

PROGRAMME REPORT

Awareness Webinar on Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan: Substance Abuse & Digital Addiction

Organised by: Mental Well-being Committee (MWC), Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU)
Campaign Reference: Department of Higher Education, Govt. of West Bengal Circular (06.08.2026) | NMBA Special Campaign (6–20 August 2026)

Date & Day:	20th August 2026 (Thursday)	Time:	02:00 PM onwards
Platform:	Zoom Cloud Meetings	Anchor:	Ms. Anindita Sarkar, Asst. Prof. of ELT & Member, MWC-NSOU
Resource Person:	Dr. Antara Choudhury, Asst. Prof. of Special Education & Programme Coordinator (M.Ed. Spl. Ed.-ODL), SoE, NSOU		

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In accordance with the directive issued by the Department of Higher Education, Government of West Bengal (Circular dated 06.08.2026) observing a special awareness campaign under the nationwide **Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)** from August 6 to August 20, 2026, the Mental Well-being Committee (MWC) of Netaji Subhas Open University (NSOU) organized a state-level awareness webinar on August 20, 2026.

The webinar focused on the twin challenges confronting contemporary youth: **Chemical Substance Abuse** and **Behavioral / Digital Addiction**. Delivered by key resource person Dr. Antara Choudhury, the session provided alarming statistical insights, real-world case studies, psychological frameworks of addiction, and practical coping mechanisms including guided mindfulness and digital hygiene protocols. The program successfully engaged faculty members, officers, and a large cohort of students across higher education institutions.

2. PROGRAM SCHEDULE & SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

TIME SLOT	SESSION ITEM	RESOURCE PERSON / SPEAKER
02:00 PM – 02:05 PM	Inauguration	Playing of National Song <i>Vande Mataram</i>
02:05 PM – 02:10 PM	Welcome Address	Dr. Papiya Upadhyay , Asst. Prof. of Education & Convener, MWC-NSOU
02:10 PM – 03:00 PM	Keynote Address & Technical Session	Dr. Antara Choudhury , Asst. Prof. of Special Education & Prog. Coordinator, SoE, NSOU
03:00 PM – 03:05 PM	Presidential Address	Smt. Ananya Mitra , Registrar (Acting) & Joint Registrar (Admin), NSOU

TIME SLOT	SESSION ITEM	RESOURCE PERSON / SPEAKER
03:05 PM – 03:15 PM	Vote of Thanks & Anthem	Mr. Anupam Roy , Asst. Prof. of Sociology & Member, MWC-NSOU

3. KEY DELIBERATIONS & TECHNICAL INSIGHTS

Dr. Antara Choudhury opened the lecture by contextualizing "Nasha" (addiction) beyond traditional definitions. She emphasized that *Nasha* encompasses any substance or behavior that generates a compulsive urge, loss of self-control, and continued engagement despite obvious physical, social, or academic harm.

A. The Context & National Reality

To highlight the urgency, Dr. Choudhury cited critical news reports and nationwide survey data:

- **Public Safety Risk:** Referenced a recent aviation crisis (August 2026, *The Times of India*) where an Air India pilot on the Phuket-Delhi flight AI 2379 failed dope tests, being severely impaired by marijuana in-flight. The incident caused a sudden drop in altitude and negative G-force, resulting in injuries to 20 passengers and 4 crew members before the co-pilot safely landed the aircraft, prompting DGCA to mandate stricter dope testing and criminal penalties.
- **Substance Abuse Prevalence:** Highlighted findings from the 10-City Youth Survey (published in *Nat. Med. Journal of India / TOI*), revealing that **15.1% (1 in 7)** of surveyed school and college students have tried psychoactive drugs, with children as young as 11 years old dabbling in substances.
 - *Substance Breakdown:* Tobacco (4%), Alcohol (3.8%), Opioids (2.8%), Cannabis (2%), Inhalants (1.9%).
 - *Gender Dynamics:* Boys lead in tobacco and cannabis consumption, whereas girls exhibit higher prevalence in inhalants (glues, whiteners) and prescription opioids.
 - *Support Gap:* Alarming, only **1%** of adolescent users seek medical or psychological help.

15.1% Youth Psychoactive Drug Trial Rate (1 in 7 Students)	56% High School Students Addicted to Smartphones	1% Adolescent Substance Users Seeking Medical Help
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B. Categorization of Addiction

The speaker divided addiction into two major streams, highlighting that both hijack the brain's dopamine reward pathway in identical ways:

1. **Chemical / Substance Nasha:** Tobacco & Nicotine (gutka, cigarettes — reducing lifespan by ~11 mins per cigarette), Alcohol ("social drinking" escalating to dependency), Cannabis (Ganja/Charas, falsely perceived as harmless but causing permanent memory/cognitive impairment), Hard Opioids (Heroin/synthetics with high fatal overdose risk), and Inhalants (whitener, petrol fumes causing rapid brain damage).
2. **Behavioral / Digital Nasha:** Mobile phones, social media algorithms, online gaming, gambling, and OTT bingeing.

