

Bridging Theory and Practice: Department of Psychology Organizes Orientation Session with DOBARA

The **Department of Psychology, ICFAI School of Social Sciences (ISoSS), ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (IFHE), Hyderabad**, successfully organized an **orientation session with DOBARA** on **27 July 2026** from **10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.** at **BB10**. The session was conducted as part of the department's commitment to providing students with experiential learning opportunities by connecting classroom concepts with real-world psychological practice.

The session featured **Ms. Mateen Ansari, Founder and Director of DOBARA**, as the guest speaker. A distinguished **social gerontologist** and graduate of the **USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology, University of Southern California**, Ms. Ansari has devoted her career to promoting active ageing, emotional well-being, and meaningful social engagement among older adults. Through her vision and leadership, DOBARA has emerged as a pioneering organization dedicated to transforming the experience of ageing by creating opportunities for senior citizens to live active, connected, and purposeful lives.

Founded in **2014** and registered as a not-for-profit trust in **2017**, **DOBARA** works to reduce loneliness and social isolation among older adults through innovative initiatives such as intergenerational programs, lifelong learning, creative expression, wellness activities, and community participation. The organization has positively impacted the lives of thousands of senior citizens by fostering dignity, independence, confidence, and a renewed sense of purpose. Under Ms. Ansari's leadership, DOBARA has received several prestigious recognitions, including the **Nexus of Good Award, Khyaal 50 Above 50 Award, National Sarla Mittal Memorial Award**, and recognition from **Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU)** for its significant contribution to social development.

During her engaging presentation, Ms. Ansari discussed the challenges commonly experienced by older adults, including loneliness, social isolation, changing family structures, retirement, and emotional well-being. She emphasized the need to move beyond stereotypes associated with ageing and encouraged students to adopt a strengths-based perspective that recognizes the capabilities, resilience, and contributions of older adults.

The session also highlighted the importance of **intergenerational relationships**, community-based interventions, and psychosocial support in enhancing the quality of life of senior citizens. Students gained valuable insights into how psychologists can contribute to promoting healthy ageing through counselling, community outreach, mental health advocacy, and evidence-based interventions. Ms. Ansari enriched the discussion by sharing real-life experiences and success stories from DOBARA, illustrating how meaningful engagement and supportive communities can significantly improve the well-being of older adults.

The interactive session provided students with an opportunity to ask questions about gerontology, community psychology, and the practical application of developmental psychology concepts in real-world settings. The discussion encouraged students to reflect on the changing needs of India's ageing population and the growing role of psychology professionals in addressing these challenges.

The orientation served as an excellent platform for students to appreciate the relevance of developmental psychology beyond textbooks. It strengthened their understanding of ageing as a dynamic developmental stage and inspired them to explore opportunities in geriatric mental health, community psychology, and social service.

The programme was **organized by Ms. Priyanka Kanake, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, and Dr. Subhashini, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology**, under the aegis of the **Department of Psychology, ICFAI School of Social Sciences, IFHE, Hyderabad.**

The Department of Psychology expresses its sincere gratitude to **Ms. Mateen Ansari** and the **DOBARA** team for conducting an insightful and inspiring orientation session. The event successfully bridged academic learning with community practice, reinforcing the department's commitment to preparing socially responsible and professionally competent future psychologists.