



Report on UGC-DEB Sponsored Orientation Program for Academic Counsellors and Dissertation Guides under School of Professional Studies, NSOU

The School of Professional Studies organised a one day Orientation Programme for Academic Counsellors and Dissertation Guides on 11th April 2023 with an objective to give a clear idea about the ODL system and also discuss the guidelines which are expected by the dissertation guides, especially of MLIS and MSW Programme. **About 56 participants** from Commerce, Economics, Library Science and, Social Work, attended the programme. A participatory and interactive approach was adopted to carry out the sessions. Professor Pratip Kr. Chaudhury, Rtd. WBSES and Former Director, School of Sciences, NSOU delivered his Keynote address while Professor) Someswar Bhowmik, Office-in-Charge, Centre for Online Education (COEdn) and Professor Tridib Tripathi, DLIS, NSOU delivered their lectures in the Programme. The entire programme was efficiently compered by Smt Priyanthi Bagchi, Asst. Professor in Economics, SPS.



The inaugural session began with the Welcome Address by Professor Anirban Ghosh, Director (i/c), SPS, NSOU. Prof Ghosh extended his warm greetings to the participants. He discussed about the ODL Teaching learning process. Prof. Ghosh explained the importance of “counselling” in Open learning system. He urged the Academic counsellors to make the PCP sessions interactive and as interesting as possible. He requested the Academic Counsellors to encourage the learners to read the study material before they come to the classes/ PCP, and clear their doubts, in this way the prime objectives of organizing these sessions shall be fulfilled.

Prof. Arun Kumar Chakraborty HoD, DLIS, NSOU, while introducing the theme of the programme, said that PCP is the heart of ODL system. It must be carried out in a very meaningful way. One must be very careful while developing the study materials. The SLMs should be written in the vernacular language so that it is understood by the large section of the

learners. He concluded his speech with the hope that many critical issues shall emerge during the programme and we shall be able to address it together.

Prof. Tridib Tripathi, DLIS, NSOU in his lecture elaborately discussed about the role of an Academic Counsellor in PCP. He specifically said that the academic counsellor must be completely devoted to their assigned job, and they must be compassionate especially towards the ODL learners, as their situation is different from the students of conventional background. He emphasised that the teachers should make it a practice to use chalk and board during the personal contact programme and write legibly so that it is clearly viewed by the learners.

Professor (Dr.) Someswar Bhowmik, Centre for Online Education (COEdn), discussed about the importance of online education, and how effectively it should be designed for the learners. He specifically said that merely conducting online classes is not online education. Online courses need to be designed in a different way. It may be credit based or non-credit based. It must adopt a four quadrant approach, -Quadrant-I - (e-Tutorial), Quadrant-II - (e-Content), Quadrant-III - (Assessment) and Quadrant-IV - (Discussion Forum). Prof. Bhowmik said that MOOCs are becoming very popular and we must also take initiatives in developing such courses from our end, for which he requested the participants to extend their support.



Professor Pratip Kr. Chaudhury delivered a very interesting keynote address. In a lecture Prof Choudhury mostly shared his ideas from his personal experiences with lots of case studies and example, which made the entire session even more interesting and engaging. He discussed about the needs, expectation and aspirations of a learner from ODL system and compared it with the students of Conventional system. He discussed about the desired role of an academic counsellor and the kind of attitude they must have for the learners of this system. He said that an Academic counsellor must be tolerant about the lack of background knowledge and should not compare the distance learners with students of conventional classes. He also emphasised to conduct “Induction Programmes” before the commencement of the new session. There were a few questions from the participants which were satisfactorily clarified by the speakers.

The inaugural session concluded with the Vote of thanks by Dr Sudarshan Roy, Asst. Professor in Commerce.

The Technical Session started by Dr Anamika Das, Asst Prof in Library Science. Dr Das said that it is not possible for the teachers of ODL system to cover the entire jurisdiction, so we have to depend upon the Counsellors, so when it comes to guiding the learners for preparing their dissertation, our counsellors must be committed to supervise our learners, as the university prepares the guide lists only after talking their consent. They must motivate the learners to come to PCP sessions and try to remove the psychological barriers if any.

Smt Kasturi Sinha Ghosh Asst. Prof. in Social Work, expressed her gratitude to the counsellors and said that the team of Counsellors of Social Work have always exhibited a strong solidarity and they have been working together as a team. She urged the counsellors to be careful that the learners do not get trapped. Their interest should never be hampered. The Dissertation must

not become a matter of concern rather the learners must take it as a new way gaining knowledge.

Dr Barnali Roychoudhury opined that the counsellors must understand the pulse of the learners and must take out time to prepare a lesson plan before conducting the PCP should be conducted systematically. The learners must be encouraged to participate in the sessions and their ideas should be given due importance, she also conveyed about the internship programmes as one the initiatives of the University. She said that the learners may also be told about the e-repositories which are available in the university website

Dr Sudarshan Roy presented a study which he had conducted on understanding the trend of the teaching –learning process of Commerce department of NSOU, many interesting findings were highlighted in the study.



Finally Mr Monojit Garai , Asst Prof in Social Work, conveyed that the learners must follow the website to know about various relevant information about the various programmes. He briefly talked about the guidelines for writing Dissertation and shared that the learners may be encouraged to go through the Dissertation and Field work manuals which are uploaded in university website.

Some of the suggestions which came up from the participation where-

- The books, either in hard copy or soft copy, may be made available to them so that it becomes easier for them to teach.
- The PCP may be allotted in such a way that one teacher may complete the topics which are of similar nature.
- After completing the topic of the study material, the teachers may also give the students some extra knowledge so that they may prepare themselves for competitive examinations.
- Regular revision of Guide list should be done.

The programme concluded with the distribution of certificates.



---Report prepared by Smt. Kasturi Sinha Ghosh