



NETAJI SUBHAS OPEN UNIVERSITY
School of Social Sciences
DD 26, Sector – I, Salt Lake – 700064
Website: www.wbnsou.ac.in

Report of the workshop held on 20th August, 2016

The workshop for “Syllabus restructuring of B.D.P Sociology: an academic enterprise in generating an open form of discourse”, was smoothly conducted at NSOU Headquarter, Salt Lake Campus. The programme initiated at around 10.40 am on 20th August, 2016 in the presence of a handsome group of editors and authors essaying the SLM for the first four papers of the newly structured BDP Syllabus of Elective Sociology (ESO).

Objectives of the workshop:

Sociology syllabus of Bachelor Degree Programme has been currently revised by the university and we therefore intend to conduct a workshop for the smooth writing of the papers. The workshop intends to appraise the paper writers of the ways to compose the modules effectively, especially keeping in mind the issues and concerns of the open and distant learning mode. The workshop shall deliberate on consistent and standard production of SLMs so that the university can vouch for its premium quality of learning materials. Eminent resource had been invited upon to give their esteemed advises on designing SLMs that shall serve this purpose. The workshop has a dual purpose, that of urging the writers to produce conceptual clarification in their papers as well as to address the special needs of the students in the distant medium.

The Thrust areas of the workshop

N.S.O.U is the only state sponsored open university in West Bengal that offers bachelor degree programme to its students in sociology. The onus is therefore on the university to upgrade its syllabus regularly so as to elevate its students on an equal footing with other universities. Keeping this in view, the university has decided to re-design its syllabus to offer a better learning experiences to its students. Accordingly, the university conducted its official modalities to re-structure its syllabus, in tune with the recommendations of its esteemed B.O.S members. After the successful formation of the syllabus, it was hereby decided that the self-learning materials for the first four papers be immediately expedited. Accordingly, each module was earmarked for individual writers. Each paper will be subsequently edited by an eminent academician after the completion of the writings. The workshop will thus be conducted for the easy and smooth writing of the modules, so as to ensure parity and consistency among all the papers. In this way a uniformity will be adhered to while ratcheting up the syllabus. Since, not everyone from our present group of writers have prior- experience in working with the open and distance learning medium, therefore the workshop aims to dispel any doubt or ambiguity, if the writer has any.

The open system of education is unique in its ways of delivering education and stands out from the conventional modes in multiple ways. Therefore, writing study materials for its fellow students is a challenge for anyone who decides to perform this grand task. Addressing the vast and diverse populace of students through a uniform and homogeneous mechanism is challenging, especially pertaining to the subject matter of sociology. The workshop therefore

articulates its all-inclusive strategy of imparting education to its vast population through the open mode of communication. The workshop shall deliberate on the versatility of the syllabus that has been formulated as well as the correct ways of presenting its content through SLMs. For any university, that initiates open mode of learning, composing SLMs can be an ardent challenge, since the identity of any such university is reflected through its study materials.

The task becomes more gruelling when it comes to writing the syllabus for sociology, since the subject has dynamic status and unfathomable contemporary significance. Teaching such a subject through a medium, where the face to face interaction between the students and teachers is minimum, makes the work far more challenging. The study materials will therefore have to be designed in a way that shall bridge the gap between the teacher and the taught. The workshop will therefore articulate how this can be done so as to make the syllabus lucid yet analytical. The syllabus and its contemporary content must be made self-explanatory so that the student finds it insightful yet eloquent. This is a herculean task that requires conceptual clarity and innovation, that supposedly will be reflected in our learning materials, and that surely is the anthem of the workshop.

The issues that were addressed in the workshop:

- What is the need for re-structuring an already existing under-graduate syllabus for the students in Sociology?
- What elements to be kept in mind while drafting the modules for the students of the open mode of learning in Sociology?
- How should the editors charter the guidelines for the module writers?

The academic trajectory of the workshop:

The workshop took off with the Inaugural session formally addressing the editors and the authors, who had amassed on the occasion of the august workshop. Dr Chandan Basu, Officer-in-charge, School of Social Sciences, NSOU, welcomed the guests, followed by the key note address rendered by Professor Prasanta Ray. The session then surged towards the Presidential Address delivered by Prof Debnarayan Modak, Professor of Political Science, NSOU. This session was concluded with a vote of thanks proposed by Ms Srabanti Choudhuri, Assistant Professor of Sociology, NSOU. The inaugural session was gracefully compared by Dr Barnana Guha Thakurta (Banerjee), Assistant Professor of Political Science, NSOU. The session was followed by a short tea break.

The second half of the session made its beginning with the Technical Session – I at around 12.00pm. Both Technical sessions I and II were compered by Ms. Srabanti Choudhuri. Dr Basu welcomed the esteemed audiences once again and it was soon followed by the spree of invited lectures by the editors of the first two papers, viz. Professor Bholanath Bandyopadhyay, Department of Sociology, University of Calcutta and Professor Debjani Sengupta, Department of Sociology, Kalyani University respectively. The two lectures were subsequently followed by an interactive session where a face to face interaction had consolidated between the editors and the respective authors.

This session was followed by a lunch interval at around 1.30 pm, only to be resumed back at 2.00 pm. This technical session (II) begun with the lectures given by editors of papers III and IV, i.e. Professor Anirban Mukherjee, Department of Sociology, Burdwan University and Professor Amites Mukhopadhyay, Department of Sociology, Jadavpur University respectively. The session was followed by the distribution of certificate, group photo of the workshop and sitting fees to all the invited guests.

The lingering questions that the workshop kept behind for further enquiry:

How will this workshop impact the creation and circulation of sociological knowledge and practise with an open latitude?

How have module writers imagined and sustained to give shape to this special kind of open educational resources?

As an Organizing Secretary of the workshop, I express my heartfelt thanks to everyone for their support and participation in making the workshop a grand success.

Srabanti Choudhuri

Srabanti Choudhuri
Assistant Professor of Sociology,
NSOU.