

Initiatives for Seamless Learning

*International Conference on
Promotion of Open Schooling*

*23-25 January, 2005
Goa, India*

Final Report

Organised by



*National Institute of Open Schooling
New Delhi, India*



*Commonwealth of Learning
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CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

- ♦ *NIOS may intensify its efforts to persuade the State Education Departments to setup/upscale the Open Schooling System and take measures for quality assurance of open schooling programmes.*
- ♦ *In order to promote quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of Open Schooling, NIOS may, on a priority basis, formulate an appeal in consultation with experts in the field, practitioners and State Open Schools(SOSs).*
- ♦ *NIOS may help States in developing programmes in regional languages over and above the existing provision of Hindi, English and Urdu.*
- ♦ *A Curriculum Framework for Open Vocational Education programme may be developed by NIOS for its own use and provide guidelines to the State Open Schools in the formulation of different courses of studies and development of material.*
- ♦ *The Vocational Education courses offered by NIOS and State Open Schools may be covered under the Apprenticeship Act 1961 so as to give benefit to a large number of students pursuing Vocational Education through open schooling delivery mode.*

- ♦ *NIOS in collaboration with COBSE, may take up from time to time comparative study of the curriculum, implementation status and impact of open learning programmes in different states.*
- ♦ *NIOS and SOSs may conduct market research surveys to find out the demand of the programme, cost benefit analysis, models of open schooling in India and other countries, study of outcomes and impact of open schooling for a specified period.*
- ♦ *As an important measure towards staff development at different levels – national and state- study visits and staff attachment programmes at selected institutions may be taken up by NIOS, SOS and international institutions like COL, UNESCO etc.*
- ♦ *A National Council for Open Schooling may be set up for formulation of standards in open schooling and accreditation/grading of open schooling organizations forging coordination and collaboration among various School Boards and Universities.*
- ♦ *The MHRD may be requested to formulate a centrally sponsored scheme for Promotion of Open Schooling in the country.*
- ♦ *COL/UNESCO may sponsor joint research studies in the key areas of ODL and facilitate cross country level dissemination of ideas and findings.*
- ♦ *The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) being an ardent promoter of Open Schooling may develop a detailed work plan of the Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth (OSAC).*
- ♦ *Steps may be taken by the Commonwealth countries to bring qualitative improvement in Open Schooling programmes in the wake of quantitative expansion.*

BACKGROUND

The emergence of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System has been a phenomenal evolution in the history of educational development towards the later half of the twentieth century. While the conventional system continues to be the mainstream of educational transaction, it has its own limitations with regard to expansion, access, equity and cost effectiveness.

The revolution brought about by the growth of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has greatly facilitated the expansion of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System and facilitated adoption of a flexible, constructivist, learner friendly and multi-perspective approach to teaching learning process

The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System is a new paradigm with some elements of shift such as:

- ♦ From classroom to anywhere
- ♦ From teacher centric to learner centric,
- ♦ From teacher as an instructor to teacher as a facilitator,
- ♦ From mainly oral instruction to technology aided instruction,
- ♦ From fixed time to anytime learning,
- ♦ From 'you learn what we offer' to 'we offer what you want to learn',
- ♦ From education as one time activity to education as life long activity.

*ODL System:
the New Paradigm*

The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System, during the course of its journey through a few decades in India, has seen many stages of development in teaching and learning modes/material and in its delivery mechanisms against the background of unprecedented development of Communication Technology vis-à-vis shrinking resources of education.

In fact, the ODL System has been gaining wide popularity over the years in India and across the globe since it provides an opportunity to all those who are unable to pursue learning through traditional system.

The ODL System aims to:

*Aims of
ODL System*

- ♦ provide an opportunity for education for all aspirants including those in service, women, adults, physically and mentally challenged, staying in remote areas etc.,
- ♦ allow self paced learning,
- ♦ provide innovative and flexible education,
- ♦ provide learning material which are self-explanatory, user-friendly and updated in content,
- ♦ provide opportunity for a number of diverse courses – professional, technical, vocational and general
- ♦ cater to the needs of certification, education, knowledge, skill upgradation etc.,
- ♦ provide regular counselling and other appropriate learning support through networks of Study Centres, and
- ♦ incorporate new technology, satellite communication, networking, internet, e-mail etc., for access to learners.

In other words, ODL democratizes education, offers need based academic programmes, promotes and takes quality education to people's doorsteps. Besides providing opportunities for relaxed entry and exit regulations it offers flexibilities in selection of courses, place of study and examination with full freedom to pursue the courses at a self-determined pace. Demographic, socio-economic, technology dominated approach and cost- effectiveness are the reasons for the fast growth and success of the system.

The present trend suggests a vast scope for capacity enhancement of the ODL System. It would require additional infrastructure and ICT support. The greater use of new ICT is supportive of the paradigm shifts in education sector. Learners of the future will not be passive recipients but active processors of information and consumers of varied knowledge products.

