

NEWS BULLETIN

February 2010



National Institute of Open Schooling

Annual Meeting of National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS)

A forum of the Open Schools in India titled "National Consortium for Open Schooling" (NCOS) has been striving to facilitate co-ordination among State Open Schools (SOSs). The National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) is a forum of Open Schools in India. This includes the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and fourteen State Open Schools (SOSs). The NCOS Secretariat located in NIOS has been organizing advocacy and consultancy programmes for the States to set up SOSs. Resource support in the form of financial assistance, supply of learning material and conducting examinations is being provided to SOSs as per their needs and requirements.



Seated on the dias (From L to R): Dr. S.S. Jena, Sh. Kapil Sibal; Smt. Purandeswari; Sh. Sunil Kaura

The Annual Meeting of National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) was organized by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) on 15 February 2010 at the India International Centre, New Delhi.

The agenda items for deliberation included:

- i) Development of the constitution of NCOS
- ii) Strategy and Planning for Promotion of Open Schooling in the context of the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
- iii) Development of Curriculum Framework for Open Schooling based on the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)
- iv) Formulating Policy Plan for Student Assessment
 - Introducing Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE)
 - Transition from Marking System to Grading System
 - Sharing of Resources for Examination Reform for Open Schools

The meeting was inaugurated by Sh. Kapil Sibal, Hon'ble Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Govt. of India. In his inaugural address, Sh. Sibal said that a framework of the vision and mission of NCOS needs to be evolved in order to move forward in the area of Open Schooling (OS).

Expressing concern over the enormous challenge of reaching out to 15 million learners who are out of school, he emphasized on the need to improve the methodology of programmes in the Open Schooling



NCOS Meeting : A session in Progress

system. States, he said, should consider themselves as active stakeholders in the OS system. He also stressed on the need for a system to monitor the outcome of learners enrolled in the NIOS to ascertain whether they were sufficiently empowered. Considering the fast pace in which the country is moving forward, the Open School should be in a position to deliver not as a stand alone programme but as a centrestage programme. He impressed upon the states that they had not done enough to meet the challenges of open schooling and appealed to each one of them to take adequate steps in this direction.



Sh. Kapil Sibal delivering the inaugural address

The Minister said that the option for Open School should be regarded not as a poor alternative but as an effective empowering alternative, by producing high quality delivery materials which also needs to be continuously evaluated by an outside agency. Speaking on the importance of skill development, he advised Open Schools to keep their vocational programmes open to all to make the system more flexible, enabling learners to shift from academic to vocational and vice versa. He advised the

NCOS to evolve a policy through incentives to attract regular schools to embrace the Open Schools to increase its credibility and improve its national acceptance. He also appealed to the NCOS to work out an effective policy to meet the challenge of reaching out to about 15 million learners by the year 2020.

The Minister released the following:

- i) Booklet titled "National Consortium for Open Schooling: Vision and Mission".
- ii) Logo of the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS)
- iii) Eight CDs on enhancement of Life Skills of Learners under the Adolescence Education Programme



Smt. Purandeswari addressing the participants

Presiding over the meeting, the Hon'ble Minister of State, HRD, Smt. Purandeswari lauded the efforts of the NIOS which had earned the experience of more than two decades of representing the ODL system at the national level. Keeping in view the recommendations of the CABE Committee, she said that it has become imperative for existing State Open Schools (SOSs) to upgrade themselves and others to establish SOSs. Commenting

on the need to strengthen its programme delivery at the regional level, she said that the NIOS should explore the feasibility of setting up a Regional Centre in every State, specifically a disadvantaged region like Vizakhapatnam to take care of the enrolment of the girl child and marginalised groups. In this regard, she also stressed on the need for a strong advocacy programme to make people aware of the learner friendly open school system. The NIOS, she said should offer consultancy programmes for promotion of Open Schooling in States where no Open School has been set up as well as resource support right from planning to operationalisation of State Open Schools.

Expressing the need for the Hunar programme to be extended to other minorities, Smt. Purandeswari felt that the NIOS can contribute enormously to the task of reaching out to the 22 million children who are in school and 16 million who are out of school. Quoting that 'choice is the hallmark of freedom', she said that it should be the endeavour of the educational system to expand the Open and Distance learning system to meet this need of providing alternatives to its learners.

Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS said that the Open Schooling System through the NIOS is today at the centrestage of the education arena by growing into an institution covering the length and breadth of the country with a cumulative enrolment of about 1.6 million learners. He mentioned that the NIOS is in the process of developing equivalency and skill development programmes to support the Sakshar Bharat Mission and reach out to neo-literates. Speaking on the need to ensure universal access to secondary education by 2017 and universal retention by 2020 through the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) programme, he pointed out that Open Schooling should be expanded to target the enormous number of children who drop out of school as well as the 12 million school going children. In this regard, he said that the Centrally Sponsored Scheme was under active deliberation to expand the open schooling system. Facing the challenge of developing an appropriate curriculum, the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS), he said, would deliberate on the Student Assessment Process specifically with regard to the grading system to provide mobility between educational systems.

The Annual Meeting of NCOS approved the Vision, Mission, Functions and the Organizational Structure of the NIOS.

Task forces were set up for:

- i) Preparation of Plan of Action for Upscaling of the Open Schooling System
- ii) Development of Curriculum Framework for Open Schooling
- iii) Preparation of Framework for Evaluation System in Open Schooling

Recommendations

- i) Upscaling of Open Schooling Programmes on priority basis
- ii) Sharing of resources such as print and non print material amongst Open Schools
- iii) Capacity Building of Open Schooling Functionaries
- iv) Quality Assurance in Open Schooling
- v) Development of Curriculum Framework for Open Schooling
- v) Evaluation Reform : Introduction of Comprehensive and Continuous Evaluation (CCE) and Grading System in Certification.

- vi) Networking and Linkages for exchange of ideas and information
 - vii) Facilitate Transfer of Credits of students amongst Open Schools
- The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks by Sh. S.S.Sangal, Incharge, NCOS Secretariat.

Fifth Meeting of the Research Advisory Committee

The Fifth Meeting of the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) of NIOS was held on 20th January, 2010 at NIOS, A-24-25, Sector-62, NOIDA under the chairmanship of the Chairman, NIOS, Dr. S. S. Jena. In this meeting, the Scheme of Grant-in-Aid for Research Projects in Open Schooling (GRPOS) was approved.



Dr. S.S. Jena addressing the Fifth RAC Meeting

The research projects for grant-in-aid from outside institutions/ organisations under GRPOS will be screened/ evaluated by a Sub-Committee of RAC. This Committee will also consider the research projects from faculty of NIOS working in its Constituents. The Principal Investigators would be asked to make a presentation of the research projects before the Sub-Committee of RAC.

The RAC has suggested that the Sub-Committee may decide the priority areas for research in Open Schooling. A database of research institutions and experts in Open Schooling would also be prepared.

NIOS I-CONSENT (For Developing and Deploying Open Resources for Quality School Education For All) PILOT PROJECT

A pilot program is proposed to be undertaken with the leadership of I-CONSENT and participation of institutions like HBCSE, MKCL, IIE Pune, Vidnyan Ashram, Pabal, Science Center IUCAA, Pune, etc for creating Open Education Resources (OER) and Reusable Learning Objects (RLOs) for constructivist learning. (Developmental Learning). It will involve development and deployment of Open Resource elements in terms of Reusable Learning Objects based on outcomes.

The Project will concentrate on evolving processes, resources and methodology for generating the system; and ensure its scalability openness essential for wiki processes. (open participation from all interested in the development and deployment).

The Pilot will be run at two places, in Maharashtra (Pune) and in and around Delhi. Maharashtra will have a target with 200 teacher participation; and Delhi can have the same or different number of participants to work on-line in cooperation with Maharashtra group of teachers.

The Pilot Program assumes the availability of internet connectivity to teachers and schools participating in this program along with the use of mobile cell phone communication. In this program, student link is through Schools or through their centers (home or public) of access to internet. The MKCL network can be used for connecting schools and students as well as the two groups at Pune and Delhi.

New Certificate Course on IT Essentials: PC Hardware and Software In Collaboration With CISCO

Keeping in line with the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has signed an MOU with CISCO (a reputed international organization in the field of Information Technology) to offer an on-line course titled "IT Essentials: PC Hardware and Software", aimed at nurturing IT professionals.

This on-line Certificate course is planned to be offered on a pilot basis in a limited number of Accredited Vocational Institutes (AVIs) in the first phase.

