



Online Training Programme of Capacity Building of Academic Counsellors of Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota

A Report

Organised By:
Vardhman Mahaveer Open University (VMOU), Kota
In collaboration with
Commonwealth Educational Media Center for Asia (CEMCA), New Delhi

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A 3-day Online Training Programme of Capacity Building of Academic Counsellors of Vardhman Mahaveer Open University, Kota (VMOU) was organized by VMOU in collaboration with Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA).

Date: 8th -10th June 2020

Participants: 63 Academic Counsellors of Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University (VMOU), Kota participated the workshop.

Workshop Facilitators:

Prof. B. Arun Kumar, Director Regional Services, VMOU
Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi, Senior Programme Officer, CEMCA
Mr. Ashish Awadiya, IGNOU, New Delhi
Dr. Nisha Singh, IGNOU, New Delhi

Proceedings:

In the Inaugural Session of the training programme on 8th June 2020, Prof. B. Arun Kumar, Director Regional Services, VMOU welcomed all the Resource Persons and participants. He conveyed the greeting message and best wishes of Prof. R. L. Godhara, Vice-Chancellor, VMOU to each one organizing and participating in the Programme. Prof. Kumar highlighted the need and significance of the programme and thanked CEMCA for facilitating such an important training programme for the faculty and officers of VMOU and the academic counsellors of VMOU hailing from various government and private colleges in Rajasthan.

Prof. Madhu Parhar of CEMCA presented an overview of the Programme and spoke on ‘Changing Scenario in Open and Distance Learning (ODL), Distance Learners in 21st Century and Effective use of SLM in Counselling’. She said that ODL institutions are playing an important role in increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER). She said that the inherent benefits of ODL system have attracted many students who are unable to get access to institutions offering conventional mode of study. Simultaneously she also pointed out that ODL too has many challenges to face because of its inherent nature. This along with the increasing number of the students coming to ODL for pursuing higher education has increased the responsibilities of academic counsellors associated with ODL institutions like VMOU. Drawing the attention of the participants she pointed out that ODL in 21st Century is characterised by important changes especially with regard to the nature of learners now approaching the system, the increased emphasis on quality education and technology enabled processes, most importantly counselling. Today’s learners, she said, are multi-task performers, more techno-savvy or digital savvy, believe in collaborative learning, know where to find information, have multi-cultural awareness, learn by doing and appreciate trial and error approach, expect transparency, have grit determination and have a ‘can do’ attitude, want freedom, are connected with others in real time and are open to change. They are

interested in pursuing academic interests which are not facilitated by the traditional system of higher education. They are also concerned about their skill enhancement and employability. Prof. Parhar pointed out how Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and Open Educational Resources (OER) are today playing an important role in enhancing knowledge and qualifications of the learners and the digital revolution has greatly facilitated the learners in this regard. Concluding her lecture, she said that effective ODL delivery in 21st Century should focus on Learning Analytic Changes, Big Data, Micro Credentials backed by Digital Badges and Micro-Learning. ODL, she emphasised, should also focus on enhancing such skills like communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity which are considered as very important in the changing situations of 21st century.

On the 2nd day of the programme i.e. 9th June 2020, the expert lecture was provided by Mr. Ashish Awadia, IGNOU. He spoke on Technology Integration by Academic Counsellors. He pointed out that technology is an important aid for the counsellors to effectively reach the learners. The need, he pointed out, is that the counsellor should be able to identify the relevant technology to reach the learners as well as the appropriate learning content for the learners. He said that the ICT skills can be developed using OER and educational content can be created accordingly. The ODL learners being large in number, coming from different cultural background and lacking high end technological knowledge and resources, it is necessary that the conventional mode of classroom teaching be changed with that of virtual class teaching. In this YouTube, various Google Platforms, etc are very facilitating for lectures, notes, quizzes, exams, etc. Sh Ashish Awadia discussed the advantages of Google Apps for education. The various teaching aids through the Google Classroom – Announcements, discussions, e-tutorial, videos, virtual meet, assignment, quiz, grading, classwork were discussed by him. How to use the various Google Educational Apps like the Google Drive, Google Docs, Google Groups, Google Meet, Google Translate, Google Scholar were exhaustively discussed by him. Other platforms like the Facebook, You Tube, WhatsApp & Telegram, Twitter and Blog were also discussed by him. With regard to the task of identifying the content for the learners, he said that the counsellors should keep in mind the Indianized content to meet the needs of the Indian learners. The cultural needs must be identified and facility of education through the regional language should be explored. He also detailed SWAYAM's Four quadrant approach and discussed SWAYAMPABHA, ARPIT, and various ICT initiatives of MHRD, Govt. of India etc which aid the teachers for their own career advancement as well as their roles as counsellors, coordinators, content creators & reviewers and life-long learning. Participants sought clarification of their doubts and the resource person deftly resolved these and answered the questions raised from time to time during the lecture.

