

Guidelines for
Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE)

(26th November 2016 to 09th January 2017)

A Component of
Master of Business Administration (Rural Management)
(MBA-RM)



Xavier School of Rural Management (XSRM)

Xavier University Bhubaneswar (XUB)

Xavier City Campus | XIMB Campus

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About Xavier School of Rural Management (XSRM)

The history of Xavier School of Rural Management (XSRM) goes back to 1988, when Centre for Development Research and Training (CENDERET; <<http://www.ximb.ac.in/cenderet>>) was set up in Xavier Institute of Management Bhubaneswar (XIMB), as the rural and social development wing to highlight the issues in rural and deprived sections of the society. It started with the commitment to reach the rural society and serve them with better available and evolved management tools. In 1995, this practice based knowledge was used to design and launch one-year Post Graduate Diploma Program in Rural Management for the graduate's students and NGO members. In 1999, the diploma program was upgraded to the two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Management (PGDRM at XIMB). In 2013, the program again evolved and housed into an independent school - XSRM - when XIMB became XUB.

The XSRM is dedicated to developing committed professionals with the contextual understandings, specialized management knowledge and skills necessary to address the unique challenges faced by the institutions / organizations engaged in rural development. The school runs the flagship two-year full time Post Graduate Program in Rural Management (MBA-RM). In addition, the school offers one-year Executive Management Program in Rural Management (Ex-MBA-RM) for working professionals and PhD in Rural Management. The programs are designed to create reflective professionals and enlightened knowledge leaders for effective management of rural institutions, businesses, development programs and civil society organizations which are engaged in progressive economic development and social transformation.

1. Introduction

Xavier University is a private university located near Bhubaneswar, India. The university has been established in accordance with the Government of Odisha passing Xavier University Act in June 2013. The university is a self-financing institution of higher learning for imparting professional and technical education. The journey of the University started in 1987 as Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB). The University is dedicated to research and teaching that meets the highest standards of excellence; to conduct research that breaks new ground; and to providing services and solutions that help individuals and the local, national, and global communities.

The Xavier School of Rural Management (XSRM) prepares professionals to understand and serve rural communities, rural organizations and societies engaged in promoting their welfare. This is achieved through unique, mission-inspired management education, training, research and action.

The two-year full-time residential postgraduate programme in Rural Management (MBA-RM) was incepted in Xavier Institute of Management Bhubaneswar (XIMB) almost two decades ago and is the second-oldest in the country. With the growth of the XIMB program, it is now offered from the new campus at Kurki, Bhubaneswar. The Rural Management programme evolved with commitment to rural development and the need for professional expertise in the extensive development efforts carried out by the government, civil society organizations and corporations. Its unique feature is the dual competencies - in management and development - which are acquired by the students. The programme is designed to prepare managers with the expertise to run business and development organizations, and the passion to use their capabilities for the betterment of rural communities. The program is designed for preparing committed and competent leaders who can analyse, reflect, plan and execute sustainable development strategies in rural areas.

1.1. MBA-RM Programme Objectives:

The rural management programme aims to:

- Develop the ability to systemically analyze and solve complex problems rural organizations and markets
- Equip students to contribute to social change in underserved rural areas through professional managerial inputs
- Enable students to evolve alternative perspectives and paradigms for development interventions
- Encourage students to plan, nurture and incubate social enterprises by building social entrepreneurial skills

Over a period of two years, the students develop competencies to analyse managerial and developmental problems in a holistic manner, and to seek, organize and present information that could lead to insightful, practical and innovative solutions. The curriculum helps students to decipher the complex situations and go beyond the obvious. The hallmark of our graduates is discipline, intellectual breadth, a progressive social consciousness and humility.

