# INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE E M E R G E N T  ( 71ST ) MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL OF THE INSTITUTE HELD ON JANUARY06,2020 & JANUARY 21,AT ISI KOLKATA**

| | Members/ invitees Attending the Meeting On 6th January, 2020 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Srl. No. | Name | Srl. No. | Name |
| 01. | SANGHAMITRA BANDYOPADHYAY | 21. | HARI CHANRAN BEHERA |
| 02. | GOUTAM MUKHERJEE | 22. | NITYANANDA SARKAR |
| 03. | SAURABH GHOSH | 23. | D. SENGUPTA |
| 04. | SUBHAS CHANDRA NANDY | 24. | PRASUN DAS |
| 05. | RAJAT KUMAR DE | 25. | SMARAJIT BOSE |
| 06. | SANDIP DAS | 26. | SAMARJIT DAS |
| 07. | BHABATOSH CHANDA | 27. | SUBHAMOY MAITRA |
| 08. | PROBAL CHAUDHURI | 28. | SRIMANTA PAL |
| 09. | DEBRUP CHAKRABORTY | 29. | DIPTI PRASAD MUKHERJEE |
| 10. | UTPAL GARAIN | 30. | SOUMYANETRA MUNSHI |
| 11. | PRADIPTA BANDYOPADHYAY | 31. | TARUN KABIRAJ |
| 12. | RUDRA P. SARKAR | 32. | SHILADRI S. DAS |
| 13. | KISHAN CHAND GUPTA | 33. | RITA SAHARAY |
| 14. | SWAGATO K. RAY | 34. | ANUP DEWANJI |
| 15. | MRINAL KANTI DAS | 35. | ATANU BISWAS |
| 16. | AYANENDRANATH BASU | 36. | UMAPADA PAL |
| 17. | PABITRA BANIK | 37. | ABHAY GOPAL BHAT (VC) |
| 18. | BANASRI BASU | 38. | DEEPAYAN SARKAR (VC) |
| 19. | SUBIR GHOSH | 39. | SUJATA GHOSH (VC) |
| 20. | SUSMITA MUKHOPADHYAY | 40. | SURAJIT PAL (VC) |

| | Members/ invitees Attending the Meeting on 21st January, 2020 | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Srl. No. | Name | Srl. No. | Name |
| 01. | SANGHAMITRA BANDYOPADHYAY | 19. | DEBRUP CHAKRABORTY |
| 02. | GOUTAM MUKHERJEE | 20. | KRISHNENDU MUKHOPADHYAY |
| 03. | SAURABH GHOSH | 21. | SMARAJIT BOSE |
| 04. | MAHUYA DATTA | 22. | PRASUN DAS |
| 05. | AYANENDRANATH BASU | 23. | PRADIPTA MAJI |
| 06. | SUSMITA MUKHOPADHYAY | 24. | DIPTI PRASAD MUKHERJEE |
| 07. | PABITRA BANIK | 25. | RAJAT KUMAR DE |
| 08. | RAGHUNATH CHATTERJEE | 26. | AMITA PAL |
| 09. | SUBHAS CHANDRA NANDY | 27. | HARI CHARAN BEHERA |

## AGENDA 1 - POST GRADUATE DIPLOMA IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL MANAGEMENT WITH STATISTICAL METHODS AND ANALYTICS.

**Introduction**

After the opening remarks by the chairperson, the Dean began by explaining the background behind the current meeting. He said that in the 69th AC meeting it was reported that the PGDCA programme (in Giridih) would be withdrawn due to various adverse feedbacks over the years, and would be replaced by a more relevant programme. Moreover in the previous year the programme had only seventeen (17) applicants, while currently only four (04) students remain. The faculty members of Giridih had expressed their desire to start a new programme, in which they can actively contribute. Following this the Dean asked Dr. Behera to plan a programme which would be suitable for the Giridih area. The draft by Dr. Behera was forwarded to a few experts and underwent two rounds of successive feedbacks and revisions. When the revised draft had received positive comments, the Dean forwarded it to the standing committee. Further clarifications sought by the committee were addressed before the committee approved the programme material in principle. They recommended it to be placed in the AC and the Dean circulated the recommendation. In order to introduce the programme in the current academic year (2020-21), work had to be done on the prospectus and the application portal. Hence an emergent meeting was commissioned on 30th December, 2019 which was later rescheduled to 6th January, 2020 due to unavailability of certain faculty members.