Paradigm shift in education has implication on learner's autonomy – it is becoming not only possible but also a passion for today's learners to select Courses and Curriculum from anywhere in the world.

The Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System has been the key dispersal agent in the movement towards a post-industrial society characterized by globalization. ODL will be the mainstream of education in not too distant future.

*ODL System :
the key dispersal
agent*

School education is an important segment of the total educational system contributing significantly to the individual as well as national development process. So far, formal schooling has been playing a major role in educating the children in the age group 6-18 years. However, due to rigidities of the formal schooling system, quite a large number of school-going-age children drop out at various stages of school education. Moreover, due to socio-economic and other reasons, many children belonging to disadvantaged section of the society are not able to take advantage of the formal schooling system. Today the major challenges that India faces in the educational arena are:

- ♦ the challenge of numbers,
- ♦ the challenge of credibility, and
- ♦ the challenge of quality.

The major concerns are to:

- ♦ meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children,
- ♦ provide wider choice of educational programmes to learners,
- ♦ provide a “safety net” to school drop-outs so that they do not lapse into illiteracy, and;
- ♦ provide education to those who cannot attend conventional schools for a variety of socio-economic reasons, as well as to those who missed opportunities to complete school and developmental education.

*Facing Challenges
&
Major Concerns*

In search of solutions to the emerging educational concerns, the ODL System at school level has been adopted which gave rise to the evolution of Open Schooling System in the country. Over the decades, ODL system has grown both conceptually and in depth. The Commonwealth countries have evolved a number of models in extending opportunities for continuing educational pursuits through ODL system.

International Conference

NIOS organized an International Conference on “Promotion of Open Schooling” from 23 to 25 January, 2005 in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (COL). The major objectives of this conference were to:

- ♦ Advocate the need to set up Open Schools thereby insisting on need analysis and feasibility study in States/Countries where there is yet no open school.
- ♦ Emphasize on qualitative improvement and upscaling of activities in the existing State Open Schools.
- ♦ Exchange experiences so that pitfalls are identified and strategic solutions worked out.
- ♦ Share highlights of “Vision 2020” of NIOS.
- ♦ Examine modalities of setting up Open Schools.

*Objectives of the
Conference*

The Participants included reputed educationists, educational planners and administrators from States of India, international experts, representatives from apex institutions within and outside India and representatives from COL. The participating countries included Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, India, Canada and UK.

The themes for the Conference were as under:

- ♦ ICT for Open Schooling.
- ♦ Status of Open Schooling in India and abroad.
- ♦ Research in Open Schooling: Prospects and Priority Areas.

Themes

- ♦ Quality Assurance in Open Schooling System.
- ♦ Vocational Education: Significance for Open Schooling.

Methodology of the Conference/ Modus Operandi

The conference was a mix of presentations, panel discussions, open house discussions and group sessions.

Based on the deliberations in various sessions, the recommendations of the conference were drafted and presented in the penultimate session for adoption by all.

The Programme Schedule and List of Participants are given at Annexure IV and V respectively.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The inaugural session started with lighting of the lamp by Ms. Susan Phillips, Prof. H.P. Dixit, Prof. R.H. Dave, Shri Keshav Desiraju, Shri V.J. Williams, and Dr. (Mrs) Sushmita Mitra.

Dr. Sushmita Mitra, Director (Academics), NIOS welcomed the delegates.

Ms. Susan Phillips, Education Specialist, COL in her opening remarks emphasized the need to provide access to children, youth and adults who could not complete school education to pursue relevant and need based courses of study through open schooling system. The reasons of making open schooling as a choice for continuing education at school level was highlighted by her. In order to meet the challenge of educating a large number of out of school children and due to lack of sufficient number of schools in the formal education system, she felt that the open schooling system can be considered. With the use of ICT, the developing countries can meet the challenge of numbers by providing high quality education at the doorstep of learners. There is an urgent need today to set up open learning in all states of India and upscale the programmes with a focus on qualitative dimensions.

Shri. M.C. Pant, Chairman, National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) India stressed the need and importance of Open Schooling to educate millions of people that are deprived of education and equip them with necessary skills for a decent living. He further emphasised the need of developing a perspective of open schooling leading to



formulation of long term, medium term and short term plans for effective implementation of the programmes.

While concluding his address, Shri M.C. Pant thanked COL for sponsoring the international conference on promotion of open schooling and the Governments of the Countries / States that deputed participants. The address of Shri M.C. Pant is enclosed at **Annexure-I**.

