

GENDER POLICY FOR OPEN SCHOOLS INDIA 2021



विद्याधनं सर्वधनप्रधानम्

National Institute of Open Schooling

(An Autonomous Institution under Ministry of Education,
Government of India)

ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified

GENDER POLICY FOR OPEN SCHOOLS INDIA

2021



National Institute of Open Schooling

(An Autonomous Institute under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

ISO 9001 : 2015 Certified

A-24-25, Institutional Area, Sector-62, NOIDA-201309, U.P.

© National Institute of Open Schooling

October, 2023 (50 copies)

Published by the Secretary, National Institute of Open Schooling, A-24/25, Institutional Area, Sector-62, NOIDA-201309 and Printed at M/s India Binding House, A-98, Sector-65, Noida.

FOREWORD



It gives me immense satisfaction to present the Gender Policy 2021. I have closely watched the struggle girls, women, and persons with transgender identities face in accessing schools, learning-resources, and work-opportunities throughout my career. Consequently, they remain under-represented in decision-making processes that shape their lives and societies.

The Gender Policy is a crucial tool to guide Open Schools across India to mainstream gender matters and ensure that access to educational resources is no longer weighted against girls, women, and persons of transgender identities. Through a wide range of policy recommendations, NIOS, in collaboration with UN Women, is trying to ensure that learning opportunities are neither dependent on nor constrained by the sex of the person and her subsequent marginalization.

The Policy presents a road map to attain gender equality and integrate gender concerns in analyzing, formulating, and monitoring open and continued learning programmes.

In collaboration with UN Women, the National Institute of Open Schooling will strive to operationalize this Policy in a time-bound manner. We at NIOS are committed to achieving the highest goal of Nation building through equal opportunities of quality education to all by enacting at the right time the strategies and action plans that lead to a path of gender equality and success.

(Prof. Saroj Sharma)
Chairperson, NIOS

CONTENTS



<i>Foreword</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acronyms</i>	<i>vi</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>vii</i>
Introduction	1
Rationale and Background	3
Scope	6
Aims and Objectives	7
Issues and Challenges	8
Strategic Goals	10
Strategies	11
Monitoring and Evaluation	15
Glossary of Terms	17

ACRONYMS



NIOS – National Institute of Open Schooling

ODL – Open and Distance Learning

AI – Accredited Institutions

AVI – Accredited Vocational Institutions

AAs – Accredited Agencies

SAIED – Special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged

OBE – Open Basic Education

NEP – National Education Policy

LGBTQIA – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, (questioning), Intersex, Asexual, and (gender)

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

SEDGs – Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics

MIS – Monitoring and Information System

SoS – State Open Schools

ICT – Information and Communications Technology

SSS – Student Support Services

CBC – Capacity Building Cell

KGBV – Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya

ITDC – India Tourism Development Corporation

FSSAI – Food Safety and Standards Authority of India

D.El.Ed – Diploma in Elementary Education

CSCs – Common Service Centres

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Gender Policy, 2021 reflects the ongoing commitment of the National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS) to further the agenda of gender equity & equality in its mission to provide equitable learning outcomes to all learners. Being an Open and Distance Learning Platform, NIOS has the potential to provide education to those who are most marginalised. This policy aims to strengthen NIOS in realising its potential to become an effective educational platform – especially for women, girls, and trans-people.

The Policy has been revised under the vision of Prof Saroj Sharma, Chairperson, NIOS and developed under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Rajiv Kumar Singh, Director, Academic Department, NIOS.

NIOS expresses heartfelt gratitude towards the members of the Consultative Committee, for their insights and contributions to this revision of the 2015 Gender Policy of NIOS. Their inputs have enabled the policy to consider current national & international commitments to gender equality and quality education and incorporate them into NIOS policy.

We would also like to acknowledge UN Women, India, for their technical support in the process of policy revision.

Consultative Committee

Ms. Kanta Singh, UN Women

Dr. Rekha Pappu, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Ms. Malini Ghose, Development Professional

Dr. Urvashi Sahni, Study Hall Education Foundation

Ms. Urvashi Butalia, Zubaan Books

Ms. Suneeta Dhar, South Asian Women Foundation

Dr. Jagpreet Kaur, Punjabi University

Prof. Pankaj Arora, University of Delhi

Prof. (Retired) Mondira Dutta, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Dr. Rajiv Kumar Singh, NIOS

Dr. Sandhya Kumar, NIOS

Ms. Anitha Nair, NIOS

Dr. Tarun, NIOS

Dr. Sukanta K. Mahapatra, NIOS

Dr. Manoj Thakur, NIOS

Ms. Anshul Kharbanda, NIOS

Ms. Manju Churungu, NIOS

Ms. Padmakshi Badoni, UN Women

Dr. Rashmi Sinha, UN Women

INTRODUCTION



The National Institute of Open Schooling, NIOS, is a national resource organisation in the field of open schooling and the largest open schooling system in the world catering to the needs of a heterogeneous group of learners up to pre-degree level through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System. These groups include the first-generation learners, physically, mentally and visually challenged learners and candidates from disadvantaged sections of the society and are reached via a network of Departments, Regional Centres and Accredited Institutions (Study Centres) of NIOS in India and abroad.

NIOS's Vision is 'to provide sustainable inclusive learning with universal and flexible access to quality schools education and skill development'.

The Mission of NIOS is as follows:

- To provide relevant, continuing and holistic education up to pre-degree level through Open and Distance Learning System (ODL System)
- To contribute to the Universalisation of School Education
- To cater to the educational needs of the prioritized target groups for equity and social justice

NIOS data over the past three years, has shown the enrolment of 13,81,227 students. Out of these, on average, 33% of the enrolled students are female, less than 1% are trans people and the rest 65% are male. Therefore, the enrolment of girls and women in NIOS has been historically lower than boys and men.

It is identified as critical to NIOS to increase the enrolment of women, girls and LGBTQIA and efforts have been made for gender mainstreaming in processes and programmes.

In 2015, NIOS developed Gender Policy for Open Schooling with the support of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL). This policy aimed at putting in place processes which lead to gender equality in the NIOS system and also develop awareness of gender issues in the NIOS staff and learners. It was the aim of this policy to mainstream gender in NIOS policies, programmes and implementation mechanism. In 2020 a need for revision of this policy was felt in accordance with new and renewed commitments of the nation to advance gender equality. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 also reinforced the commitment towards gender equality in Indian Education systems and served as a driving force for the revision. It was thus decided at NIOS that the procedures put in place for implementation of the policy were to be revised and new processes were to be put in place for enhancing implementation. Therefore, NIOS has undertaken the task of revising its Gender Policy for integrating gender equity, equality, justice and empowerment in its programmes and procedures at all levels.

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND

The Constitution of India grants equality to its citizens before the law. However, the social reality is very different from the legal rights and responsibilities granted in the Constitution. The diverse identities that the people hold lead to discrimination, perpetuating in conflict and unequal opportunities. Discrimination based on gender leads to unequal opportunities for women, girls and the LGBTQIA community around the world.

Gender discrimination exists against all women, but it is worse for those on the margins who also face other forms of discrimination as a result of their caste, class, religious identity, sexuality, etc. These discriminations are further compounded by disasters and conflict.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing inequalities, leading to women and girls dropping out of education, severe effect on their physical and mental health, increase in child marriage, increased unemployment and increased responsibilities of domestic work, among others. According to UN Women data, 'Women make up more than two-thirds of the world's 796 million illiterate people'¹. According to UNESCO, an estimated 743 million girls worldwide are out of school due to the lockdown initiated because of the pandemic². Therefore, the adverse effect of the pandemic is disproportionately seen for marginalised women and girls.

Education of women and girls is strategic development priority. The global education development agenda reflected in Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015, seeks to 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. To achieve SDGs and promote Right to Education, it is imperative to prioritise the Gender equality agenda, which is given in SDG 5, to 'Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.'

