

# National Institute of Open Schooling

## International Conference

Education for All : Role of Open Schooling

13-15 March 2013



**National Institute of Open Schooling**

A-24-25, Institutional Area, Sector-62, Noida-201309, National Capital Region, India

# International Conference

## Education for All: Role of Open Schooling

March 13-15, 2013



Organized by:



**National Institute of Open Schooling**

A-24-25, Institutional Area, Sector-62, Noida-201309, National Capital Region, India

In collaboration with:





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Intel South Asia

Syndicate Bank, India

Union Bank of India





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# Inaugural Address





## Inaugural Address by Chief Guest



Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju, Hon'ble Minister, Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

**E**ducation for All is a global commitment to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults. The movement was launched globally with the world conference held at Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990. The movement towards Education for All revitalised educational reforms all over the world. Subsequently, major progress has been made worldwide in terms of access to elementary education and declining the rate of out of school children at the elementary level. For instance, in India, universal elementary education has been achieved to a large extent due to the success of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, a flagship programme of the Govt. of India. However, in recent years emphasis has been laid on the quality of elementary education, particularly in rural schools.

The success of the global Education for All movement lies in its ability to unite and bring together world leaders, stake holders, national governments and NGOs for achieving the common objective of universalisation of education. As I am given to understand, this international conference brings together academicians from diverse corners of the world, particularly from more than twenty Commonwealth countries, to deliberate on the issues related not only to the access to schooling but also on enhancing the quality of education in our schools. I'm sure the coming together of so many countries shall bear fruit and bring the world closer to reach the ultimate goal of education for all.

Education is the most potent tool for socio-economic mobility and a key instrument for building an equitable and just society. No wonder, the necessity of education for individual and national development has become one of the prime concerns today. While it is essential to build schools and train teachers so as to achieve goals of universal education, the challenges we face in the form of limited infrastructure, inadequate economic resources and lack of quality teaching are major concerns. Hence, there is a dire need for having a strategic planning and to look for credible alternatives to achieve the massive task ahead. Of late, the open and distance learning has emerged as one of the alternatives to supplement this goal.





Open School programme has made significant strides, yet in some countries it remains at the initial stage. We all need to open up to the idea of Open Schooling, if we are to achieve the cherished goal of Education for All. Further, after the success of universalisation of elementary education, the countries shall have to get themselves prepared for making secondary education accessible to all, to complete the cycle of school education. As I have been given to understand and as per the recent World Bank report, whatever one need to invest in terms of physical resources into the elementary education to make it universal, a country needs to invest the double for making education universal up to secondary level.

In India, we have taken concerted steps in achieving the goals of universalisation of school education. Our government has recently enacted a law on “Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Elementary Education” popularly known as “Right to Education” for the children from 6-14 age group. A comprehensive step in this respect has been taken to strengthen the flagship programme named as “Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan” by the Govt. of India. To strengthen this Abhiyan, otherwise known as 'movement', a second flagship programme known as “Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)” is launched in 2010 by our government with the objective to make secondary education universal for all. You all will be pleased to know that under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan programme, a target of enrolling 15% children from the age group 14-18 through the open schooling system has been envisioned, thereby acknowledging the potentiality of the system and making the same an integral part of the RMSA programme. Moreover, in view of the children of this age group entering into the world of work at an early stage, we have given utmost importance on vocational education and skill training. This has led us to formulate a policy on “National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF)” for granting a smooth progression of children horizontally and vertically in the education sector. We have also taken the steps to recognise, validate and certify through a robust assessment process on the prior learning of the population attained in the



informal setups, and NIOS and other open schools in the country have largely been entrusted with this responsibility in partnership with industries. I am sure this conference will focus and deliberate on some of these initiatives of our government and further give new impetus by drawing international experiences available elsewhere.

I congratulate NIOS for organising this conference and choosing a very relevant as well as contemporary topic. Since its inception in the year 1989, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has emerged as a global brand for imparting vital school education to every individual who could not avail formal education. With its vision of “sustainable inclusive learning with universal and flexible access to quality school education and skill development,” NIOS aims at providing relevant, continuing and holistic education up to pre-degree level through open and distance learning system. Its contribution to the Universalisation of School Education and catering to the educational needs of the prioritised target groups for equity and social justice has been well recognised. With a cumulative enrolment of above 2 million, NIOS is playing a significant role, by developing systems and strategies to reach the unreached and unreachable. It is further attempting to increase access to quality education and thus making significant contribution in the move towards education for all.

I have been told that the conference has attracted more than seventy quality papers from India and abroad. This speaks volumes about the acceptability of open schooling as an alternative system. It also is an indicator of the relevance and currency of the theme.

I wish the conference all the best and look forward to significant recommendations from this conference for strengthening open schooling in the country.



## Address by Guest of Honour



Mr. R. Bhattacharya, Secretary, School Education & Literacy,  
Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India

Open schooling is indeed a concept that has the potential of revolutionising society at large and bringing out the best in people since it motivates the learners to strive and achieve their educational aspirations. Reaching the unreached - this about sums up the entire process. The Jomtien World Conference on 'Education for All' (EFA) in 1990 gave a clarion call to countries to develop strategies for enabling access to basic education. Ten years later, leaders all over the world reiterated the need for developing a strategic plan on "Education for All", one of the objectives of United Nation's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

India with a burgeoning population of over 1.2 billion initially established the National Open School in November 1989 in Delhi, now known as National Institute of Open Schooling. It soon became the largest open schooling system in the world with client groups like drop-outs from formal schools, rural youth, rural and urban poor, girls, women, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, backward classes, handicapped people, ex-servicemen and working population at the bottom level. Subsequently, the huge size of the country with many large states made it imperative to set up State Open Schools, mainly to raise their literacy level and open a window for second chance education, those who have missed their first chance of formal schooling. It is well nigh impossible to realise the laudable goal of EFA and universalisation of school education through the formal education system alone and hence a deliberate attempt was made to create an alternative called "open schooling".

In India, the flagship programme called "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan", launched by the Govt. of India in partnership with the provincial government, aims at making elementary education from class I to VII universal for children in the 6-14 age groups, and I am happy to inform you that this has largely been successful in terms of access to education. But the issues related to equity and quality, particularly in rural areas, have remained still a distant goal. Further, with the increased demand for secondary education, the Govt. of India has launched a second flagship programme called Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA), to provide greater access to secondary education. The main focus of RMSA is to provide access to Secondary

#### Address by Guest of Honour



Education with special emphasis on enrolling children from economically backward groups, girls from rural areas, differently-abled children, and many more marginalised segments of the society.

The programme RMSA recognises the role of Open Schooling, which states as: “Despite massive expansion of educational facilities in Secondary Schooling, a large number of adolescents and youth in the concerned age groups will not be able to take advantage of formal schooling during stipulated school hours that often coincide with the productive labour required in rural areas for agriculture and in urban areas for a variety of income generating activities particularly for lower middle class and poor families. It is necessary to design, create and establish alternative educational provisions for such prospective learners. As a result of experimentation and initiatives in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) the Open Schooling system has emerged as an alternative school education system.”

Further, the Central Advisory Board on Education (CABE), while deliberating on the universalisation of secondary education, has suggested that the open school network when fully developed should be able to cater to at least 15% students in secondary education. It is a great challenge before the open schooling system, which needs to be met by making perspective plans meticulously. The Open Schooling network, therefore, needs to be expanded to ensure that every state provides open schooling facility through its regional language.

The role of open schooling is no doubt crucial for attaining education for all at the school level. As you may agree with me many countries in the developing world, including India, are facing the challenge of providing adequate infrastructure for universalisation of secondary education. The open and distance learning system has emerged as a viable and acceptable alternative system of education, as a supplementary mechanism for providing quality education for all due to its in-built mechanism of cost effectiveness, flexibility in curriculum and instructional system and potentiality to harness the support of technology to facilitate learning.

In India, the open schooling programmes are offered up to pre-degree level by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and 16 State Open Schools (SOSs). NIOS functions as an apex institute, more specifically the national resource organisation in the field of open schooling. Apart from offering open schooling programmes, it plays an advisory role for state open schools as well as a training and research institute in the field. I congratulate NIOS for taking the initiative of organising this international conference involving the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada, the UNFPA (a UN Agency) and Intel (one of the biggest names in the field of computers/IT) as partners.

I wish the participants attending this conference will share such experiences and develop strategy plan with common interest to boost open schooling system in the developing world.

I wish the conference all success.



Dr. S.S. Jena, Conference Chairperson

# Conference Recommendations

*Placing on record* the importance of attaining both the EFA (Education for All) Goals as well as MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) for all signatory countries;

*Recognizing* that ODL (Open & Distance Learning) is a cost effective and efficacious mode of education at all levels;

*Realizing* that Open schooling is crucial for attaining EFA Goals; and

*Understanding* the need for all governments to include *Open Schooling* as an acceptable mode of education in any policy/legislation on Education for All;

*The participants* of the international conference on "Education for All: Role of Open Schooling" held on 13-15 March, 2013 at IDSA, New Delhi in partnership with Commonwealth of Learning, UNFPA and Intel South Asia, after detailed deliberations make the following recommendations for attaining EFA Goals and MDGs.

- A. Recommendations for all countries and national governments
  1. *Taking steps* to introduce ODL at school/pre-degree level in all countries, particularly developing countries, where resources are an issue;
  2. *Ensuring* acceptability of open schooling by maintaining quality in curriculum, study materials, programme delivery, evaluation and student support;
  3. *Enhancing* the quality of courses & programmes by addressing hidden curricula including life skills and livelihood skills;
  4. *Recognizing* Prior learning and building learning imperatives on it;
  5. *Optimizing* the use of ICT (Information & Communication Technology) to make learning more accessible and to provide equitable learning opportunities;
  6. *Supporting* the OER movement to bring cost effective quality material to distance learners;
  7. *Encouraging* research and capacity building of all ODL functionaries; and
  8. *Developing* action plans for collaborating, and cooperating with other nations/organizations/institutions as well as individuals to boost the Open Schooling Movement for achieving the EFA Goals as well as MDGs.
- B. Recommendations for MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development), Govt. of India
  1. *Including* open schooling in the definition of *school* as an accepted mode of schooling under the RTE Act, 2009;
  2. *Establishing* State Open Schools in every state to cater to 15% children of the relevant age group through open schooling under the RMSA Framework for universalization of secondary education;
  3. *Notifying* NIOS as the National Resource Organization in open schooling and raising its status to the level of NCERT for providing academic and technical support and advice to state governments; and
  4. *Supporting* NIOS to set up a National Resource Centre for RMSA.



Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Conference Director

- C. Recommendations for National Institute of Open Schooling
1. *Playing* a crucial role towards universalization of secondary education and in attaining the cherished goal of Education for All at secondary level by addressing the needs of priority groups girl children/women, socially & economically backward groups, persons with disability, minorities, etc. keeping the triangle of Access, Equity and Quality in mind;
  2. *Evolving* an action plan to promote gender equity and equality;
  3. *Integrating* Life Skills in all policies and programmes of NIOS;
  4. *Drawing up* of a special programme for persons with disability;
  5. *Planning* to establish at least one regional centre in every state;
  6. *Extending* its outreach by providing study centres in all Blocks, particularly in Educationally Backward Blocks of India;
  7. *Instituting* a National Resource Centre for RMSA to provide academic and technical support to state governments, capacity building of open school functionaries as well as undertake quality research for expanding the knowledge base in open schooling;
  8. *Initiating* advocacy with all state governments to set up open schools or strengthen the already existing State Open Schools;
  9. *Developing* curriculum framework for open schooling;
  10. *Optimizing* the use of ICT and Media and explore innovative ideas inter alia Virtual Schooling, OERs, e-Learning;
  11. *Expanding* its skill development/vocational education programme in tune with the NVEQF, revising all courses in consultation with National Skill Development Council and Sector Skill Councils; and
  12. *Playing* an active role as world leader in open schooling by providing consultation to national governments, particularly in the Commonwealth for setting up Open Schools and reviving the International Centre for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS) set up with the help of COL (Commonwealth of Learning) and UNESCO for capacity building of open school functionaries at international level.
- D. Recommendations for State Governments
1. *Establishing* and / or strengthening open schools in consultation with NIOS;
  2. *Undertaking* advocacy activities for promoting open schooling and
  3. *Tracking* out of school children and bringing them into the fold of education through open schooling.

# Conference Approach Paper

“Education for all” declares that everyone has a right to education. Its aim is to give everyone a chance to learn and benefit from basic education not as an accident of circumstance, or as a privilege, but as a right.”

## EDUCATION FOR ALL: INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

The aspiration of making education available to all is not new. More than two hundred years ago, Adam Smith argued for universal education on the grounds of public order and the preservation of freedom. By the mid-20th century, education was enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has a right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.”

As an international initiative, Education for All (EFA) was first launched in Jomtien, Thailand, in 1990 to bring the benefits of education to “every citizen in every society.”

After a decade, the international community reaffirmed its commitment to EFA in Dakar, Senegal, in April 2000 and again in September of that year. In order to realize this aim, a broad coalition of national governments, civil society groups, and development agencies such as the World Bank and UNESCO committed to achieving six specific education goals:

- Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
- Achieve a 50% improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. In the September meeting, 189 countries and their partners adopted the two EFA goals that are also Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

There were 40 million more children in schools in 2006 vis-a-vis in 1999. This success was achieved by focusing international effort after 2000 on the core goal of Universal Primary Education (UPE). The Dakar Forum had articulated six goals, covering aspirations ranging from the expansion of early childhood education to a drastic reduction in adult literacy. Two of the Dakar goals – UPE and Gender Equality – were incorporated into the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)** are eight international development goals that United Nations member states and international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. The goals are:

1. eradicating extreme poverty and hunger,
2. achieving universal primary education,
3. promoting gender equality and empowering women
4. reducing child mortality rates,
5. improving maternal health,
6. combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases,
7. ensuring environmental sustainability, and
8. developing a global partnership for development.

Achieving the Education for All goals is critical for attaining all 8 MDGs in part due to the direct impact of education on child and reproductive health, as well as the fact that EFA has created a body of experience in multi-partner collaboration toward the 2015 targets. Simultaneously, achieving the other MDGs, such as improved health, access to clean drinking water, decreased poverty, and environmental sustainability, are critical to achieving the education MDGs.

The movement towards *Education for All* revitalized educational reforms all over the world. Major progress has been made in terms of access to primary education and declining number of out of school children between 6-11 age groups but a wide vacuum still has its presence in the effort to achieve the goal of Education for All. Although there has been steady progress towards achieving many EFA goals, challenges remain. According to the latest data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), 61 million children of primary school age were out of school in 2010. It is a matter of great concern that the number of out-of-school children has remained at 61 million over the last three years. Much of this global stagnation is due to trends in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of out of school children has actually risen over the past three years - from 29 million in 2008 to 31 million in 2010. Of the 61 million children who were out of school in 2010, 47% are expected to never enter school. A further 26% have attended but left school, and the remaining 27% are expected to enter school in the future. A more serious challenge is that there are roughly 28 million of the global numbers out of school children who are expected to never gain access to schooling. Girls are more likely to be out of school (28%) than boys (25%).







## EDUCATION FOR ALL IN INDIA

At the time of Independence, India inherited a system of education which was not only quantitatively small but also characterized by structural imbalances. Only fourteen per cent of the population was literate and only one child out of three had been enrolled in primary school. As education is vitally linked with the totality of the development process (education being "the basic tool for the development of consciousness and reconstitution of society," in the words of Mahatma Gandhi), the reform and restructuring of the educational system was recognized as an important area of state intervention.



The need for a literate population and universal education for all children in the age group of 6-14 was recognized as a crucial input for nation building and was given due consideration in the Constitution as well as in successive Five Year Plans.

The National Policy on Education (NPE) 1986, revised in 1992, resolved to achieve the goal of Universalization of Elementary Education by the turn of the century, emphasizing three aspects: universal access and enrolment; universal retention up to 14 years of age, and to bring about substantial improvement in the quality of education to enable all children to achieve essential levels of learning.

The Policy set the goal of decentralized planning and management of elementary education. This thinking led to the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments that provide for decentralization of the activities and facilitate transfer of power and participation of the local self-government institutions or the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

In Unnikrishnan Vs. State of Andhra Pradesh (Writ Petition No.607 of 1992), Supreme Court held that citizens of this country have the fundamental right to education and the said right flows from Article 21 of the Constitution. This right is, however, not an absolute right. Every child/citizen of this country has the right to free education until he/she completes the age of fourteen years. Thereafter, his/her right to education is subject to limits of the economic capacity and development of the State. This movement has culminated in the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009 notified on 27th August, 2009, popularly called RTE Act.