After this the Dean requested Dr. Behera to give a presentation on the proposed Academic Programme.

**Before the presentation two issues were briefly discussed:**

**Issue 1**

Sandip Das drew reference of a computer science graduation programme, whose proposal had been pending for over three years. The Dean answered that despite several discussions there were no convergence on that proposal in any academic meeting, neither had the designated committee got back with the proposal. The Chairperson requested the Dean to take up the issue in future.

**Issue 2**

Rajat K. De complained of not receiving enough support for the PGDCA programme. He also argued that no permanent teacher was recruited in the PGDCA programme in spite of his personal requests. He mentioned that despite this several pass outs from the programme had landed job offers. Director pointed out the repair of quarters, construction of classrooms, laboratories etc. were ongoing. She agreed that it was difficult to place faculty members at that point in time. She pointed out that while PGDCA had no regular ISI faculty in Giridih the current proposed programme had three teachers from the branch who wanted to take the ownership of the programme. Rajat K. De concluded the discussion stating that he hopes the institute will support the current programme more enthusiastically, to which the Dean agreed.

**Dean requested Dr. Behera to present the proposed Academic Programme.**

**Post presentation Discussion.**

**Hostel facilities**

Rajat K. De inquired about the availability and condition of hostels reminding that those used by the PGDCA students were almost inhabitable. Dr. Behera replied that there were currently eight rooms undergoing renovation and it would be ready soon. Rajat K. De questioned how will eight rooms accommodate twenty four students. Behera explained that two students per room would be ideal. In case more than sixteen students require hostel accommodation such arrangements can be made outside the campus.

**Target students**

Subhas Nandy asked if the programme was being offered exclusively for local students. Dr. Behera clarified that though local students would benefit from the programme, it was designed as a national level programme.

**Employment opportunities**

Several members enquired about the employment opportunities after completion of the programme. Dr. Behera replied that they have had some discussion regarding internship and placement, with the institutes / organizations as mentioned in the presentation. He said these institutes / organisations after going through the proposal have encouraged them to go ahead with the programme. Bhabatosh Chandra inquired if they have identified any specific job positions, where the students can be absorbed. Behera replied that he has personally spoken to some high level management of a few institutes / organisations, and that there were consultancies like that of NABARD and NGOs who were currently engaging such graduates. When asked if these were temporary or permanent positions, he said though he was not sure but stated that some of these companies were recruiting consultants in long term projects.

**Programme timing and structure**

In the presentation the programme was shown to be divided into 3 terms per year of 16 credits each. Several concerns were raised about the deviation from the conventional semester and marks system of ISI, and the lack of clarity on several issues related to such a system, including the number of class and lab hours, were mentioned. Ayan Basu stated that a week must have at least 16 hours of lecture and an additional 4 to 5 hours of lab time. The Chairperson agreed to this and requested to make a note of this. Probal Chaudhuri opined that the programme plan did not seem ready enough to be advertised in the prospectus. The Dean mentioned that these details can be worked out, provided the proposal gets an in-principle approval. Rajat K. De suggested that the better option would be to divide the programme into two semesters as in usual in the Institute to which both the Dean and Chairperson agreed. The Chairperson suggested that they could use the PGDSMA programme structure and its division of modules as a template while designing the new structure.

**Discussion on faculty members**

Some members enquired if there were enough faculty members to run the programme. Dr. Behera clarified that the three faculty members of Giridih will be involved full time, in every term. Help in terms of faculty would also be needed from other centres, primarily from Kolkata. Ayan Basu requested Dr. Behera to explain the distribution of faculty members. Dr. Behera clarified that assistance from ISI Kolkata would be required in the modules involving 'Business Statistics and Analytics' and 'Agricultural and Rural Statistics'. Most other sections would be handled by the three in-house and one contractual faculty of Giridih. For subjects like 'Development of Rural Entrepreneurship' faculty members of ISM Dhanbad (and other organisations like NABARD) have been contacted. Concerns were raised about strain being put on the existing faculty of ISI Kolkata, especially Statistics faculty.