The duration of the course is six months. However a person can complete this course within five years of registration as per NIOS norms.

The course requires 30 hours of Practical training. Theoretical inputs will be on-line as well as through Self Instructional Material.

Eligibility Criteria

10th pass from any recognized Board of school education.

Objectives of the Course

- To enable the learners to work on networking environment
- To develop skills and competencies in computer hardware assembling
- To maintain a standard of equivalence with industry and market demand
- To enable the learners to take up jobs/professions in Computer Hardware Maintenance

Course Content

- In addition, this course covers the following:
- Laptops and portable devices
- Wireless connectivity
- Security
- Safety and environmental issues
- Communication skills

Medium of instruction

The medium of instruction is both English and Hindi. The course is offered through a multimedia approach comprising the following:

- On line course material
- Face to face counselling
- Practical facilities at the Study center
- Internal assignment

International Seminar on Quality Education

A two day seminar was organised by the Department of Education, University of Allahabad in collaboration with the Indian Association of Teacher Educators on 06-07 February, 2010 at Allahabad, U.P. The topic of the seminar was "Quality Concerns in Education and Professional Ethics of teachers in developing countries".

Many eminent scholars from all over the country attended the seminar. Prof. M.B. Menon, Chief UNRWA, JORDAN, Prof. S.V.S. Chaudhary, Vice-Chairperson, NCTE, Prof. Mohd. Miyan, President IATE, Prof. R.G. Harshe, Vice-Chancellor, University of Allahabad, Prof. Shyam B.Menon, Vice-Chancellor, Ambedkar University, Delhi, Prof. Janak Pandey, Vice-Chancellor, University of Bihar, Patna shared their experiences and viewpoints about the different dimensions of Quality education along with the need for professional Ethics. The seminar was divided into two plenary sessions and three technical sessions. About 400 participants presented their papers on various issues related to the following themes:-

- Quality parameters of school education and higher education.
- Role of teachers vis-à-vis teacher empowerment provisions in the context of quality in education.
- Strategies for inculcation of professional ethics among teachers.
- Efficacy of ICT in Research, Development and sustaining quality in Education with a focus on teacher empowerment.

- Quality Issues in Open and Distance learning based teacher education.
- Priorities of research in Quality Assurance and professional development of teachers.

All the topics were discussed in detail and several suggestions emerged on the concept of Quality, Quality parameters and how to ensure quality at the school and higher levels. It was also emphasized that professional ethics have become the need of the hour. Dr. Bal Krishna Rai, Academic Officer, NIOS presented a paper titled "Quality Assurance in Open and Distance Learning: A case of NIOS".

Orientation Programme for Coordinators of AIs & AVIs under Dehradun Region

The NIOS Regional Centre at Dehradun organised a meeting of Coordinators at St. Joseph's Academy, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, (AI No. 340045). About 150 representatives from AIs & AVIs from Uttarakhand (Almora, Champawat, Rudrapur, Mussoorie, Dehradun, Nainital, Haridwar, Pithoragarh) and western UP (Meerut, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Moradabad, Bagpat, Bulandshahr, Amroha) participated in the meeting.



Co-ordinators of AIs and AVIs - Dehradun Region

The Chief Guest, Prof. A.K. Dimri, Regional Director, IGNOU emphasized on the unique flexibilities offered by the open and distance learning (ODL) mode where students could study at their own place, pace and time. He said ODL was the need of the hour since physical infrastructure of schools and colleges were already stretched to the maximum limit. He advocated an enhanced usage of latest technologies like e-learning, mobile learning, teleconferencing, etc. Emphasis was laid on making education more relevant by combining Vocational courses with academic courses which would automatically enable students to become self employed. The coordinators were informed about Vocational courses in broad areas such as Home Science, Agriculture, Health and Paramedical, Engineering & Technical, Computers and ICT based etc.

Procedural changes made by NIOS in admission for forthcoming session 2010-11 were also highlighted. Other areas of concern related to examination, administration and academic matters were also discussed to enable the coordinators to function effectively.

Reacting to the concern voiced by the Coordinators about non receipt of study material on time, it was informed that the matter would be looked into and any procedural lapses that may have occurred would be taken care of in future.