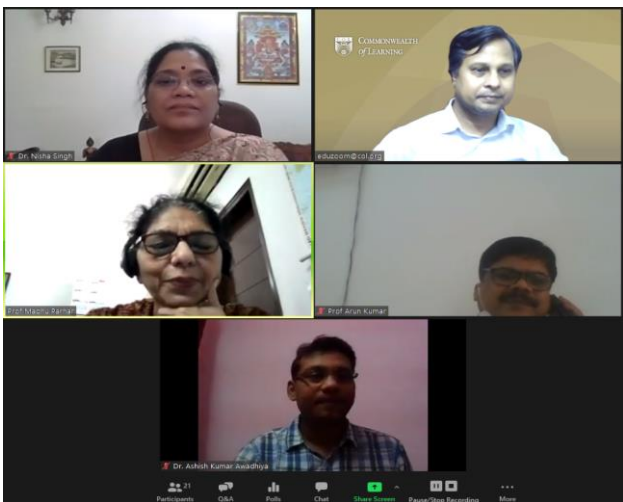
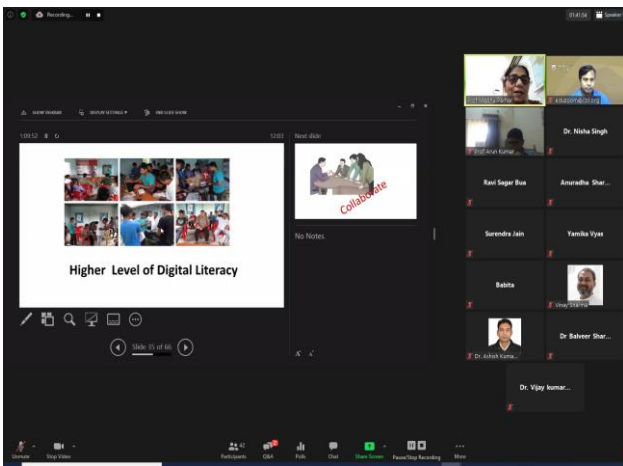
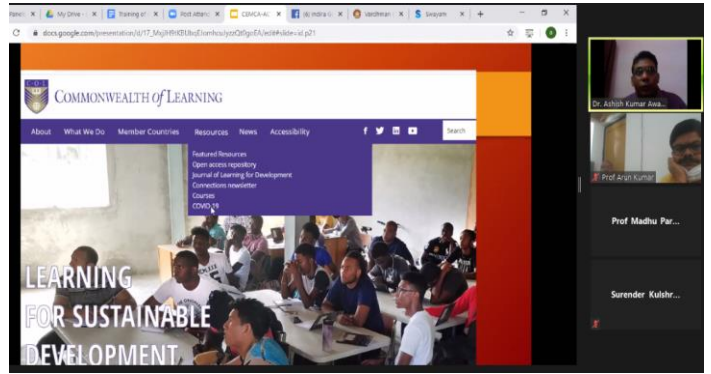
On the third and final day i.e. 10th June 2020, Prof. Madhu Parihar started the session with her observation on the importance of Assessment in ODL. She drew attention to the scenario of many learners in ODL who join or register themselves for a particular ODL programme but are unable able to successfully complete the same. Data of admission to ODL institutions on All-India basis and of Rajasthan was discussed to prove the point. She emphasised that it

is an important responsibility of the ODL institutions and to look into the problem. Academic counsellors should also understand the difficulties faced by the learners while they make efforts to successfully complete the academic programme in which they are admitted. All efforts should be made to remove these problems and facilitate the learners.

