

**TWO DAY NATIONAL WORKSHOP REPORT ON ROLE OF ACADEMIC COUNSELORS IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING SYSTEM**

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**Inaugural Session**

The Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir in collaboration with STRIDE IGNOU and Gandhi Memorial College of Education, Jammu organized a two day National Workshop on the theme "Role of Academic Counselors in ODL System" on 8<sup>th</sup> & 9<sup>th</sup> November ,2012. Forty five participants attended the workshop from various universities, colleges and institutions across India. Two renowned resource persons from STRIDE-IGNOU conducted eight technical sessions in two days. In addition to technical sessions, the Inaugural and Valedictory sessions were also conducted which were presided by Jenab Abdul Gani Malik( Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education ,Labour and Employment), Jenab Raman Bhalla (Hon'ble Minister for Revenue, Relief and Rehabilitation) and Prof. Talat Ahmad, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir.

At the outset of the inaugural session Prof. Nilofar Khan, Director DDE presented a brief profile of the Directorate regarding the programmes offered, study-cum-information centres, faculty ,faculty development programmes, new programmes in offering, ICT support for distance learners of the Directorate at their doorsteps, library facility at study centers, grievance redressal, feedback forum, enquiry cell and other extension activities carried on by the Directorate in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh provinces for the enrolled students from J&K and other parts of the India.

Sh. Anil Dhar , President HESK(Hindu Education Society of Kashmir) highlighted the role and objectives of HESK and its instrumental role in spreading education in Jammu & Kashmir. In his emotional address, he expressed his social, educational and intellectual attachment with University of Kashmir.

Prof. P. K.Biswas highlighted the objectives of the workshop and the need for conducting such workshops for providing training to faculty working in ODL system.

Prof. Talat Ahmad, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor University of Kashmir, Srinagar stressed that the message of University of Kashmir should be spread to far flung areas by strengthening extension and outreach activities of the Directorate. He said that the

Directorate should expand its network of study centres to other districts of Jammu and provide educational opportunities to all those desirous students who because of socio-economic or geographical constraints are not in a position to go for higher education.

Jenab Abdul Gani Malik, Hon'ble Minister for Higher Education said that Distance Education has a promising role to play in enhancing Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) and employability. He also stressed upon the growth of private sector so that they can shoulder the responsibilities of the Government in education sector by offering courses where students have better job prospectus.

Dr. Nahid Ruhi, Associate Professor, Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir, presented vote of thanks.

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Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Dar, Associate Professor (Law), Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir prepared and presented the workshop report.

### **Objectives of the Workshop**

1. To develop professionalism among the personnel responsible for the delivery of distance education system.
2. To make the persons aware about the philosophy and methodology of ODL system.
3. To help them to identify the strategies and methods for realizing the objectives of ODL system by providing effective support services to distance learners.
4. To develop in them skills about latest trends and ICT enabled developments to resolve the problems of students in cost effective manner.
5. To provide training to resource persons about the dimensions of academic counselling.

### **Target Group**

- Academic counsellors engaged for providing counselling and guidance to distance learners
- Resource persons engaged in Personal Contact Programmes, for delivering lectures to DDE students
- Resource persons engaged for evaluation of assignments submitted by students as an essential component of ODL system and their curriculum.
- Liaison officers working at different Study-cum-Information Centres

### **Technical Sessions**

In this workshop eight technical sessions were conducted in two days jointly by the experts Prof. Biswas and Dr. Mithili. The workshop methodology was through presentations, discussions and interactions. Brain storming sessions were conducted frequently at the end of each session. The issues raised were discussed and replied to the best satisfaction of the participants.

#### **1<sup>st</sup> Session (Day 1)**

The 1<sup>st</sup> technical session was conducted on the topic “*ODL :Concept, Development and Components*”. In this session Prof. Biswas explained the difference between conventional and distance education system. He explained the concept of open education as an alternative mode to formal system. In his excellent presentation he highlighted characteristic both conventional system of education and distance education. He also discussed open learning system and its flexibility in admissions, contact programs, counseling etc.

#### **2<sup>nd</sup> Session (Day 1)**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> session was conducted by Dr. Mithili on the topic “*The Models of Distance Education System*”. The expert highlighted various stages of Distance education system from correspondence to online mode and its corresponding delivery technologies. The focal point of her presentation was on the mixed use of Audio, Video, print and ICT enabled teaching- learning in ODL system. It was followed by discussion and interaction session. The queries were nicely replied by the expert.

#### **3<sup>rd</sup> Session (Day 1)**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> session was on the topic “*Self-learning Materials: Need and Characteristics*”. This session was conducted by Prof. Biswas and discussed various aspects of self learning material, viz., need, characteristic features and importance of SLM as an essential component of student support in open and

distance learning system. He explained how to develop Self Learning Material (SLM) which should be self explanatory, self contained, self directed, self motivating and self evaluating. He stressed upon the need that a teacher should be in-built in the self learning material.