This significant part of a rural manager's training and formation is a golden opportunity to tune in their qualities and capabilities and evolve a philosophy of life. Great thinkers and achievers centred their life on the desires and aspirations of the people. They were very much *people-centric*. Needless to speak of our Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi, Baba Amte, Anna Hazare, Mother Teresa, Mohd Yunus to name a few, who have contributed or continue to contribute because they have reached out to the people since they were their prime focus and object of their love. Identifying oneself with the marginalized section of society is the invitation extended to us today. RLLE is sure to add value and meaning to future management professional's life to become efficient and effective facilitators of change across rural India.

We have been receptive to various suggestions given by our key stakeholders, particularly the prospective employers of our students. One of the important suggestions we have received is to strengthen the ability of the students to learn from rural social realities. The Rural Living and Learning Experience (RLLE) component of the MBA-RM program is part of that exercise.

2. Objectives

The RLLE objectives are:

- To make students experience rural life, situations and processes
- To enable students to develop an analytical perspective on their experience and on the rural life, places and the development processes they observe
- To facilitate students to reflect on the issues they observe and ideate on possible alternatives
- To help students understand how rural development and / or business organizations work with communities
- Develop a heightened consciousness of justice leading to a definitive commitment for the welfare of people.
- Develop the Life Skills of the students

The component of RLLE is founded on the efficacy of experiential learning, and the importance of learning from the very people and communities they are expected to work with and for. RLLE is expected to lead students to cultivate the process of un-learning and examining their own biases and prejudices about contexts, and providing opportunities to re-learn from the people and communities; this cycle would enable the students to develop fresh perspectives and the attitudes necessary to be a professional in their field. The students need to understand the struggle of the poor, the marginalized and the exploited to survive and to succeed in a rapidly changing socio-political and economic environment. The project(s), exercises and documentation to be done during RLLE helps students challenge, learn the relevance and practical application of the classroom courses in the first two terms and further in journey of life.

3. Attendance Rules

The period of RLLE is from 26th November 2016 to 09th January 2017. All students are expected to be back at XSRM not before the evening of 09th January 2017. No student is allowed to leave the field during the period of RLLE except on conditions approved by the competent authority (RO in the Host organization and Faculty Guide from XSRM). Any absence from the field location except to the host organization's office for briefing / presentations will result in disqualification of degree or repetition of RLLE, as found appropriate by faculty and Dean of XSRM, XUB.

Points to Reflections

- Be an observer, explorer and a participant, not a by-stander – Exhibit enthusiasm and interest.
- Allow yourself to be fascinated by the beauty of nature in the village.
- Get into the shoes of the simple, vulnerable section of the society, adopt a *verstehen* (empathic understanding of human behaviour) approach and feel the situation that is part of their life.
- Find time to spend quiet moments to reflect on the richness of the simplicity of rural life and name the sentiments that are evoked within you.
- Exercise extreme caution and prudence in your words, actions and behaviour.
- Seek information and clarifications while taking notes / translation without confronting them with your personal biases.
- Take good care of any personal ailments / illness, fatigue, etc. without attracting attention and carry with you some essential medication that you require.
- Carry with you winter clothing's and potable drinking water.
- *Indiscipline during RLLE will lead to strict disciplinary action, including expulsion from course.*

4. Reporting Officer (RO)

Each host organization is expected to provide a RO to the group of students attached for RLLE. The role of the RO is to facilitate the entire learning process and provide all possible support for their living during RLLE as agreed upon.

5. Faculty Guide

Each group will have a Faculty Guide and the role of the guide is to provide academic input to the entire learning process. The guide will visit his / her group of students in the field, advise the students on all aspects of RLLE and evaluate the student deliverables. If possible, the guide may also publish the report jointly with the students and the RO.

6. Schedule and Duration

The RLLE is scheduled in the second half of Term II, and for a **total of 45 days**, with students spending approximately 45 days in one village, in selected field locations all across India. For this purpose, students will be divided into group of two in one village, with a faculty guide assigned to each group. Each student group will be attached to a host organization working in the rural area, and typically, in the development domain. A RO will be designated by the host organization, to

guide the students throughout their stay in the village. Every student must live at the village throughout the 45-day duration of the RLLE. They are only permitted to travel to nearby block / town / city for the following reasons (a) in case of illness, (b) travel related to the organizational project assigned, and (c) meetings / presentations in the host organization's office.