*Genuine need to
expand Open
Schooling System*

Following this, Shri Keshav Desiraju, Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) addressed the participants by welcoming them and appreciated the Chairman NIOS for organising the conference in collaboration with COL. For universalising school education, the governments at the centre and in the states are finding it difficult to meet the challenge of education through formal schooling system, particularly due to lack of resources. As such, there is a need to expand the open schooling programme with quality assurance. He stated that the students of open schooling system should be able to join the mainstream at some point of time. The question of language teaching like English is an extremely sensitive issue. Therefore, it needs to be discussed properly. The problems faced by girl students need to be tackled carefully through the open schooling system by providing appropriate facilities. For promotion of open schooling, NIOS should have close contact with the State Education Departments. This organisation should play an important role for promotion of open schooling in India as well as in other countries. Efforts need to be made to place the Open Schooling System on a sound pedestal, and the system should not suffer by labels such as second rate or inferior education. The demand for open schooling needs to be created through quality assurance. The successful models of open learning in other countries may be considered for replication in India.

He requested the State Education Departments to upscale the open schooling programme and contribute substantially to meet the challenges of increasing demand of relevant and need based quality education, and in this context the NIOS is required to play an important role for promotion of open schooling at national and global level. At the end, Shri Desiraju urged that roles of Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the State Education Department for promotion of open schooling programme may be deliberated and expectations from MHRD may be pinpointed.

*Redefining
Education*

In his presidential address Prof. H.P. Dixit said that after independence it had been one of the difficult tasks to make people properly educated. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru had a vision at the time of independence that one of our greatest priority would be to give education to all. Even today this dream could not be fulfilled in its entirety. As such, the education needs to be redefined. Despite massive efforts, much headway could not be made beyond classroom at school level. However, the situation at higher education level is somewhat better. The nation has resolved that every child up to 14 years of age is to be given elementary education. A close look at the available infrastructure and other resources

reveals that these are not sufficient to meet the challenge of educating every child up to 14 years of age. There is need to look around outside the campus to meet the educational needs of various client groups that could not avail educational facilities due to various reasons. The Open and Distance Education programmes, besides providing seamless access to education, are cost effective and have promise of quality assurance.

Prof. Dixit pointed out that there are some emerging issues that need to be taken care of by the open and distance education system. One of the issues relates to promotion of skill based vocational education particularly in villages and rural areas where the existing facilities, workshops etc., could be utilised. Instead of setting up new training centres, it would be beneficial to opt for open and distance education by sharing available facilities and infrastructure.

The distance education in India emerged as a sort of revolution and in higher education it has succeeded because of its openness. The revolutions in ICT and the space programmes have made global impact. However, these could not be utilised gainfully by the education system in general. The open and distance education system has utilised these technologies for various programmes and activities. In this context, interactive networking was required in the form of consortium etc. There is a need to come out of the closed mindset that education of all sorts is only available in the school/college campus. The existing workshops should be utilised for training and skill development of mechanics. In this context, the specific tasks are:

- Identification of the available resource places/workshops
- Redefining education
- Using O D L system for skill development

Prof. Dixit said that in India, establishment of State Open Universities had taken considerable time. The Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has played significant role for promotion of open and distance education at higher education level. The University has many achievements in terms of access to a variety of courses of study and training of personnel. It has produced many renowned scholars. The States are now convinced that Open and Distance Learning mode of education is an effective and viable method of providing orientation/training to teachers. Besides the Open Universities, time is now ripe to up scale the open schooling programme. Every State needs to have one or more Open University and a State Open School. IGNOU is motivating the conventional universities to make use of open and distance learning mode also. NIOS is expected to play similar type of lead role for promotion of state open schools in the country. The open and distance education has bright future in India, but there is a need that the policy makers and the Government may support this venture. IGNOU and NIOS have same mission and that mission is to "educate everybody".



The Chief Guest was Prof. R.H. Dave, former Director, International Institute of Education, UNESCO. While inaugurating the conference he pleaded for promotion of open schooling to meet the challenges posed by multiple revolutions in science and technology, commerce and industries and in several other fields of life – all occurring simultaneously. With the emergence of knowledge society, a new set of vocabulary, such as knowledge economy, knowledge jobs, knowledge workers, knowledge management, has emerged. It is therefore, imperative that all citizens of the 21st Century must have a minimum of school level education (general education

as well as vocational and technical skills) and should continue learning throughout life. For this purpose, today's learner should give focus on four inter-related aspects: (i) learning what to learn; (ii) learning how to learn; (iii) learning how to evaluate one's own achievement; and (iv) self regulated progress-monitoring throughout life; which are the new learning needs of the new century. Undoubtedly this calls for adoption of a multi-model schooling system adopting multi-media approach including open schooling, distance learning, EDUSAT, TV and DVD learning systems, multi-media computers, contact classes, peer learning arrangements and self study through modular textual materials. Now time has come to modernise the organizational principles of both formal schooling and open schooling treating them as a holistic system of general and vocational learning. This paradigm shift in education will facilitate us to make India a global economic super-power. The detailed speech of Prof. Dave is at **Annexure – II**.

