

REPORT
TWO DAYS INTERACTIVE SESSION
on

“SHARE YOUR STORY. WE ARE LISTENING”



Organized by:

Department of Psychology
Rajiv Gandhi University (A Central University),
Rono Hills, Doimukh – 791112
Arunachal Pradesh, India

in collaboration with

Department of Social Work
Rajiv Gandhi University (A Central University),
Rono Hills, Doimukh – 791112
Arunachal Pradesh, India

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I express with innermost regard and sincerity, the sense of gratitude to our honourable Vice Chancellor, R.G.U, Prof. Saket Kushwaha for his constant guidance and support. I owe him Thanks for the way he has always encouraged me.

I also express my deepest gratitude to the Pro-Vice Chancellor, Prof. Amitava Mitra and the Registrar, Prof. Tomo Riba, who always boosted my morale and has been a guide helping me through thick and thin. I am indebted to you both for your guidance.

I also extend my gratitude to Dr. K P Singh, Head,Dept. Social Work and his colleagues, for their time and cooperation, without which the event wouldn't have been made possible.

I must also thank my loving and dedicated colleague, guest faculty members and students for providing me with emotional and moral support; their cooperation and support can never be forgotten.

Dr.KAKALI GOSWAMI

Convenor

1.1 The University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is the premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh located at the picturesque tabloid of Rono Hills approximately 25 km away from the state capital Itanagar. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the University on 4th February 1984 at Rono Hills. Ever since its inception, the University has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The University was recognized as a Central University in the year 2007 established under the Act of Parliament. Being the only Central University of the State at present there are Twenty Six (26) Departments and Two (02) Institutes functioning under Nine (09) Academic Faculties. The Faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities. The University has been maintaining its academic excellence and individuals from its alumni group are contributing at significant positions not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various Institutions, Industries and Organizations. The University has continuously maintained its premier status among top hundred (100) educational institutions in NIRF ranking across India.

About the Department of Psychology

The Department of Psychology was established in the year 2017 with two Assistant Professors. Currently the Department is running with two Assistant Professors and 3 Guest Assistant Professors.

Vision: The Department was set up to develop an awareness of the importance of studying human behaviour and the societal relevance of psychology. The Department offers M.A. Psychology which is of four semesters and the curriculum is so designed as to provide strong theoretical, methodological and contemporary knowledge of various areas of Psychology to the students. The purpose is to equip the students with knowledge, skills and values to become effective and competent professional psychologists. During the course, the students are taken for field visit at mental health centres and counselling cells besides interactive classroom teaching and laboratory training. Time to time extended lectures from experts in relevant field is also conducted. This academic training enables the students to work in a

broad range of settings such as medical, organization, counselling centres, NGOs, researchers and academicians.

About Department of Social Work

The Department of Social Work (DSW) at Rajiv Gandhi University (RGU) was established in 2015 with the vision of providing quality Social Work Education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh. DSW at RGU is the first full-fledged Department of Social Work offering face-to-face Master of Arts in Social Work (MASW) Program in the state with a total of four regular faculty members and sixteen students in the first batch which has now been increased to thirty five (35) including three seats for Economically Weaker Section (EWS). The Doctoral Program in Social Work (PhDSW) was introduced with July 2018 to focus on strengthening the research component in the region with an emphasis on ‘evidence based practice and practice based evidence’. Class room lectures and social work practicum form the main crux of the Program (both MASW and PhDSW). The students/trainees are also exposed to carefully crafted skill building and personality development Programs and are provided with opportunities to participate in workshops, seminars and lectures from external experts on regular basis. The mandates of the course curriculum also include students led initiatives in the department and the community with varied clientele groups. The department has strived and established a strong foothold in the field of social work education by means of continuous engagement in both academic and outreach activities. In a short span of four years the Department has established meaningful and sustainable engagement with a total of Forty Two (42) field work partners which include Twenty Seven (27) across Arunachal Pradesh and Fifteen (15) across India. In our pursuit to extend our horizons in serving diverse categories of student community the Certificate Program in Environmental Sanitation was conceptualized and implemented with July 2019 for an integrated understating to the learners about the issues involved in Environmental Sanitation. The department is thereby committed in moulding and equipping the students to reach their full potential and acquire the knowledge, skills, values and techniques essential to become a professional social worker who not only acquires personal and professional competency and growth, but also contributes to the betterment of the society and country at large.

1.2 Sponsoring Agency

The Program was sponsored by Rajiv Gandhi University.

1.3 Background

The current pandemic is not only seen to affect the health of the citizens but has also hindered various industries, shaking them to their roots. Armed conflicts, forced displacements, climate change induced disasters and protracted crises have disrupted the education of 75 million children and youth globally. And that number is growing in an unprecedented manner with the spread of Covid-19. Education in particular, has been hit hard by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The national lockdown and the ascending health crisis have been striking the education of students as well, with the sudden shut down of all educational institutions. Today, by boosting retention of the syllabus via the use of innovative technology, the universities are also engaging students to learn by choice and not just through their physical presence in a classroom. However, there still exists various challenges amongst the student community with regard to the unanticipated switch of remote and robust method of study, unpredictability with regard to the new normal, perplexity revolving around entrance exams and other competitive exams, admissions, placements amidst other dubiety.

Therefore conduction of interactive sessions like this, is urgent and the need of the hour to assess the situation and provide professional help to people in general, and students in particular for their overall mental health.

1.4 Objectives

- Provoke discussions to acquire a cognizance of the vulnerabilities faced by the student community in areas ranging from academic stress, career related confusions, exam anxiety, uncertainty, relationship issues, and any other issues affecting their overall mental well being.
- Acquire an understanding of the black holes in the current education system.
- Review current research on how can the students learn best, during and post Covid-19 times.
- Discuss what is working with remote teaching and learning strategies with the student's involvement and legitimate responses.
- Introduction to true interactive components in inclusive pedagogy!

1.5 Programme Outcomes

The expected programme outcomes of the current webinar are specified below:

- Mapping out the future road map facilitative for both the students and educationists.
- Structuring of effective classroom management skills to ensure smooth session management for the new normal.
- Analysis of the best methods for application concerning exam conduction, assessments and teaching approach.
- Model engaging and collaborative remote learning strategies, supported with student centred and career-focused frameworks.

1.6 Theme:

The interactive session was based on the theme "Student's Mental Health and well being".

1.7 Resource Persons:

❖ **Prof.Sibnath Deb,**

Director,
Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development,
Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports,
Government of India

❖ **Dr.Nesmita Das,**

Students Counsellor,
Centre for Holistic Well-being,
IIT Guwahati, Assam

❖ **Ms. Pampak Khumukcham**

Assistant Professor,
Department of Clinical Psychology,
RIMS, Manipur.

1.8 Target Group

Entire student community, majorly the College and University students.

1.9 Date of the Event

The interactive session took place on the 4th and 5th of September, 2020.

1.10 Estimated Budget

The estimated budget of the programme is Rs. 9,000/- which includes honorarium to the Resource Persons and other Miscellaneous Expenses.

1.11 Mode of Operation:

The program was conducted through the online platform - ‘Google meet’.

PART 2: SESSION WISE DELIBERATION

2.1 Inaugural Session:

Addressing the Inaugural session, Pro VC Prof. Amitava Mitra, Rajiv Gandhi University stressed on the importance of mental health and stated that it is more than the absence of mental illness defining it as a state of well-being in which people can realize one’s learning potential, cope with stresses and communicate with the community at their best.

The welcome address was delivered by Dr. Kaushalendra Pratap Singh, Convener of the interactive programme and HoD (in-charge) Social work, RGU. He welcomed the dignitaries and expressed his warm and solicited greetings to the participants for fruitful deliberation and intensive interaction on the topic. Dr. Kakali Goswami, Hod (in-charge) of Psychology highlighted on the importance of the programme in which she stated the aims and objectives of the interactive sessions which included disseminating information to the student community on coping strategies in the new normal. Ms. Chaphiak Lowang, Co-ordinator of the program, proposed vote of thanks expressing her sincere gratitude towards Vice Chancellor of RGU Prof. Saket Kushwaha and Pro VC Prof. Amitava Mitra for their continuous guidance, support and motivation. She expressed her heartfelt appreciation to the

esteemed dignitaries for their active collaboration and support and lauded the organizing committee as well as participants in making the program successful.

2.2 Plenary session: None

2.3 Technical Sessions:

Day 1 (4th September,2020): 1st Interactive Session:

The first interactive session of the day was conducted by Dr. Sibnath Deb, Director, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, and Ms. Pampak Khumukcham, Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, RIMS, Manipur. In their deliberation, they targeted many crucial aspects of student's general well being with special reference to the ongoing pandemic and spoke at length on topics ranging from online education and employment to the various psychological issues faced by the student regarding stress and anxiety management. Emphasis was also given to queries on social relationships and overall youth wellbeing.

Day 2 (5th September,2020): 1st Interactive Session:

The first technical session of the second day was delivered by Dr. Nesmita Das, Student Counselor, Centre for Holistic Wellbeing, IIT Guwahati. She addressed issues specifically pertaining to student's psychological wellbeing. Her deliberation focused extensively on topics like adjustment issues, academic stress and pandemic related distress. Additionally, she also answered queries regarding the overall psychological health and wellbeing of the general population and gave awareness on psychological first aid as a care giver.

The session ended with a vote of Thanks from Dr. Kaushalendra Pratap Singh, Convenor of the programme, wherein he extended his heartfelt gratitude to all the dignitaries, resource persons, participants and the organizing committee for a successful conduction of the 2 day event.

2.4 Valedictory Session: None

Major Takeaways:

3.1. Academic context:

In the present time caused by the global pandemic, with social distancing measures being cautioned by all, it is of utmost importance to maintain continuity in all other aspects especially with regard to academics in order to rule out the same reaching a standstill. In addition to which, there exists a spectrum of vague, future related unaddressed issues causing distress and discomfort especially to the youth. With the uncertainty revolving around, the students are yet to fathom what tomorrow brings, ranging from postponement of exams with no definite schedule, final year students with their term end exam tension along with that of their admission into the new academic year to name a few. In lieu of which, the Two Day Live interactive session was conducted by the Department of Psychology in collaboration with the Department of Social Work, wherein the majority of the participants comprised from the student community.

The technical sessions designed by the resource persons in collaboration with the joint Departments were created to facilitate the overall mental health and wellbeing of the entire student community, with regard to understanding the various underlying Psychological problems as well the solution for it.

The sessions created to accommodate the psychosocial emotional needs of all but with specific focus on the students, given the uncertainty surrounded by Covid-19, impacting the normalcy of face-to-face classes, reduction in physical-social interactions, exam induced stress and confusion regarding the future. The doubts and concerns associated were tackled by the key subject experts via the PowerPoint presentations as well as Q&A sessions.

- (i) A solution driven aspect with the significance of a more student focused approach was highlighted.
- (ii) An in depth understanding on holistic well-being was facilitated.
- (iii) The resource persons acknowledged the practical ways to incorporate for certain issues daily issues like stress and anxiety management, ways to tackle boredom, anger management amidst others.
- (iv) Recognize, regulate and incorporate a multidisciplinary approach in the future for all round development of students with specific regard to Psychology.

Students' positive comments and feedback reflected the understanding they gained through the Two Days course.

3.2. Research context:

Any uncertainty automatically instills fear or even phobia amongst the people and the associated uncertainty that is increasingly testing psychological resilience of the masses. The pandemic has generated a major jolt in all aspects around the globe. However, one needs to adjust to the new normal and start moving on with life.

Various competitive exams are being conducted and the educational institutions are already out with their new academic calendar to avoid wastage of an academic year of students. With the chaos revolving around due to the pandemic and lockdown, students have an additional burden of academics related uncertainty. Hence, now, more than ever, it becomes crucial for Mental Health practitioners and allied professionals to solicit their support, understanding and knowledge of the subject to help aid the students in making apt decisions in life ranging from their daily activities to inter and intra-relationship issues, career choices, suspension of classes, confusion regarding placement and exam and academic induced stress especially for the final year students.

