



ଓଡ଼ିଶା ରାଜ୍ୟ ମୁକ୍ତ ବିଶ୍ୱବିଦ୍ୟାଳୟ, ସମ୍ବଲପୁର, ଓଡ଼ିଶା  
**Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur, Odisha**  
Established by an Act of Government of Odisha.

## Proceedings of the Workshop on **Soft Skills Development and Career Counselling**

Organised by:

**Odisha State Open University**

In Collaboration with

*Sambalpur Public Library*

**September 13 & 18, 2016**

The two-days workshop was attended by more than 100 students from different institutions of higher learning located in Greater Sambalpur. Online registration was made to limit the number of participants for the workshop. Students from Odisha State Open University, Sambalpur University, Gangadhar Meher University, Govt. Women's College, Dr.P.M.Institute of Advanced Study in Education, NSCB College, etc. participated in the workshop.

Soft skills are crucial components for employability. Further those are extremely important for one's career progress. Unfortunately, soft skills have not been made part of the teaching-learning process in higher education. Our system of higher education puts emphasis mostly on domain knowledge. As a consequence, many meritorious students with sound knowledge in the concerned subject fail to make a breakthrough in their professional career. Keeping in view the necessity of enhancing soft skills among students of OSOU and other institutions of higher learning, a median attempt was made by Odisha State Open University in collaboration with Sambalpur Public Library to organise a two-day workshop to prepare young students of the region to face various challenges of the job market.

In the inaugural session of the workshop, Professor Srikant Mohapatra, the Vice Chancellor of OSOU, presented the keynote address covering the objectives and structure of the workshop. In his address he specifically highlighted on the Organisational Ethics. Professor Deepak Kumar Behera, Former Vice Chancellor of Berhampur University and a member of the Executive Committee of the Sambalpur Public Library, spoke about the need of soft skills in contemporary job markets. Professor Shankar Pati, Vice President of Sambalpur Public Library, discussed about the role of ICT in contemporary situations at the inaugural session. Sri Raghunath Mishra, the Secretary of the Sambalpur Public Library also presented some basic guidelines to the students on soft skills.

In the first technical session Professor Deepak Kumar Behera showed many inspirational documentary video clippings and made some PowerPoint presentations on soft skill enhancement. Topics covered in this session were: Attitude, Passion, Hard Work, Leadership, Successful Life, Decision-Making Ability, Team Work, preparing PowerPoint Presentation, Speech Making, etc. The participants of the workshop were highly motivated by Professor Behera's presentation during the pre-lunch session.

In the second technical (post-lunch) session, Dr. Debendra Mahalik, Dept. of Business Administration, Sambalpur University discussed on ICT and its application in higher education.

The day ended with an interactive session where participants were called upon to put forth their views for further improvement in the workshop. Dr. Jayanta Kar Sharma and Dr. Sangeeta Nath, the coordinators of the interactive session, finally provided some tips to the students for their necessary preparedness for effective participation on the second day of the workshop.

Some probable questions for the PI and expected topics for the GD were uploaded on the OSOU website for the preparation of the participants. That helped the students to come prepared for the 18<sup>th</sup> workshop. Students Feedback Form were taken for further improvement in the programme on Soft Skills.

On 18<sup>th</sup> September, the second day of the workshop, two eminent scholars, Professor A.K. Das Mohapatra, and Professor P.C. Tripathy, both from the Dept. of Business Administration, presented some valuable tips to the students for their effective participation in the "Personal Interview" (PI) and "Group Discussion" (GD). Some documentary video clippings were shown on "Personal Interview" and "Group Discussion" by Professor Deepak Kumar Behera. Some mock personal interviews and group discussions were conducted as part of this session. The resource persons and participants commented on the performances of different candidates who took part in the PI and GD. It was a kind of experiential learning for all those students who participated either in PI or GD.

In the post-lunch session, Professor Ashok Mohapatra, Dept. of English, Sambalpur University delivered a lecture raising some of the basic challenges faced by students while choosing a career. He also presented a framework for preparing for facing personal interview. Mr. Arun Kumar Basa, the Computer Programmer of Sambalpur University, gave demonstration on the use of "MS Office" highlighting the use of "MS Excel" in office environment. The post-lunch session ended with a talk by Professor Behera covering three important aspects, viz. "Building Self Confidence", "Positive Attitude" and "All Round Personality Development".

In the valedictory session Certificate of participation were given to the student participants. Professor Shankar Prasad Pati and many senior members of the Sambalpur Public Library graced the closing ceremony as distinguished guests. The workshop generated a great enthusiasm among the young students for enhancing their soft skills. Dr. Sangeeta Nath thanked all stakeholders for making the workshop a grand success.