C. Digital Addiction & Mental Health Crisis

Dr. Choudhury highlighted that screen addiction is the most normalized yet overlooked crisis of the present generation:

- **Usage Metrics:** Indian youth check their phones an average of **150+ times per day** (once every 6 minutes). Average daily screen time ranges between **6 to 8 hours**.
- **Nomophobia:** **66%** of smartphone users suffer from Nomophobia (NO Mobile PHOBIA) — the irrational fear of being without a mobile device.
- **Cognitive Impact:** Over **60%** of students report inability to maintain focus during a standard 40-minute lecture, accompanied by elevated anxiety levels (42.4%). Exposure begins as early as 6–7 months of age.
- **Tragic Extremes:** Real-world cases were discussed, including an incident reported by NDTV where a Class 10 student in Telangana died by suicide after his parents confiscated his phone due to severe PUBG/BGMI gaming addiction.

4. PRACTICAL COPING TOOLS & INTERACTIVE EXERCISES

Moving beyond diagnosis, the webinar offered practical, evidence-based coping interventions for students:

The 20-Minute "Urge Surfing" Technique

Research demonstrates that physiological and psychological cravings peak within 15–20 minutes before subsiding. Students were trained in four steps: (1) *Urge Hits* (recognize the pull), (2) *Set a Timer* (commit to 20 minutes before acting), (3) *Physical Engagement* (walk, drink water, stretch), and (4) *Riding the Wave* (allowing the urge to fade naturally).

A. Digital Hygiene & Daily Rules

- **The 5-5-5 Rule:** No phone usage during the first 5 minutes after waking, the last 5 minutes before sleep, and taking a mandatory 5-minute break for every study hour.
- **Replace, Don't Just Resist:** Directing energy toward sports, music, art, yoga, or Rajyoga meditation rather than relying solely on willpower.
- **Anchor Values:** Cultivating intrinsic self-respect and integrity rather than relying on external validation (social media likes/comments).

B. Live Mind Relaxation Exercise

During the webinar, Dr. Choudhury conducted a live 15-minute guided relaxation exercise consisting of:

1. **Posture Alignment (1 min):** Sitting uncrossed, hands on lap, eyes gently closed.
2. **Breathing Awareness (3 mins):** Deep inhalation, holding for 3 seconds, slow exhalation releasing physical tension.
3. **Guided Meditation (8 mins):** Visualizing oneself as peaceful conscious energy independent of digital devices.
4. **Return (3 mins):** Gradual sensory awareness return, feeling re-energized and centered.

5. INSTITUTIONAL PLEDGE & GOVERNMENT SUPPORT MECHANISMS

The event concluded with all participants taking the official **Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan Pledge**:

NASHA MUKT BHARAT ABHIYAAN PLEDGE

- ✓ I will not use tobacco, alcohol, or any substance to cope with stress — I will seek healthier ways.
- ✓ I will set daily screen time limits and honor them — my attention is my most valuable asset.
- ✓ I will speak up if I see a friend struggling — silence is not loyalty, it is abandonment.
- ✓ I will be the change — a healthy, addiction-free, value-based future starts with me.

Participants were guided to scan the official QR code to claim their Government of India NMBA Participation Certificate. The speaker also highlighted key government helpline numbers:

- **National NMBA Helpline:** 14446 (24x7, Toll-Free, Confidential)
- **NIMHANS Mental Health Helpline:** 080-46110007

6. VALEDICTORY & ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In her Presidential Address, **Smt. Ananya Mitra**, Registrar (Acting), NSOU, commended the Mental Well-being Committee for organizing a timely intervention aligned with state government mandates. She emphasized that open university frameworks must continually prioritize the mental health and digital wellbeing of distance learners.

The program concluded with a Vote of Thanks delivered by **Mr. Anupam Roy**, Asst. Prof. of Sociology, expressing gratitude to the University Administration, the Resource Person, the organizing committee, and the participating students.

7. ORGANIZING COMMITTEE (MWC-NSOU)

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| • Smt. Ananya Mitra , Joint Registrar (Admin) | • Dr. Monojit Garai , Asst. Prof. of Social Work |
| • Dr. Sudeshna Chatterjee Biswas , Joint Registrar (Acad) | • Mr. Anupam Roy , Asst. Prof. of Sociology |
| • Dr. Abhedananda Panigrahi , Coordinator-B.Ed. | • Ms. Anindita Sarkar , Asst. Prof. of ELT |
| • Dr. Ushnish Sarkar , Asst. Prof. of Mathematics | • Dr. Papiya Upadhyay , Asst. Prof. of Education (Convener) |

Report Prepared By: Dr. Papiya Upadhyay (Convener, MWC-NSOU & Rapporteur)

Netaji Subhas Open University, West Bengal

Event snapshots:

