

Office of the
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Press Release

To experience rural realities Social Work students of JMI attended rural camp in MP

The students of Department of Social Work, JMI along with two faculty members attended a ten day rural camp in Bagli Tehsil of Dewas district in Madhya Pradesh. The visit was aimed at providing students with an exposure to rural realities as well as understanding about interventions being undertaken to address some of the issues of concern. The tightly packed programme schedule had perspective building sessions, opportunities for understanding rural life through the use of Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) tools, an exposure and interface with watershed, rural credit and livelihood interventions besides a daily shramdaan. The rural camp provided the students an opportunity to closely observe and experience rural life, understand the functioning of rural institutions and to live and work as part of a team.

The visit was facilitated by Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS), a non governmental organisation which has been working in this tribal dominated area for the past 30 years. Working on the issue of water, livelihood, health and nutrition, rural credit the organisation has been able to impact the lives of people in one of the most backward and arid districts. The students got to see how SPS works along with the local people to improve water availability, provide alternate livelihood, minimise the use of pesticide, etc.

One of the most successful interventions by SPS has been the creation of Self Help Groups (SHG) in the most economically backward villages of Dewas district. These are small, informal groups of women for credit enhancement which in the long run is also expected to make them more socially empowered. The students had an opportunity to witness the meetings of SHGs and Federations. Through their interaction with the women of SHGs, they learnt how their lives had changed through these groups.

People's issues and concerns were seen first-hand. Dewas district falls in the tribal belt of Madhya Pradesh. The geological makeup of the place combined with man-made factors like deforestation as well as climate change, makes it an acute water shortage area. Since most people are dependent on agriculture for subsistence, water is the most basic resource which is in short supply here.

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