When asked about how students will attend classes during internship, he mentioned that five credits have been solely allocated for field work during which time there would be no classes. Saurabh Ghosh pointed out that if the programme was to be transformed into a semester system then implementing this system would be difficult. Rajat K. De argued that in that case the break between two semesters could be utilized for internship. The Chairperson seconded this opinion.

**Deepayan Sarkar's Comment**

The Dean read out 5 points in a comment from Deepayan Sarkar at Delhi. He made the following observations on the proposed programme:

1) Lack of clarity of the programme structure. It's inconsistency with the institute's academic calendar and semester system. Lack of clarity on labels like 'term', its duration etc.
2) Lack of details on internship.
3) Feasibility of conducting the programme at a desirable quality, since it requires several external faculty.
4) Unclear target audience and future prospects.
5) No justification of high programme fees.

The Dean mentioned that most of these were already being discussed in the meeting. About the fifth point he clarified that though the initial proposal had a programme fee of Rupees 1 lakh, but after a discussion it has been decided that this would be reduced significantly by the administration looking into the logistic charges part.

Deepayan Sarkar opined that the proposed programme was a very good idea and that he believed ISI should take on projects like this. But he held that there should be a review committee who should scrutinize it further and target the programme for the next academic calendar. This view was argued against. The Chairperson pointed out that there were still six months before the current session. Nityananda Sarkar suggested that if everyone agrees on the content, the structure of the programme can be changed in the line of PGDSMA within two to three weeks. He further opined that having three in-house and one contractual faculty already at the Centre was not bad at all for a new programme, considering there would always be room for improvement in the future. The Chairperson supported this when she said that it was normal for a new programme to have certain issues, but that must not hinder it from being initiated.

**Points supporting the programme**

Rajat K. De reminded that a programme was necessary at Giridih, since there was keen interest from Govt officials and absence of a programme may imply that ISI was not utilizing the facilities there. Nityananda Sarkar remarked that numerous IIM students were opting for rural management signifying the demand of the proposed programme down the line. Dr. Behera added that though there are other rural management programs but hardly any of those include 'Agricultural Farm Management' and 'Statistical Analysis'. He reminded that since the Government has shown interest in doubling the income of farmers, such a programme could play crucial role in providing required rural managers with knowledge of data analysis.

**Diploma vs Masters**

Subhas Nandy questioned if a one year diploma programme would be sufficient to land such job offers. The Chairperson clarified that the proposal was initially that of a Masters programme. But she felt that starting with a Masters programme would be too big a step for Giridih. Thus she proposed to begin the programme as a diploma and consider upgrading in future depending on how it is received.

Sandip Das held the opinion that in such a scenario the content of the programme should match a Maters level programme, which both the Dean and Chairperson refuted saying a diploma syllabus should never compare to a Masters level programme. The Chairperson added that it does not imply that a diploma programme is worthless, pointing out that students of PGDSMA programme in Chennai were receiving job offers, even before programme completion.

**Teachers from other centres**

Debasis Sengupta asked if providing resources from ISI Kolkata would create a vacancy there. The Dean clarified that such may not be the case since the faculty members may take extra load. He added that there were no surplus of teachers in the Kolkata and it is always difficult to find enough teachers. He pointed out that Kolkata's assistance was needed mainly in statistics and that some faculty members have agreed to help. Classes could also be conducted over VC, with occasional visits to Giridih. Though several members thought that taking classes over VC was not a good idea, it was opined that although it is best to have direct classroom lectures, given our structure, some times having classes over VC becomes necessary. It was pointed out that this was already in practice in some other programs. It was mentioned that services of some Associate Scientists could also be utilized.