¹<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/commission-on-the-status-of-women-2012/facts-and-figures>

²<https://en.unesco.org/news/covid-19-school-closures-around-world-will-hit-girls-hardest>

India is one of the signatory countries to **The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination amongst Women (CEDAW)**, adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly. India has also committed to the **Beijing Platform for Action 1995**, to follow action plan and work towards the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment along with other participating nations.

To provide the required support to the marginalised, the Government of India has regularly brought in progressive legislation to bridge the gaps in existing legal provisions. There have been efforts to bring more women into education and employment through state and national policies, including special provisions for women and girls, campaigns to raise awareness in the communities and legal recourse in the face of discrimination.

National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986 and its revised Programme of Action (POA) 1992 has ensured that the policy be geared towards bringing gender equality and women's empowerment in all the educational endeavours.

The **National Policy on Women's Empowerment 2001**, **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) 2001**, **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) 2009**, now collectively under **Samagra Shiksha**, **National Curriculum Framework 2000 & 2005**, **Position Paper Focus Group on Gender Issues in Education 2006**, **Right to Education (RTE) 2009** and the recent **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** lay emphasis on promoting and integrating gender equality and empowerment through various national and regional programmes.

The National Education Policy 2020³, recognized the critical role of education in women's lives. Taking into account the global and local demands of education, the policy focuses on imparting 21st-century skills amongst the students, while mentioning "full equity and inclusion" as the cornerstones of all education decisions (pg 5). NEP, 2020 talks about providing "equitable quality education" to girls and trans-people (pg 26, para 6.8). Additionally, the policy document also focuses on developing a "gender-inclusion fund" for implementing schemes to improve the access and participation of the girls and transgender students (pg 26, para 6.8). Further, it is suggested that to facilitate learning for all students, with special emphasis on Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs) including girls and transgender students, the scope of school education will be broadened to facilitate multiple pathways to learning involving both formal and non-formal education modes. ODL Programmes offered by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and State Open Schools will be expanded and strengthened for meeting the learning needs of young people especially girls in India who are not able to attend a physical school (pg 11, para 3.5).

³https://www.education.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf

Despite efforts at both policy and ground level to create both equity and gender equality, much remains to be done as women and LGBTQIA still face structural, economic and cultural discrimination and violence.

In order to work towards achieving gender equality, systemic barriers that women and LGBTQIA face, need to be removed. The COVID pandemic has brought about loss of livelihoods, increased unpaid care work, and increased domestic violence. Post pandemic efforts will have to be prioritised and targeted towards the most vulnerable. There is a need for gender responsive policies and programmes and it is at this critical juncture that this policy is being presented.

