

Chairperson, EOC

Memo No : EOC/005

Date: 25/07/2024

## Netaji Subhas Open University: Learners' Awareness Programme

### A Report

On July 4th, 2024, Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) marked its inaugural Learners' Awareness Programme, spearheaded by the Equal Opportunity Cell (EOC) working under Socio Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDG) as prescribed by the UGC. This initiative signifies a strong commitment to creating a truly level playing field for all students pursuing education at NSOU.

The programme was coordinated by the EOC's Member Secretary who also delivered opening remarks, was further enriched by the esteemed Chairperson's welcome address. The Chairperson, Prof. Barnana Guha Thakurta Banerjee shed light on the EOC's core mission – to empower and support students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Established in adherence with UGC guidelines and aligned with the National Education Policy 2020, the EOC aims to bridge the gap for various student communities:

- **Leveling the Educational Landscape:** Acknowledging the disparity between students from privileged backgrounds and others, the EOC strives to bridge this psychological gap. They aim to ensure that no student feels disadvantaged or inadequate due to their background.
- **Empowering All Voices:** Students from less fortunate backgrounds may often hesitate to raise concerns due to social stigma. The EOC provides a safe space for their voices to be heard, fostering open communication and seeking solutions to their specific challenges.
- **Supporting First-Generation Learners:** Open and distance learning at NSOU offers a perfect platform for first-generation learners. The EOC aims to be a valuable resource, addressing their specific needs and anxieties, and ensuring a smooth educational journey.
- **Inclusivity for All:** Students from religious minorities can sometimes feel overlooked. The EOC is dedicated to addressing their concerns and ensuring they receive adequate support and feel like an integrated part of the student body.

- **Disability Inclusion:** The Learners' Awareness Program also addressed the needs of students with disabilities. They were encouraged to proactively reach out to the EOC for assistance and guidance in navigating their educational pursuits.
- **Reaching Out to Marginalized Communities:** Issues faced by students from migrant, denotified, and nomadic communities were also brought to the table. The EOC actively encourages these students to access the educational opportunities available at NSOU.
- **Education Behind Bars:** Discussions were held on extending educational opportunities to inmates in jails and correctional homes. The program emphasized equipping them with the tools and support needed to pursue higher education.

Professor Anirban Ghosh, a valued member of the EOC, provided further insights. He highlighted that the EOC goes beyond simply resolving immediate problems. They aim for deeper engagement, empowering students through knowledge and fostering a sense of agency.

The programme culminated in an interactive session, where viewers like Diptargha Bagchi (PG Political Science) and Biplab Biswas (PG Public Administration) appreciated the initiative taken by the respective faculties but raised concerns about missing video lectures and the availability of sample question papers on the university website. The Chairman Madam, on behalf of EOC team personally addressed these concerns effectively, ensuring a sense of satisfaction among the participants. Thus through its The Learners' Awareness Program marked a significant step towards a more inclusive and equitable educational experience for all students at Netaji Subhas Open University. The EOC's commitment to empowering diverse student communities paves the way for a brighter future, ensuring that education is truly accessible to all.

The report is placed before the honourable Vice Chancellor for his approval so that it could be recorded and uploaded accordingly to the official website of the University.

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25/7/24

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