Rev. Bro. A.J. George, Principal, St. Joseph's Academy, shared his experiences as Coordinator in Siliguri in West Bengal and said that it was the responsibility of all Coordinators to be proactive and guide and counsel students who seek open schooling.

NIOS Examinations to commence on 5th April 2010

The Senior Secondary examinations of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) will commence on 5th April 2010. About 2,11,490 learners will appear for the Senior Secondary examination.

The Secondary level examinations are scheduled to commence on 8th April 2010. About 2,34,466 learners are expected to appear in the Secondary examination.

The learners will appear through a total of 1473 examination centres spread across the country.

Most of the exam-related information, the detailed date sheet for the April/ May 2010 examinations as well as the intimation letters of those learners who have not received them are available on the NIOS website www.nios.ac.in

Information regarding examination may also be obtained from the Learner Support Centre (LSC) through the toll free number 1800-180-9393.

NIOS Introduces 100% Online Admission

NIOS has introduced 100% On-line admission From the year 2010-11 in order to facilitate learners in registering themselves with it. The Off-line admission quota has been dispensed with. Under this scheme, learners have the following options :

- register themselves On-line directly
- visit their nearest AI (study centre)/Facilitation Centre and take their help for On-line registration.
- visit the concerned Regional Centre for on line-registration.

Stream I for online Admission is now Open for new Learners till 31.08.2010 till 5:00 PM as per the laid down eligibility criteria for Secondary & Sr. Secondary Levels. These Learners will be eligible to appear in Public Examination for the first time in April 2011.

For details of the procedure for registration, log onto the NIOS website www.nios.ac.in

Capacity Building Workshop on Effective Handling of Learner Queries

A five day workshop on Effective Handling of Learner Queries was held from 22nd to 26th February 2010 for the LSC and Front Desk officials of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). This first of its kind initiative was undertaken by the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) unit of the Academic department of the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS).

The objectives of the workshop were to sensitize the NIOS officials with the needs and concerns of the learners and to empower them to deal with the learners' queries empathetically. Such an initiative would also equip them with effective methods of communication for establishing better interpersonal relationships.

Ms. Asheema Singh, Project Officer (AEP) welcomed all the participants and outlined the objectives of the workshop. She shared with them the benefits of participating in the workshop such as being helpful in their daily dealings in their workplaces as well as their homes. Experts included Dr. Sudha Sood, Director of HELP, (Health Education and Learning Programs), Consultant, UNFPA and Dr. Malini Kapoor, a Consultant with HELP, and NIOS and an active member of Yuva Technical Support Group.

AI Co-ordinators Meeting, Pune Region

The NIOS, Regional Centre, Pune organized the AIs Co-ordinators meeting for Maharashtra and Goa on 1st February 2010. Mr. Sunil Kaura, Secretary, NIOS inaugurated the meeting by lighting the lamp and addressed the Co-ordinators. The welcome song was rendered by a group of NIOS students.



NIOS Students rendering the Welcome Song



Jithin Jose

Success Story

Name: Jithin Jose

Enrolment No.: 09001533003

Jithin Jose had to drop out of school when he was in class II as he was suffering from haemophilia, a disorder in which blood does not clot as in the case of a normal person. Severe and frequent internal

bleeding prevented him from even going to school for writing the exams. When he was about sixteen years old, his parents learnt about the NIOS and got him registered for the foundation course. This enabled him to start his second innings as a student. Due to the flexibility of the NIOS system, Jithin could choose non-science subjects along with Maths and English, when he further enrolled for the Secondary Course.

He found that the books were self-explanatory and prepared in a simple language. Although there were frequent interruptions due to internal bleeding, Jithin studied on his own imagining that books were his teachers. At the age of nineteen, he passed his secondary exams in 2003 with 72% marks. He further enrolled for the NIOS Senior Secondary Course and passed in 2005 with 81% marks. By that time, this aspiring student became ambitious and decided to register for a course in Chartered Accountancy. Although he missed the first few attempts due to severe bleeding, he managed to clear the CA Inter exams with 41st rank at the All India level. What a level of determination! Jithin Jose who viewed studying on his own as a limitation realized that it was his strength. It not only expanded his horizons of thinking but also sharpened his analytical skills. He acknowledges that the NIOS led him from ignorance to knowledge, by initiating him into the world of studies. He feels extremely proud to be an NIOS Product.

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