Prof. Parhar then introduced Dr. Nisha Singh the resource person for the day. Dr. Nisha Singh spoke on Assessment Tools for Academic Counsellors. As everywhere else in the educational system, Assessment, Dr. Nisha Singh said, is an important part of ODL also. Assessment is done to judge the conceptual or theoretical knowledge that has been grasped by the learner during his learning period; for admission of a learner to a higher level of study than the previous level he/she has successfully completed and also for judging a learner's employability. In ODL, Dr. Singh pointed out, assessment is done at various levels - in the SLM, in Assignments, in Project/Practical Work/Dissertation and in Term End Examination. She pointed out that today, with the progress of technology, there are various platforms available for e-assessment. She said that increasing use of attractive tools for assessment like Quizzers, Kahoot, Google Forms, etc to make assessment of the learners. In times of epidemic spread by the Covid-19 or any other widespread disaster or calamity, e-assessment is important alternative an effective way to assess the learner. In ODL, Dr. Singh pointed out, the assessment is an important responsibility of the academic counsellor. Correctly assessing or a just assessment is very crucial. Judicious assessment on the one hand provides a morale booster to those who have toiled a lot and done their exams well and secure good marks or grades, on the other hand it provides the counsellor to identify problem areas and then later provide the solution to these problems through counselling. Participants had raised questions and expressed doubts which were answered by Prof. Madhu Parhar and Dr. Nisha Singh.

Professor R.L. Godhara, Hon. Vice-Chancellor, Vardhaman Mahaveer Open University, Kota delivered his Presidential Address. He thanked CEMCA for collaborating with VMOU in organising the important 3-Day Online Capacity Building Programme of Academic Counsellors and faculty and officers of VMOU. He pointed that academic Counsellors are very important stake holders of the ODL system and they play an important role in facilitating, guiding and development of the learners coming to ODL for higher education, especially in such conditions as the COVID pandemic which is prevailing world wide and causing great stress everywhere and for everyone. He expressed happiness over the important issues taken up the 3-Day Online Programme hoped that the academic counsellors as well as teachers and staff of VMOU will play a more positive and active role in helping the learners of VMOU. He concluded his address with best wishes for a safe, healthy, peaceful and happy life for everyone. Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi, Senior Programme Officer CEMCA extended a formal Vote of Thanks. Prof. B. Arun Kumar, Director Regional Services, VMOU also thanked Hon. Vice-Chancellor, CEMCA, all the Resource Persons, the technical team and all the participants.

Photo Gallery:



Programme Schedule

Day 1: 08.06.2020					
S. No	Time	Activity Session	Resource Person	Outcome	
1	10.30am - 11.00am	Inauguration Workshop and its Outcomes: Madhu Parhar Overview of the Workshop Inauguration by Vice-Chancellor, VMOU Vote of Thanks	VC, VMOU Madhu Parhar Prof. Arun Kumar Manas R. Panigrahi		
2	11.00-11.15am	Overview of Academic Counselling at VMOU	Prof. Arun Kumar		
3	11.15-12.30pm	Changing Scenario in ODL Distance Learners in 21 st century Effective use of SLM in Counselling	Prof. Madhu Parhar		
Day 2: 09.06.2020					
5	10.30am – 12.30pm	Technology Integration by Academic Counsellors	Mr. Ashish Awadiya		
Day 3: 10.06.2020					
9	10.30-11am	Role of Counsellors in Assessment	Prof. Arun Kumar		
	11.00-12.15pm	Assessment Tools for Academic Counsellors	Dr. Nisha Singh		
10	12.15-12.30am	Closing			

Workshop Coordinators:

Prof. B. Arun Kumar, Director Regional Services, VMOU

Dr. Manas R. Panigrahi, Senior Programme Officer, CEMCA

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