ICT FOR OPEN SCHOOLING

The deliberations of the Conference started with Session-I that centred round the theme **ICT for Open Schooling** which forms one of the key inputs of ODL system. The session Chairperson was Prof. M.M. Pant while the speakers were Mr. Vis. Naidoo, Education Specialist, Educational Technology, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada; Dr. Derek Wenmoth, E. Development Manager, The Correspondence School, New Zealand and Dr. B.S. Bhatia, Director, Development and Communication Unit, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). Prof. Pant initiated the session with his presentation referring to the major challenges of present day education, namely, numbers, quality and relevance. In his opinion the increasing use of ICT in educational and allied fields is ingrained in the very concern of what Mahatma Gandhi told about the need for education for the masses and taking education to every villages. He also gave emphasis on the need for effective utilization of ICT in Open Schooling and making preparation for knowledge economy.

Today world countries are engrossed with devising newer techniques of providing wider exposure to the children and youth through generating multidimensional support services by harnessing the potentiality of electronic media. In this context Mr. Vis Naidoo, deliberated on '**School Nets- The Electronic Network for School Education**' that facilitate regular communication among school clusters. He stated that in recent times certain new concepts like e-learning, open learning, technology-distributed learning, resource-based learning, web-based learning, online learning, virtual education have become the focus point of global education, research and development. The extended use of echnology in education depends upon planning appropriate situation-specific modalities, creation of suitable delivery environment and, above all, a clear cut policy formulation. In this regard the world educational scenario demonstrate adoption of a number of approaches. One of the approaches that proved effective in the school sector refers to the launching of 'school net' services. School net denotes school networking wherein schools collaborate

*ICT for Communication
among School Clusters*

*School Net
Services*

on interschool projects, content, curriculum development and are in regular communication.

School net services include:

- ♦ Computer distribution and connectivity services.
- ♦ Inter-school networking and collaborative projects using the broad array of information and communication technologies (ICTs).
- ♦ Content and curriculum development and sharing.
- ♦ Teacher Training in ICT to enhance teaching skills.

Some examples of Schoolnet Models were highlighted like:

- ♦ School net South Africa
- ♦ Pakistan Association for Computer Education in Schools (PACES)
- ♦ Project Harmony Armenia Connectivity 2000
- ♦ Goa Schools Computer Project
- ♦ School Net Mozambique
- ♦ Malaysia
- ♦ Egypt
- ♦ School net Canada
- ♦ European Schoolnet

*Measures for use
of ICT in
School Education*

Mr. Naidoo said that ICT in School Education involves a number of measures and the main ones are:

- ♦ Preparing all sectors of the education system to understand the investment in and value of technology
- ♦ Preparing education institutions to accept the technology
- ♦ Procuring and installing the technology
- ♦ Training teachers to use ICT
- ♦ Developing and managing content
- ♦ Planning for continuous evaluation and research
- ♦ Integrating curriculum
- ♦ Providing ongoing technical support
- ♦ Providing ongoing curriculum support
- ♦ Developing partnerships

*Need for
Policy for effective
use of ICT*

Keeping in view the special learning context and philosophy of open schooling, Mr. Naidoo feels that there is a need for formulation of a policy for effective use of ICT for open schooling in which some of the issues could be related to:

- ♦ Use of ICT for distance education in an intensive way
- ♦ Increasing use of computer technology and the Internet
- ♦ Increased use for:
 - course delivery
 - learning and teaching materials
 - student support
 - peer interaction
 - management systems

At the end Mr. Naidoo reiterated that the need of ICT in education programme is vital to ensure an equitable system. A school net may be considered as a strategy to coordinate implementation and use the policy and school net to support open schools.

Dr. Derek Wenmoth drawing examples from Correspondence School in New Zealand explained about the creation of learning community through **on-line service of cluster schools**.



New Zealand's Correspondence School has emerged from a concern to supplement/supersede traditional print-based materials by technology based e-learning approach. It largely uses videoconferencing delivery mode for providing a variety of courses through the Correspondence School. This kind of provision enable students to continue with their studies in their local school with some of the subjects that are being provided at a distance through the Correspondence School.

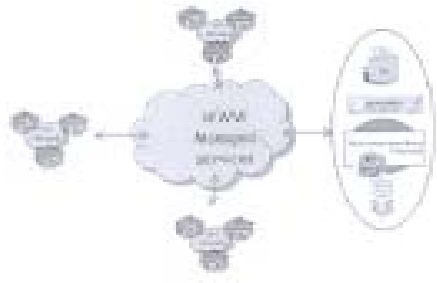
A number of schools in an area form a cluster for sharing support services and resources. There is a system of audio-graphic network among the cluster of schools wherein a teacher in one school addresses a class made up of students in one or several of the other schools in the cluster. Thus the use of videoconferencing technologies facilitate linkage between teachers and students. The use of technology in cluster schools serves fourfold purposes, namely, (i) provision of curriculum support to students; (ii) promotion of professional development for teachers; (iii) Share of staffing and resourcing between and among clusters; (iv) increase in the range of subjects available to students in these schools. Today the number of clusters is in the increase. There is greater awareness about subjects being offered through different cluster schools.

*On Line Service
of
Cluster Schools*

Currently the basic issue is the linkage between schools through a Virtual Private Network (VPN) and the services provided within it. These VPNs exist at a variety of levels- within each school (intranet), within clusters (extranet) and as an environment that links these together (VPN). The success of this approach is largely dependent on investment and management at a national level. This is the system with a national mandate and is New Zealand's major provider of distance education to the school sector for long 80 years.

During 2004 there were nine clusters with about 300 students from 77 schools who participated in weakly online classes.

The network is also used during out of school hours for a number of "Virtual Staff Meetings". This provides an opportunity to subject specialists for holding professional discussions and sharing of experiences with other teachers having similar interests and responsibilities.



At the transaction level each cluster enjoys autonomy to organize courses, distribute resource and make staff allotment as per its own requirement. At secondary school stage four periods per week is allocated for face-to-face class time for each subject. In videoconferencing cluster model, an equal amount of time is allocated for student learning of which only one period is used for scheduled video conference. In the other three periods students are given individual study assignment either in the form of print or via the Web using a Learning Management System (LMS).

While each cluster has a choice for selection of LMS from a variety of materials the cluster school students get ample scope for sharing of resources through online discussion chat and groups. This system establishes linkage between teacher and fellow students.

Dr. Wenmoth also highlighted that in videoconferencing model learner support is provided in three ways:

- ♦ Pastoral support by the students' base on home school (which they physically attend)
- ♦ Curriculum support by the remote teacher who is actually teaching the course.
- ♦ Learning support is extended by the remote teacher and the host school.

However, each cluster has evolved different models for facilitating and monitoring this process.

Presenting about the Management System Dr. Wenmoth said that each school forms its own management system for overseeing the functioning of videoconferencing within the cluster. Usually individual teachers including the on-line teachers organize the materials as per the requirement of the course they are teaching.

Each school takes up independent decision about the technology that it would like to go in for. A variety of technologies are being used. The standard set of materials that are in use in most of the participating schools are videoconferencing codec and camera, two monitors, an audio conferencing facility and a document camera. The Ministry of Education is presently engaged in providing multipoint videoconferencing within and between schools. A networking process is underway for collaborative partnership between Ministries to enhance the opportunity for all schools to participate in the national videoconferencing network.

Following this Dr. B.S. Bhatia highlighted on the launching of EDUSAT Services for Education and Development.

He said that EDUSAT as a satellite dedicated for educational usage has ushered revolution in the area of accessibility with equity, transaction and connectivity. The launching of EDUSAT has enormous possibility for the utilization of space technology for education and development. In fact EDUSAT proposes to strengthen education efforts by augmenting curriculum based teaching, offering effective teacher training and community participation,

increasing access to education and access to new technologies through an effective ground segment configuration.

These configuration can be adopted and established in schools, colleges and other institutions. Five hubs have been visualized one for each regional beam.

EDUSAT combines the features of several ICTs. It is flexible enough to support technological inputs like :

- ♦ Radio
- ♦ TV broadcasts
- ♦ Video conferencing
- ♦ Data broadcasting
- ♦ Computer connectivity
- ♦ On line education through internet
- ♦ On line admission
- ♦ On line examination
- ♦ Easy storage and retrieval
- ♦ National and regional level communication links

*Features of
EDUSAT*



Technological Possibilities of EDUSAT

Today there has been concerted efforts in India to identify the sectors of education where EDUSAT can be of immense service. These are:

- ♦ E-learning
- ♦ Online admission : Assessment and Evaluation
- ♦ Open and flexible system of learning
- ♦ Teaching counseling
- ♦ Virtual classroom

- ◆ Assessment and two way processing of information
- ◆ Training by all agencies in the State
- ◆ Sharing of resources among ODL and other system in the region
- ◆ Facilitate Institute – industry interaction

Dr. Bhatia stated that currently the programme is in its pilot phase. The proposed target for this phase are:

- ◆ Use KU band transponder on INSAT to set up networks in 3 locations, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh.
- ◆ Develop multimedia based interactive content and train resource persons to develop it.
- ◆ Utilisation of 2 hrs. a day, 6 days a week and 50% time for interaction expected.
- ◆ Status
 - Networks Installed
 - Dry runs completed
 - Network being upgraded
 - Regular use from September 2004

With ICT and space applications the benefits of distance and open learning can be instrumental in taking education at the doorstep of students and facilitate interactivity at different levels.

The presentations of all the four experts clearly brought out the significance of ICT in Open Schooling programme and indicated the dimensions in which ICT application in education will be very effective.

*Issues for
effective use of ICT
in Open Schooling*

Some of the points that call for consideration in the effective utilization of ICT in Open Schooling are:

- ◆ Drivers versus Inhibitors,
- ◆ The criticality of education for all and hence a re-look at the ingredients,
- ◆ The collaborative learning environment and hence the changed and new role of the teacher,
- ◆ The accessibility dimension which may be expanded with the use of ICT.