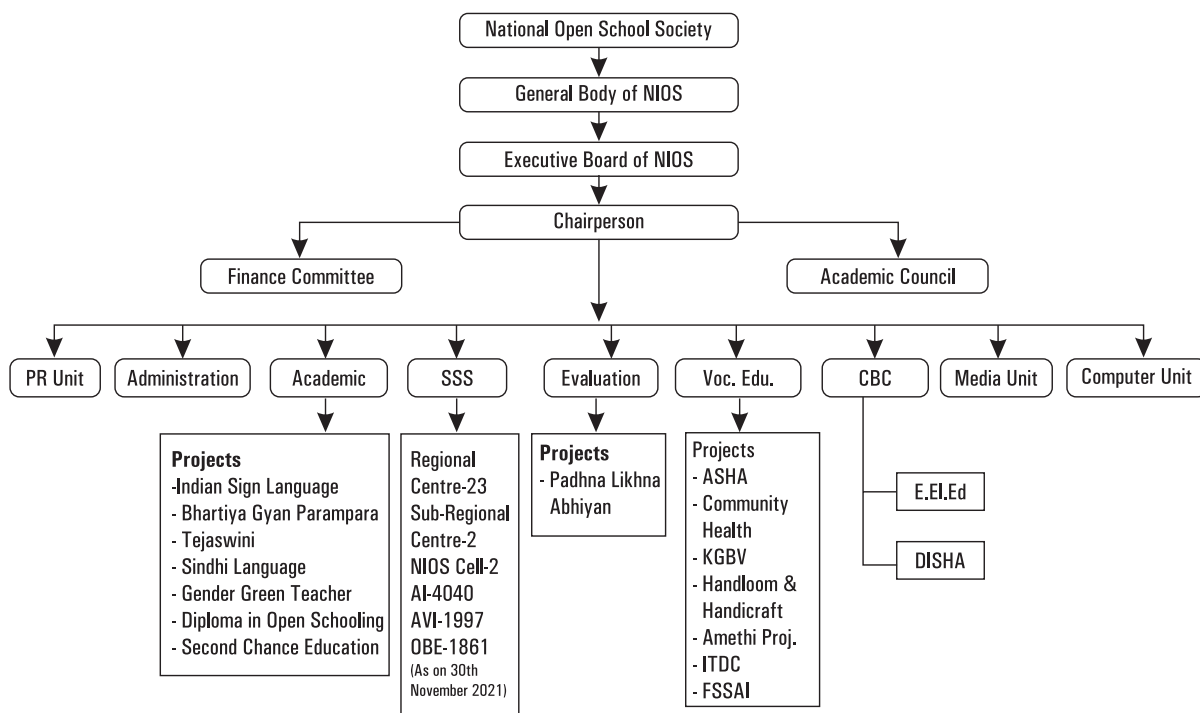
NIOS is a unique opportunity for women/girls/trans people to access education as it provides flexibility and easy accessibility to those who had to drop out due to an early marriage, or other reasons like safety concerns and stereotype attitude, those who are compelled to work, and those who have young children, amongst others.

SCOPE



This policy will guide NIOS including all regional centres, study centres and all stakeholders. It is anticipated that this will eventually extend to the State Open Schools and the community of learners at large. This will be achieved through close coordination with all NIOS linked centres and personnel and the partnerships with organisations working with learners on the ground.

Organisational Structure of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)



Source: NIOS Administration Department, July | 2021 (to be adjusted based on changes in partnerships/projects')

AIM AND OBJECTIVES



The **Overall Purpose** of the policy is to inculcate gender sensitivity in the functioning of the institution whether academic or administrative, with the aim to change mindsets, to develop curricula and pedagogy and to determine that resource allocation (material and human) takes place in a gender responsive manner.

The objectives of this Gender Policy are:

1. develop and implement gender-responsive **procedures** and standards for academic, vocational and skills programmes for **prioritised groups**, keeping in view the local, regional, national and international educational needs in open schooling.
2. Design and develop gender sensitive curriculum, **programmes** and delivery methods that are relevant to the stakeholders.
3. Ensure a safe, inclusive, gender bias free and effective **learning environment** for learners of all genders, so that they are comfortable and inspired to learn in the open and distance mode.
4. Work towards **bridging the gender gaps in enrolment at** all levels of school education through distance and open schooling.
5. Develop egalitarian democratic mindsets and perspectives in learners, policy makers and other stakeholders.
6. To encourage women, girls and people belonging to LGBTQIA who have not been able to avail of mainstream education opportunities due to gender related challenges, to use NIOS as a platform to pursue and complete their schooling.

ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

NIOS faces varied challenges in bringing women and girls into education. Being an ODL system, these are different from regular schools, where there are mechanisms to interact with the students face-to-face. Some of the challenges that NIOS has identified which would hinder the participation and achievement of women and girls in the system are listed below:

