

# NEWS BULLETIN

October-November 2010

 National Institute of Open Schooling

## NIOS organizes Annual General Body Meeting of COMOSA – 21 November 2010

Under the aegis of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) organized the Annual General Body Meeting of the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association (COMOSA) on 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2010 at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

*The COMOSA is a democratic, collaborative and futuristic organization based on mutual respect and committed to support the efforts of open schooling institutions to cooperate and collaborate in the development, promotion and introduction of innovative, high quality, relevant, equitable, gender-sensitive and cost-effective programmes of school education for sustainable development in commonwealth countries through Open and Distance Learning Mode.*

In total, 25 participants mostly, the Open schooling Heads of Commonwealth countries, from Australia, Belize, Botswana, Canada, Fiji, Ghana, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Trinidad & Tobago, Zambia, India, South Africa and Eight State Open Schools from India participated in this Meeting.

Delivering his Key Note Address on "Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Time for Open Schools to Raise their Game", Sir John Daniel, President & CEO, Commonwealth of Learning said that for a large part of the world, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century belongs to Open School.

Expressing concern on the educational system being highly compartmentalized and lack of co-ordination between different departments, he emphasized on the need for an educational ecosystem, comprising of the Ministry of Education, School-based Teacher Education institutions, communities and mega schools.

"Secondary Schooling for girls is the most powerful tool against climate change", he said, implying that for every girl taught, it would help in population control, in the context of three contemporary challenges in the education system, the others being Universal Primary Education and Teacher Shortage. Sir John Daniel also stressed on the importance of encouraging more and more research in Open Schooling particularly for increasing access, improving quality and cutting cost.

While referring to the three types of Open Schools i.e. Complementary, Alternative and Integrative, he said that the Integrative type could be the most effective as it could cater not only to its student body but also act as a catalyst and clearing house at a national level. Quoting the TESSA programme involving half a million teachers in Sub-Saharan African countries as an example of linkages between Open Schooling and Teacher Education, Sir John Daniel urged the Open Schooling System to emerge from the shadow and place itself prominently in the educational ecosystem.

Sir John Daniel released the Logo of COMOSA and launched the website of COMOSA on this occasion. The COMOSA Journal for Open Schooling was also released by him.

On this occasion, the NIOS signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Open Polytechnic of New Zealand which is a crown entity, for mutual collaboration. Both the institutions have also agreed to strengthen and further develop the relations between them in the field of distance education upto pre-degree level and to work in the area of Vocational & Technical Education. The memorandum was signed by Sh. G.G. Saxena, Secretary, NIOS and Dr. Carolene Seelig, Executive Director, Open Polytechnic of New



Zealand in the presence of Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, Sh. S.C. Khuntia, Joint Secretary (SE&L), MHRD, Govt. of India and Sir John Daniel, President and CEO of Commonwealth of Learning and the representatives of the COMOSA.



COMOSA Journal for Open Schooling being released by Sir John Daniel, President & CEO, COL

Addressing the gathering of COMOSA representatives from Commonwealth countries and State Open Schools, Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education specialist, COL emphasized on the importance of collaborative relationships through the institution of COMOSA.

"Open Schooling has the capacity to deliver access to all levels of School Education and Vocational Education" she said, stressing on the need for more and more collaboration between institutions of COMOSA as the global economy expands.

Shri S.C. Khuntia, Joint Secretary (School Education and Literacy), said that COMOSA could create a powerful collaborative structure to educate a large number of people especially in Asian and African countries. "Collaborative efforts through COMOSA would help in the process of globalization by exchange of best practices which could be conveniently adapted" he said in the context of the paradigm shift in education from classroom teaching to collaborative teaching. He also urged the NIOS and State Open Schools to come forward to achieve the ambitions target set for them under the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (National Secondary Education Campaign).

Welcoming the participants, Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS said that the NIOS had grown to be placed in the centre stage of education and had become the first choice for many learners.

Shri G.G. Saxena, Secretary, NIOS proposed a Vote of Thanks.

## Pre-PCF-6 International Workshop on "Research in Open Schooling" – 22 and 23 November 2010

### Inaugural session : 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2010

The inaugural session of the Pre-PCF6 International Workshop held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, was presided over by Ms. Vibha Puri Das, IAS, Secretary, Higher Education, Government of India. The thrust of the Workshop was "Research in Open Schooling." Dr. V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor of IGNOU, was the chief guest.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS, emphasized on the need for Research in Open Schooling in order to contribute to the growth of Open Schooling in terms of access and quality, not only in India, but in all commonwealth countries. Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education specialist, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) lamented the fact that despite having been on the ground for quite sometime, the Open Schools have yet to find a place in the research arena. She informed the house that, over the two days, the group would develop and consolidate strategies for collecting baseline Institutional data in Open Schooling in the Commonwealth and would also discuss methodological issues appropriate for Research in Open Schooling and analyse and understand the importance of systematic reporting of research results. The sharing of research results was stressed on by all the speakers.

Prof. Pillai stressed on the fact that education is successful only when it is sociological, contextual and it is in this sphere that educational research takes on a very important role, specially research in open schooling. He suggested that quality teaching of Science and Maths could go a long way in reducing the number of school dropouts.

Ms. Vibha Puri Das informed that India was set to reap the demographic dividend and would have the largest number of young persons in the world. It was thus the need of the hour to provide quality education



Ms. Vibha Puri Das, Secretary, Higher Education, GOI, inaugurating the Pre-PCF-6 Workshop

through multiple pathways, including vocationalisation of education. She said that the National Knowledge Commission has also advocated the setting up of a Research Foundation for research in Open and Distance Education. This must be used to conduct research and implement the findings.

Sh. G.G. Saxena, Secretary, NIOS proposed a Vote of Thanks.

Dr. Santosh Panda, the workshop facilitator initiated the session with a discussion on "Institutional research on Distance Education (DE)/Open Schooling: Policy and Priorities". He traced the discussion from the evolution of distance education to the models of open schooling. He emphasized on the fact that an Institutional research policy was essential for conducting transparent and effective research. Areas of research discussed included curriculum/course planning and development, Media and Technology, Economics of distance education, growth and development, education, equity and access, feed back from learners etc.

While making a presentation on "Research Methods and methodological issues in research in open schooling", Dr.Panda elaborated on research methods and said that both qualitative and quantitative kinds of research are essential to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. Speaking about the advantages of qualitative research, he explained that qualitative research is especially helpful in understanding a variety of variables responsible for the phenomenon; it is contextual and holistic in approach, and uses a multitude of methods such as observation, interview, focused group discussion, document analysis, etc. He simultaneously cautioned the group about a few disadvantages of qualitative research such as the fact that the research findings do not easily lend themselves to generalization as it is very contextual in nature. Such research is also time consuming as it involves longitudinal studies.

Dr. Panda also discussed the various methods that could be used in research such as participatory evaluation, conducting surveys, taking of case studies and conducting action research. He said that the choice of an appropriate method impacted on the quality and outcomes of the research. It emerged from a discussion among the participants that probably no one method would suffice and sometimes a combination of methods would be useful and appropriate.

In order to draft the broad frame work ,the participants were divided into 4 groups to work on the broad outline of the following topics :

- Institutional Policy for data base
- Organisation and Management of Research.
- Prioritizing areas of Research.
- Action Research

Some of the priority areas which came up after the discussion included Curriculum and course development, Teacher training and in-service, Monitoring and evaluation and impact studies and Vocational education at the school level .

### NIOS Celebrates its 22<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) celebrated its 22<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day on 23 November 2010. To commemorate this, a Foundation Day Lecture was delivered by Shri Kiran Karnik, Former President, NASSCOM on "Inclusive Education: Role of Media and Technology".



Shri Kiran Karnik, Former President, NASSCOM delivering the Foundation Day Lecture

Expressing concern on the large number of illiterates in the country, Sri. Karnik emphasized on the need for inclusiveness in education for bridging gaps and divides. "Inclusive education is the seed from which we should look at inclusivity", he said, pointing out the important role that technology and media have to play in narrowing differences to reach out to groups and individuals who may be left behind in the process of education.

"The challenge before the media today is twofold: how to ensure access for all and how to produce content that is relevant, interesting and effective", he said stressing on the importance of the mobile handset as a powerful tool for promoting inclusive education.

"Skills are a key to livelihood", he said while referring to the importance of vocational education and urged the NIOS to provide high quality vocational training based on industry needs.

Earlier in his welcome address Dr. S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS explained how the NIOS had grown to become the largest open schooling system with a cumulative strength of 1.9 million and huge network of 4,000 study centres including those in NGO sectors for providing education at the basic education level. Speaking on the use of ICT for facilitation of NIOS learners, he mentioned about the introduction of 100% Online admission and On-Demand examination.