The Chairperson said she hoped that in future, faculty members from Tezpur and Chennai may also pitch in.

**Reviewing of the proposal**

On Anup Dewanji's question regarding if there was a review committee, the Dean clearly stated that there were no review committee but the draft was sent to a panel of external experts for review. Following this the proposal was forwarded to a standing committee. Saurabh Ghosh noted that the draft had undergone several revisions and circulated before it was produced in the AC.

**Feasibility study**

Bhabatosh Chanda inquired if the programme has gone through any feasibility committee. The Dean and the Chairperson remarked that the standing committee itself has studied the feasibility to some extent. When asked about this Saurabh Ghosh clarified that they have considered feasibility in general but micro level issues like number of faculty members and programmes were to be discussed in the AC. Anup Dewanji stated that feasibility study must include issues like availability of teachers and hostel facilities. The Chairperson reminded that these things were already discussed. Some colleagues expressed reservation that the programme was being introduced in a hurry. Chairperson pointed out that the programme has gone through quite a thorough scrutiny over the past several months. Dean pointed out that the procedures had been followed of taking the proposal through different levels. Many members felt that further improvements can be carried out in the several months left before the actual start of the programme.

Sandip Das argued that since the experts who reviewed the proposal were not faculty members of ISI, they were not well placed to verify the feasibility of the programme. The Chairperson replied that ISI does not have faculty members for every field and that several colleagues had volunteered to help the programme. When asked if outside experts will teach the programme, the Chairperson remarked that while attempt should be made to avail existing faculty of the Institute as far as possible, for some external teachers may be necessary. She reminded that several external faculty members already teach at ISI Kolkata and Chennai.

**Eligibility and Selection**

Debrup Chakraborty queried about eligibility criterion and method of admission. The Chairperson and Dean clarified that it would be just like a normal entrance test. Probal Chaudhuri questioned on what would be the syllabus of the entrance test based upon. The Dean replied that unless the proposal is approved in principle, he can't form a committee who would work upon these things. He said the test would be essentially on mathematics and OMR based. Rajat K. De argued against including GK, stating that it would make the syllabus it too diverse. This was agreed to.

Dr. Behera pointed out two major takeaways from the meeting. The first was redesigning the programme from a term based to a semester based model. The second was to plan out the distribution of marks. The Dean requested a final decision on if the programme was to be introduced this academic year or the next. The Chairperson opined that no academic programme could possibly begin with every minute details been taken care of beforehand. She suggested going ahead with an in-principle approval and coming back in 3 weeks with the details worked out.

**Preparation of prospectus**

Probal Chaudhuri enquired if the prospectus could be completed in time since the programme plan was not finalised yet. The Dean said that there is a prospectus committee working on that and the necessary revisions can be worked out and implemented in time.

The Chairperson noted that many programmes have had an in-principle approval and then details had been worked out later. Anup Dewanji contended this and accused that a half hearted attempt was being made. The Dean firmly stated that the due procedure has been followed.

Smarajit Bose from the prospectus committee pointed out that details like programme structure are not put in the prospectus but the brochure, which is printed a bit later. He said that if the programme

was approved and the materials required for the prospectus were worked out within two to three weeks, it would give some additional time to decide on the programme structure. The Chairperson agreed that this was a good idea.

Prasun Das said that since the prospectus will be published on 7th February 2020, the revisions should be worked out within a couple of weeks. Doing such would allow the AC to meet again on around 20th January 2020. The Dean then asked the final decision on the proposal. While Prasun Das and some members stood for accepting it in-principle others disagreed. The Dean then inquired if the revised proposal is approved by the AC on 20th January, if it could be completed in time. Prasun Das assured that that would be possible. It was agreed upon that the next AC meeting will be held around 20th January 2020, and that the revised proposal would be circulated by 17th January 2020, so that everyone can have a look.

**Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay's mail**

The Dean then read out an email by Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay in which he registered his strong objections against the procedure which was being followed regarding the proposal. He noted that the correct procedure to introduce a new programme should be: 1) Time for perusal of the proposal 2) Approval of the technical content 3) Feasibility study by an AC appointed committee. He suggested to bring the agenda as a regular item in a normal AC. If there the technical approval be met, then to conduct a proper feasibility study. From here he felt, if all approvals are granted then the programme should be started in the next academic year.

When Debasis Sengupta questioned if the above sequence of approval was true, the Chairperson replied that different programmes have followed different approval methods in the past. She cited the example of M.Tech (CrS) which started with an in-principle approval. The Dean also noted a programme in Delhi whose feasibility report was never submitted by the centre head; hence the programme could not be started.

*Resolution*:  *It was agreed upon that the next AC meeting will be held around 20$^{th}$ January 2020, and that the revised proposal would be circulated by 17th January 2020, for everyone to take a look.*


## AGENDA 2 - REGARDING START OF ACADEMIC SESION

**The issue**

The Dean requested Saurabh Ghosh to elaborate on the issue regarding the commencement of the academic session. Saurabh Ghosh explained that in the past the Dean's office had faced severe problems in starting the year end semester, resulting from the delay in submission of marks by a few faculty members. Thus in the 63rd AC meeting it was decided that the semester would not be started unless every faculty have submitted the scores. This was a decision which was specific to ISI Kolkata. This year since a few of the faculty members did not submit the scores, according to the aforesaid AC rule, the next session could not be started. This was affecting the students, especially those doing internship or in the final year with job offers. So for the sake of the students, he requested to a waiver of the AC rule for this year.

**Handling the delay and its impact.**

He asked Saurabh Ghosh if he were to receive all scores by next day, how long it will take for the session to begin. Saurabh Ghosh replied that it would take until around 20th January, since the institute has followed a policy of maintaining a seven days gap between the announcement of the results and that of the back papers. This he noted would result in a two week delay of the academic calendar. To avoid this, he suggested doing without the one week study time provided before the exams. He noted that doing this would not violate any rules. Probal Chaudhuri felt that a one week delay was something that the teachers and students can easily make among themselves. Saurabh Ghosh noted that a two week delay would not impact the second year, but students of M.Tech first year would face problems regarding internship.

**Effectiveness of the policy**

Saurabh Ghosh mentioned that there was a similar situation last year. A couple of scores were not submitted, but since the Dean's office was unaware of that, it allowed classes in the next session to being. He remarked that though the policy was born of a collective decision, personally he felt that it failed to solve the actual problem of faculty members not submitting marks. Probal Chaudhuri asked Saurabh Ghosh to decide if this academic council policy should be permanently scrapped. When Debrup Chakraborty questioned why the policy was brought into practise in the first place, some said its intention was to discipline the faculty.

Ayan Basu was against the idea of declaring the back paper results late into the semester. He said that not adhering to the AC policy would imply that there are no means to make the teachers submit the scores. Saurabh Ghosh agreed but pointed out that it was not within the power of the Dean to put an end to it.

**The Chairperson's view**

The Chairperson was visibly displeased with the issue. She noted that faculty members not adhering to timelines and rules have made it impossible for the Dean to run his office. She said that the problem has reached a level where the only option left was probably to shut down some programmes, and decide to operate only as a research centre. She agreed to Probal Chaudhuri who remarked that a committee needs to be formed who would discuss these serious concerns.

The Chairperson requested everyone to submit the marks by the next day. She requested Saurabh Ghosh to resume the classes as soon as possible. If somehow teachers were not ready to comply, she proposed to make an exception to the AC rule for this year.

Tarun Kabiraj suggested that the semester be started notwithstanding the submission of marks by some of the faculty members. Though some agreed, Ayan Basu argued that there was no reason why marks could not be submitted on time, and making an exception for a few teachers was pointless.

Probal Chaudhuri suggested an all teachers committee meeting on Thursday to ask everyone to submit the marks. The Dean proposed to start the semester on 13th to which Saurabh Ghosh argued that prior intimation was necessary since some students and faculty members could be outstation. Ayan

Basu argued that this would imply a violation of the AC decision, but the Chairperson held that they were just making a one-time exception. Ayan Basu argued that this may repeat in future, to which the Chairperson proposed that certain steps can be taken to avoid this in future.