- Awareness about NIOS is low in the community, particularly in rural and tribal areas. One of the reasons is the lack of effective advocacy by NIOS to reach those who are marginalised, thus leading to lack of information about the system. Distance Education not taken as a first career choice and learners are hesitant to enrol in open schooling. However, this mindset is fast changing.
- Currently NIOS reach in rural areas is limited. Considering the low literacy rate, especially of women in rural areas, it is important to reach to those people who find it difficult to enrol in regular schooling. It is seen that tying up with Common Service Centres (CSCs) is not enough to enhance reach and Educationally Backward Blocks need to be targeted.
- NIOS relies on infrastructure of schools and other centres which become AIs/AAs/SAIED and AVIs. The compliance of these centres with NIOS standards is paramount, but a regular monitoring of infrastructural facilities needs to be put in place.
- The digital divide that exists in India between men and women, in rural and urban areas, is also a challenging reality. With the ODL mode increasing its online presence with the provision of course material, videos, and forums for interaction, those who do not have access to technological infrastructure and devices, are left out of the benefits of such a system.
- The vocational courses in NIOS provide a good way for the learners to gain skills and eventually get into decent employment. However, female learners or other

marginalised groups opting for Vocational Courses are not given concessions as in Academic Courses. Due to the fact that households in India are reluctant to spend on the girl child, there is high likelihood that women's access to these courses is limited.

- Vocational courses offered by NIOS are open to all. However, due to existing societal norms, women and men tend to take up courses which align with their gender roles and expectations. There is a need for targeted advocacy for promotion of non-traditional courses for women, which will open them to more courses, and therefore wider options.
- It is identified that counselling (career and psychological) plays a vital role in the effective education of the learner. The provision of counselling services to be availed by the learners is critical to be put in place and needs to be strengthened at NIOS.
- The existing socio-cultural norms form a barrier for women and trans people to enter into education. In order to encourage them to join at the study centre level, orientation towards their needs and specific challenges needs to be undertaken, which might be a gap as of now.
- Gender budgeting is a grey area and needs to be done more effectively.

It was in the context of these challenges that NIOS created a Gender Policy in 2015 and the revision of this policy now hopes to address these and ensure that implementation mechanisms are put in place, with an accountability process involving the various stakeholders.

STRATEGIC GOALS



1. **Enrolment:** Increase enrolment ratio of girls to boys in NIOS to 50:50, Increase enrolment ratio of transgenders by 10% in the next 5 years.
2. **Retention and achievement:** Provide better support mechanisms and tracking for all genders in the NIOS system to enhance retention and achievement
3. **Academic material:** Provide gender-equal and gender responsive learning materials (written, audio, video, etc) with enhanced use of ICT and include gender education in the curriculum.
4. **Sensitization and awareness:** Human resource at all levels in NIOS to be made gender-equal and responsive to the needs to learners
5. **Fundraising:** Mobilize resources and build infrastructure for gender mainstreaming activities
6. **Administration:** Gender responsive employment facilities

STRATEGIES



Goal 1: Enrolment

- a) Partner with organizations/NGOs/Panchayats/other govt. schemes especially in rural/tribal areas for woman/trans people for enhancing their education to effectively address the issues and concerns girls face to help them continue in their education.
- b) Track and reach Out of School Children (OoSC) and school dropouts particularly, women/girls/trans people in the districts with high dropouts and disadvantaged groups. These groups include children of migrants, waste collectors, street children, children of domestic workers, violence survivors, leprosy cured persons, refugees, children of remote areas, trans-genders, HIV affected families, refugee and asylum seekers, persons with disabilities and other identified groups with a high ratio of dropouts in various regions.
- c) Provide fee waivers and other financial support (including but not limited to provision of simple digital devices) could be given to the females, trans learners and boys belonging to vulnerable groups to help them combat financial constraints to come into education.
- d) Collaborate with other ODL institutions including State open Schools (SOS) in the country to develop and organise gender sensitive programmes, workshop/seminars
- e) Incentivise AIs/AAs/AVIs/SAIEDs to enrol more girls/women/trans people.
- f) Conduct research into issues and challenges of girls/women/trans people in reaching out to education in open learning mode.

Goal 2: Retention and Achievement

Retention

- a) Develop student support services/counselling to address issues being faced by all genders on a regular basis and developing a robust MIS system, especially to trace the left out and at-risk girls and trans people.