Congratulating the NIOS on its 22<sup>nd</sup> Foundation Day, Ms. Frances Ferreira, Education Specialist, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) said that while Open Schools should provide a safety net for those who miss schools, they should not be seen as a second chance but as an important

medium to acquire education enjoying all the flexibilities that the system offers. She also pointed out that ICT integration in open schooling can enhance access.

While referring to the importance of content for education, Sh. S.C. Khuntia, Joint Secretary, SE&L, MHRD, Govt. of India said that a good system should impart education by integrating entertainment and education using the latest technology.

### NIOS Participates in PCF-6

The National Institute of Open Schooling participated as a partner agency in the Sixth Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Schooling (PCF6) held at Kochi from 24-18 November 2010 and played a key role in this international conference. The theme of PCF6 was: Access and Success in Learning: Global Development Perspective. The conference provided an opportunity to share experiences and expertise and to contribute to future policy and provision.

Sir John Daniel, CEO and President, Commonwealth of Learning (COL) appreciated the role of NIOS in the field of Open Schooling during the conference in his interview in Kochi as well as in his blog.

The following officers of NIOS attended the conference:-

- (1) Dr. S.S.Jena- Chairman
- (2) Sh. G.G. Saxena- Secretary
- (3) Dr. Sushmita Mitra - Director (SSS)
- (4) Dr. K.P. Wasnik - Director (Vocational Education)
- (5) Sh. D.N. Upreti - Publication Officer
- (6) Dr. B.K. Rai- Academic Officer
- (7) Ms. Ashima Singh- Project Coordinator (AEP)
- (8) Sh. V.S. Raveendran – Regional Director, Kochi, NIOS.

Dr. S.S.Jena, Chairman, NIOS participated in the panel discussion on skill development and also made a presentation during the conference.

Dr. Sushmita Mitra presented a paper titled 'Can mobile phones be used to improve the Quality of Learning in Open Schooling' and also played a key role as a rapporteur. Dr. Balakrishna Rai, presented a paper on 'Role of Open and Distance Learning in reducing the stress among the learners.'

Sh. G.G. Saxena and Dr. K.P. Wasnik also participated in the group discussion. The NIOS also exhibited its publications and Adolescence Education Programme related promotional materials.

### NIOS-AEP activities showcased at PCF-6

The Adolescence Education Programme (AEP), NIOS in collaboration with MHRD and UNFPA has adopted a new approach with a focus on integrating subject knowledge with life skills. The Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) of NIOS showcased its print material, audio and video programmes and other advocacy materials in a stall at the Sixth Pan Commonwealth Forum (PCF6) held at Kochi. Pledge Pole, an interactive method of introducing the concept of Life Skills, was one of the most popular activities in the exhibition.



NIOS Stall at PCF-6

A Session on "Integrating Life Skills in the Secondary Curriculum of National Institute of Open Schooling" chaired by Dr.S.S.Jena, Chairman, NIOS was held on 27<sup>th</sup> Nov 2010 as a part of PCF6. This included a panel discussion on the following topics:-

#### (i) Life skills enhancement as an educational approach

- Concept and relevance in the current Indian context
- Rationale for integration in NIOS curriculum



AEP materials on display

#### (ii) Development of Life Skills Integrated Self Learning Material

- Unique characteristics of the system and its learners.
- Development Process of Self Learning Materials, including Advocacy
- Specific examples from the life skills integrated materials on learning objectives.

### Admissions

Admission is open for the following courses:

Course	Dates of admission	Exam in which learners can appear
II Block (Secondary and Senior Secondary courses)	11 Sep. 2010 to 28 Feb. 2011	First time in Oct./Nov. 2011
Vocational courses	Upto 30 June 2011	First time in Oct./Nov. 2011

### Tutor Training Workshop

A two day Tutor Training Workshop for Tutors was organized under the Adolescence Education Programme (AEP), on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2010 at ODM Public School, Bhubaneswar.

Dr. S. Minaketan, Principal (ODM Public School) inaugurated the programme and Mr. B. N. Rout welcomed the guests. A CD on effective Personal Contact Programme (PCP) was also released on the occasion BY Dr.S.S.Jena, Chairman, NIOS.

Sharing his views on the workshop, Dr.S.S. Jena, Chairman NIOS, spoke on the relevancy of life skills and objectives and goals of workshop in relation to adolescent needs and concerns. Mr. Rushi Kumar Rath, Regional Director, Bhubaneswar proposed a vote of thanks.