*Factors to note
for knowledge
economy*

Meaningful use of ICT in Open Schooling would require proper preparation for the knowledge economy. At planning stage a number of factors need to be taken into account for preparing for the knowledge economy which are:

- ◆ Flourishing and thriving in the knowledge economy
- ◆ Outcomes of learning; multi-sensory education
- ◆ The soul of IIT's (excellence)
- ◆ Volunteer and independent teachers
- ◆ The power of meshed networks
- ◆ The tasks ahead

OPEN SCHOOLING SYSTEM

The theme for Session-II was on **Open Schooling System**. The Chairperson for this session was Dr. Amrapalli M. Merchant, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Babaseheb Ambedkar Open University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The speakers for this session were Ms. Susan Phillips, Education Specialist, Basic Education, COL, Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, Ex-chairman, National Open School and Shri M.C.Pant, Chairman, National Institute of Open Schooling, India. In her opening remarks, Dr. Amrapalli M. Merchant spoke about the importance of open schooling. Ms. Susan Phillips presented a brief concept paper on Open Schooling and Fr. Kunnunkal gave a historical backdrop to the setting up of the National Open School in India which was later renamed as the National Institute of Open Schooling. Shri M.C. Pant spoke about the consortium and association for open schooling in India.

Ms. Susan Phillips in her presentation on Open Schooling pointed out that Open Schooling was a means to meet some of the global challenges. The marginalized groups could be reached through this system which is a “timely alternative”. The success of Universal Primary Education and Education For All movements in some countries have created demand for secondary level courses of study. The success for literacy programmes have also resulted in the need for greater opportunities for neo-literates, specially adults. Open schools have succeeded in both developed and developing countries and open schooling can provide access to quality school level education in economical, timely and effective manner.

*Open School:
a timely alternative*

Following this Fr. Kunnunkal stated briefly about setting up of National Open School. The Open School was set up as a Project in the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 1979. It became an autonomous institution called National Open School in 1989. From the very beginning, the Open School had functional autonomy. The curriculum and

the evaluation pattern was different even though the certification was done by the CBSE. The Open School was neither a part nor an appendix of the formal system. Although it had a separate identity, equivalency of standards was maintained. The use of vocational education to meet the needs of adults and the use of technology to reach the population living in difficult contexts was stressed. The need for close collaboration among various institutions to ensure optimal utilization of resources was under scored. The role of the National Consortium of Open Schooling (NCOS) for being a meeting point for national and state level Open Schooling organizations was also mentioned.

Shri M.C. Pant, Chairman, NIOS, spoke about the National Consortium of Open Schooling (NCOS) and the Open Schooling Association for Commonwealth (OSAC). He dwelt upon the major focus and role dimensions of NCOS and OSAC as important units of NIOS, India.

He said that in order to facilitate better cooperation, collaboration and interaction among NIOS and State Open Schools and other concerned agencies and expansion of activities pertaining to Open Learning system, a National Consortium for Open Schooling (NIOS) was established in 1997. NIOS works as the Secretariat of NCOS.

The NIOS envisages a pro-active role for itself by sharing professional capabilities and resources to maintain and coordinate standards of Open Schooling in the country. Among other things, performance indicators for ODL will be developed and disseminated. A National Council for Open Schooling is envisaged to be set up for formulation of standards in open schooling and accreditation/grading of open schooling organisations vis-a-vis the standards and forging coordination and collaboration among various School Boards and Universities. To begin with, this regulatory mechanism will work under the aegis of the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS). At a later stage when the NCOS will be subsumed in the National Council for Open Schooling, the NIOS would take steps, on priority basis, to set up an ad-hoc National Council for Open Schooling by studying the constitution, role and functions of similar Councils established elsewhere. Further, the National Council for Open Schooling may be made a statutory body. The Council shall inter alia perform the task of 'accreditation' of State Open Schools based on quality, performance, and achievements, to be graded as A,B,C etc. Among other things such grading will facilitate NIOS and SOSs to have mutual agreement about acceptance of one another's certificates and Transfer of Credits. For example, if the credibility of an SOS is not upto desired standard, another SOS or NIOS may not accept transfer of credits from that SOS. The grading needs to be done purely from the standpoint of academic considerations for which the NIOS will lay down "standards" and it will come out with a 'good model'.

NIOS would present a model of Open Schooling that may be adopted or adapted by States for the State Open Schools (SOSs). NIOS would strive to gear the programmes

of SOSs to conform to NIOS model through advocacy programmes so that SOSs follow the philosophy of open school in letter and spirit.

Pending setting up of the National Council of Open Schooling, the NIOS would continue working as a Secretariat of the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS). Whereas the National Council will perform the task of formulation of standards for State Open Schools and for coordination and collaboration among various School Board and Universities, the need for providing forums for exchange of ideas and information and ancillary activities among open schooling organizations will still remain to be taken care of.