The webinar covered various significant contemporary issues prevailing for Psychology as a subject, the understanding of the term mental health, the dearth of professionals available to promote the subject and its sub-fields despite the boom in demand, with utmost importance on the dire need to acknowledge and understand the significance of Mental wellbeing for an overall wellbeing. The findings offered a glimpse of what is brewing in hundreds of millions of students around the world, but with specific regard to the north-eastern scenario and the negative consequences of it as the unaddressed stress, anxiety, depression or any psychological issue caused for a prolonged term has a direct, negative co-relation with wellbeing in the long-run.

- (i) Guide researchers to plan prospective longitudinal studies for assessing the impact of unaddressed psychological issues.
- (ii) Secondary research data on relevance and demand of the subject were discussed and the participants were also briefed, given the unawareness of the concept altogether.
- (iii) The relevance of maintaining a proper schedule regardless of the situation also called attention.

- (iv) The impact of the subject, and its role in providing upper hand to its students in various career domains were also made aware of.

3.3. Policy making and practice context:

It is no surprise of the insights on the long-term damage of unaddressed issues which have been accepted in the field of Psychology. Hence, post the end of this unprecedented lockdown, we will need all able bodies to help the world recover in all factors namely health, education, livelihood and economy and be better prepared to cater to the needs of all, especially the torchbearers. The stakeholders involved amongst which the body that constitutes the most significant role to play is the government and the policy makers, to accommodate the new normal and ease the process of adapting to the new normal for the general population. The fear due to the contraction of COVID -19 is on the rise because of the death tolls and global spread. Hence, this webinar also attempted to find the requirements and interests of Psychology amongst the youth of north-east in the absence of research, which can potentially help policy makers in formulating comprehensive interventions as a future roadmap. This webinar highlighted the need of online counselling as the need of the hour and its implementation at the earliest.

- (i) Need for more systematic and longitudinal assessment of the needs of the population, which can help the government in formulating holistic interventions in lieu with the job scope and the demand for the youth.
- (ii) Bridge the gap between demand and supply and create a protective layer for the youth to not ward off to substances as a reliever.
- (iii) Identify trigger points and anticipating issues, and how to address them.
- (iv) Prepare a separate Counselling cell especially in every educational institute and monitor its active operations for facilitating both face-to-face and online sessions for students for better preparedness in the future.
- (v) Dire need for more job creation for psychology related fields, especially in the rural areas of the country and introduction of the subject in +2 and Pre university level in wide scale across all the schools and colleges of India irrespective of Private, autonomous or government.
- (vi) Mandatory appointment of Psychologists and Counsellors in every schools and organizations.

PART 4. APPENDICES & ANNEXURE

4.1 Programme Schedule

The programme schedule is as mentioned below:

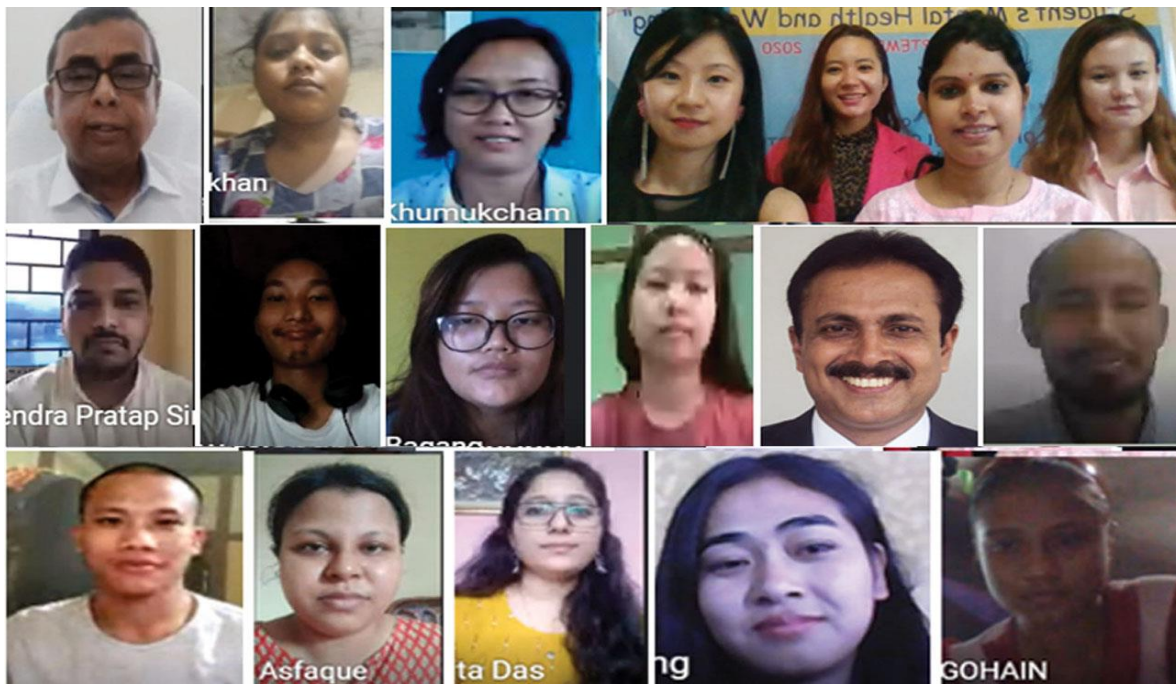
Date & Day	Time	Topic	Resource Person
Day 1: 4th September, 2020 (Friday)	11.00 am- 11.30 am	<u>Inauguration</u> <u>Program</u>	
	11.30 am- 2.30pm	<u>Technical</u> <u>Session 1</u>	Prof. Sibnath Deb, Director, Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India Ms. PampakKhumukcham, Assistant Professor, Department of Clinical Psychology, RIMS, Manipur.
Day 2: 5th September, 2020 (Saturday)	11.00 am - 2 pm	<u>Technical</u> <u>Session 1</u>	Dr. Nesmita Das, Students Counsellor, Centre for Holistic Well-being, IIT Guwahati, Assam
	2 pm – 2.30 pm	<u>Valedictory</u> <u>session</u>	

Annexure 2: List of Participants

S.L. No.	FULL NAME
1	DIMI NATH
2	DODUM NATUNG
3	DR VISBY SAVIN
4	Gitartha Pratim Kusre
5	HIMADRI BORA
6	KAVITA KASHYAP
7	Lastwansing D Marak
8	MINAKSHI BORAH

9	MISS BHASWATI BURAGOHAIN
10	MISS KABITA BURAGOHAIN
11	MISS. KARISMA BAISHYA.
12	MOHSINA ASFAQUE
13	Mr.Gaurav Kumar Srivastava
14	Ms. SASMITA SAMANTASINGHAR
15	MUKESH SEHWAG
16	NAGENDRA KUMAR
17	NAVIN CHANDRA SHARMA
18	Oussama Boukhari
19	Pallabi Devi Nath
20	RENU KUSHWAHA
21	RULI SAIKIA
22	SEITYARANI RAJKUMARI
23	Shivam Kumar Mishra
24	SHIVIKA VISHWANATH
25	Shripuja S
26	SRI PABITRA DIHINGIA
27	SRI PABITRA DIHINGIA
28	Suchitra sen Gupta
29	SUMI DEKA
30	Terang dada
31	Afareen Khan
32	Nabam Anu
33	Ongjong Chamchang
34	Nanyu Nokbi
35	Donik Andrew
36	Dugi Uma
37	Mito Karga
38	Kiri Taso
39	Madhrujya Bora
40	Landi Pussang Monia
41	MUMNI TABOH
42	SHAHNAZ RAHMAN
43	PREM TABA
44	RIGIO BABY
45	RUBU TARE
46	TENZIN PHUNTSOK
47	TUYIR RIBA
48	BISHNUPRIYA BORAH

Annexure 3: Photograph



Annexure 4: Media Coverage

The webinar was well covered in Local daily Newspaper of the state.

Following are all the links of the media coverage:

http://www.echoofarunachal.in/news_details.php?nid=8537

<https://arunachaltimes.in/index.php/2020/09/06/interactive-session-on-students-mental-health-and-well-being-concludes/>

<https://arunachalobserver.org/2020/09/07/rgu-holds-interactive-session-state-of-well-being-define-health-pro-vc/>

<https://thedawnlitpost.com/2020/09/rgu-hosts-interactive-session-on-mental-health-well-being/>