- b) Develop provisions such as fee concession for 'single girl child' and scholarship for subject wise topper for girls/trans people.
- c) Develop strong coordination with Gram Panchayats and block level Asha workers for tracing dropouts and out of school girls and trans people.
- d) Monitor exam centres and study centres to ensure accessibility, safety,provisions of appropriate infrastructural facilities and deployment of women invigilators. Making essential infrastructure required for girls and trans people mandatory in compliance for accreditation, such as gender-neutral toilets.
- e) Consider suitable timing of examination for different regions, like hilly areas especially in North-Eastern parts of India where day light fades early.
- f) Constitute inclusive committees for pre and post evaluation work to ensure significant representation from men, women, and transgender persons
- g) Develop effective Counselling services for learners and parents, sensitising the parents on education for every child and building the capacity of AIs to provide strong local support and counselling.
- h) Provide effective counselling and career counselling to encourage girls/women/trans people to take up STEM subjects, vocational courses, and break gender stereotypes.
- i) Develop an alumna network which could support and mentor students locally to facilitate their learning.

Achievement

- a) Develop a robust MIS to gauge the achievement of learners in terms of the number of learners enrolled and those who passed the examination.
- b) Measure pass percentage and determine the performance of female and trans people learners to gather insight into their progress and make adjustments accordingly.
- c) Measure the above regularly and use insights gathered to inform and modify processes.

Goal 3: Academic material

- a) Promote gender equity, equality, justice, and empowerment through learning resources i.e., print, electronic and others.
- b) Prepare simple training material/guidelines for teachers and support staff of NIOS and study centres on effective affirmative action strategies, putting women, girls and trans people at the centre of all recovery efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and providing them support to complete their education.
- c) Include gender education in the curriculum.
- d) Include a booklet on gender rights and issues to be sent along with print material to learners. Messages on gender rights and equality could be included in covers of the Self Learning Materials.
- e) Review materials from a gender prism recognizing the gender inequalities linked to other forms of inequalities to be undertaken at a regular interval representing a Pan-India picture and usage of a proper language eliminating all kind of bias towards any community.
- f) Highlight and disseminate information on gender, enabling sensitivity through analysis, and other engaging content to be regularly published in NIOS publications, including magazine and other journals.
- g) Partner with organisations that have experience in developing gender resources and other educational material, to provide inputs in the process of updating academic materials.
- h) Conduct regular orientation of course developers on gender issues and incorporation of gender sensitive content into the learning materials and transactional processes.
- i) Develop a checklist for reviewers of content with the necessary inclusion of gender related parameters for every learning material.

Goal 4: Capacity building and awareness

- a) Regular training of staff at NIOS and study centres to provide information and awareness building on gender discrimination, privilege, communicating equally with learners, maintaining safe spaces in the centres for learners of all genders, receptiveness to the needs of girls, LGBTQIA and trans people to ensure that all teachers are sensitized to these requirements. Build capacities of master trainers at NIOS to enable them to train staff as required.

- b) Undertake training of new staff at orientation on all aspects mentioned in the point (a) above.
- c) Undertake regular training of staff on the Sexual Harassment in the Workplace Policy according to the norms of the policy. The policy is to be regularly disseminated and put on the website for all to access.
- d) Undertake advocacy activities/campaigns for gender equality to raise awareness among learners and staff.
- e) Ensure all advertisements for employment foreground equal opportunity and are inclusive, to remove elements of unconscious bias.
- f) Undertake capacity building of organisations/institutions associated with NIOS, on gender mainstreaming and development of gender-responsive policies and processes.
- g) Develop a pan-India network of study centres. Out of these, identify those performing best on gender indicators and constitute a Working Group to share best practices and train other study centres to become gender responsive.