NIOS has formulated a Suggested Framework for Setting up of a State Open School. This Framework provides guidelines about (i) courses of study, (ii) role and functions, (iii) educational process, (iv) evaluation system, (v) management and organisational structure, (vi) mechanism for programme planning, and (vii) suggested Plan of Action for starting a State Open School.

A Scheme of Financial Assistance to States for setting up of State Open Schools and for up scaling of the Open Schooling programme is being operationalised by NIOS. The financial assistance under this scheme is limited to Rs. 20 lakh which is generally spread over a period of five years.

There is a need to give fillip to the open schooling programme in the States particularly due to the fact that the students preferring 'open schooling' would generally like to opt regional mediums for their courses of study.

The MHRD may take note of this fact particularly to meet the challenge of providing secondary education to a large number of Upper Primary pass outs. The conference may deliberate on the issue of upscaling of the open schooling programme as a priority agenda for which it may like to recommend formulation of a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Promotion of Open Schooling by the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). Such a scheme would prove very useful to place the Open Schooling programme on a sound pedestal.

There are still some states in which there is no State Open School (SOS) or the Regional Centre of NIOS. The NIOS proposes to interact with these States in order to impress upon the State Education Departments to set up State Open Schools (SOSs) on priority basis. In case such States are unable to set up SOSs early, then NIOS proposes to set up its Regional Sub-Centres in these states in a phased manner. At a later stage, NIOS may negotiate with the concerned State Education Departments to take over such Regional Sub-Centres and convert them into State Open Schools.

Mr. Pant highlighted that another important function of NIOS relates to the activities pertaining to Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth (OSAC). The Open Schooling

Association of the Commonwealth (OSAC), created with financial assistance from the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), with Secretariat/Headquarters at NIOS, New Delhi, is functioning as liaison agency for information dissemination, coordination and mutual consultation among member countries. The OSAC is required to organise human resource development programmes for functionaries of Open Schools, promote research and development activities and take steps to ensure quality of standards. Through periodic meetings, the OSAC provides forum for discussion on issues of mutual interest and concerns. One of the functions of OSAC is to facilitate and support research and developmental activities through joint research projects to be conducted by the member states (countries) and to publish a News Bulletin to disseminate information on latest developments in Open Learning system. As a first step in this direction, NIOS in collaboration with COL has been bringing out the half yearly OSAC Journal of Open Schooling. The Journal provides informational inputs about the developments in Open Schooling, especially in the Commonwealth countries. The NIOS expects greater collaboration with COL in various aspects of Open Learning. Partnership is also required to be forged with UNESCO, World Bank, UNICEE, UNDP and other international organisations for promotion of open schooling at national and international level.

Some international agencies, specially the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO, are taking steps for Promotion of Open Schooling in different countries. The NIOS, in collaboration with COL and UNESCO, has been interacting with several developing countries and has set up an International Centre for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS). Under ICTOS NIOS has organized several advocacy programmes for developing countries of Africa and Asia and is all set to offer Certificate and Diploma Courses in Open Schooling. Such capacity building programme will facilitate up scaling of open schooling programme in various countries as trained manpower will be available for various tasks such as planning, developing, implementing and monitoring the educational programmes.

EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO IN COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES

Session-III of the conference focused on the **Educational Scenario of Commonwealth Countries** like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. The session was chaired by Dr. Vis Naidoo, Education Specialist, Policy and Planning, Commonwealth of Learning, Canada. The speakers for the sessions were Dr. Md. Arshed Ali Mattuber, Dean, Open School, Bangladesh Open University and Dr. Nanda Wanniarachi, Chief Project Officer, Open School, National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka.

The presentations are summed up below.

Contemporary Issues in Open Schooling : A Case of Bangladesh Open University

The objectives of Bangladesh Open University are to increase equitable access, to develop human resource to support the government's current and long term education policy, to cater to people excluded from conventional education system, and to include significant numbers of students of rural areas, particularly women.

The Bangladesh Open School is one of the seven schools of the Bangladesh Open University and offers programmes for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) – grades 9-10 and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) grades 11-12. The total enrollment (cumulative) at the SSC level is 269583 of which 161790 are male and 107793 are female. The enrollment figures of Higher Secondary level stand out 146091, of which 79824 are male and 66267

*About Bangladeshi
Open School*

*Challenges
facing Bangladeshi
Open School*

are female. The statistical data presented bring out the increasing enrollment trend both at the SSC and the HSC level. The number of tutorial centres are also on the rise. It was pointed out that while the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) offered non-formal education at grade levels one to five, no non-formal schooling was available at grades 6-8. Hence, partnership building with NGOs for non-formal education for grades 6-8 was being proposed so that the Open School at the SSC level could then provide a regular continuum.