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) was launched by the Government of India for achievement of Universalization of Elementary Education (UEE) in a time bound manner, as mandated by 86th amendment to the Constitution of India making free and compulsory Education to the Children of 6-14 years age group, a Fundamental Right.

After the success of SSA, pressure has increased on the secondary education sector. The Govt. of India is now moving towards universalization of secondary education, for which the RMSA (Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan) has been launched on the lines of SSA in a missionary mode. There is a move to extend the scope of RTE Act to the target group beyond 14 years of age.





## ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOLING

While the countries have struggled to build schools and train teachers, both of which are necessary to achieve universal primary education, the limited primary infrastructures and inadequate economic resources and lack of quality teaching learning mechanisms to provide a quality secondary schooling are serious challenges that are being faced by government policy-makers. Therefore, there is a need of serious thinking and strategic planning to achieve the massive tasks ahead. In this backdrop, open and distance learning, has the paramount importance for achieving the goal of Education for All with the potential of surpassing traditional barriers that may result from prior educational, financial, geographic, time or disability-related constraints.

It is being increasingly realized that the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of education, especially at the Secondary and the Senior Secondary school education levels, is the need of the hour and should be practiced in all countries, along with the formal system of education. The Open Schooling system, with its various learner friendly characteristics and inputs like flexibility in place and pace of learning, self learning material, media and ICT support, Personal Contact Programme (PCP), recognizing and accommodating learner's preferred learning objectives (programmatic or course- or module-specific), his or her selected means for accomplishing the learning and demonstrating its attainment, and his or her need for student support services that will maximize the individual's chances of success, thus has emerged as a potential alternative system of education. As a result, massive expansion of Open Schooling Institutions has been found over the past few years.

Globally, the progress of Open Schooling programme is varied in nature and scope. Whereas in some countries the Open School programme has made significant strides, in several countries it is at the initial stage. Some countries have not started the open schooling programme, but they essentially need to open up to the idea of open schooling to achieve the cherished goal of EFA.

If EFA has to be achieved by 2015, it is obvious the open schooling will have to play a more vital role. It is in this context that an international conference is being visualized for deliberating upon the role of open schooling in fulfilling this cherished goal in all developing countries, particularly those that come under the umbrella of the Commonwealth.



## CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the conference will be to

1. exchange and share existing national and international experiences/practices for achieving Education for all
2. discuss issues and concerns pertaining to education for all at different levels and types of school education
3. suggest strategies and interventions to achieve the goal of Education for All through open schooling

## CONFERENCE THEMES

The sub-themes of the conference will be

Issues of Access & Equity:

- Expansion and Meeting of Demand; Retention/completion
- Awareness Building and Advocacy for open schooling

Issues of Quality (materials, curriculum, delivery system, evaluation)

- Relevance (need based); Contextualized; Goal-oriented
- Learner Support Services and Delivery System
- ICT & Multimedia
- Capacity Building
- Research and Development
- Innovation

Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies

- Management of Open Schooling
- Financing of Open Schooling
- Monitoring and Quality Assurance in Open Schooling
- Networking and Collaboration
- Resource Mobilization
- Documentation of Success Stories

Issues Pertaining to Skill Development through Open Schooling:

- Levels (elementary, secondary and senior secondary)
- Types (general, vocational)
- Integration of Academic Education and Vocational Education/ Skill Development



## EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Collection and compilations of status position about the open schooling programmes in different countries.
- Recommendations of the conference mentioning strategies for (i) promotion/ up scaling of the open schooling programme in various countries, (ii) increasing access with equity, (iii) ensuring quality of materials and methods, and (iv) effective programme delivery.
- Networking within the open schooling system and with other educational development sectors.
- Compilation & dissemination of a document, including proceedings, conference papers and Recommendations.

## CONFERENCE METHODOLOGY

The conference format would be a mix of thematic and plenary sessions, panel discussion and presentation of papers. If needed, parallel session may be organized for presentation of papers. In the end, recommendations of the conference will be drafted and deliberated in a plenary session for adoption.

## PARTICIPANTS

To achieve the above objectives, the conference will witness active participation of experts in the field of education/ODL and officials involved in policy making at school level.

Participants will include:

- Experts in EFA/ODL from India & abroad

# Conference Proceedings (Day-1)

# Inaugural Session



## Inaugural Session

Chief Guest:

Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju,  
Honourable Minister, Human  
Resource Development,  
Govt. of India

Guest of Honour:

Mr. R. Bhattacharya,  
Secretary, School Education  
& Literacy, Ministry of  
Human Resource  
Development (MHRD), Govt.  
of India

The conference on Education for All (EFA): Role of Open Schooling (supported by Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Vancouver, Canada, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) India, and Intel began on Wednesday, 13 March 2013. Spread over three days the conference involved six key note addresses, delivered by world renowned educationists of India and abroad, three Panel Discussions and seventy papers in eleven parallel sessions. The conference was attended by more than 200 delegates and guests from nearly twenty countries from all over the world.

The Inaugural Session was opened by Dr. Jena, who in his welcome address informed that much has been done in open and distance and distance learning system but that even more needs to be done to ensure that Right to Education (RTE) is observed in letter and spirit. He expressed his gratitude and indebtedness to the Chief Guest, Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju, Honourable Minister, Human Resource Development, Govt. of India and Guest of Honour, Mr. R. Bhattacharya, Secretary, School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), GOI.

Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Acad.), NIOS, spoke about the conference and how EFA is a cherished goal. The movement toward EFA has led to cooperation with other countries. He talked about moving towards universalization of secondary education and the importance of access, equity and quality.

Ms. Ferreira opened her address by conveying greetings from COL and how COL is proud to partner with NIOS and HRD. She stated that the





conference allows ODL stakeholders to share consult and collaborate, and she congratulated NIOS for organising the conference.

Mr. Bhattacharya discussed the merits of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). He went on to say that the Govt. of India is committed to provide Education for All. After the success of SSA leading to universalization of elementary education, the nation is now ready to move towards the universalization of secondary education. In this context the role of open schooling is crucial and it will have to cater at least 15% of children in the age group of 14-18 years.

Dr. Pallam Raju released the Framework of Recognition of Prior Learning drafted by NIOS. While speaking on the occasion he outlined the success of SSA and how it means that secondary education must also become universal. He felt that open schooling has significant role to play in achieving the target of Education for All.

Sh. U.N. Khaware, Secretary, NIOS, then delivered the vote of thanks. He said that NIOS is indebted to Dr. Pallam Raju's efforts.





## Keynote Address 1

# From Education For All to Learning For All



Conference Keynote  
Address:

“From Education  
for All to Learning  
for All”

Speaker:

Ms. Frances Ferreira,  
Education Specialist,  
Commonwealth of  
Learning (COL),  
Vancouver, Canada

Chair:

Dr. S.S. Jena,  
Chairman, NIOS,  
India

Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, chaired the Conference Keynote Address “From Education for All to Learning for All”. Dr. Jena welcomed Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada, the speaker for the session. He also gave a hearty welcome to all delegates present and noted that 2013 is the Silver Jubilee year of the founding of NIOS. In a yearlong activity the present conference is one of many activities arranged to celebrate this important anniversary. He was certain that the presentations made at the conference will give direction on how NIOS and all concerned can achieve the U.N. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Finally, he thanked Ms. Ferreira for helping to coordinate the participation of the delegates from the Commonwealth countries. With those remarks, he turned over the session to Ms. Ferreira.

Ms. Ferreira stated that she was always happy to be involved with NIOS and was privileged to be invited to the conference. She congratulated NIOS on arranging the conference, noting that EFA is central in the crusade to eliminate poverty.

She posed the question on how we can work towards Learning for All. Noting that the challenge is bringing children to school and keeping them in school, she said that children who leave school early represent lost opportunities. One startling statistic she quoted was that in Sub-Saharan Africa, 17% of children leave school before grade 2.

Ms. Frances Ferreira joined COL as Education Specialist, Basic Education and Open Schooling, in January 2007. A teacher by profession, she was Director of the state-owned Namibian College of Open Learning from 1996 to 2006. As the institution's first chief executive, she facilitated the strategic positioning of NAMCOL, both nationally and internationally. Previous positions include Chair of the Namibian Open Learning Network Trust and Chair of the Distance Education Association of Southern Africa (DEASA). Her contribution to the field of open and distance learning in Namibia was rewarded in 2002 at COL's second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning, held in Durban, South Africa, when she received the Distance Learning Experience Award from the Commonwealth of Learning (one of COL's Excellence in Distance Education Awards).



Ms. Ferreira also brought up the issue of gender parity, equal treatment and equal access to what children want to study. Gender parity remains a challenge, but it means more than an equal number of boys and girls. Equal treatment and access to subjects that children want to study are also to be considered.

Turning to the role of open schooling, she asked the audience to consider if there are any published results of the successes of open schooling. In that regard, she suggested the following:

- We must gain the confidence of governments to enable us to deliver efficiently
- We must provide evidence because we lack the hardcore data that comes from tracking students' learning and achievements
- We need dedicated leadership to guide us

Addressing the need for skills development, she said that the lack of strategic planning in this area shows a short-sightedness of many development strategies. Therefore, she hoped that the conference would renew peoples' commitment and she urged everyone to review curriculum so as to provide a balance between technological, vocational and general subjects. She also pointed out the need for a clearer ICT strategy and queried if technological education is avoided because of the costs and risks involved. If so, all participants in the education must design the future of learning.

She further mentioned Open Educational Resources (OER) materials that are:

- free and freely available
- suitable for all levels of education

Turning towards flexible opportunities, she queried if anyone in the education system truly knows why children drop out or do they simply guess at the reasons. She also asked how to tap the potential of ICTs to provide flexible opportunities.

In her closing remarks, she looked forward to the outcome of the conference. She maintained her conviction that open schooling can improve society by building human capital and quality learning. However, she noted the troublesome image of a tsunami of learners on the verge of engulfing an Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Titanic. To avert disaster, everyone in the education system must start today to change the collision course.

After Ms. Ferreira's presentation, Dr. Jena invited the audience to an open discussion. Mr. Joshua Mallet from Ghana asked if we can share our knowledge with the non-Commonwealth countries and how can we partner with them. Another audience member, Mr. Swajan, asked Ms. Ferreira about the common obstacles shared by developed and developing countries. What is being done to accept open learning degrees across the board? He gave the example of Indian employers who are reluctant to accept employees with open school degrees.





Ms. Ferreira replied to Dr. Mallet that leadership remains the bottom line. We must learn to share open schooling resources, this is the best way to gain confidence. She also said that COL will not impose itself on other countries.

In response to Mr. Swajan's remarks, she said that poverty is the key reason behind dropouts. Children must earn for their families, so the cost of an education is weighed against what a child can earn. She also said that curriculum is frequently irrelevant to what children want to learn. Instead of teaching them technology, we offer them boring material. She also said that one of the common obstacles faced by all countries is uneducated parents. As to the acceptance of open schooling, she said that a common perception is that quality has a price tag. If something is expensive, we automatically consider it superior. Therefore, since open schooling is less expensive, people think it's inferior. This is another reason why we need hard data to reveal our successes.

Prof. Usha Nayar, Professor (Retd.), NCERT, stated that we shouldn't feel inferior because ODL often has material that is superior to that used in the formal system. In addition, ODL opens its arms to everyone, regardless of gender, caste, ability, location, etc. This openness is the only way to reach as many learners as possible. She also said that what we need is not leadership but rather a collective team.

One delegate brought up the issues of infrastructure, proper advocacy and networking. Another delegate discussed advocacy and noted that in the two modes of delivering education (ODL and the formal system), the curriculum (for instance, mathematics) remains the same; it is only the delivery modes that differ. He also said that we need ODL programmes placed in the national qualifications network.

Ms. Asheema Singh, UNFPA consultant and Project Co-ordinator, AEP, NIOS, asked Ms. Ferreira if we need to have open schools and formal schools come together to discuss issues and share knowledge. Ms. Ferreira said yes, we must invite our partners from the formal school system. However, before we do that, we must have proof and evidence to offer.

Dr. Jena concluded the Conference Keynote Address by thanking all the participants. He noted that since 1947, India has been struggling to provide education. Indeed the enactment of the Right to Education (RTE) is a proof of this struggle. He pointed out that ODL is still a new concept in India; however, instead of having to prove its worth, just as Sita had to prove her purity, ODL must now ask the formal education system to explain lapses such as why children in Class 5 can't do maths at a Class 2 level.

## Keynote Address 2

# The Future of Learning



The next session was the Keynote Address on “The Future of Learning”. The Chair for the session was Ms. Shweta Khurana, Head, K12 Education, Corporate Affairs Group, Intel South Asia, and the speaker was Dr. Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology, Newcastle University, U.K.

Dr. Mitra began by pointing out that learning is not education. He queried that if the primary education system produces broken pieces, then it is the role of the remaining systems to only repair but also to provide maintenance services. He discussed the Victorian machine of schooling how reading, writing and arithmetic were taught so as to produce the clerks needed to keep the British Empire running. He noted that we are still stuck with this model.

He then discussed how schools are designed to meet the very different needs of two customers the parents and the government. Schools must provide what parents want for their children to be happy and well-rounded while meeting what the government wants in order to secure funding. The third customer is the employer but their requirements are not used to design a school curriculum. In fact, most employers end up re-training their employees. Therefore, according to Dr. Mitra, schools produce a perfect product for an empire that no longer exists.

There is a fourth customer a child's peers. And their requirement is only that a child be cool, which is radically different from the requirements of the other three customers. Unfortunately, education is not designed for the only people who will be with you forever your peers.

Dr. Sugata Mitra is Professor of Educational Technology at the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University, England. He is best known for his "Hole in the Wall" experiment and is a leading proponent of Minimally Invasive Education (MIE). He has a PhD in Physics and is credited with more than 25 inventions in the area of cognitive science and education technology. He is widely cited in works on literacy and education. He is Chief Scientist, Emeritus, at NIIT and is also the winner of TED Prize 2013. His interests include Children's Education, Remote Presence, Self-Organising Systems, Cognitive Systems, Physics and Consciousness.

Keynote Address:  
“The Future of Learning”  
Speaker:  
Dr. Sugata Mitra,  
Professor of Educational  
Technology, Newcastle  
University, U.K.

Chair:  
Ms. Shweta Khurana,  
Head, K12 Education,  
Corporate Affairs Group,  
Intel South Asia



Dr. Mitra gave the startling statistic that 2 billion out of 3 billion students are in bad schools. He noted that schooling is outdated, based as it is on a military-industrial background, and that you don't improve an outdated thing. Instead, you re-invent it.

Turning to his experiment, Hole in the Wall, from 1999-2001, he mentioned that with broadband access to Google, you can pretend to be educated. And that we become what we pretend. Hole in the Wall demonstrated that self taught learning and minimally invasive education produce phenomenal results. Groups of children can learn to operate computers by themselves but only under two conditions:

- The absence of teachers
- The computers are in a public, non-threatening locations

The experiment, where small input produces disproportionate output, means that there is a mechanism at work that we don't know about. The question is: how far can it go? This led to his organising British grandmothers as volunteer teachers. The Granny Cloud connects these teachers to students across the world via Skype.

He discussed Self Organised Learning Environments (SOLEs) and pointed out that teachers around the world are beginning to work with SOLEs. Emphasising that a group of children can learn anything by themselves, he speculated that learning is an emergent phenomenon in an educational self organising system.

He said that the new curriculum is:

- reading comprehension by age 6
- information search and retrieval
- rational system of belief, NOT a doctrinal system

He gave the following Lessons from Neuroscience:

- eliminate all threat perception
- replace threat with pleasure but not exhilaration
- have sessions where rational thinking is stopped
- do not medicate for fictitious diseases

He closed his session with the question is learning obsolete? If so, then we must overhaul the system.

Ms. Khurana wrapped up Dr. Mitra's address by discussing the Changing Paradigm and Intel's Vision and redefining the future of children in South Asia.



During the open discussion, a delegate asked Dr. Mitra if it wasn't simplistic to say that a teacher's role will become obsolete. Dr. Mitra responded that the system needs teachers but that the present system can't continue forever. After that, the teacher's role will be radically different.



## Keynote Address 3

# Access and Equity in School Education: Issues and Concerns for Open Schooling

Following lunch was the Keynote Address on “Access and Equity in School Education: Issues and Concerns for Open Schooling”. The Chair for the address was Prof. A.K. Sharma, Former Director, NCERT. Dr. Vinod Raina, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, was the speaker.

Dr. Raina opened his remarks by noting that every Indian has political rights guaranteed by the constitution and that these rights can only be enjoyed by all when socio-economic rights are achieved. In this context, then, the right to education is critical.