Goal 5: Resource Allocation/Mobilisation

- a) Constitute a Gender-inclusion fund for implementing schemes to improve the access and participation of the girls and transgender students and to provide equitable quality education for all girls as well as transgender students.
- b) Undertake Gender Budgeting while conducting the overall budgeting process for NIOS and all Departments. Organise/participate in trainings/refresher courses on gender budgeting regularly.
- c) Work closely with other ministries/departments to utilise the special schemes for education/skilling of women.
- d) Creches to be provided at NIOS and study centre.

Goal 6: Administration

NIOS will follow all norms laid down by the Government of India regarding recruitment, promotions, opportunities for professional growth, leave and other mentioned provisions for women in the workplace, without any bias.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Gender mainstreaming requires changes at different levels within the institution, in agenda setting, policy making, planning, learner support services monitoring, implementation and evaluation. NIOS recognizes that to ensure gender equity, a change of mindsets is required and a change in conditions in which to implement the policy. All stakeholders need to be involved to work towards the process of changing mindsets to translate the vision into action and practice. This is the challenge that NIOS faces and will work towards by means of this policy. **Therefore, a short term and long-term plan of action will be designed to ensure that the gender policy is implemented successfully.**

Bodies for Implementation:

The implementation of the Gender Policy will be achieved by setting up the following committees. These will be internal committees, and will ensure representation from all departments, not below the rank of Academic Officer of NIOS. These committees will be led by a Steering and Implementation Cell. In order to ensure an external point of view, the Cell will have representation from expert(s) belonging to reputed National/ International Organisations working on Gender.

- A. Gender Steering and Implementation Cell (GSIC) with the following committees will be formed
 - i. Academic (looking at materials, pedagogy, assessment)
 - ii. Counselling and Guidance
 - iii. Gender Budgeting and auditing committee

Gender Sensitization to create awareness on gender issues for all stakeholders towards all underrepresented groups will be part of the GSIC. The Cell will conduct six-monthly rapid and annual detailed audits to ensure that policy directions are being achieved through a Plan of Action and Implementation/result framework.

Reporting:

- i. A quarterly reporting structure will be created and followed. Qualitative and quantitative information will be collected from the points persons as required and stated in the Plan of Action.
- ii. A reporting format will be prepared by the GSIC based on indicators of success for each Goal.
- iii. A format for evaluation based on parameters of success will be prepared by the GSIC against which the submitted reports will be evaluated.
- iv. Constructive feedback will be provided by the GSIC to concerned depts, personnel, with regard to achieving the policy goals.

In order to ensure fairness, measures often may have to be put in place to compensate for the socio- cultural and socio-economic disadvantages that have always placed women and transgender person on discriminatory footing. Equity will demand positive discrimination for the disadvantaged genders to achieve equitable gender outcomes.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



1. **Empowerment** is about people taking control over their lives, setting their own agendas, gaining skills, developing a voice and capacity to aspire, building autonomy and self-confidence, solving problems, and developing self-reliance, irrespective of their gender. Society, as well as the institutions can support processes that can nurture the self-empowerment of individuals or groups.
2. **Gender** is used to describe those characteristics of individuals, which are socially constructed, while sex refers to those which are biologically determined. People are born female or male but learn to be girls and boys who grow into women and men. This learned behaviour makes up gender identity and determines gender roles. Gender also refers to the roles and responsibilities of women/girls and men/boys in construction of roles and relationships that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures between women and men. The concept of gender includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely behaviours of both women and men (related to femininity and masculinity). These roles and expectations are learned. These are not biologically predetermined nor are these fixed forever.
3. **Gender Bias** refers to the unequal treatment in employment opportunity and attitudes based on the sex of an employee or group of employees. Gender bias can be a legitimate basis for a lawsuit under anti discriminatory statutes.
4. **Gender Budgeting** is critical for ensuring that resource allocation takes place in a gender-responsive manner. Gender budgeting involves the examination of all expenditures and revenues from a gender perspective. This implies that all expenditure is examined for its relevance, accessibility, impacts and consequences for women and men and transgender people. For example, when an institution devotes a percentage of its budget to provision of accommodation or scholarships, the question of how much of it will benefit women, will emerge. When an institution

budgets for a crèche for staff children, the question of what is the impact on the female and male workforce will emerge.