Students will be briefed in detail about the arrangements by the RLLE Coordinator, and by each faculty to explain how they should apply the content of their respective courses to the RLLE tasks. Students are expected to report to their respective organizations on the date decided by the RLLE Coordinator and specified in the RLLE Guidelines provided to them.

On their return from the field to the campus, *on the date specified*, students will be given two days to prepare their Group and Individual Reports, their Presentations, and the concepts for the one-day RLLE Mela, in the formats specified herein. They will work on these on campus, under the guidance of their Faculty Advisor.

7. RLLE Components

The 45 days in the field consists of two components, with intent and content as below:

7.1. Rural Study and Reflection Component (RSRC)

This component is expected to take about 30 days. It includes various segments which, taken together, would take the student through the un-learning and re-learning process.

- i. Every group is expected to apply their [un]learning in the various classroom courses (SADA, PRA, RPS-RLS, RDA, RFIS, SRM, etc.) to prepare a detailed RLLE deliverables (see **Section 10**). Each group is expected to use the tools of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), which should be definitely used to in preparation of different sections of RLLE deliverables. In the annexure of the Village Report (VR) the photographs of the PRA should be included.
- ii. Every student group must prepare a short (video) film / flash presentation (of minimum five [5] minutes' duration) on any one of the seven dimensions of the Village, viz, Demography (social dimension), Infrastructure, Livelihoods, Market, Migration, Governance and Culture, that the group is particularly struck by or concerned about. It is expected to be a reflective commentary / story rather than a touristic run-through the village. A two-page description of this video should be a part of the VR.
- iii. Every student is expected to maintain a daily journal (RLLE Diary) and write and reflect on his / her daily experience of living in the village. Based on their RLLE Diary, every student must prepare a Personal Reflection Paper (PRP), analyzing and reflecting on their personal experience of village life during their stay. Only the PRP will be evaluated but the RLLE Diary should be mandatorily submitted by all students. Students can choose to maintain their daily journal in Indian languages but the PRP will be in English.

7.2. Development Project Learning Component (DPLC)

This consists of the project-based learning, i.e., learning from the assignment / project given by the host organization through the RO. This component is expected to take maximum 15-20 days. The assignment is typically expected to require application of student's skills learnt in the courses before the RLLE, such as identification of development issues, analysis of those issues and suggesting / working on existing issue in village. Through this component, the students are expected to add some small but significant value to the host organization.

The students are expected to finish the work assigned to them by the host organization before they leave the organization. Even during the DPLC work, the host organization is requested to facilitate the stay of students at the village only. If the host organization wishes, the student groups can be asked to give a presentation to the host organization and /or submit a report to the RO of the host organization before they leave the organization. The format and the contents of this presentation and report can be decided by the RO.

8. RLLE Expenses

The host organizations are kindly requested to take care of the boarding and lodging of the students during the field stay. For this purpose, XSRM will pay to the host organization INR 300/- per day per student for the total duration of RLLE, viz, 45 days (total amount per student is INR 13,500/- only). This amount calculated for the total number of students hosted by the organization will be delivered to the organization through Demand Draft or Cheque by the students on the first day of reposting for RLLE.

In case any travel or any other expenses are incurred by the students while working for the host organization's project, the host organization is kindly requested to take care of such expenses as it has been incurred for the benefit of the host organization.

Each student will get a fixed amount for meeting the travel expense from XSRM to the host organization and back from the host organization to XSRM. This will be approximately equal to II Sleeper class railway fare. Apart from this no other student expense will be reimbursed by XSRM.

9. Organizational Feedback

Each host organization is expected to submit a feedback on each of the students. The feedback is to be given in the prescribed format and it is confidential. The feedback is expected to be either carried by student (in sealed envelope) or have to be sent to XSRM before 30th January 2017.

10. RLLE Deliverables

RLLE carries nine (9) credits as core component of MBA (RM). The following are to be prepared and submitted to XSRM and the host organization.

10.1. Host Organization Project [to Host Organization; group activity; 20% weightage based on the organization's feedback]

This is the project work done by the students for the host organizations. At the end of this, the organization may ask for a report / presentation. The Organization will give appropriate

individual and group feedback about students in a standard format provided by the XSRM Office.

10.2. Presentation [at XSRM; group activity; 15% weightage; 10% for VR and 5% for DPR]

This involves a systematic presentation (for about 25 min) of the entire RLLE learning, including the Village Report (VR) and the Development Project Report (DPR) to a faculty panel.

A 5-7 minute (video) film / flash presentation should be shown as a part of the presentation. This can be on any aspect/ issue in the village that the group is particularly struck by or concerned about. This should capture in a creative manner, a slice of village life and development activities taking place therein, but not be just a tour through the village. The video should relate directly/indirectly with a development issue. The videos along with the Village Report will be submitted to the XSRM Dean Office. No extra equipment is necessary; the students can use their smart phones to capture video or still photographs from which they can develop this.

10.3. RLLE Mela [at XSRM, group activity; 10% weightage]

This is a creative activity with a cultural dimension wherein students have to showcase their academic learning from RLLE for the benefit of the general public. Students have to demonstrate their analytical insights and understandings developed during the RLLE, in the context of the area in which they had spent 45 days. The students can use whatever artifacts' that they brought from the village for the *mela*.

10.4. Village Report (VR) [at XSRM; group activity; 30% weightage]

This will comprise the systematic documentation of the revenue village (where student is staying for 45 days) in a standardized structure, and provide details on seven dimensions, viz, Demography (social dimension), Infrastructure, Livelihoods, Market, Migration, Governance and Culture. A detailed format is enclosed in the Annexure. The report (excluding annexures) should be between 20-30 pages.

10.5. Case Study [at XSRM; group activity; 15% weightage]

A case study of maximum 3500 words on any interesting aspect of the village life. This has to be done by a students living in village together. The students have to clearly share in what capacity each student in group worked for the case study writing.

10.6. Personal Reflection Paper (PRP) [at XSRM; individual activity; 5% weightage]

In this, students are expected to bring out their personal reflections on village life. It will have standard components but format is left to the students. The PRP should be of minimum two (2) pages.

10.7. Development Project Report (DPR) [at XSRM; group activity; 5% weightage]

The learning that the students got from the host organization's assigned project is to be prepared as a "Development Project Report" and submitted to XSRM Dean Office. This report should add an analytical view to any report / presentation submitted to the organization, with an academic rigour in applying perspectives and understandings learnt till then. This report (excluding annexures) should be for minimum five (5) pages.

The best RLLE group, i.e. the group scoring the highest overall marks (including individual PRP marks) will get 'RLLE Ratna' award.

11. Deadlines

11.1. For Host Organization:

Group report and /or presentation on the project to the organization (if expected by the organization): 06th January 2017.

11.2. For XSRM:

- Reporting at XSRM, XUB: 09th January 2017 (by 06.00 pm)
- Consultation with faculty guide for presentation: 09th, 10th and 11th January 2017
- Presentation: 12th, 13th, and 14th January 2017
- RLLE Mela - 16th January 2017 (Monday)
- Submission of Village Report (VR), Development Project Report (DPR), Case Study (CS) and Personal Reflection Paper (PRP): 20th February 2017

12. Health Advisory

It is the responsibility of the students to take care of their health during the period of RLLE. Students are strongly advised to take all preventive measures against Malaria and other diseases which may be prevalent in their respective field areas. Please consult your host organizations for more details. Carry sufficient warm clothes with you, if required on location of host organisation.

XSRM Contact Details

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