Dr. Vinod Raina is a social activist in education and rural development and a member of the drafting of the Right to Education Bill. He did his doctoral in Physics from Delhi University and taught there for over a decade before leaving to serve school education directly. After founding the organisation Eklavya, an organisation advocating alternative education, he worked voluntarily in rural schools of central India for quality improvement of school education. Engrossed completely in the task, he worked passionately and prepared the curriculum, trained teachers and worked out innovative methods of examinations. Later, through Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, (BGVS), he worked and developed the campaign mode of adult literacy and extended it across India from 1989 in collaboration with the National Literacy Mission, Government of India. He is a member of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE)

Keynote Address:  
“Access and Equity in School Education: Issues and Concerns for Open Schooling”

Speaker:  
Dr. Vinod Raina,  
Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti,  
India

Chair:  
Prof. A.K. Sharma,  
Former Director, NCERT,  
India



## Conference Proceedings (Day-1)

He then discussed the elusive triangle of access, equity and quality in the education system. He pointed out that without equity, there cannot be quality. This makes it all the more crucial for policy makers to focus on integrating quality within ODL by joint efforts

and contributions from all concerned. Meanwhile, inclusion means that all children, whether bright or slow, rich or poor, are in the same class. To illustrate the importance of equity, he gave the example of Scandinavian countries that have an inclusive education system. Children there perform better in mathematics than their American counterparts.

Turning to the conference theme of Education for All, he said that this is a measure which is left to the state to provide as a constitutional right. However, the difference between RTE and EFA is that the former is a constitutional right, while the latter is a social right. Under RTE, the compulsion is on the state to ensure enrolment, attendance and participation. This means that an Indian child who doesn't receive an education can lobby the Supreme Court about the matter. He queried if we intentionally keep open schooling apart from the legal entitlement of a child under RTE.

He then turned to the need to balance vocational and "normal" education. Stressing the importance of skill development activities for learners, he pointed out how crucial the role of the ODL system is in this regard. This will become possible through the vocationalisation of academic courses. For Dr. Raina, education is not routine monotonous labour work but the fulfilment of every learner's potential. He again emphasised the role of the government and concerned officials of the academic fraternity in providing education to all, at all levels and with no compromise in quality.

In conclusion, he referred to his research that revealed that 60% of children aged 6-14 are attending school and that there are good schools as well as bad schools. The big challenge for ODL and NIOS is catering to the needs of these children. The non-interactive, pedagogical technique is not enough, human interaction is needed as much as technological support.



## Panel Discussions 1

# Issues of Access and Equity

The next session was a panel discussion on Issues of Access and Equity. The panel was chaired by Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, Founder Chairman, NIOS, and moderated by Ms. Lystra Sampson Ovid, Education Consultant and Director Trinidad & Tobago open school. The panellists were Prof. Usha Nayar, Professor (Retd.), NCERT, discussing Gender Perspective, and Prof. Janaki Rajan, Professor, Jamia Millia Islamia, talking about Holistic Perspective.

Prof. Nayar discussed the education of girls in India as a revolution. She noted that the notion of women being the weaker sex was an import of the colonial rulers. In pre-colonial India, women were never weak or disadvantaged. However, the need now is to focus on both sexes.

Prof. Rajan opened her remarks by stating that discrimination is rampant and flourishing in the Indian education system, whether it's discrimination because of caste or gender. She pointed out that the universal right to education is most often least realizable by the most underprivileged and that equal access alone is not equal opportunity.

Panel Discussion:  
"Issues of Access and Equity"

Chair:

Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal,  
Founder Chairman,  
NIOS, India

Moderator:

Ms. Lystra Sampson Ovid,  
Trinidad & Tobago Open  
School

Panelists:

Gender Perspective:  
Prof. Usha Nayar,  
Prof. (Retd.), NCERT,  
Delhi, India

Holistic Perspective:  
Prof. Janaki Rajan,  
Jamia Millia Islamia,  
Delhi, India





## Conference Proceedings (Day-1)



She discussed social justice as education, the inheritance of inequalities, moving from exclusionary education to universal education, reclaiming equitable traditions, the challenges for open schooling, and the potentialities for open schooling.

Ms. Ovid thanked Prof. Nayar and Prof. Rajan for clarifying the issues of gender perspective and the holistic perspective. She noted that these issues could have come from any country in the Commonwealth. She said that we must demystify the concept that open schooling is sub-standard.

The audience was then invited to ask questions and make comments.

Prof. N.K. Ambasht from India noted that modern education is weaning children away from tribal societies. He said that open schooling content has greater potential as a leveller and that RTE is not at loggerheads with open schooling.

Dr. Lopez from Belize remarked to Prof. Nayar that her country experiences an imbalance of 1 boy for every 16 girls in a classroom. She asked how to attract and retain boys to education.

Chair of the session Fr. Kunnunkal concluded the session by noting that India has a cultural problem with equality. He said that we need to rewrite the definition of functional literacy to be fair to the children. Otherwise, we run the risk of producing misfits who can barely read and write. He officially closed the session by thanking the panelists and the delegates for their rapt attention.



# Cultural evening



After the busy schedule of conference activities, a cultural evening was organized for the delegates participating in the conference

Learners from NIOS study centers Shikhar Organisation, Talent Group and Brihannayika Culture Resource Center put up scintillating performances.

All the delegates enjoyed the performances put up by the learners.





# Conference Proceedings (Day-2)

## Keynote Address 4

# Quality in School Education: Issues & Concerns for Open Distance Learning



Day Two began with a keynote address on “Quality in School Education: Issues & Concerns for Open Distance Learning”. The chair for the session was Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director UNESCO, New Delhi & Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka. The speaker was Prof. Shyam B. Menon, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi India.

Mr. Aoyagi began the session by noting the global education trends as we draw closer to 2015, the deadline for fulfilling the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). Post the 2015 agenda, the role of non-formal, flexible learning will come into play. The concept of learning anywhere, any time will mean expanding the role of ICT and improving teacher quality.

Prof. Menon then took the podium. He thanked Dr. Jena and NIOS for the invitation to address the conference. Recounting his personal association with NIOS, back when it was the NOS he said he has been watching the emerging role of NIOS in developing education. However, he characterised it as a dream that has yet to reach a conclusion.

He noted that ODL and open schooling are not limited to children who are out of school. Indeed, the distinction between being in school and out of school is very narrow and is becoming blurred. This is, in part, due to a systemic approach that is

Keynote address:  
“Quality in School Education: Issues & Concerns for Open Distance Learning”

Speaker:  
Prof. Shyam B. Menon,  
Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R.  
Ambedkar University,  
Delh, India

Chair:  
Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi,  
Director UNESCO, New  
Delhi & Representative to  
India, Bhutan, Maldives  
and Sri Lanka

Prof. Shyam B. Menon has been the Vice Chancellor at Ambedkar University, Delhi, India, since 2008. Previously, he was a Professor at the Central Institute of Education, University of Delhi, and Dean, Faculty of Education and the Proctor of the University of Delhi. He had earlier been Director, School of Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, and a Professor at the Central Institute of Educational Technology, NCERT. He had also taught at the M.S. University of Baroda for several years. He studied at the University of Kerala and at the M.S. University of Baroda and was a Fulbright Fellow at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His doctoral work was in the area of Curriculum and Cognition, and his postdoctoral research was in Higher Education. Much of his work has been in Curriculum Studies, Higher Education and Teacher Education. He edited the journal, Perspectives in Education, for many years. He is at present on the international advisory board of Comparative Education, Teaching Education and Asia Pacific Journal of Education.





lacking among teachers, facilitators and policy makers.

He cautioned all present to realise that the goals of EFA and the MDGs cannot be achieved by 2015 and characterised India's achievements in this area as a receding horizon. This is not a goal that can be achieved in the time stipulated, so the need of the hour is to recognise the immensity of the challenges and the fact that the routine bureaucratic structures no longer work. Therefore, political mobilisation is imperative: not just political will, but also the readiness of bureaucrats to accept the need for change.

In order to go forward, three things are needed:

- greater political will
- readiness of the bureaucracy to transcend a routine matter of working
- greater civil society participation

He pointed out that major educational reforms have been attempted by SSA and RMSA, which were state initiatives that went beyond the previous centrally sponsored schemes for quality in education. However, even though they are positive steps, they do not address the issue of looking at school in the broadest manner. Instead, they are limited to the model of a classroom with a didactic teacher delivering packaged knowledge. These very traditional notions are fine for providing hand holding and social interaction, but in elementary education, the need is to facilitate face-to-face interaction by adopting non-traditional approaches.

Prof. Menon next addressed the futility of teacher training encapsulated in the cascade approach. The static nature of teacher training produces assembly line workers and has no place in a complex educational system. ODL could have played a role in improving teacher training in the districts. However, the lack of a systematic approach prevented this from happening.

He likened the workings of bureaucracy and parallel systems to that of a heart bypass operation. The bypass works fine but the main artery wastes away. In this way, the main departmental structure of the Indian bureaucracy rejected most of the reforms attempted in education. One solution to this problem is civil society initiatives to partner with the government - witness the RTE, which was the culmination of a political process that involved civil society initiatives.

In conclusion, Prof. Menon pointed out that the core of the Indian economy, i.e. approximately 93% is in the non-organised sector. To bridge the gap between the core and peripheral economies, the traditional, non-inclusive imagination of secondary and tertiary education must be overhauled. That will entail including every element when judging whether or not a school is good. So, again, the traditional model of knowledge diffusion and flow must be changed.

## Panel Discussion 2

# Vocational Education and Skill Development

Next was a panel discussion on Vocational Education and Skill Development. The discussion was chaired by Ms. Fancy Amey, Director, Learner Support, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Botswana. The moderator for the session was Mr. Joshua Mallet, Director, CENDLOS, Ghana. The panelists were Dr. Joginder S. Sodhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, Human Resources, Economic & Social Development, New Delhi; Ms. Ankita Mishra Bundela, Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Govt. of India, and Dr. K.P. Wasnik, Director (Vocational Education), NIOS, INDIA.

Dr. Sodhi stressed the need for industry involvement in formulating vocational education. He also pressed for erasing the stigma that vocational education training (VET) condemns a student to remaining a labourer. To combat that stigma, more needs to be done to understand the youth's aspirations and to improve career counselling and career guidance. For him, the shift must be from teaching and training to employment and employability.



Panel Discussion:  
“Vocational Education and Skill Development”

Chair:

Ms. Fancy Amey, Director, Learner Support, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Botswana

Moderator:

Mr. Joshua Mallet, Director, CENDLOS, Ghana

Panelists:

- Dr. Joginder S. Sodhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, Human Resources, Economic & Social Development, New Delhi, India
- Ms. Ankita Mishra Bundela, Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Govt. of India
- Dr. K.P. Wasnik, Director (Vocational Education), NIOS, INDIA

Ms. Bundela discussed the MHRD's order for the National Vocational Education Qualification Framework (NVEQF), issued in September 2012. NVEQF establishes national principles for providing vocational education at an international equivalency. Partnerships with industry are emphasised, as is a transfer between vocational education and general education. NVEQF has launched a pilot in 40 schools in Haryana and pilots in West Bengal (60 schools) and Assam (93 schools) are also in the pipeline.

Dr. Wasnik discussed the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and its benefits to learners, employers and society by providing a certified skilled workforce. Two of the principles of RPL are accessibility and that it is voluntary for learners. The assessment methods used must be appropriate, fair and manageable.



Mr. Joshua Mallet, moderating the session



Mr. Joginder S. Sodhi presenting his paper



Ms Ankita Misra explaining NVEQF



Ms Fancy Amey chairing the session

## Keynote Address 5

# Planning for Instructional Strategies in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling

After the lunch break, there was a keynote address on “Planning for Instructional Strategies in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling”. The speaker was Dr. Santosh Panda, Professor, Distance Education, STRIDE, IGNOU, and the chair was Prof. N.K. Ambasht, Former Chairman, NIOS. Dr. Panda opened his remarks by noting that establishing parallel education systems means that more money must be spent. However, this investment is something we need to do. It is also important to ensure dialogue, especially among students. A model of low structure with high dialogue will yield learner autonomy.

He enumerated the interests of the various stakeholders in education policy makers, teachers, parents, evaluators and employers and how they frequently are at odds with each other. For teachers, learning is an active and engaging experience. For parents, the goal of education is to produce a good human being

Keynote Address:  
“Planning for Instructional Strategies in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling”

Speaker:  
Dr. Santosh Panda,  
Professor, Distance Education, STRIDE, IGNOU, India

Chair:  
Prof. N.K. Ambasht,  
Former Chairman, NIOS, India

Dr. Santosh Panda, M.Phil. and Ph.D. (Education), Certificate in ETV (BBC, UK), is a professor of Distance Education, Staff Training & Research Institute of Distance Education (STRIDE) at the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU). He has served as founding director, Inter-University Consortium for Technology-Enabled Flexible Education and Development (IUC-TEFED), IGNOU (2004- 2007). He is also the coordinator of IGNOU's International MA in Distance Education Programme, sponsored by COL and Rajiv Gandhi Foundation, SADC, and UNESCO-IICBA and offered in 20 countries; and coordinator of the first National M.Ed. Programme sponsored by the statutory Distance Education Council and the statutory National Council for Teacher Education, Government of India. As founding head of IUC-TEFED, he has been responsible for initiating policy formulation and system-wide implementation of new educational media and technology, focusing particularly on interactive multimedia, online and blended learning, development of learning technologies, and faculty development towards effective transition from traditional distance learning to blended and online learning.







with employable skills. Evaluators concentrate on comprehensive learning, while employers look for innovative leaders with multiple skills. In all of this, the goals of learning are to produce graduates who can engage in critical thinking, higher order learning, problem-based enquiry and jugad innovation. This last item is problem solving in context with low-cost technical intervention.

Turning to learning styles, he elucidated the differences between sensing, visual, inductive, active and sequential, and he highlighted the struggle between behaviourism and constructivism. As for Self Directed Learning (SDL), he said it was to address self management and self monitoring. Adapting OER to one's own context is involved, as is self regulation. This sets up a conflict between independence (independent learning) and interaction (guided and collaborative learning), or the student's preference for individualised learning vs. the lack of skill in personal goal setting.

Dr. Panda then discussed the variances in curriculum mapping, concept mapping and skill mapping as coherent (balanced); cohesive (binding together); comprehensive (wider coverage); and progressive (vertical-spiral).

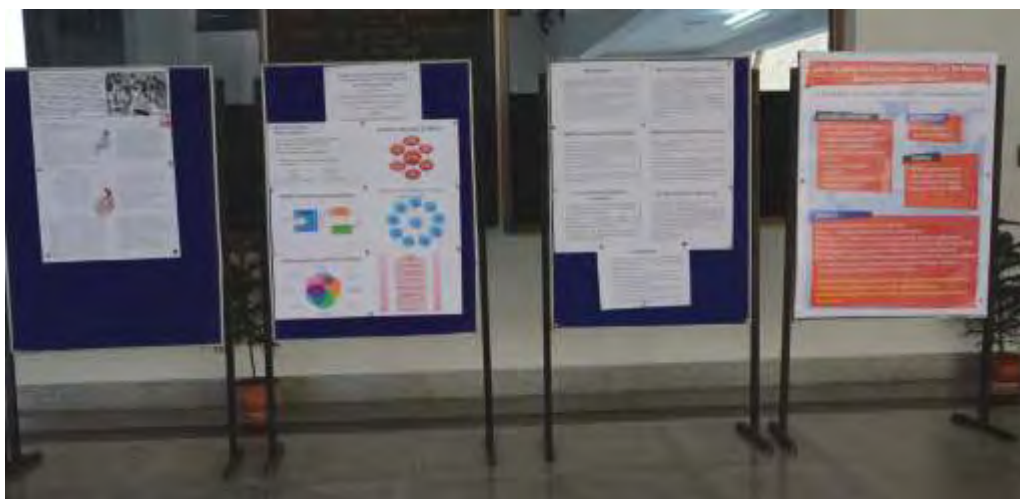
He focused on the factors in learning: cognitive (knowledge and academic skills); non-cognitive (attitude, behaviour and motivation vs. context); and the capacity to learn (blend of cognitive and context). In non-cognitive learning, the student is not the same as the context. This is related to an academic mindset, social skills and academic perseverance, and academic behaviour and academic performance.

In conclusion, he touched upon the merits of blended learning and how it involves learning objectives, content, activities and assessment and/or portfolios.

# Poster Session

The poster of the participants were displayed from the inaugural day of the conference. All the posters are designed according to the conference guidelines. The participants selected for poster presentation presented their papers on the second day of the conference. All the delegates were engaged in active discussions with the poster presenters and took a keen interest in the subject

Name	Title of the Paper
Dr. Geetika Dutta	Enduring Issues in Business Education: A Case for Societal Need based Systemic Reforms
Mr. Swaleha A. Sindhi	Quality Assurance System in State Board Secondary Schools of Gujarat State: A Critical Appraisal
Mr. Sarat Kumar Jena	Open School Learners and the Challenges of ICT as Educational Technology: Locating Sociological Prospective
Dr. Amit Agrawal, and Dr. Piyush Prasad	Universalisation of education system through schooling governance
Dr. Arif Jan and Mr. Khalid Masroor	Advocacy in favour of open schooling: expansion and quality





# Conference Proceedings (Day-3)

## Keynote Address 6

# Integrating Skill Development in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling

Day 3 of the conference began with a keynote address on “Integrating Skill Development in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling”. The chair was Prof. R.B. Shivagunde, Joint Director, PSSCIVE, Bhopal, and the speaker was Prof. (Dr.) Mukti K. Mishra, President, Centurion University, Odisha.

Dr. Mishra began his lively and engaging presentation by noting that indifference and inefficiency till infinity are two of the major problems confronting India. In Odisha, 70% of students drop out by Class X. This is due, in part, to the crisis in education brought about by a lack of creativity, imagination and innovation. He lamented that education policies for rural areas are decided in Delhi, which has led to education having lost its relevance at local level.

However, he continues to believe in creating a world of hope and of possibilities, without lapsing into irrational exuberance. The challenge of ensuring that 500 million people will become skilled is daunting. What must be remembered is that skill education is not a business model but a social model. This is difficult as human

Keynote Address:  
“Integrating Skill Development in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling”

Speaker:  
Prof (Dr.) Mukti K. Mishra,  
President, Centurion University, Odisha, India

Chair:  
Prof R.B. Shivagunde,  
Joint Director, PSSCIVE,  
Bhopal, India

Prof. (Dr.) Mukti Mishra is President of Centurion University, Odisha. After enjoying a brilliant career in the corporate sector with Fortune 500 companies for 15 years, he turned his attention toward teaching. In 2005, he felt that he was ready to give back to society and contribute to the lot of the common man more directly. He became an edu-entrepreneur and took over an ailing engineering institute: the Jagannath Institute for Technology and Management in the tribal and Naxal affected district of Gajapati, Odisha. Under his missionary zeal and commitment, JITM was transformed into one of the finest engineering colleges in eastern India in just one year's time. Within the next three years, JITM became part of a consortium of four other distinguished and stand-alone institutions, each one a model of excellence in its own capacity. Prof. Mishra was associated with Xavier Institute of Management, Bhubaneswar (XIMB) as Professor-Marketing and Coordinator Placement until 2005 and Xavier Labour Relations Institute (XLRI), Jamshedpur as Adjunct Professor (Mktg) until 2007.





beings are no longer social beings but economic beings, due to a mercenary outlook that supersedes everything. In this context, the importance of the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) cannot be underestimated.

Delving into the important aspects of skill development in school and overall education, he pointed out that EFA and poverty eradication seem to be unachievable in the given diverse scenarios. For him, a school should ingrain imagination, innovation and creativity in every child to enable skill development and different thinking in the real world of differences and chaos. At the same time, each person must remember his personal-social responsibility so as to serve the nation, especially as the demand and supply problem has emerged due to a lack of skill development. He advocated hands-on training, experience based learning and practice oriented teaching for the improvement of education at large.

Dr. Mishra advised NIOS to consistently challenge the present state of set affairs, such as study materials, examination process, overall management, etc, in order to continually evolve and progress in the field of education. This will necessitate an internal review from time to time.

In his concluding remarks, he stressed the importance of meta-thinking (thinking about thinking) for the development of self and society. He urged NIOS to be open to ideas, especially when focusing on creating a cadre of teachers.

## Panel Discussion 3

# Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies



After a refreshing tea break, the conference resumed with a panel discussion on "Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies". Prof M.M. Pant, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, chaired the session. The speakers were Prof. M.N. Deshmukh, Former Director, SSA, IGNOU; Dr. R.C. Sharma, IGNOU, New Delhi; Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Academic), NIOS, Delhi; and Mr. S.K. Prasad, SAP, NIOS.

Prof. Pant opened the session by reminding all present that we are at an important stage in ODL. Partly because ODL is no longer seen as a second rate option, and partly because of the global shift towards inclusive education, thanks to the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs). The world is moving towards recognising the importance of a talent pool, so the purpose of education had to become inclusive. As he pointed out, we need a system where millions of people can be taught well and at low cost.

Prof. M.N. Deshmukh spoke on Resource Based Learning in Open Schooling: A Case of OER Project of NIOS India. He stated that information is now in abundance, so the new challenges are selecting and converting information into actionable knowledge. In his thoughtful presentation, Dr. Deshmukh touched on the basic tenets of constructivism, as well as the paradigm shift from behaviourist to constructivist; from content to context; and from inform to perform.

Panel Discussion:  
"Institutional Related  
Issues and Operational  
Strategies"

Chair:  
Prof M.M. Pant,  
Former Pro-Vice  
Chancellor, IGNOU

Panelists:  
• Prof M.N. Deshmukh,  
Former Director, SSA,  
IGNOU  
• Dr. R.C. Sharma,  
IGNOU  
• Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal,  
Director (Academic),  
NIOS  
• Mr. S.K. Prasad,  
SAP, NIOS



He listed the three skill based vocational courses at the secondary and post-secondary level:

- ICT
- rural technology
- tourism and hospitality

Next up was Dr. R.C. Sharma, who addressed Virtual Open Schooling. He began his remarks by noting that the various measures and initiatives in place are still inadequate because a large number of students remain to be covered. He pointed out that virtual schools are the fastest growing trend globally and that the key is to de-link the degree from the job, thus emphasising the skill.

Dr. Sharma was followed by Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, speaking about Life Skills Integration in Open Schooling: Towards Holistic Education. He began by asking what is the end point of learning? And what should it lead to? He outlined the paradigm shift with regards to the emphasis on learning, the constructivist approach, experiential learning and RPL. He referred to the UNESCO Pillars of Education: learning to know; learning to do; learning to live together; learning to be.

Mr. S.K. Prasad was the final speaker for the session and addressed OER for Vocational Education: A Case of NIOS. His topic was Mukta Vidya Vani NIOS Initiatives Free Audio Content to Learners. This web based, live audio streaming programme, launched in July 2012, is a fine example of virtual schooling. Its attributes are that it is live, interactive, participatory and cost effective.



# Parallel Sessions



# Parallel Session I

## Issues of Access and Equity



Parallel Session I:  
“Issues of Access and Equity”

Chair:  
**Sh. M.C. Pant,**  
Former Chairman, NIOS,  
India

The session began with **Dr. Sushmita Mitra**, Former Director, Student Support Services, NIOS, presenting on “Open Schooling System in In-Secured and Conflict Situations: A Case of Afghanistan”. Noting that most countries have included the right to education in their constitutions, fulfilling this goal presents several challenges. In the case of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, situation is even more perilous, resulting as it does from the insecurity brought on by a long history of war, conflicts and insurgency. Despite steps taken to rehabilitate the education system and some achievements, access to quality education remains inequitable. This is especially so in the provinces, due to the remoteness and geographical isolation, a harsh climate and insecurity. These factors impede growth and the sustainability of access points. The high gender gap in all sectors of education, particularly from lower secondary stage to higher stages of education; poor infrastructure prevalent in most schools; untrained teachers and fewer female teachers also affect participation, retention and continuity of studies. Dr. Mitra felt that the open schooling system can meet these myriad challenges and provide educational opportunities to those who cannot and do not go to school, particularly the girls and women.

This intriguing paper was followed by **Mr. A.K.M. Iftekhar Khalid**, Assistant Director (Training), Training & Research Unit, Bangladesh Open University, discussing “The Role of SSC Programme of Open School towards Education for All in Bangladesh: A Study on Learners' Experience”. Bangladesh faces the issue of a large number of dropouts in primary education. This has happened despite the government's efforts and the increased enrolment in primary education. One solution is the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) programme of the Open School of the Bangladesh Open University (BOU). SSC is for children as well as adults returning to school, thus giving them a second chance. Mr. Khalid presented the results of interviews with 28 students of three study centres of Open School. The three districts represented Rajshahi, Dhaka and Joypurhat range from rural to urban areas. Mr. Khalid highlighted the students' experiences and their views on taking part in national development.



After examining the educational challenges in Afghanistan and Bangladesh, the focus returned to the Indian experience with the paper presented by **Mr. Sukanta Kumar Mahapatra**, Academic Officer, NIOS. Taking up the topic of “Educational Development of Marginalised Communities through Open Schooling in India: A Case Study of NIOS”, Mr. Mahapatra noted how differences in educational attainment lead to cross-generational disadvantages. Children from a lower social class perform worse in school than children from a higher class. In addition, the substandard quality of teaching and systemic inefficiencies affects the learners and society in many ways. To combat this, educational planners have advocated for expanded educational facilities, accompanied by significant improvements in quality and equality at all levels across region, class and gender. Yet the enrolment and participation of tribal children in formal schools is lower than the general population. This is due to the cost and affordability of time, coupled with several social and cultural barriers. Open schooling has, therefore, been considered as one of the viable options to increase the enrolment and participation of these marginal groups of children, particularly tribal children. By exploring the various steps and measures taken for the educational development of tribes, Mr. Mahapatra outlined the measures taken by NIOS to address the various educational issues of marginal groups and how successfully they succeed in the education system where poverty and cultural barriers prevail in their society. NIOS formulates its curriculum and learning material with an eye towards enrichment and vocational skills. Graduates of the system may thus be better equipped to tackle different vocations, as well as life.

**Dr. Dev N. Pathak**, Assistant Professor, South Asian University, then examined “(In) Quality Questions: A Sociological Apprehension of the Issues in Open Schooling”. Dr. Pathak based his analysis of the debates on schooling on the ideas put forth by Ivan Illich, Paulo Friere and Marshal McLuhan. While open schooling is a necessary step in accomplishing the universality of and equity in education, its perceived quality, or the lack thereof is unsettling. Dr. Pathak sought to unravel this complex issue, focusing on ways to enrich open schooling rather than dwell on its shortcomings.

After this thought provoking paper, **Mr. Pankaj Das**, Assistant Professor at CIE, Department of Education, University of Delhi, concluded this first parallel session with his ideas on “Schooling and Silent Exclusion in Education: Open Schooling is the Alternative Perspective towards Access and Equity in Education”. He began by noting that in India's rural areas, most children in the age group of 6-14 years are not completing basic elementary education. In addition, the dropout rate is quite high in all social categories in the same age group. He explored the phenomenon of 'silent exclusion' in elementary school education in Madhya Pradesh. This is when children who enrol in elementary schools are silently excluded, thus leading to a final exclusion. Mr. Das proposed that open schooling could be one of the viable options for combating the phenomenon of educational in-access and inequity.



## Parallel Session II

# Issues of Quality

Parallel Session II:  
Issues of Quality

Chair:

**Dr. Jaya,**  
National Programme  
Officer, UNFPA, India

**Dr. Sutapa Bose, SOE, IGNOU, New Delhi,** began by discussing “Making Learning Contextualised: A Step Towards Quality Education”. ODL in India usually uses print as the master medium to impart instructions, with a transmission of pre-packaged information for individualised reception. The same model is often adopted for imparting instructions in other media. Unfortunately, this practice undermines the social constructivist approach to learning and the situated learning theory, which demands that learning be contextualised, especially for vocational and professional programmes. The radical changes required for integrating theory and practice in ODL has led to suggestions for utilising the existing mechanisms for making learning contextualised. One is that the personal contact programme (PCP) of an ODL programme can provide not just a random assortment of activities, but rather a schedule based on a sound theoretical framework to guide the designing of learning experiences. In addition, ICT can be used for more than reaching out to learners and making instructions available round the clock. It can also be integrated into the instructional strategy adopted in a PCP and its potential, especially of web-2.0, may be used for enabling collaborative learning.

This esoteric discussion was followed by the challenges of educating adolescents. **Ms. Asheema Singh,** UNFPA consultant and Project Coordinator, AEP, presented her thoughts on “Life Skills For Enhancing Excellence In Education And Lifelong Learning”. NIOS caters to the educational aspirations of the most vulnerable and crucial group of out of school young people through printed self study material and a limited number of contact classes for concept clarification. The target group belongs to urban slums, rural areas, school dropouts, first generation learners or physically, mentally or educationally challenged learners who have no access to authentic information. Although a huge group, its needs have not been met by any agency.



Ms. Singh outlined the challenges and issues as:

- 1. NIOS addressed the needs of 1.6 million out of the 250 million Adolescents in India;**
- 2. The approach for effective life skills transaction has been through experiential learning. Transacting Life Skills Education (LSE) through open distance education has been a major challenge;**
- 3. Since NIOS has a bouquet approach for selection of subjects, it became imperative to include life skills in most of the existing subjects because as a separate subject, it may or may not be opted for as it offers no vertical linkages.**

AEP has focused on formulating a curriculum to suit the target group; sensitising the lesson writers to the new approach and to build their capacities; developing lessons with situations that most learners can relate to and that encourages them to practice life skills; expanding the scope of LSE from ARSH issues to include subject specific content; supporting and strengthening the study material through ICT (audio/video programmes, IVRS/ Learner Support Centre, WebPages).

As a result of this work, NIOS has adopted the curricular approach of seamless integration in selected subjects to ensure effective internalisation of life skills. Integration has been achieved in five subjects at the secondary level. The lessons developed will promote life-long learning, thus enhancing excellence in education.

The focus then shifted to primary education with the next paper, “Enhancing Quality of Education: Capacity Building of Primary School Teachers in Himachal Pradesh”. **Ms. Garima Sharma** and **Ms. Priti Joshi**, Department of Human Development and Childhood Studies, Lady Irwin College, University of Delhi, endeavoured to understand and map the linkages between capacity building initiatives such as teacher training and its role in enhancing the quality of education. They covered the aims, agencies and specific structures that emerged for in-service trainings of teachers from the Kothari Commission in 1966 to the District Primary Education Project (DPEP), from 1995-2003. They next addressed the contemporary concerns pertinent for the capacity building of teachers in the light of the recently formulated National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 2005. The adoption of the RTE Act of 2009 has prompted developing the capacities of teachers for furthering the quality of education. One of the reforms has been the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE, 2009), which dwelt on the continual development of the professional capacities of teachers.

Ms. Sharma then described her field experiences in Himachal Pradesh, a state with impressive growth in its literacy rate in the last 30 years. The present literacy rate is 83.78% (Census, 2011). She observed vital events, one of them being the in-



## Parallel Sessions

service training of the master trainers for the academic year 2012-2013. The eight day capacity building programme provided rich insights into the way and manner in which such events are planned and conducted. She then highlighted significant elements of capacity building and their links to quality.

**Dr. Balkrishna Rai**, Academic Officer, NIOS, then drew attention to Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs), one of the most important components of the teaching learning process in ODL. In his paper, “TMA as an Effective Strategy to Improve the Quality of Education for ODL Learners With Reference to NIOS”, he outlined how NIOS develops the TMAs for each subject and sends them to the learners. The learners then submit Assignment Response Sheets to the appropriate Study Centres for evaluation and grading by the tutors. The comments and suggestions of the tutors are extremely important for the learners. This two-way communication enables learners to ensure that they have learnt what is expected from the course material. TMAs not only help the learners to develop regular study habits but also enable them to design diagnostic and remedial teaching-learning strategies. TMAs are considered an integral part of evaluation and serve as a type of mid-term examination in which the questions are already known to the learners. As such, TMAs can significantly improve the quality of education and make the teaching-learning process creative and interactive.

Another useful tool in reaching out-of-school learners is flexible education delivery. As elucidated by **Dr. Saumya Rajan**, Academic Officer, NIOS, in her paper, “Novel Learners and Flexible Education Delivery: NIOS is the Key”, conventional schooling is rarely the best solution for learners who tune out the education system. We must offer learners an education that engages them in the way they want, rather than merely creating new lesson plans, or putting the curriculum online. Today's learners are, after all, confident and flexible they collect information, scan it, and use it immediately or store it for later retrieval. They easily learn just in time and just when needed, whether to keep up with what's new or to reach new career goals. Therefore, they deserve a new education delivery that provides the opportunity to explore new and relevant knowledge in a collaborative environment with peers facing similar challenges. NIOS, with its many accessible in-vogue initiatives and its flexible education delivery, reaches the unreached, thereby changing the status quo and responding to the educational challenges of a new, post-modern India with elements of capacity building and their links to quality.



# Parallel Session III Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies



**Dr. Niradhar Dey**, Assistant Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, kicked off the proceedings with his paper, “Better Learner Support Services is a Way to Ensure Quality Assurance in ODL”. The open learning system is more objective and learner centred as there is little face to face interaction. Student support services in ODL, therefore, are crucial. Ideally, these services support students, create commitment, enhance self-esteem and establish administrative processes and information management systems which are effective, transparent and overall learner-friendly. Dr. Dey conducted a study of the learner support services to IGNOU B.Ed. students in Odisha and Chhattisgarh (Bastar). A sample of 100 students who were doing B.Ed. from the session 2009-2011 was selected. They were given questionnaires and interviews were conducted to elicit support services related data.

The findings were mixed. Approximately 60% of the students were satisfied in the enquiry, admission, and pre-study advisory services. When it came to the facilities available in Regional Centres (RCs) and Study Centres (SCs), over 50% were satisfied with the library and other SC facilities, such as workshops, guidance and counselling, tutoring, continuous assessment, receiving Self Learning Material (SLM), record keeping and information management. Meanwhile, 20% did not feel it was necessary to go through the reference materials available in SCs or RCs and the remaining 20% were dissatisfied in this regard. Almost all of the students appreciated the interactive quality of SLM, especially the writing, activities, and inbuilt characteristics of checking progress, etc. The use of electronic media for transacting curriculum was the weakest point.

In light of these findings, it is crucial to establish better learner support services in ODL and make the students use the varied support services available in the main campus, regional centres, and concerned study centres. For success of the ODL system, learners could not be neglected at any stage of the programme.

Parallel Session III:  
“Institutional Related  
Issues and Operational  
Strategies”

Chair:  
**Mr. U.N. Khaware**,  
Secretary, NIOS, India





The quality of the ODL system purely depends on the pedagogical and administrative support services to the students.

**Mr. Anuj Kumar**, TGT (S.ST), Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Sirmour, Rewa, Madhya Pradesh, then presented his suggestions for building awareness and advocacy for open schooling. In his paper, “Publicity Strategy for Awareness and Advocacy of Open Schooling Regarding Indian Context”, he reminded us that open schooling is now preferred not only by drop-outs and the disadvantaged population, but also by those who have easy access to formal schooling. As open learning gains popularity worldwide, India needs to establish institutes nationwide and enhance the programme by focusing on quality. Mr. Kumar suggested that motivators be recruited to promote open facilities in areas where formal education is not available. Another step is to give incentives and rewards to anyone who promotes open schooling. Brand ambassadors should be nominated and motivational songs should be composed, similar to those that were used for SSA, Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, and literacy and health programmes.

From India, we moved to Bangladesh with **Mr. Mohammad Mamunur Rashid**, Lecturer in Computer Science, School Of Science and Technology, Bangladesh Open University. He discussed “Learner Support Services in Open and Distance Learning for Achieving Education for All”. He gave some background statistics on Bangladesh, noting it is one of the world's most crowded countries with 150 million people occupying an area of 147,570 square kilometres. For 49% of the population, survival is a struggle because they live below the poverty line. The literacy rate for females in 2010 was 52.2% and 61.3% for males. Even as the government and various NGOs work to improve this figure, a large number of students are forced to abandon their education and a major proportion of them are unemployed. To address these issues, Bangladesh Open University (BOU) uses distance education as a method of delivery. BOU was established in October 1992 to use every means of communication technology to bring education to the disadvantaged nationwide. The learner in this system is not restricted by time, space or age as BOU imparts education via print and electronic media, and through tutorial sessions in the tutorial centres. BOU has 12 Regional Resource Centres (RRC), 80 Coordinating Offices (CO) and 1260 Study Centres (SC) throughout the country and has launched 26 formal and 19 non-formal programmes. Formal programmes consist of five levels: Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Honours and Masters. Non-formal programs have been produced on environment, basic science, elementary mathematics, agriculture (which include irrigation, water management, horticulture, animal nutrition, pest management, use of aquatic weeds and preparation and preservation of food), bank services and marketing management, health, nutrition, population

and gender issues.

Leaving Bangladesh, we ventured to south India with Mr. Sheik Mohammad, Doctoral Research Scholar, Dr. BRAOU, Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. He discussed “Effectiveness of Learner Support Services in Andhra Pradesh State Open School”. He outlined the objectives of the study to:

- 1. ascertain the aspects of structural and functional nature of an Open School system;**
- 2. focus on how the Learner Support Services are being provided to the learners, and**
- 3. describe the delivery system of print and non-print material.**

**Ms. Sonam Mehta** and **Ms. Karnica Vyas**, Junior Research Fellow, Faculty of Education, Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Deemed University, Dayalbagh, Agra, Uttar Pradesh, then drew our attention to the challenges still confronting India as it works to provide Education for All. In their paper, “Open Schooling and Distance Learning: A Superhighway to Success but Still a Long Way to Achieve It”, they squarely faced the issues involved in providing education to children in rural and remote areas. These children represent over half of India's population and they have minimum facilities and opportunities.

Achieving the targets and goals of education has been hindered by, among other things, the quality of instruction, cost effectiveness, lack of proper training and expertise of the personnel. Despite these problems, ODL continues to open the doors of development which can lead India to becoming a developed nation. They noted that the existing situation of ODL is not as positive as the quality and quantity of efforts made by its pioneers. They discussed possible solutions to attaining the true mission of open education.





# Parallel Session IV

## Issues of Access and Equity



Parallel Session IV:  
**Issues of Access and Equity**

Chair:  
**Dr. K.K. Vashishtha,**  
Former Professor,  
NCERT, India

**Prof. Amitav Mishra**, Professor, School of Education, IGNOU, opened the session with a discussion of “Disability and Equity of Access to Education: Capitalising through Open Schooling”. International educational statistics reveal that 36.7% of the school going population is out of school, with 50 million alone in Southeast Asia. The limitations of conventional schools in failing to attract students with disabilities at the secondary level have been well researched. ODL provides secondary education opportunities for students with disabilities in an inclusive manner that enables everyone to attend. Access to education is an important way for students with disabilities to be included in society. In India, despite the efforts of NIOS, the enrolment of students with disabilities is only 16,199 (2012).

In order to achieve equity of access to education, open schooling needs to consider the following:

- a. making open schooling opportunities accessible to the target beneficiaries;**
- b. managing the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or in both time and place;**
- c. institutional accreditation;**
- d. use of mixed-media courseware with extensive use of assistive technology;**
- e. quantity and quality of two-way communication between special learners and tutors; and**
- f. face-to-face meetings in inclusive environment and non discriminatory attitude**

In addition, time management assistance; monitoring of progress in course work; registration assistance; volunteer assistance, including note taking; exam writing assistance; mobility assistance; taping of readings; library research help; special

## Parallel Sessions



project help; and counsellors trained to deal with students with disabilities are needed. Children with disabilities are heterogeneous, so it is important to consider demographic factors, motivation, learning factors, subject background, and resource factors when developing learning materials. Applying the principles of universal design will make the programmes/courses inclusive or accessible. In addition, assistive technologies work as enhancers or extra tools to ensure the usage of various services given to the students. This support system must take into account individual needs and should create a necessary alternative reliable support system in open schooling with support mechanisms being more flexible for learning and alternative ways of assessment.

Continuing to address the education of children with special needs were **Dr. Yash Pal Singh** and **Dr. Anju Agarwal**, Associate Professor, Centre for Disability Studies, Faculty of Education & Allied Sciences, MJP Rohilkhand University. In their paper, “Role of Open and Distance Learning Systems in Education and Rehabilitation of Children with Special Needs”, they outlined the daunting obstacles to good education faced by millions of children in South Asia. For the 10% of the region's young people who are estimated to have some kind of disability, the barriers are compounded. Even the ones that do get places in school are often not sitting in the same classrooms as other children because of a perception that they need to be separated and treated differently. In India, there are approximately 30 million children suffering from some form of disability. While the national average for gross enrolment in school is over 90%, less than 5% of children with disabilities are in schools.

The focus then switched from South Asia as a whole to the experiences of one woman in Sri Lanka. **Dr. Godwin Kodituwakku**, Director-Research and Development, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka, presented “*Two fruits are Enough for Me and My Sister: Self Reflected Story of a Woman in Developing a Sri Lankan School*”. The paper was the account of a female principal of a mixed school, her observations and innovations. The school is in an urban area and the principal, along with students, teachers, parents and community members, works towards peace, sustainable development, and human rights. Their vision and mission is to develop a child who can maintain the Sri Lankan identity and also adjust to global world trends. The school programme is centred on both

## Parallel Sessions



government directed curriculum and innovative practices of the members of the school. Activities include:

- **sport meets mixed with fair competition and personality development;**
- **Sinhala and Hindu new year festival to inculcate intercultural understanding;**
- **field trips to learn about different cultural living styles;**
- **extracting concepts of peace, sustainable development and human rights from classical literature;**
- **publication of a value based manual incorporating the new concepts and creations;**
- **school garden and field to grow vegetables using compost;**
- **animal feeding place;**
- **cultural events to highlight different cultural patterns;**
- **100 year celebration of the school to honour history.**

In addition to facing the same issues as any other school principal, she also dealt with the conflicts of people's representatives at different hierarchical levels that affected the smooth running of the school.

From Sri Lanka, we moved to Bangladesh and the topic of women's empowerment. **Dr. Sadia Afroze Sultana**, Dean, Open School, Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur, Bangladesh, discussed the problem of poverty for women in rural areas in her paper, "Open Schooling for Female Education and Empowerment in Bangladesh: Scope, Practices and Challenges". Given their conditions, it is difficult for these girls and women to receive education from an on-campus setting. Several government initiatives have failed at keeping girls in the conventional education system. Bangladesh Open University (BOU) has launched open schooling programmes to help the people, especially the dropout females, attain an education. Enrolment in BOU's secondary and higher secondary education programmes is increasing and several students have completed their education from BOU. Dr. Sultana outlined BOU's collaboration with government organisations and NGOs to promote the socio-economic benefits for rural girls and women.

Returning to matters in India, **Dr. Pankaj Deep**, Assistant Professor, School of law Justice and Governance, Gautam Buddha University, Greater Noida, spoke on "Education of Tribal Children through Open Schooling with Special Reference to Odisha". Education is especially significant for the tribals as they are facing a critical and transitional situation in the development process to adjust themselves to the changing world. The detrimental effect of an illiterate home begins in the

pre-school years the formative stage of life when attitudes are shaped.

To realise the idea of equality and social justice, the Indian constitution lays special emphasis on the education of the children of backward classes such as the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes through special provisions (Article 21-A & 46). In spite of various state proactive policies and programmes, the educational level of scheduled tribes' children is very dismal. The dropout rate of scheduled tribe children at both elementary and secondary stages is 84.52%, compared to the overall average dropout of 66.33%. The reasons for dropping out are many the low educational background of parents, the distressed economic condition of family, cultural barriers, language, etc. Dr. Deep analysed the state's commitment to educate this marginalised community through the alternative of open schooling. Programmes that can help this community need facilities such as no age bar and no formal attendance.

The issue of reaching female school dropouts in Bangladesh was again addressed.

**Md. Mizanoor Rahman**, Open School, Bangladesh Open University; **Ms. Sabina Yeasmin**, Open School, Bangladesh Open University and **Prof. Santosh Panda**, STRIDE, IGNOU, presented on “Streamlining Female School Dropouts through Distance Education in Bangladesh”. Girls in Bangladesh are more vulnerable because of religious and social beliefs that result in high female dropout rate in basic education and secondary education. Compounding this situation are factors such as poverty, early marriage, migration due to river erosion and child trafficking that also contribute to the increased dropout rate. The paper suggested a meaningful ODL model, coupled with general and vocational education, which improves female enrolment status over time. In addition, female dropouts would return to the educational process through this alternative route that would enable them to compete in the labour market with the learners who earn traditional diplomas.

The final paper of the session was presented by **Dr. Pratibha Sharma**, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, on “Dreaming the Education for All: A Small Step or a Giant Leap Towards an Empowered Society?” She noted that several articles and amendments of the Indian constitution addressed the goal of free and compulsory education. The vision of freedom fighters, members of constituent assemblies, great leaders and even the common man are echoed in the RTE Act of 2009. However, she questioned whether the act can achieve all the goals of the constituent assembly. She considered the issues and concerns related to RTE and offered suggestions on how the provisions of RTE can be significantly implemented via open schooling.



# Parallel Session V

## Issues of Quality

Parallel Session V:  
**Issues of Quality**

Chair:  
**Prof. K. Ramachandran,**  
NUEPA, New Delhi

Parallel Session V focused on the use of technology in helping disadvantaged and distance learners.

The first paper focused on using technology to provide education to disadvantaged children and youth in Kenya. **Ms. Jane Ngima Muthiga**, Executive Director, Network for Non Formal Educational Institutions (N-NEFI), presented on “Enabling Education for All Through Technology”. The new Kenyan constitution provides basic education as a right for all Kenyans. However, access to secondary education in slum areas is extremely low due to a lack of public secondary schools and cost related aspects. The launch of the Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training (APBE&T) policy was a major milestone in providing education to various communities and target groups, and especially difficult to reach areas that include slums and marginalised communities.

N-NEFI took the opportunity provided by APBE&T and introduced the use of video conferencing for enabling education to slum schools. N-NEFI received funding from COL to train teachers and centre managers working on the video conferencing programme on ICT and the use of OER. One month after the

training, N-NEFI began developing digital content for the secondary level

from the OER platform. Adapted subjects at the secondary level include Mathematics, English, History, Geography, CRE, Business Studies, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Kiswahil. N-NEFI has also developed a web portal from which the content can be accessed: [www.nnfeischools.co.ke](http://www.nnfeischools.co.ke)

The Communication Commission of Kenya (CCK) provided N-NEFI a license for an educational community free to air digital TV channel. On 13th September 2012, N-NEFI celebrated the birth of an innovative way of enabling access to quality education for all children and youth through the launch of Elimu 24/7 TV channel and web portal.



Following this enlightening presentation, the use of technology to enable learners in India was highlighted by **Mr. Vinod Kumar Kanvaria**, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Delhi. In his paper, “Assessing Distant Learners: ICT Tools for Mathematics Evaluation”, he remarked upon the efficacy of ICT in minimising the distances between facilitators, learners and peers. There are several ICT tools used in the assessment of mathematics learning. He discussed the following:

- **I-rubric a comprehensive rubric development, evaluation, and sharing tool that modernises the collaborative creative writing arena to produce a better, more usable interface**
- **Rubistar allows facilitators to easily make rubrics for a variety of evaluations**
- **Poll daddy a web-based programme that can be used to develop and deliver polls, surveys and quizzes**
- **R-campus a comprehensive education management system and a collaborative learning environment**
- **E-portfolio a digitalised collection of artefacts, including demonstrations, resources and accomplishments, representing an individual, group, community, organisation or institution**
- **Survey monkey a platform for surveys allowing users to create and upgrade accounts, design surveys, collect responses, analyse data and manage accounts**
- **School tube a space for facilitators and learners to post videos for the classroom**
- **Mahara a fully featured application to build electronic portfolios**

The uses of ICT were more fully explored by **Ms. Juliet Aleta R. Villanueva**, Assistant Professor and Curriculum Consultant, University of the Philippines Open University and the Builders' School. She presented on “Exploring ICTs and Platforms for E-learning with K-7 Learners in a Progressive School: A Seedbed for a Prospective Open High School Program”.

The Department of Education in the Philippines recently introduced programmes at the formal basic education sector to decrease dropout rates by blending the use of ICTs to deliver teaching and learning through the Open High School Program (OHSP) and the Internet-based Education Program (IDEP). With the recent shift to the K-12 basic education in the Philippines, and a decade of alternative learning practices in place, learning for Filipino open school learners is a foreseen eventuality. She outlined the ways through which a few grade school programmes can gear up to the possibility of open schooling at the secondary level, not as a mere alternative but as a viable option.



The Builders' School is a progressive school that integrates teaching and learning with technology in a natural set-up. She discussed the school's conditions that make OHSP a viable option for school's set up and student population. Her paper recommended a working model of a school-based curriculum development for an OHSP. Teaching in the 21st century involves skills and a blended learning mode of delivery. The Builders' School is a model for progressive schools wanting to branch out to a form of open schooling.

The final presentation of this session focused on using ICT to further education in the 21st century. **Dr. Nityananda Pradhan**, Head, Department of Education, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha, presented on "ICT Enabled Open and Distance Education for 21st Century".

ICT addresses the question of access and provides new and alternative forms of capacity building. It effectively bridges the distance between learners and instructors by transcending barriers of space and time. Most importantly, ICT has the potential to foster greater inclusiveness and to overcome spatial isolation by bridging geographical and social divides, especially the rural-urban imbalance. A robust, vibrant and well-managed open and distance education system is crucial for continued development and management of the knowledge society in a country as large as India. For ICT to become a viable alternative in the Indian educational system, a radical overhaul of that system is needed. Crucial areas that need changing are access, enrolment, programmes, pedagogy, capacity development of staff and faculty, technology, governance, research, linkages with industry and civil society, policy for inclusion, and most importantly, quality of education. A paradigm shift in open and distance education system is also necessary, particularly with reference to the teaching-learning process; evaluation process; infrastructure; organisation and management; and quality assessment.