5. **Gender Disaggregated Data** is the data that are collected and presented separately on all genders women, men and transgender persons.
6. **Gender Discrimination** refers to the prejudice or discrimination based on person's sex or gender and has been linked to gender stereotypes and gender roles. Gender discrimination continues to get perpetuated with the belief that one sex or gender is intrinsically superior to the other. Another commonly used term for such discrimination is sexism. Extreme sexism may foster sexual harassment, rape and other forms of gender violence.
7. **Gender Equality** means that all genders have equal conditions for realizing their full potential and for contributing to and benefitting from economic, social, cultural and political development. It is based on the principle of all genders being full partners in their home, community and society. The advancement of the goals of gender equality and empowerment are central to the agenda of learning for development. Existing power structures must change, and all genders must be full partners in development processes. There is a need to move from a gender neutral perspective to a gender-responsive approach.
8. **Gender Equity** refers to fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities amongst women and men and transgender people. The concept recognises that women and men and transgender people have different needs and power and that these differences should be identified and addressed in a manner that rectifies the imbalance between the sexes and amongst all genders.
9. **Gender Gaps** in learning environments stem from socio-cultural values, beliefs and attitudes. Such gender gap in learning environments refers to differences in access, participation and benefit from learning opportunities for women/girls, men/boys and transgender people.
10. **Gender Identity** refers to a person's internal, deeply felt sense of being either man or woman, or something other or an identity that is between man and woman, or neither
11. **Gender Inclusive** term denotes that all genders should be part and parcel of the processes of education aiming at mainstreaming for equity, equality, justice and empowerment.

12. **Gender Mainstreaming** is a strategy for making women's, men's as well as transgender concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres, such that inequality between men, women and transgender persons is not perpetuated.
13. **Gender Parity** is attained when the same proportion of women and men, relative to their respective age groups, enter the learning environment or education system and complete and advance through different cycles of learning and education.
14. **Gender Policy** is developed out of the recognition that there are deficiencies in the operation of institutions and organizations in the structuring of society, social norms and gender relations, in their fair and equitable treatment of all genders i.e. women/girls, men/boys and transgender community. A gender policy is an evolving instrument for tackling those deficiencies in an organized manner with stated goals, timeframes for achieving them, methodologies for the achievement of goals and strategies, and programmes through which the policy will be applied.
15. **Gender Roles** are learned through socialisation processes; they are not fixed but are changeable. Perspectives on gender are institutionalised through educational, political and economic systems; through legislation; and through culture, religion and traditions.
16. **Gender Roles and Relations** usually result in women and girls having different and less access and control to resources and decision-making processes than men and boys, which may lead to unequal power relations. These unequal power relations hinder equitable development and make it difficult for women and girls to fully participate in development processes that affect them.
17. **Gender Sensitivity** is the translation of awareness into practices, which result in changes in the perceptions, plans and activities of people, society, institutions and organizations.
18. **Gender Stereotype** is a rigid and over-simplified definition of a group of people in which all members of that group are labelled with similar characteristics. Stereotypes produce behaviour patterns that conform to expectations. Gender stereotypes inhibit women and girls and transgender people from realizing their full potential because of patriarchal mindset and thus societal barriers.

19. **Transgender** people are individuals of any age or sex whose appearance, personal characteristics, or behaviours differ from stereotypes of being men and women and fall outside of the stereotypical gender binary.

Transgender has become an umbrella term that is used to describe a wide range of identities and experiences, including transsexual people; male and female cross-dressers; intersexes individuals; men and women whose identity or behaviours are gender-atypical and fall outside the stereotypical gender norms. Trans is a term which is used to refer to all persons whose own sense of gender does not match with the gender assigned to them at birth.



National Institute of Open Schooling

(An Autonomous Institution under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

A-24-25, Institutional Area, Sector-62, NOIDA-201309, U.P.

Website: www.nios.ac.in