The remarkable feature of his presentation was to develop the study material in user friendly mode to inculcate interest, motivation and curiosity among distance learners while studying at their own place and pace.

#### **4<sup>th</sup> session (Day 1)**

The 4<sup>th</sup> session was on the topic “*Development of Study Skills*”. It was once again nicely conducted jointly by both the experts. They highlighted various teaching techniques like 5Ws and 1H, Fishbone diagram and Spider diagram for the development of study skills among distance learners.

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Session (Day 2)**

The 5<sup>th</sup> session was on the topic “*Student Support Services*”. It was partly conducted on Ist day in the form of home work assignment and partly on day second by Prof. Biswas. Student Support Services is one of the essential components of ODL system. The quality of any institution depends upon its student support service. It includes both Academic and Administrative support services which must be student oriented. Support services to students is one of the important parameters of quality education and is in itself a recognition of the institution

#### **6<sup>th</sup> Session (Day 2)**

The 6<sup>th</sup> session was on “*Tutoring and Counselling in Distance Education*”. It was conducted jointly by both the experts. Very important aspects relating to assignments, their importance, role of counsellor etc where explained thoroughly to participants. The experts also deliberated upon “problem solving exercises” and “comment writing by tutor”. The purpose of assignment is that a student can develop his own thinking and act independently according to his own level of understanding. Independent learning especially by a distance learner has to pass through various stages. It starts from understanding of basics, second understanding of concepts, third independent understating and lastly developing his own ideas. It is because of this reason that assignment is also considered one of the essential components in ODL system.

#### **7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> Sessions (Day 2)**

The 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> sessions were jointly conducted on practical’s, projects and participants views. The experts touched an important an interesting topic for practical’s “*Use of Media*” in ODL system. The practical sessions also included –how to design:

- In-text Questions within sub-headings in the material
- Self-assessment Questions at the end of the lesson
- Exercises, illustrations, examples, activities and case studies for conceptual clarity
- Assignments both theoretical and practical oriented with the objective that the students can make a serious homework

The questions and issues raised by the participants were addressed nicely by experts.

#### **Recommendations**

1. There is an urgent need to establish open universities one at Jammu and one at Kashmir for providing higher educational opportunities to poor, needy ,weaker sections and other students belonging to far flung areas of the state.

2. Faculty development programmes like workshops, refresher courses and orientation programmes in ODL system is the only way to impart training and inculcate professionalism in the faculty working in Distance Education Institutes and Open Universities.
3. Training programmes in Information Communication Technology to every faculty member(teaching and non-teaching) working in ODL System is the need of the hour and demand of the system ,otherwise people working in ODL system would become irrelevant. ICT enabled teaching learning in ODL system will develop skills among faculty to tackle problems faced by Distance Learners in their day-to-day online feedback and instant reply to queries of students.

### **Conclusion**

Support services to students are one of the important parameters of quality education and is in itself a recognition of the institution. It includes both Academic and Administrative support services which must be student oriented. Research studies in India and abroad have revealed that learners in various programmes have shown interest in various forms of student support services and have been benefitted by the same. Most of the open and distance learning institutions and open universities in the world have well established student support centres at local , regional national and international level to cater the needs of thousands of students in respect of admissions, courses on offer, examination schedules, course combinations, material dispatch, face-to-face interaction , personal contact programmes, counselling and guidance sessions ,ICT support, library support , grievance redressal, instant and online feedback support for queries and overall decentralization in educational facilities for facilitating distance learners. Hence we can conclude that success of ODL system in general and any Distance Education Institution in particular largely depends on strong network of student support services(SSS). To conclude this historical workshop has not only taught us to minimize the distances between the distance learners and our educational systems but also in our social and intellectual relationships. Hope this trend will continue in future also. This workshop has reminded us our culture, history and our origin *Mooj Kasheer* for the affection, cooperation and hospitality shown by the organizers to our honourable guests and participants.

### **Workshop Director**

Prof. Neelofar Khan, Director, Directorate of Distance Education, University of Kashmir.

### **Organizing Committee**

- Dr. Nahid Ruhi, Associate Professor (DPPTT & Home science) DDE, KU
- Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad Dar, Associate Professor (Law) DDE, KU
- Dr. Mohd Altaf Ahangar, Assistant Professor (Urdu) DDE, KU
- Mr. Showkat Rashid Wani, Assistant Professor (Education) DDE, KU
- Dr. Irfan Aalam Malik, Assistant Professor (Urdu) DDE,KU
- Ab.Hamid Shah,Assistant Registrar DDE,KU

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