The second session began with a discussion on the objectives and goals of the workshop by Mrs. Asheema Singh, Project Coordinator (AEP) who introduced ten life skills to the participants. This was followed by a presentation on the definitions of Life Skills and its various interpretations by the participants.

The participants were divided into five groups - Case study (Group-A), Role play ( Group-B) ,Peer tutoring(Group-C), Cooperative learning (Group-D) and group discussion (Group-E).

The participants prepared charts to depict their methodologies of taking PCP classes, which were put up for display.

On the second day of the workshop, the participants were divided into five groups to discuss about Adolescence : Charms and Challenges which included Characteristics of adolescence; developing positive self esteem and self concept; forming an identity; building healthy friendship



and handling peer presence and preventing high risk behaviour and changing parent-adolescence relationships.

The participant groups used various methodologies such as quiz-play and debate to introduce their lessons to the mock –PCP students who were present.

## General Body Meeting of NIOS Society

The 19th Meeting of the General Body of National Open School Society was held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2010 at Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi. The Hon'ble Minister of HRD, Sh. Kapil Sibal and President of the NOS Society chaired the meeting.

In the meeting, the i) Annual Report of the NOS Society for the year 2009-10, ii) Annual Accounts of NIOS for the year 2009-10 with the Audit Report thereon and iii) Revised Estimate for the year 2010-11 and Budget Estimate for the year 2011-12 under Plan and Non-Plan heads were approved.

Sh Kapil Sibal in his presidential key note address stated that the objective of Right to Education to all is to provide educational opportunities in every state and district, but keeping in view the magnitude of effort to be made in the context and diversity of the country, it may take some time to make it fully operational. Therefore, there is an immediate need to provide an additional educational back-up to the children and NIOS can play an important role in supplementing formal education.

The Chairman, NIOS presented the activities and initiatives of NIOS.



Hon'ble Minister of HRD, Sh. Kapil Sibal along with NOSS GB members and NIOS officials.

The following broad decisions were arrived at the end of the General Body Meeting:

1. Developing a road map for providing supplementary support to the formal education by the open and distance learning system, more specifically NIOS, to support implementation of Right to Education Act and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan of Govt. of India and to develop synergy with the National Literacy Mission.
2. Developing the road map for Vocational Education in the context of skill development and integration with the Academic Courses of NIOS for creation of a unique academic and economic model to be implemented through ODL mode.
3. To develop a good and sustainable economic model for NIOS with research support from IIM/ISB for private sector investment on vocational education offered by NIOS through PPP model.

4. To develop global opportunities through networking and collaboration with a strong data base to be created through a portal to be developed for this purpose.

## Observance of Vigilance Awareness Period (25 October 2010 to 1 November 2010)

Observance of the Vigilance Awareness Period commenced with the administering of the PLEDGE at the NIOS headquarters, its Regional Centres and Sub-Regional centres in the country. This year, the main focus of observing the Vigilance Awareness Period was "Generation of Awareness and Publicity against Corruption". Banners and posters were displayed at prime locations to spread awareness on the harmful effect of corruption.

## Technology Orientation Workshop on Effective Communication and Online Forums

The Computer Unit with the help of the Capacity Building Cell (CBC) organized a Technology Orientation workshop in collaboration with Intel for NIOS officers on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in the Computer Training Lab.

The workshop included sessions on exploring the web for effective communication and the use of Web 2.0 technologies to collaborate and conduct online forums.

A consensus was formed to create an online community as one common platform for all NIOS Learners to share and interact.

A demo on using Skype Application was held keeping in mind the specific needs of NIOS officials. The NIOS online Community (<http://rdonlinecommunity.blogspot.com>) was also showcased and utility of such online communities in distance learning environment as that of NIOS was discussed.

### Success Story

**Jaspal Singh**

**Enrolment No.:** Secondary - 27020212195,  
Senior Secondary – 92279300066

**Fulfilling aspirations with the help of NIOS !**



Forced to discontinue his tenth class in 1993 in order to earn a livelihood to support his family, when his parents met with an accident, Jaspal Singh resumed his studies in 2003 by enrolling for the Secondary level course in NIOS. The flexibility of the NIOS system enabled him to pursue his studies along with his vocation. He acquired skills in fashion designing while working as a freelancer in garment export houses.

Having completed his Senior Secondary course from the NIOS and moved by the desire to continue studies, Jaspal Singh has managed to obtain admission to a three year course in Fashion Management at the University of Thames Valley, London.

### Editorial Board

• S.S. Jena, Chairman, NIOS	: Chief Editor
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