**Conclusion**

Ayan Basu suggested stricter action citing that IITs give only 72 hours to the teachers to submit grades. He proposed action if the teacher's body refuses to agree, but the Chairperson said that it would just escalate matters, and should be avoided as far as possible.

The Dean finally proposed to start the semester on 20th January and said that he would appeal to the all teacher's committee to attend a meeting next Thursday. Debasis Sengupta and Rita Saha Ray reminded that the Dean should rather ask those twelve teachers who were yet to submit the marks, to do so within two days. The Chairperson noted that if this problem continues in future then they might have to place it before the council.

*Resolution: The Dean finally proposed to start the semester on 20th January. The Dean appealed to all those teachers who were yet to submit the marks, to do so within two days; so that teacher's committee meetings could be held on the next Thursday.*

# AC Discussion on 21st January

Dr. Hari Charan Behera presented a revised version of the proposal taking into the account the suggestions regarding the alignment of the semester system and class hours with other existing programmes of the Institute. While the members were satisfied with the overall structure and utility of the program, there were a few concerns that were raised:

1. Prof. Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay expressed his opinion that some programmes, where he had expertise, seemed loaded with various advanced topics and students with prior knowledge of Mathematics only till the 10 plus 2 levels are likely to find it extremely difficult to cope up with these topics. He also raised the issue that it was hardly possible to actually have 56 class hours due to holidays and hence it would be difficult to cover all the topics suggested in the syllabus. The Chairperson agreed that the syllabus for some programmes including the Statistics programmes needed to be modified suitably.
2. Professor Smarajit Bose opined that while he was not commenting on the feasibility of the proposed programme based on its difficulty level, it was definitely a better programme to be offered compared to the existing PGDCA programme currently being offered at ISI, Giridih.
3. Professors Mahuya Datta and Bhabotosh Chanda mentioned that it being a diploma programme, the issue of possible placements of graduating students was of great importance and it was not clear whether the proposers had actively explored as to probable institutions who may be interested in recruiting these students after the programme. Dr.Behera replied that he had talked with certain governmental agencies like NABARD, various departments of the Jharkhand government and some NGOs and they had shown enthusiasm at possible recruitment of students passing out of the proposed program.
4. Some members raised their concern about the requirement of faculty from ISI, Kolkata in teaching the programmes on Statistics in the proposed program which may create a shortage of faculty while allocating programmes at ISI, Kolkata. The Chairperson clarified that some faculty, if necessary, may have to do additional ~~to~~ teaching for helping in the proposed coure.

It was also pointed out that such teachers who had been named in the proposal had agreed, in principle, to this arrangement. It was also mentioned that services of some Associate Scientists may be sought for the proposed programme. A concern was raised with respect to the need of some outsourced visiting faculty to teach some specialized programmes which may have financial implications. However, the Chairperson pointed out that visiting faculty had to be employed even at ISI, Kolkata and in other centres if needed.

There was a suggestion that more time be taken to design a more optimal syllabus and the programme be introduced from the Academic Session 2021-22. However, the Chairperson pointed out that since the PGDCA programme was being discontinued, it would not be prudent not to offer any programme at ISI, Giridih for the Academic Session 2020-21 and while the syllabus needed to be partially modified, she finally decided that the proposed programme be introduced from the session 2020-21. She suggested that a small group of faculty should discuss and modify the syllabus of the programmes on Statistics and Computer Science as per the suggestions given by the members during the meeting so as to reduce the programme load. However, it was pointed out that the exercise needed to be carried out very quickly in order to prevent in delay in commencing the Admissions procedure.

There were a few members who recorded note of dissent, which has been attached herewith.

**Resolution:** *The proposed programme at Giridih will be introduced from the academic session 2020-2021. A small group of faculty members would discuss and modify the syllabus of the programmes on Statistics and Computer Science.*

**SD/**
**Goutam Mukherjee**

**SD/**
**Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay**