Reaching the Unreached: Advocacy Programme

A one-day Advocacy programme was organized on 15th December, 2010 at Regional City Centre, Lucknow in which Madarsas affiliated to State Madarsas Board/Arbi Farsi Board of the State of UP (10 districts) were invited. The programme was organized with the objectives to:

A. Highlight the unique features/functions and activities of NIOS which makes open schooling accessible.

B. State the role of NIOS in promoting the Minority Community and make them linked with mainstream education.

C. Discuss strategies for linking up with the Madarsas.

A total of 67 representatives of Madarsas from different parts of U.P attended the programme.

Welcoming the participants and NIOS officials, Dr. Sushmita Mitra, Director (Student Support Services), Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Academic), Ms. Anitha Nair, Assistant Director (Student Support Services) and Suvendu Sekhar Das, Assistant Director, Regional Centre, Allahabad who were present on the occasion, Dr. Sabra Habib, Resource Person of the programme hoped that the Advocacy Programme would help in promoting the Minority Community and enable them to be linked with mainstream education.

This was followed by a detailed presentation on the role and functions of NIOS by Dr. Sushmita Mitra. She briefly explained the educational status and needs of the Minority Community in India. Emphasizing on the role of NIOS in catering to the unreached section of the Minority Community to bring them into the mainstream, she stated that NIOS is presently able to reach out to only 3.5% of the total minority population. She highlighted the unique features and flexibilities in the open schooling system in respect of age limit, choice of subjects, mediums of instruction, transfer of credits, flexibility in scheme of admission and examination. She hoped that the suggestions of the participants would help in devising a strategy to reach the masses and link Madarsas with NIOS. One set of NIOS accreditation forms was circulated to all representatives of Madarsas present in the meeting.
Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Academic), NIOS highlighted the scheme of studies offered by NIOS in Academic and Vocational Courses and the different mediums of instruction available in the NIOS scheme of studies.

A detailed discussion and interaction among participants on the strategies for linking up Madarsas with NIOS followed.

Queries raised by the participants related to provision for payment of admission fee through instalment; help that NIOS can extend to non-affiliated madarsas; equivalence and recognition of vocational certificates and recognition and acceptance of NIOS certificates for higher studies.

The participants felt that the infrastructural facility, qualification and experience of faculty, financial status etc of madarsas do not match NIOS norms and procedures for accreditation. In view of this, they suggested that NIOS may review the norms and procedures for accreditation and make separate norms and procedures for grant of accreditation for Madarsas.

The programme ended with a thanks to the chair.

Meeting of NIOS Regional Directors

A two day meeting of the Regional Directors of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) was convened on 20 and 21st December, 2010 in the NIOS headquarters at NOIDA.

The main objectives of the meeting were to take stock of activities undertaken in all the Regional Centres of NIOS from July-December, 2010; to plan future activities and to discuss issues related to Academic/Vocational/Student Support Services/Evaluation departments.

All Regional Directors and Heads of the Departments made Presentations regarding the activities undertaken by them and future plans in their Regions and Departments.

A Special guest on the occasion, Dr. Sugata Mitra, Professor, New Castle University, UK delivered the inaugural lecture on the topic “Where Children Teach Themselves-Self organizing system in Education”.

A Special lecture was also delivered by Shri K.K. Saxena, Officer of the Central Secretariat on the use of Office Procedure and Manual; how to create files and filing system etc.

A Presentation was also made by the Officers of the Indian Bank regarding the Challan Form to be used for depositing fees in NIOS.

Learner’s Workshop on Handling Stress and Emotions

A learners’ workshop on “Handling Stress and Emotions” was organized at the Adolescence Friendly Centre, NIOS Regional Centre, Bhubaneswar on 2nd December 2010. A total of 32 students enrolled with NIOS participated in the workshop. Present on the occasion were Dr. S.S.Jena, Chairman, NIOS, Dr. G.S. Mohapatra, Eminent Educationist (School &Teacher Education) and Shri. R.K. Rath, Regional Director, NIOS, Bhubaneswar.

Dr. Sugata Mitra delivering the inaugural Lecture

Adolescence Friendly Centre, NIOS-RC, Bhubaneswar being inaugurated
Prior to the commencement of the workshop, the Adolescence Friendly Centre was inaugurated by Dr. G.S. Mohapatra and Dr. S.S. Jena.

Dr. S.S. Jena also inaugurated the Teleconferencing facility at the centre.

Shri R.K. Rath informed the gathering that centre had been equipped with teleconferencing facility and the facility of On-demand Examinations would also be available soon. He urged the students to visit the centre which would soon be transformed into a resource centre with facilities like e-library and accessing educational channels. He then declared that the centre would be open from 2.30 to 4.30 PM every Saturday for students to view interactive educational channels and audio and video programmes of NIOS.

Dr. G.S. Mohapatra advised the students to become more organized and disciplined in their lives which would help reduce stress significantly. He pointed out that as a transition phase of life, the adolescent stage is a critical time for students and is therefore also termed as the “Slippery Age”.

Mr. Pabitra Kumar, Resource Person (KISS) explained how students should recognize stress; understand the difference between stress and Eustress; practise different methods to relieve stress and use Eustress as a positive force for self development. The students were kept involved throughout the session with various exercises for releasing stress.

Mr. Sambit Mishra, Executive Officer, AEP facilitated the sessions and delivered the vote of thanks.

Teleconference for Tutors

A teleconference was organised for Tutors of Accredited Institutions of NIOS in collaboration with the Electronic Media Production Centre (EMPC), IGNOU and its different centres all over India. This subject specific teleconference was organised for Tutors who look after the subject of English during the Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs). 342 Tutors in 21 different locations of 14 Regional Centres of NIOS participated in the Programme.

The NIOS Regional Centres in Bhubaneswar, Patna and Kolkata organised the programme in their respective Regional Centres itself.

The programme started with a welcome address by Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, who mentioned that this was the first of many such programmes to be organised by NIOS. As the tutors play a pivotal role in Personal Contact Programmes, they would be oriented regularly to handle the PCP classes more effectively in future, he added. Dr. Sushmita Mitra, Director Student Support Services, underscored the difference between Personal Contact Programmes and conventional classroom teaching and elaborated on the duties and functions of tutors. Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director, Academic Department, emphasized the importance of teaching English in the Indian situation.

The subject specialists- Mrs. Vijaya Subramaniam, Mrs. Shefali Ray, Mr. S.K. Gangal and Prof. Anju Sehgal Gupta brought to the attention of tutors different aspects of teaching English, for example, the different levels of reading and comprehension.
skills, reading styles, effective ways of handling poetry texts, teaching writing skills etc. The need for counselling learners in the Open and Distance Learning System was also dealt with.

Of the questions received from different Regional Centres were queries on how to tackle the learning needs of a heterogeneous classroom; providing the facility of language lab to the NIOS learners, etc. Regional Directors from different Regional Centres have reported that the programme was well received by the tutors and most of them have shown interest and their eagerness to participate in such programmes in future.

Success Story

ALEX P JOSEPH
Enrolment Number: 09000363015

A self-learner furned motivator!

Owing to severe economic problems, Sri. Alex had to discontinue schooling in 1995 when he was in Class X to earn a livelihood by selling engine oil and flowers. He had to take care of his ailing parents. His mother who suffered from kidney failure passed away suddenly in 2005. His father was affected badly by a brain stroke which occurred in 2003. Alex had to therefore shoulder the responsibility of his family which also included his younger brother. Despite all these problems, he continued his studies after a long gap and he managed to complete his Secondary Course from the NIOS in 2006 and Sr. Secondary Course in 2008. He is now planning to join the Indira Gandhi National Open University for higher studies.

A self-learner who utilized the opportunity provided by NIOS to complete his schooling, Alex also motivated his wife, Ms. Ann Shyla Fernandez and his younger brother, Mathews P J to enroll in the NIOS. Ann has completed the Secondary course of NIOS in 2010 vide Enrollment No. 09000372008 and now enrolled for the Sr. Secondary course. Mathews who discontinued schooling after Class X in 2003 joined NIOS in 2006 and completed the Senior Secondary Course in 2008 vide Enrollment No. 09000363016. He is now pursuing an undergraduate course.

Kudos to Alex!

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