## Parallel Session VI

# Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies

The session began with **Dr. Sambit K. Padhi**, Department of Education, Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh, discussing “Open Schooling for Secondary and Higher Secondary Education: A Reflection from Chhattisgarh”.

Universal access, equity, inclusion and quality in secondary and higher secondary education are major concerns at the present. Political, economical, demographic and social dimensions play a huge part in shaping education policies. This is especially true in Chhattisgarh, which became one of the newest Indian states on 01 November, 2000. The education scenario in Chhattisgarh is not very remarkable, especially in secondary and higher secondary levels. Most children attend eight years of elementary school before joining secondary classes. The schools follow the same 10+2 pattern of education like the other union territories and states in India, and there are private and state-run schools.

Realising the importance of an alternative system of education, Chhattisgarh Open School was established on 01 July 2008. Dr. Padhi outlined the objectives of establishing the Chhattisgarh Open School and assessed the performance of students in the secondary and higher secondary levels. He concluded by highlighting the school's progress as well as the challenges that lay ahead.

From Chhattisgarh, we moved to a national perspective, courtesy of **Dr. Kartar Singh**, Assistant Professor, IASE, F/O Education, Jamia Millia Islamia. In his paper, “Challenges for Open Schooling to Meet Quality Education in India”, he highlighted figures from the 2011 Census on the national literacy rate. 74.04% of the population is literate, with men making up 82.14% and women at 65.46%. Meanwhile, 25.96% of the population is illiterate and there are more illiterate women (34.54%) than men (17.76%). These figures reveal that the goal of free and

Parallel Session VI:  
**Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies**

Chair: **Mr. C. Dharuman**,  
Director Evaluation, NIOS,  
India







schooling system still confronts challenges to meet the increasing demands for secondary and the senior secondary education.

We then moved from India to Canada as **David Manuel**, Principal, Fraser Valley Distance Education School, British Columbia, Canada, gave his findings in a paper entitled “School Improvement Planning to Ensure Learning for All Students”.

The Ministry of Education in British Columbia (BC) has instituted various measures that align its schools to ensuring learning for all students. One of these actions is the annual school improvement plan that is submitted by all BC schools to their school boards. The school planning council develops for improvement by collecting and analysing information and input from the parent advisory council and the school community.

Plans include:

- **Clearly stated goals**
- **A rationale for the selection of the goals**
- **An indication of specific performance targets for improving student achievement**
- **A description of the data the school uses to track its progress over time**

After consultation with the parent advisory council and the school community, the school planning council submits the completed plan to the school board for review. The school board may accept the plan, return the plan to the school planning council for modification or reject the plan and direct the principal to develop an alternate plan.

He explained how Fraser Valley Distance Education School, one of the largest distributed learning institutions in BC, is using the annual school improvement plan to enhance its commitment to ensuring learning for all of its students.

We returned to the issues confronting Chhattisgarh through the next presentation by **Dr. Smriti Sharma**, Asst. Secretary, C.G. State Open School, Raipur. In her paper, “Success Story of Open School in Naxal Affected Area Bijapur”, she described Chhattisgarh's many blessings low population density, effective governance, political and financial stability and abundant mineral resources. In addition, the state has the densest forests in India, rich wildlife and more than 200 non-timber forest products, with tremendous potential for value addition.

One third of Chhattisgarh's population is of tribes, mostly in the thick forest areas in the North and South. Female literacy has doubled in the last decade, and male literacy is higher than India's average. Chhattisgarh Open School was established in the year 2008 and the first examination was held a year later. The school operates through 250 study centres.

## Parallel Sessions

One of Chattisgarh Open School's notable achievements has been the success of students in Bijapur district. It is an area of deep forests, a dense tribal population and considerable Naxal activity, all of which make it a challenge to establish open schooling and provide education. Dr. Sharma outlined the district's six study centres that have seen a gradual increase in the number of students, higher enrolment and an improved achievement level.

The next paper was presented by **Mr. Khan Ferdousour Rahman**, Research Fellow, Bangladesh University of Professionals. In "A Study on Learning for Bangladesh: Challenges and Opportunities", he outlined the advantages of e-learning for students. While e-learning is an emerging market in Bangladesh, its use is still sporadic and most users represent only a small segment of the education and business communities. Mr. Rahman examined the issues highlighting the challenges and opportunities of e-learning in Bangladesh.

The final paper of Parallel Session VI was "Academic Support to Distance Learner: Development of an Eclectic Model". **Ms. Anupama Bhargava**, Asst. Professor, Department of Education, St. Xavier's College, Ranchi, Jharkhand, suggested that NIOS implement a support system based on an eclectic approach. To combine the benefits of formal and nonformal systems in the larger interest of the student community, NIOS can associate itself with the teacher training institutes (TTIs). The ODL system provides flexibility of place, time and pace which can be accommodated by formal TTIs. In addition, a new model of student support system could be developed. NIOS learners would benefit from the infrastructure offered by TTIs. The library, labs and ICT room of the institutes could be used by NIOS learners in general and those from poor socio- economic strata in particular. Teacher trainees could be mentors to the learners, which would be especially beneficial for first generation learners, and could guide learners in competency building and refining their soft skills. Learners can visit the TTIs whenever required for any kind of help and trainees can monitor their progress throughout the academic session. The modified versions of programmes like 'each one teach one', AEP, etc, would benefit both learners and teacher trainees. Such arrangements motivate the learners and help surmount the barriers they face while studying. In short, TTIs will help reduce the problems of dropout students and the retention rate, while enhancing the quality of non- formal education.



## Parallel Session VII

# Vocational Education and Skill Development

Parallel Session VII:  
**Vocational Education and Skill Development**

Chair:  
**Dr. Godson Gatsha,**  
Botswana College of  
Distance & Open Learning  
(BOCODOL) Botswana

**Ms. Lystra Sampson-Ovid**, Education Consultant and Director, Trinidad and Tobago Open School, began the session with her paper on “Open Schooling in the Caribbean; Integrating Academic with Vocational Education in Trinidad and Tobago”. The feasibility of implementing an Open School within the Caribbean has been explored. It would leverage open schooling methodologies and ICTs to provide increased access to quality instruction at all examinations offered by the CXC (Caribbean Examinations Council) across the region. It would also provide support for school-based students to improve their examination performance. There has, however, not been any significant effort to implement a Caribbean-wide open school. Ms. Sampson-Ovid suggested that modifying existing structures and resources to promote a system that utilises the open school model to integrate academic and vocational programmes. She explored research conducted by COL and COMOSA (Commonwealth Open School Association) into integrating vocational education with academic education in Commonwealth Open Schools. She also discussed the experience of the National Open School of Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the region's TVET (Technical Vocational Education and Training) strategy and its implementation. In conclusion, she proposed a pivotal role for the Caribbean chapter of COMOSA.

From the Caribbean, we moved to Africa as **Mr. Rashid Chuachua**, Assistant Lecturer, Institute of Adult Education, and **Fidelice Mafumiko**, Senior Lecturer and Acting Director, Institute of Adult Education (IAE), discussed education in Tanzania. In their paper, “Integration of Academic and Vocational Education in Tanzania: Is this an innovation? The Experience of the Institute of Adult Education”, they noted that Tanzania views education as a means to alleviate poverty. While primary and secondary education has been offered mainly in learning areas of academic component, only a few schools provided vocational education. Little emphasis was placed on vocational education and it was not



integrated with the academic process. As a result, most graduates did not continue with further studies and had difficulty in earning a living. The government recognised the need to widen

opportunities for secondary education. In 2006, the study on Complementary Secondary Education in Tanzania (COSET) was initiated by UNICEF in collaboration with the IAE. The study explored how the COSET initiative could be implemented in the non-formal context. This initiative went further into transforming ideas from COSET to Integrated Post Primary Education (IPPE) Programme which is offered through ODL. As an alternative learning opportunity, it attempts to increase access and equity to post-primary education. The curriculum is competence-based and modularised, consisting of three key learning areas/components: academic, vocational skills and generic skills. This programme has been implemented since 2012 in seven piloting districts. The authors discussed IAE's innovative practices, successes and challenges in the course of putting this programme into practice.

The training of orthopaedic technicians in India was the focus of the next presentation, given by **Dr. P.V. Prakasa Rao**, Professor and Head of Health Education, PSSCIVE, Shyamla Hills, Bhopal, and **Dr. P.V. Siddhartha**. In their paper, "Training Orthopaedic Technicians in India, through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Mode", they characterised orthopaedics as a fast rising health care discipline. It is a specialty that has grown tremendously in India during the last four decades. However, the supply of well trained orthopaedic technicians is not keeping pace with the growth of orthopaedic hospitals/departments/trauma centres/orthopaedic clinics in the country.

Orthopaedic technicians apply plasters casts, splints and braces, and help in assessing care for patients with bone and joint conditions. The authors suggested that the course needed to become such a technician be developed and implemented through NIOS study centres or accredited vocational institutions.

Another aspect of vocational education was discussed by **Dr. Arif Jan**, Academic Officer, J and K State Board of School Education, and **Khalid Masroor**, Lecturer, School Education Department, Jammu and Kashmir. In their paper, "Implications of Integrating Academic and Vocational Education", they highlighted the need for flexible rules and regulations in establishing vocational institutions by industries and businesses. This way, vocational skill training could be designed by the relevant industries, especially if they are encouraged to open institutes. Not only would such a move fulfil specific job requirements of a given industry, it would also reduce the post-training placements problems of skilled workers.



The role of a national level institute in the field of Open Schooling would be enhanced by making it a regulatory body of the vocational institutes established by the business houses. Such a national institute could also be a database for

industries running training institutes. The Private Public Partnership (PPP) model could be adopted to make the vocational and technical education more relevant, useful and to the point. This model could also be adopted for the conventional and formal education being imparted at schools regularly. State open schools need to be coordinated so that all areas, regions and states are covered under the benefits of ODL.

The final presentation of Parallel Session VII was given by **Mr. K. Venkatesan**, Assistant Professor and Head, Department of Home Science, Jawaharlal Nehru Rajkeeya Mahavidyalaya (JNRM), A & N Islands. He discussed “Vocational Education Through ICT of Pura E-Connectivity”.

PURA is a GOI scheme that envisages a habitat design to improve the quality of life in rural areas and remove urban congestion. It is essentially about total rural prosperity. Physical connectivity enables high mobility to villagers so that they can interact and use common infrastructure such as school, health centres and markets. The electronic connectivity with telephones and internet facilities brings them together and facilitates interactions with anyone, anywhere in the world. Knowledge connectivity will transform the rural area in education; health care; and the application of science for crop, water and forest management, environmental protection and cooperative product marketing. The combination of these three factors provides economic connectivity with small-scale industries, agro and food processing, warehouses, micro power plants, renewable energy farms and banks.

Connectivity would enable students, farmers, artisans and rural entrepreneurs to get the best process for their products, Village Knowledge Centre (VKC) and Village Resource Centre (VRC). VKC will bring the benefits of IT directly to the communities, especially to students at the secondary level.

Mr. Venkatesan sought to improve the skill training and education to the normal stream students along with home science students through e-connectivity. Topics could include skill development and linkage with market requirements and demands; capacity building of students and students based organisations and people; the application of science and technology in real life; rain water harvesting; rural sanitation and the preventive and curative aspects of health and hygiene.



# Parallel Session VIII

## Issues of Access and Equity



**Mr. Amarendra Mishra**, Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Tribhuwan University, Nepal, presented on “Progress and Problems in Achieving Goal of Education for All in Nepal: A Review of literature”.

EFA and Open Schooling are essential for developing education in Nepal where political crisis and conflict make it difficult to complete the MDGs. Challenges in achieving EFA include the establishment of peace; constitution drafting; gender equity and caste discrimination. Nepal has only two reputed universities and admission to these is very difficult. In addition, not everyone gets the chance to move to the larger cities to pursue education. ODL, therefore, is the best option to improve education and literacy, although it has faced many problems.

Mr. Mishra underlined the role of teachers to improve the system.

Next was **Mr. Ajit Kumar**, Assistant Professor, I.A.S.E., Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, who presented on “Education for All: Reaching the Unreached Through NIOS”. He highlighted the role of NIOS in providing education according to the needs and requirements of the learners and in implementing EFA. He also discussed the challenges of achieving EFA in a developing nation like India.

**Mr. Prakash K. Pr. Mohapatra**, Research Scholar, Assam University, Silchar, then discussed “Role of Distance Education in the Context of Universalisation of Secondary Education in India”. Because of the lower number of students in the higher grades, the ODL system has more relevance at the secondary and the higher education level than at the primary level. The number of primary schools, their coverage and enrolment are to a certain extent satisfactory but this is not in the case for secondary education. In fact, a large gap exists between the primary and the secondary level, which needs to be examined very carefully.

Secondary education continues to be the most neglected segment of school education in many developing countries, including India. It is being increasingly recognised that secondary education is the most critical segment of the education chain. Apart from the bottom-up pressure (i.e., arising from the growth of primary schooling) and the top-down pressure (as the source of potential intakes for higher

Parallel Session VIII:  
**Issues of Access and Equity**

Chair:  
**Prof. N.K. Dash**,  
School of Education,  
IGNOU, India

education) for its expansion, there is a need to pay greater attention to secondary education as it caters to the needs of the most important segment of the population adolescents and youth, the source of the future human and social capital of a nation. Its development, therefore, can greatly contribute towards acquiring global competitiveness and achieving the MDGs.

He noted that secondary education in India is characterised by low participation, low transition and high failure rates which are great challenges to Universalisation of Secondary Education (USE). The infrastructure for secondary education is very poor, thus putting India at risk of not providing higher education to its graduating primary school students. He highlighted the role of distance education for achieving the goals of USE, and suggested giving more emphasis to the existing mode of distance education system at the secondary level.

**Ms. Peeyush Kamal** and **Mr. Dori Lal Chaudhary**, Department of TT&NFE (IASE), Faculty of Education, Jamia Millia Islamia, were next, discussing “Open Learning and Education for All”. They examined open schooling as an alternative in the context of imparting quality education for all and its significant role in the universalisation of quality school education/ education for all. They noted that conventional teaching-learning methods cannot cope with the scale of educational challenges, particularly in highly populated developing countries. Irrespective of the expansion of educational facilities in secondary schooling, all the adolescents and youth in the concerned age group will not be able to take advantage of formal schooling in the stipulated hours of the day that often coincide with the productive labour required in the rural areas for agriculture and in urban areas for a variety of income generating activities, particularly for lower middle-class and poor families.

They also pointed out that the widely varying quality and accessibility of education in India means that a well informed and competent population is not always a guarantee. Many schools have limited resources for buying books, stationery, furniture and other classroom materials. Teachers often lack adequate qualification and training, and their lesson plans are frequently outdated or irrelevant. Accessible education, with the help of technological advancements like ICT, can combat these problems.

The final paper of the session was presented by **Dr. Sonia Behl**, Asst. Director (Academic), NIOS, on “Role of NIOS in the Context of RMSA in India”. She discussed the need for a paradigm shift in the conceptual design of secondary education to meet the challenge of USE. The guiding principles are universal access, equality and social justice, relevance and development, and curricular and structural aspects. In a vast and varied country like India, where accessibility to education is still a concern, NIOS acts as a vanguard and empowers out of school students through its flexible education model.



# Parallel Session IX

## Issues of Quality



The first paper was presented by **Prof. Paul Bacsich**, Senior Consultant, Sero, U.K., speaking on Virtual Schools and Open Schools: A Perspective from Europe on Asia. In Europe, the term Virtual School is used instead of Open School, and the focus is on learners aged 14-21 years old. Another difference is that virtual schools in Europe are a business and have to advertise. As the resources they draw from are minimal, these schools are more entrepreneurial because they have to work harder to attract students. Unfortunately, enrolments in Europe are not growing quickly.

Prof. Bacsich was followed by **Dr. Vandana Singh**, IGNOU, who addressed the issues of Technological and Pedagogical Implications for Developing Quality Virtual Schools. She revealed the startling statistic that the gross enrolment ratio for upper primary students is 61.82%, while there are 61% trained teachers. She outlined the challenges for quality as:

- **limited access to quality teaching**
- **a large population that is out of school**
- **meeting the diverse needs of the population**

She listed ways to promote social constructivist pedagogy, which include negotiation and collaboration, as well as scaffolding and mentoring, understanding diversity and developing higher order thinking skills.

Next up was **Dr. Lopez** on Challenges of Open Schools and the Development of Satellite Campuses: Increasing Access and Improving Quality of Instructional Delivery in Teacher Training Institutions in Belize. In Belize, studies have found that teachers say that online teaching is more difficult. Among the many needs present are appropriately trained instructors; appropriate



Parallel Session IX:  
“Issues of Quality”

Chair:  
**Dr. Priscilla Brown Lopez**,  
Interim Dean, Faculty of  
Education and Arts,  
University of Belize



## Parallel Sessions

resources; and more technical devices to provide an opportunity for synchronous and asynchronous instruction.

Following this, **Prof. Cheria Raja Mouli**, Dept of Education, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University, talked about Use of Mobile Phone Technology in Promoting Tutor-Learner Interaction in Open Schooling. There are many advantages to the multi-media approach to instruction. Thanks to the use of mobile phones, attending the Personal Contact Programme (PCP) is not compulsory for distance learners. Instead, they can use mobile phones to access alerts regarding lessons being broadcast. This innovation helps reduce the dropout rate.

The final paper was presented by **Mr. Shambhu Sankar Deep**, PhD Scholar, Dept of Education (CIE), University of Delhi. His topic was Schooling the Mobile Generation: A Critical Review of the Role of Mobile Technology in Open Schooling for Education for All. One of the intriguing findings he discussed was that most people refuse to give up their mobiles and would rather give up something else instead.



## Parallel Session X

# Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies

Session X focused on improving and monitoring the quality of education in the open schooling system. The first speaker, **Ms. Shilpi Kumari**, Asst. Professor, Baharagora College, Baharagora, East Singhbhum, Jharkhand, presented on “Towards Positioning A Paradigm for Partnership Among Different Stakeholders of Secondary Education System for Promotion of RMSA in Jharkhand”.

In a tribal state like Jharkhand, where the status of the secondary education system is critical in many districts, blocks and Panchayats, there is an urgent need for the concerned authority, as well as different stakeholders of the secondary education system, to promote RMSA. Ms. Kumari enumerated the different factors responsible for keeping children out of the secondary education system. She also suggested that the various stakeholders recommend a paradigm for partnership among them for promoting RMSA. An open school system and SCERT need to be established in Jharkhand and the secondary education infrastructure and human power need to be strengthened. Vocational and life enrichment programmes should be integrated and a flexible learning environment should be created through the dissemination of educational resources from other stakeholders, e.g. SCERT, state open school, NGOs, etc. For these attempts to be fruitful in a practical sense, a partnership model should be

devised among the stakeholders in the state.

From a state-specific discussion, we moved to a broader topic as **Mr. Anil Nair**, General Secretary, Kerala Association for Non Formal Education and Development (KANFED), presented on “Education

Parallel Session X:  
“Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies”

Chair:  
**Dr. Sanyam Bharadwaj**,  
Director Student Support  
Services, NIOS, India



for All Role of Voluntary Organizations in Networking and Collaboration”. He noted that if the world is divided into developed, developing and undeveloped countries on an economic criterion, education is another important criterion in the same division. All developed nations are developed because they had attained a literacy level above 98%. Educating an entire population is the most critical task a developing country has to accomplish before anything else. Eight countries Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan contribute to two thirds of the illiterate people in the world. The situation of women is more alarming as every two women out of three are illiterate. The Arab states, South West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa are the worst affected as one third of its men and more than half of its women are still illiterate. The task of providing EFA after making them literate is unimaginable by government alone since the focus of rulers tends to be on the economy and defence. Even though education is the fourth elementary requirement of every citizen (food, clothing and shelter being the first three), governments in developing countries rarely give it and literacy priority treatment. Indeed, any money that is earmarked for education is consumed by regular schooling and higher education. To eradicate illiteracy, therefore, political will, concert and continuous effort of the educational fraternity is required. Local NGOS, religious organisations and international agencies also play a part. Institutions such as NIOS have the expertise and experience to coordinate efforts between governmental organisations and NGOS.

The focus then moved to sub-Saharan Africa as **Mr. Godson Gatsha**, Director, SADC-CDE and DEASA Executive Secretary, Botswana College of Distance & Open Learning (BOCODOL), presented on “Quality Audit in Distance Learning: Experience of Regional Centre Managers in Botswana”. He explained how Regional Centre Managers at BOCODOL perceived and experienced quality assurance audits.



A qualitative research design and methodology was adopted in which interviews and documents were used. The findings of underscore the importance of compliance, continuous improvement and best practices as critical success factors in ODL quality assurance implementation, monitoring and evaluation. His study contributes to quality assurance literature in terms of conceptualisation, understanding and implementation of internal quality audits in sub-Saharan African developing context. The lessons drawn are critical in contributing towards complying with ODL quality standards and best practices.

The implications of this study are that quality assurance policy implementation in an ODL environment should be the core business of all stakeholders. For effective and efficient deployment of quality assurance policy, it is necessary that quality assurance drivers should be more conversant in both theory and practice so that the interpretation of quality assurance policy is properly cascaded to all structures



and levels within an institution. Sustainable ODL that is reputable can be achieved if policy and practices are formed by evidence based research. Further research in quality assurance and internal audits that is more inclusive of all ODL staff, learners and other key external stakeholders should be carried out in order to shed more light and lead to a more comprehensive in-depth understanding of quality issues and practices in ODL institutions.

Quality was again a crucial issue as **Dr. S.K. Panda**, Assistant Professor, Sri Sai College of Education, Badhani, Pathankot, Punjab, presented on “Effective Monitoring and Management in the Context of Quality School Education Through Open Schooling”. He stated that concerns about the quality improvement of education are often played down and centralised planning is looked upon as the best solution to this problem. Instead, he recommended a multi-pronged approach that addresses the various issues affecting the quality of school education.

Quality school education is ensured when every child in the elementary education system acquires capabilities and demonstrates learning skills at an expected level. The role of the schoolteacher is crucial since improvement in quality depends on what teachers teach, how they teach and their evaluation of the children. The teacher has to play a dynamic role, acting as mentor, facilitator, guide, innovator, experimentalist, and, above all, constant learner.

To achieve quality in school education takes dynamic teachers who can strengthen the community in improving the school system and strengthen the Open Schooling system. Open Schooling, in the long run, will be very effective, not only in achieving quality in school education by making it relevant and related to life, but also in encouraging Open School authorities to make constant and consistent efforts to bring quality to the field of school education.

The next speaker, **Mrs. Meera Subramaniam**, Research Scholar, Centre of Advanced Study in Education (CASE), Faculty of Education and Psychology, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, also discussed education quality. In her



paper, “Monitoring Quality Education in Open School”, she noted that in the 1960s, much effort was given to improving primary education in the rural areas of many developing countries. Further impetus was provided at the Jomtien Conference in 1990 when a call for mobilising resources in this direction was made by the international community. Since then, primary school enrolment rates have increased, and according to UNESCO's 2002 EFA monitoring report, 50 countries have achieved EFA enrolment goals. However, the report also warns that “almost one-third of the world's population live in countries where achieving the 'Education for All' goals will remain a dream; unless a strong concerted effort is made” (UNESCO 2002).

One approach to universal education is Open Schooling, where every child, youth and adult can study at his or her own pace. Certain imperatives have to be followed and monitoring for quality assurance is essential.

Parallel Session X closed with the presentation of **Mr. Prathitha Biswas**, Research Scholar, Faculty of Education, University of Kalyani, West Bengal, on “Open Schooling with Special Reference to Quality Education”. As he put it, the quality of education in Open Schooling is as important as the quantity. Proper monitoring will motivate the educators to provide quality courses and student services at par with traditional schools. To ensure that an institution delivers quality education, it is imperative that it has quality assurance policies that dictate in clear terms the optimum standard to be achieved by the institution, the procedures to be applied, and the parties responsible. For any Open Basic Education (OBE) programme, collaboration becomes the major driving force. In every level there is an alliance between partners regarding policy making, development of curriculum, delivery strategy, strengthening efficiency or certification. The logic behind collaboration is to maximise the usage of available resources. Resource mobilisation efforts can be enhanced with better managerial performance, better budget allocations, changes in curriculums and technological innovations.

## Parallel Session XI

# Vocational Education and Skill Development



The final parallel session of the conference began with **Mr. Joshua C. Mallet**, CENDLOS, Ghana. He presented on “Issues Pertaining to Skill Development through Open Schooling Linking the Public and the Private; the Formal and the Informal”. He pointed out that EFA cannot be achieved without also ensuring Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for All. This assumption is generally based on the belief that all forms of education, particularly at the primary and secondary levels, require a high degree of hands-on activities for successful learning to take place. And TVET is largely a hands-on learning experience.

In Ghana, the structure and system of TVET present at least five “pathways” to the learner who is eager to acquire skills as well as qualifications. These “pathways” are the:

- **Formal Public**
- **Formal Private Not for Profit**
- **Formal Private for Profit**
- **Informal not for Profit**
- **Informal for Profit**

In his presentation, he pondered whether there can be a common link running through the five pathways that would facilitate the sharing of skills and competencies among their graduates for the world of work. He also asked if the system could promise the learner the possibility of “migrating” from the Formal to the Informal, and from the Public to the Private, while maintaining the same standards in skills. Finally, he asked what role open schooling can play in these trends.

Parallel Session XI:  
“Vocational Education  
and Skill Development”

Chair:  
**Dr. Sadia Afroze Sultana**,  
Dean, Bangladesh Open  
School, Bangladesh Open  
University



The next presenters were **Dr. (Mrs.) B. Satya Jnaneswari**, Reader I/c, Women Development Centre, Maharanee College, Peddapuram, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, and **Dr. (Mrs.) Swasti Shubham**, Dept. of Pathology, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, New Delhi. In their paper, “Need to start “Skills Training Hubs” under NIOS, to provide skills training for vocational students of ODL”, they had some suggestions for NIOS to implement. They noted that India's most popular health related vocational course is Medical Laboratory Technology (MLT). However, because of infrastructure constraints and the lack of well trained teachers, MLT cannot be adequately taught through ODL. This is just one reason why NIOS should launch its own Skills Training / Learning Hubs at their national and regional centres. They would be called hubs because rather than provide long-term training to a limited number of people, they would give several short-term training programmes to a large number of people. In addition, they would be connected to different Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs) in their region, just as spokes are connected to the hub of a wheel. Such hubs would enable NIOS to begin a large range of vocational courses that would help graduates find jobs and would rectify the skills shortages within India.

# Valedictory Session



Following the tea break, the valedictory session of the conference got underway. The session was chaired by **Dr. Fredrika Meijer**, Representative, UNFPA, India & Country Director, Bhutan. In this closing session, Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, gave a welcome address wherein he hoped that the conference was useful and had provided some takeaways for the participants. On the role of RTE, he noted that it focuses on the formal education system, rather than on ODL. He said that if

Chief Guest:  
**Dr Fredrika Meijer**,  
Representative UNFPA  
India & Country Director,  
Bhutan

the benefit of RTE is to be extended to the 10th Standard then a window for ODL must be provided. NIOS' role in reaching the target of 12 million children under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) must be diversified. Since, a centralised role won't work in a country as diverse as India, NIOS is also mandated to encourage and support the states to establish their own open schooling systems. After touching on the 400 million learners that NIOS and the National Literacy Mission Authority hope to reach and the upcoming assessment of 72 lakh learners on 17 March 2013, Dr. Jena noted that NIOS must adhere to a time bound action plan. He concluded his address by asking the foreign delegates to consider innovative collaboration with NIOS.

This was followed by the conference report from **Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal** wherein he noted the success of the conference lay in the unprecedented response of over 120 papers being received. He listed several important recommendations, including the fact that ODL must play a crucial role in attaining EFA goals, and that it will be the most important method of achieving the universalization of secondary education.

Next up was an NIOS success story the experiences of **Mr. Sharad Kumar Jena**, NIOS alumnus who was one of the delegates who presented the papers. Sharing his story he said that he had joined NIOS because it was the only board that gave him an autonomy to choose his subjects and offered a good mix of science and maths courses. He suggested that NIOS students be invited to share their stories at future conferences and seminars too.





## Valedictory Session



From the feedback of a home-grown experience to one from the foreign shores, **Mr. David Manuel**, from British Columbia, Canada, shared his five takeaways from the conference:

- the importance of measuring and sharing quality
- the shift from teaching to learning
- the importance of building relationships with regular schools
- how ODL can validate RPL
- the international collaboration in ODL is unprecedented and more widespread than it is in the regular system

The Chief Guest, **Dr. Fredrika Meijer**, then gave the valedictory address. Dr. Meijer, Representative UNFPA India & Country Director, Bhutan, was deeply honoured to have been invited to the conference. She noted that UNFPA places great emphasis on life skills for health. With the Adolescence Education Programme that UNFPA is engaged in with Govt. Of India they are also working with school education. However, with NIOS they have understood the importance of providing life skills enriched secondary education to adolescents. She felt that the NIOS study materials revised under the Adolescence Education Programme being supported by UNFPA has been a milestone achievement. She was happy that the UNFPA has been able to support NIOS initiative of bringing education to out of school young people. Inclusion of Life Skills and issues and concerns of adolescents in the study materials would be a great service of this target group who lack access to such information. In the end she congratulated NIOS for holding such an important conference and hoped that there would be more opportunities of NIOS, UNFPA collaboration.

**Mr. U.N. Khaware**, Secretary, NIOS, then delivered the vote of thanks. He quoted Swami Vivekananda's exhortation that we arise and awake, and not stop until the goal is reached. He thanked everyone for their hard work during the three days. While acknowledging that there are many challenges ahead, he reminded us that hope is the need of the hour, rather than giving in to despair over not achieving EFA and the MDGs. To underscore his message, he sang an excerpt from a song about how there may be many disappointments ahead but there are even more stars to guide us.

On the poetic note, the conference was officially closed.

# Programme Schedule

Day **1**

Timing	Event
9.00AM - 10.00 AM	Registration
10.00 AM - 11.00 AM	Conference Keynote Address on <b>"From Education for All to Learning for All"</b> Speaker: <b>Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist, COL, Canada</b> Chair: <b>Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS</b>
11.00 AM-12.00 AM	Keynote Address on <b>"The Future of Learning"</b> Speaker: <b>Dr. Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology, Newcastle University, UK</b> Chair: <b>Ms. Shweta Khurana, Head, K12 Education, Corporate Affairs Group Intel South Asia</b>
12.00-PM- 12.30 PM	<b>Tea Break</b>
12.30-PM- 1.15 PM	<b>Inaugural Session</b> Welcome Address by <b>Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS</b> About the conference by <b>Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Acad.), NIOS</b> Address by <b>Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada</b> Address by Guest of Honour <b>Sh. R. Bhattacharya, Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India</b> Inaugural Address by <b>Chief Guest Dr. M.M. Pallam Raju, Hon'ble Minister, Human Resource Development, Govt. of India</b> Vote of Thanks by <b>Sh. U.N. Khaware, Secretary, NIOS</b>
1.00 PM - 2.00 PM	<b>Lunch</b>
2.00 PM - 3.00 PM	Keynote Address on <b>"Access and Equity in School Education: Issues &amp; concerns for open Schooling"</b> Speaker: <b>Dr. Vinod Raina, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti</b> Chair: <b>Prof. A.K. Sharma, Former Director, NCERT, Delhi</b>
3.00 PM - 4.30 PM	Panel Discussion on <b>Issues of Access and Equity</b> Chair: <b>Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, Founder Chairman, NIOS</b> Panelists: Gender Perspective: <b>Prof. Usha Nayar, Prof. (Retd.), NCERT, Delhi</b> Holistic Perspective: <b>Prof. Janaki Rajan, Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi,</b> Moderator: <b>Ms. Lystra Sampson Ovid, Trinidad &amp; Tobago</b>
4.30 PM - 5.00 PM	<b>Tea Break</b>
5.00 PM - 6.30 PM	Paper Presentation on Issues of Access and Equity (Parallel Session I) Chair: <b>Sh. M.C. Pant, Former Chairman, NIOS</b> <b>Papers</b> Open Schooling System In Insecured and Conflict Situations: A Case of Afghanistan <b>-Dr Sushmita Mitra</b> Open and Distance Learning in Lesotho: Running an Open School In a Challenging Environment <b>-Vincent Sechaba Seutloali</b> The Role of SSC Programme of Open School towards Education for All in Bangladesh: A Study on Learners' Experience: <b>-A.K.M. Iftekhar Khalid</b> Educational Development of Marginalized Communities through Open Schooling in India: A Case Study of NIOS <b>-Mr. Sukanta Kumar Mahapatra</b> (Ine) Quality Questions: A Sociological Apprehension of the issues in Open Schooling <b>-Dr. Dev N Pathak</b> Schooling and Silent Exclusion in Education: Open Schooling is the Alternative Perspective towards Access and Equity in Education <b>-Pankaj Das</b>

