

9. OVERSEAS TRAINING PROGRAMME (OTP) IN INDIA

9.1 INTRODUCTION

The Overseas Training Programme (OTP), also known as Cross-cultural Training Programme (CTP) is envisaged to help our young confreres to discern and deepen their commitment by exposing them to mission situations of our Society. The program has found favour with many Provinces of the Society as it is proven to be effective both pastorally and cross-culturally.

India, from being predominantly a sending country in the domain of OTP, has opened its doors to be a host country for the overseas students. Although there are some restrictions in obtaining a visa to India, opportunities abound for foreign students who are qualified to meet the requirements for admission into an Indian university for secular studies. Students seeking admission to an Indian university with proficiency in English language and eligibility for a Bachelor's Degree or Master's Degree can secure a student visa on a conditional or regular basis for the duration of their studies here. That is, three years in the case of Bachelor's Degree and two years for Master's Degree.

Although there are several reputed Indian universities of international standing that admit foreign students, our OTP students were initially permitted to pursue their studies either under University of Mumbai or University of Mysore for the specific advantages these centres offered to them. But other possible centres of study, such as Chennai and Bhopal, with similar facilities quite suitable for our OTP students, can also be explored.

9.2 SPECIFIC GOALS

9.2.1. To consolidate the candidate's missionary vocation, and to develop positive self-awareness and self-criticism

- 9.2.2. To strengthen his sense of identity as religious in the Society of the Divine Word
- 9.2.3. To understand the Church and her missionary role and to make a constructive contribution to the work of the Church
- 9.2.4. To heighten the sense of international mission awareness and to forge closer bonds of international collaboration between Provinces in the Society
- 9.2.5. To provide exposure to and promote skills of intercultural living
- 9.2.6. To deepen the personal faith commitment to Christ and the missionary task
- 9.2.7. To experience the struggles and satisfaction of living in a cross-cultural situation and to tackle the challenge of inculturation, including the learning of the language and ways of the people (see *Handbook for Superiors*, pp. 93-94; C. 515.3 and 516.4)
- 9.2.8. To provide the enthusiasm for the rest of the studies and to orientate students towards a more critical interest in studies during the remaining years in their formation
- 9.2.9. To help create a closer bond of collaboration in the formation of future Divine Word missionaries in India and elsewhere.

9.3. REQUIREMENTS

- 9.3.1. The student who applies for OTP in India should have fluency in spoken and written English
- 9.3.2. He should have completed at least a 12-year schooling program, a three-year undergraduate degree, and obtained valid academic documents
- 9.3.3. He should have good physical health, and be able to make mental and emotional adjustments

- 9.3.4. He should exhibit a sense of openness to other cultures, and personal stability in vocational choice. No one should be sent for OTP who has serious personal problems or who is in doubt about his vocation
- 9.3.5. The student's formal statement of his goals and expectations for OTP, a brief biography, indicating any specific interests or training, and possibly an indication of any specific work that is desired or to be excluded
- 9.3.6. A formal appraisal of the student by his superior or home country OTP director, indicating strong and weak points and areas needing special guidance
- 9.3.7. The student's official *Relatio* papers
- 9.3.8. Eligibility (academic) documents for admission to an Indian university, a photocopy of his passport, and *curriculum vitae*
- 9.3.9. A copy of a completed application form for OTP, official transcripts from the last school/college attended, three recent passport photos, an essay stating his reason for opting to do OTP in India and a report on his present activities
- 9.3.10. He should have renewed his vows for the period that covers his OTP/secular studies in India.

9.4 PROCEDURE

Once the formal contact between the OTP-sending Provincial and the Chairman of the Formation Board, India is established, the interested candidate sends in the records of his qualifying examinations and his choice of subject/s for study. Then the OTP Director, in consultation with the Superior Delegate, will initiate the process of securing student-visa for the candidate concerned.

The OTP will start with the beginning of the new academic year in India, that is, in the month of June. That means,

the process of seeking visa will have to begin in February/ March already.

9.5 PROGRAMME

The OTP in India will have two components, namely, secular studies and other activities. The candidates, as they come into the country, will have an initiation/ orientation course for about ten days, either at Ishvani Kendra, Pune or in the place of his university studies.

The initiation program will consist of inputs on Indian culture and religions, Indian Church, Indian spirituality, etc. Later programs will include a ten-days' *vipasana*, introduction to yoga, monthly recollection and quarterly evaluation. Besides the local moderator, the National Director of OTP will 'accompany' the student. National Formation Secretary is the Director of incoming OTP students.

The OTP student follows the schedule and practice of the community in which he is placed during his university studies. The Rector/Superior of the house will be his immediate superior/supervisor. In consultation with the Rector/Superior, he will choose a spiritual director and meet with him regularly.

9.6 FINANCE

- 9.6.1 Overseas travel and all expenses connected with it (e.g. visa fees) are paid by the sending province.
- 9.6.2. All expenses during the OTP program will be taken care locally through the OTP budget. This includes the period of supervised ministry, and travel within the country during vacations.
- 9.6.3. The expenses related to the student's university studies will also be paid through the local OTP budget.

9.7 EVALUATION

Exercising his responsibility in three broad areas of direction, reflection and evaluation, the immediate superior:

- 9.7.1. Negotiates goals and schedule with the OTP student; establishes his responsibilities; provides in-service training and supervision in pastoral ministry; assists in obtaining admission to college for the student's secular studies
- 9.7.2. Sets a monthly meeting time with the OTP student to reflect on issues and challenges arising out of the campus situation and his pastoral involvement as learning situations
- 9.7.3. Provides the required annual written evaluation of the OTP student
- 9.7.4. At any time in the program, the superior may offer a personal evaluation of the OTP student to the director of OTP
- 9.7.5. A final evaluation will be prepared through a meeting of the OTP director, local superior, and the student. The purpose of this evaluation is to review critically the student's academic performance, spiritual life, community life and pastoral involvement. This evaluation should be put within the broad framework of the overall goals of the OTP program
- 9.7.6. Copies of this evaluation will be sent to the Provincial Council and the formators in the sending province
- 9.7.7. In addition to these formal evaluations, the local superior should arrange for a meeting with the student at least once a month, to facilitate on-going evaluation of his progress and experience.