➔ Venue: Seminar Hall 1  
Timing: 2.00 PM-3.45 PM  
Paper Presentation on **Issues of Quality (Parallel Session II)**  
Chair: **Dr. Jaya, National Programme Officer, UNFPA**  
**Papers:**  
Making learning contextualized: A step towards quality education **-Dr Sutapa Bose**  
Tutorial in Distance Education Programs implemented by Instituto de Educação Aberta e à Distância IEDA **-Esperança Michau**  
Issues of Quality ODL with regard to Curriculum, Materials, Delivery System & Evaluation **- Prof. K.A.Hasim**  
Life skills for enhancing excellence in education and lifelong learning **- Ms. Asheema Singh**  
Enhancing quality of education : capacity building of primary school teachers inHimachal Pradesh **-Garima Sarma and Priti Joshi**  
TMA as an effective strategy to improve the quality of education for ODL learners with reference to NIOS **-Dr. Balkrishna Rai**  
Novel learners and flexible education delivery: NIOS IS THE KEY **-Dr. Saumya Rajan**

➔ Venue: Seminar Hall 2  
Timing: 5.00 PM -6.30 PM  
Paper Presentation on **Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies (Parallel Session III)**  
Chair: **Sh. U.N. Khaware, Secretary, NIOS**  
**Papers:**  
Home schooling: an alternative mode of education **-Prof. Kuldip Kaur**  
Better Learner Support Services is a way to ensure Quality Assurance in ODL **-Dr. Niradhar Dey**  
Publicity strategy for awareness and advocacy of open schooling regarding Indian context **-Anuj Kumar**  
Learner Support Services in Open and Distance Learning for Achieving Education for All **-Mohammad Mamunur Rashid**  
Effectiveness of Learner Support Services in Andhra Pradesh State Open School **-Sheik Mohammad**  
Open Schooling and Distance Learning: A Superhighway to Success but still a long way to achieve it **-Sonam Mehta and Karnica Vyas**  
**Cultural Programme followed by Dinner**



# Programme Schedule

Day **2**

Timing Event

10.00 AM -11.00 AM	Keynote Address on “Quality in School Education: Issues & Concerns for Open Distance Learning” Speaker: <b>Prof. Shyam Menon</b> , Vice Chancellor, B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, India Chair: <b>Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi</b> , Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka
11.00 AM -11.30 AM	<b>TEA BREAK</b>
11.30 AM -1.00 PM	Panel Discussion on <b>Vocational Education and Skill Development</b> <b>Chair: Ms. Fancy Amey</b> , Director, Learner Support, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Botswana <b>Panelists:</b> <b>Dr. Joginder S. Sodhi</b> , Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, Human Resources, Economic & Social Development, Delhi <b>Ms. Ankita Mishra Bundela</b> , Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India <b>Dr. K.P. Wasnik</b> , Director (Vocational Education), NIOS <b>Moderator: Mr. Joshua Mallet</b> , Director, CENDLOS, Ghana
1.00 PM - 2.00 PM	<b>Lunch Break</b>
12.00 PM - 3.00 PM	Keynote Address on “Planning the Instructional Strategies in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling” Speaker: <b>Dr. Santosh Panda</b> , Professor, Distance Education, STRIDE, IGNOU Chair: <b>Prof. N.K. Ambasht</b> , Former Chairman, NIOS
3.00 PM - 3.30 PM	<b>Tea Break</b>

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 1  
Timing: 3.30 PM -5.30 PM  
Paper Presentation on **Issues of Access and Equity** (Parallel Session IV)  
Chair: **Dr. K.K. Vashishtha**, Former Professor, NCERT  
**Papers:**  
Disability and Equity of Access to Education: Capitalizing through Open Schooling. **-Prof. Amitav Mishra**  
Role of open and distance learning systems in education and rehabilitation of children with special need. **-Dr Yash Pal Singh and Dr Anju Agarwal**  
“Two fruits are enough for me and my sister”: Self reflected story of a woman in developing a Sri Lankan school **-Godwin Kodituwakku**  
Open Schooling for Female Education and Empowerment in Bangladesh: Scope, Practices and Challenges **-Dr. Sadia Afroze Sultana**  
Streamlining Female School Dropouts through Distance Education in Bangladesh **-Md. Mizanoor Rahman, Sabina Yeasmin & Santosh Panda**  
Education of Tribal Children through Open Schooling with Special Reference to Odisha **-Dr. Pankaj**  
**Deep**Dreaming the Education for All: A Small Step or a Giant Leap towards an Empowered Society? **-Dr Pratibha Sharma**

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 2  
Timing: 3.30 PM -5.30 PM  
Paper Presentation on **Issues of Quality** (Parallel Session V)  
Chair: **Prof. K. Ramachandran**, NUEPA  
**Papers**  
Enabling Education for All through Technology **-Jane Ngima Muthiga**  
Assessing Distant Learners: ICT Tools for Mathematics Evaluation **-Mr. Vinod Kumar Kanvaria**  
Exploring ICT's and Platforms for E-learning with K-7 Learners in a Progressive School: A Seedbed For a Prospective Open High School Program **-Juliet Aleta R Villanueva**  
ICT Enabled Open and Distance Education for 21<sup>st</sup> Century **Dr. Nityananda Pradhan**  
Application of E-Governance in Education System **-S.Selvaraju**  
Skill Development among Open and Distance Learners : Role of ICT and Multimedia **-Dr. Rajeev Prasad**  
Multimedia in Open Schooling **-Leela Pradhan**

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 2  
Timing: 3.30 PM -5.30 PM  
Paper Presentation on **Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies** (Parallel Session VI)  
Chair: **Sh. C. Dharuman**, Director Evaluation, NIOS  
**Papers:**  
Open Schooling for Secondary and Higher Secondary Education: A Reflection from Chhattisgarh **-Dr. Sambit K. Padhi**  
Challenges for open schooling to meet quality education in India **- Dr. Kartar Singh**  
School Improvement Planning To Ensure Learning For All Students **-David Manuel**  
Success story of open school in naxal affected area BIJAPUR **-Dr Smriti Sharma**  
A Study On Learning for Bangladesh : Challenges and Opportunities **-Khan Ferdousour Rahman**  
Anticipated Barriers to Open Schooling system in Nigeria **-Aminu Aliyu Wushishi**

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 2  
Timing: 3.30 PM -5.30 PM  
Paper Presentation on **Vocational Education and Skill Development** (Parallel Session VII)  
Chair: **Dr. Godson Gatsha**, Director, BOCODOL (Botswana College of Distance & Open Learning), Botswana  
**Papers**  
Open Schooling in the Caribbean integrating Academic with Vocational Education in Trinidad and Tobago **-Lystra Sampson-Ovid**  
Integration of Academic and Vocational Education in Tanzania: Is this an innovation? The Experience of the Institute of Adult Education **Rashid Chuachua & Fidelice Mafumiko**  
Training Orthopaedic Technicians in India, through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Mode **-Dr. P.V. Prakasa Rao & Dr. P.V. Siddhartha**  
Implications of Integrating Academic and Vocational Education **-Dr. Arif Jan & Khalid Masroor**  
Vocational Educational Through ICT of Pura E-Connectivity **-K. Venkatesan**

5.30 PM -6.30 PM **Poster Presentations**  
7.30PM onwards **Dinner**

# Programme Schedule

Day **3**

Timing Event

9.00AM - 10.00 AM

Keynote Address on "Integrating Skill Development in School Education: Implications for Open Schooling"

Speaker: **Prof. Mukti Mishra**, Vice Chancellor, Centurion University, Odisha

Chair: **Prof. R.B. Shivagunde**, Jt. Director, PSSCIVE, Bhopal

10.00 AM -11.00 AM

Tea Break

11.30 AM -1.00 PM

Panel Discussion on **Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies**

Chair: **Prof. M.M. Pant**, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU

Speakers:

- **Prof. M.N. Deshmukh**, Former Director, SSA, IGNOU: Resource Based Learning in Open Schooling: A Case of OER Project of NIOS India
- **Dr. R.C. Sharma**, IGNOU, Delhi: Virtual Open Schooling
- **Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal**, Director (Academic), NIOS, Delhi: "Life Skills Integration in Open Schooling: Towards Holistic Education"

1.00 PM - 2.00 PM

Lunch

Tea Break 3.45 PM- 4.15 PM

Venue: Main Conference Hall

Timing: 4.15 PM -5.15 PM

Valedictory

Welcome Address: **Dr. S.S Jena**,

Chairman, NIOS

Conference Report: **Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal**, Director (Academic), NIOS

Release of COMOSA Journal

Valedictory Address by Guest of Honour:

**Ms. Fredrika Meijer**, Country Representative (India, Nepal & Bhutan), UNFPA, New Delhi

Vote of Thanks:

**Sh. U.N. Khaware**, Secretary, NIOS

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 1  
Timing: 2.00 PM -3.45 PM

Paper Presentation on **Issues of Access and Equity**  
(Parallel Session VIII)

Chair: **Prof. N.K. Dash**, School of Education, IGNOU, N. Delhi

Papers:

Progress and Problems in Achieving Goal of Education for All in Nepal:

A Review of literature

-**Mr. Amarendra Mishra**

Education for All: Reaching the Unreached Through NIOS

-**Mr. Ajit Kumar**

Role of Distance Education in the Context of Universalization of Secondary Education in India

-**Prakash K. Pr. Mohapatra**

Open learning and education for all

-**Ms. Peeyush Kamal & Mr. Dori Lal Chaudhary**

Role of NIOS in context of RMSA in India

-**Dr. Sonia Behl**

Educational Certification Jurisprudence for delivering Multi-National Accredited Open Schooling accommodating Demographic Skill

Diversity: Making 'Education For All' Meaningful Everywhere

-**Shams Khwaja**

→ Venue: Main conference Hall  
Timing: 2.00 PM -3.45 PM

Paper Presentation on **Issues of Quality**  
(Parallel Session IX)

Chair: **Dr. Priscilla Brown Lopez**, Dean, University of Belize

Papers:

Virtual schools and open schools: a perspective from Europe on Asia

-**Prof. Paul Bacsich**

Productive knowledge sharing in open virtual learning environment through enhanced social presence: a logical analysis

-**J. N. Baliya**

Technological and Pedagogical Implications for Developing Quality Virtual Schools

-**Dr. Vandana Singh**

Challenges of Opens Schools and the development of Satellite campuses: Increasing access and improving quality of instructional delivery in Teacher Training Institutions in Belize

-**Dr. Priscilla Brown Lopez**

Use of mobile phone to promote life skills education among open schooling students: promises, possibilities and potential strategies.

-**Pradeep Kumar Mishra**

Use of Mobile Phone Technology in Promoting Tutor- Learner Interaction in Open Schooling

-**Cherla Raja Mouli**

Schooling the Mobile Generation: A Critical Review of Role Mobile Technology in Open Schooling for Education For All

-**Sambhu Sankar Deep**

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 2  
Timing: 2.00 PM -3.45 PM

Paper Presentation on **Institutional Related Issues and Operational Strategies**  
(Parallel Session X)

Chair: **Dr. Sanyam Bharadwaj**, Director Student Support Services, NIOS

Papers:

NGO-run Pre-voc through Open Schooling for contributing EFA goal in Bangladesh

-**Tapon Kumar Das, Md. Mizanoor Rahman and Santosh Panda**

Towards Positioning A Paradigm for Partnership among different Stakeholders of Secondary Education System for Promotion of RMSA in Jharkhand

-**Shilpi Kumari**

Education for All Role of Voluntary Organizations in Networking and Collaboration

-**Anil Nair**

Academic Support to Distance Learner: Development of An Eclectic Model

-**Anupama Bhargava**

Quality audit in distance learning: experience of regional centre managers in Botswana

-**Dr. Godson Gatsha**

Effective Monitoring and Management in the Context of Quality School Education Through Open Schooling

-**Dr. S. K. Panda**

Monitoring quality education in open school

-**Mrs. Meera Subramanian**

→ Venue: Seminar Hall 3  
Timing: 2.00 PM -3.45 PM

Paper Presentation on **Vocational Education and Skill Development**  
(Parallel Session XI)

Chair: **Dr. Sadia Afroze Sultana**,

Dean, Bangladesh Open University

Papers

Issues Pertaining to Skill Development through Open Schooling Linking the Public and the Private; the Formal and the Informal

-**Joshua C. Mallet**

Skill Development in Assam through the Bamboo Sector: A study

-**Dr. Silima Nanda**

Need to start "Skills Training Hubs" under NIOS, to provide skills training for vocational students of ODL.

-**Dr.(Mrs.) B. Satya Jnaneswari & Dr. (Mrs.) Swasti Shubham**

A Need to Develop Social and Emotional Skills in early years: awareness for young children

-**Dr. Garima Sharma, Dr. Preeti Sharma and Dr. S P Jain**

Skill Development via ODL Route: Issues and Concerns

-**Dr. Tarun Rashtriya**

Rural Poverty Reduction through EFA with respect to Skill Development and Vocational Education in Indian context Challenges and Prospects -

-**Madan Kumar Karanam**

# Acknowledgements

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS
- Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Academic), NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Prof. Santosh Panda, Professor, Distance Education, STRIDE, IGNOU, Delhi, India
- Prof. N.K. Dash, School of Education, IGNOU, Delhi, India
- Prof. S.C. Panda, Sr. Consultant (Teacher Education) NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Dr. K.K. Vashisht, Former Prof. NCERT, Delhi, India
- Dr. I. K. Bansal, Former Prof. NCERT, Delhi, India
- Dr. Saroj Pandey, School of Education, IGNOU, Delhi, India

## KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

- Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada
- Dr. Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology, Newcastle University, UK
- Dr. Vinod Raina, Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, India
- Prof. Shyam B. Menon, Vice Chancellor, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar University, Delhi, India
- Dr. Santosh Panda, Professor, Distance Education, STRIDE, IGNOU, Delhi, India
- Prof. Mukti Mishra, President, Centurion University, Odisha, India

## PANELISTS

- Prof. Usha Nayar, Prof.(Retd.), NCERT, Delhi, India
- Prof. Janaki Rajan, Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi, India
- Dr. Joginder S. Sodhi, Shri Ram Centre for Industrial Relations, Human Resources, Economic & Social Development, Delhi, India
- Ms. Ankita Mishra Bundela, Dy. Secretary, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, India
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- Dr. R.C. Sharma, IGNOU, Delhi, India
- Dr. Kuldeep Agarwal, Director (Academic), NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Mr. S.K. Prasad, SAP, NIOS, Delhi NCR, India

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- Prof. A.K. Sharma, Former Director, NCERT, Delhi, India
- Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, Founder Chairman, NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Ms. Lystra Sampson Ovid, Trinidad & Tobago
- Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi, Director and UNESCO Representative to India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka
- Ms. Fancy Amey, Director, Learner Support, Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL), Botswana
- Mr. Joshua Mallet, Director, CENDLOS, Ghana
- Prof. N.K. Ambasht, Former Chairman, NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Prof. R.B. Shivagunde, Jt. Director, PSSCIVE, Bhopal, India
- Prof. M.M. Pant, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU, Delhi, India
- Sh. M.C. Pant, Former Chairman, NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Dr. Jaya, National Programme Officer, UNFPA, India
- Mr. U.N. Khaware, Secretary, NIOS, Delhi, India
- Dr. K.K. Vashishtha, Former Professor, NCERT, Delhi, India
- Prof. K. Ramachandran, NUEPA, Delhi, India
- Mr. C. Dharuman, Director Evaluation, NIOS, Delhi, India
- Dr. Godson Gatsha, Director, BOCODOL (Botswana College of Distance & Open Learning), Botswana
- Prof. N.K. Dash, School of Education, IGNOU, Delhi, India
- Dr. Priscilla Brown Lopez, Interim Dean, Faculty of Education and Arts, University of Belize, Belize
- Dr. Sanyam Bharadwaj, Director Student Support Services, NIOS, Delhi NCR, India
- Dr. Sadia Afroze Sultana, Dean, Open School, Bangladesh Open University, Bangladesh

# Acknowledgements

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7. Mr. Partish Paul - Academic Officer
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24. Ms. Pooja Akshay - Sr. Executive Officer
25. Ms. Pushpa Bansal - Sr. Executive Officer

## Cultural Event

1. Dr. S.R. Khan - Academic Officer
2. Ms. Sanchita Bhattacharya - Sr. Executive Officer

# List of Participants



## PARTICIPANTS FROM OVERSEAS

1. **Ms. Frances Ferreira**  
Education Specialist, COL, Canada
2. **Dr. Fredrika Meijer**  
Representative UNFPA India & Country Director, Bhutan
3. **Mr. Shigeru Aoyagi**  
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4. **Ms. Lystra Sampson Ovid**  
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5. **Ms. Fancy Amey**  
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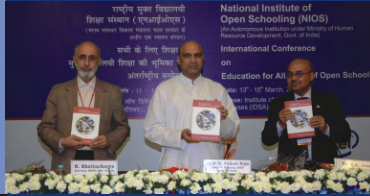
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