Some of the basic challenges facing the Bangladesh Open School are the maintenance of the portfolios of teaching programmes and keeping them updated and operational, recruiting large number of students and to ensure that as many as possible are successful in their studies. Another important challenge is to reduce educational inequality by offering educational opportunities to the marginalized and the poor.

The strengths of the Bangladesh Open School, include young and dynamic teachers, some of whom are highly trained, the country wide network of tutorial centres (there are over one thousand tutorial centres), high quality text books and a well-equipped media centre. The ministerial recognition has established the credibility of the Open School courses at par with the conventional system.

Among the weaknesses of the Bangladesh Open School one can mention the heavy dependence on the print media without much emphasis on audio-video or ICT and the lack of teachers who are trained in multimedia. Also new teachers joining the Bangladesh Open School are untrained.

If anyone wanted to question as to why the Bangladesh Open School is an important component of the Bangladesh Open University and why the University has chosen to introduce programmes at this level, the answers are not far to seek. The Bangladesh Open School is an important source of revenue for the Bangladesh Open University and Bangladesh Open University has a public commitment to improve educational access and equity across the levels. Without this commitment to school level programme and non-formal education, the BOU would have difficulty in meeting its mission and extending access to the rural poor.



The questions raised after the presentation included queries on the number and working of tutorial centres, the dropout rate in the formal system and on the affordability of fees for the tribes and poorer sections. The wide network of tutorial centres established in existing conventional schools was pointed out. However, there are only 20 centres directly under the Bangladesh Open University for conduct of science practicals. It was mentioned that the dropout rate was more than 35% in the traditional system. Education is free for the

female population till class XII and the education of the tribals are also highly subsidized. As the fees •is collected in installments, the question of paying the fees has not yet assumed problematic dimensions. The issue of training conventional teachers for open school programmes was also raised and it was mentioned that conventional teachers were trained from time to time through instructional manual and workshops but there was no well managed/well equipped teacher training programme as such.

The Sri Lanka Open School

Open Schooling which is in its initial stage in Sri Lanka has immense possibilities as all are not equally benefited by the formal school system in their school age. By the end of the primary classes (Grade 5), 6.3% students drop-out; the highest dropouts are in grade 9 and reaches almost 10.4% whereas by the end of the secondary circle (grade 11), 49% dropout from SCE (OL) and 45% dropout from SCE (AL) (School Census Report MOE 2001)

*Status of Sri Lanka
Open School*

Children of school age in Sri Lanka grow up without access to education due to a variety of reasons. Nearly 20% stop schooling to engage in economic activity, and 12% stop schooling due to financial or other difficulties. Whereas 11% do not go to school due to uncertainty of further education. The child activity survey 1999 mentioned other reasons as the need to assist parents in their work or the desire to earn money for themselves for dropping out of school. 9,00,000 children in the north and east of Sri Lanka are directly affected by the on-going armed conflict whereas another 80,000 children are affected by tsunami (tidal waves).

Certain other factors include rigid formal education system which deny access to those who temporarily stop schooling of children to help the parents in earning their livelihood, the poorer section of girl population who look after their siblings or who cannot access the formal system because of their lifestyle (like the gypsies and vaddas). The clientele of open school consequently comprise of the pushed outs, disabled, nomadic groups, employed or unemployed people and those seeking continuing education or those who need to fill in their learning gaps and aim to enter the formal education system.

The learning opportunities that could be provided through open school in Sri Lanka include general education courses, Bridge courses, supplementary education courses, vocational education courses, continuing education courses, language courses and literacy and numeracy courses. The strategies that could be adopted for delivering the Open School programme through distance and open learning methodologies include Radio and T.V. programmes, multimedia approach, printed self-learning materials, mobile libraries, visiting facilitators, study premises and practical workshops.

The functions of the Open School would encompass a wide range of activities like carrying out surveys, investigations and research, project designing, curriculum development and

planning of learning materials, development and production of learning materials, staff development and collaboration with institutes.

As regards implementation of open schooling, the project is to be implemented through regional study centers to which the learners would be attached. Each centre would have a coordinator as the head who would be assisted by subject facilitators. The centres would serve as resource centres for the students and wherever necessary sub-centres would be attached to the regional study centres.

The Open School Project of Sri Lanka would be looked after by the National Institute of Education under the Ministry of Education. The Non-Formal Education Unit, Vocational Training Authority, Department of Technical Education, National Apprentice and Industrial Training, National Institute of Business and Management, Open University and Department of Social Development would form the other Departments of the National Institute of Education and all these various departments and Institutes would collaborate with open school for successful implementation of the programme. The two courses that have been identified for implementation are the Secondary Education course and the Bridge Course for foundation to Open School or mainstreaming. The curriculum would be based on the formal school curriculum and based on the four pillars of the Dellors Report – Learning to know, Learning to do, Learning to live together and Learning to be.

The content of the course would consist of three components – academic, general and vocational/technical. The academic component would be developed in the three levels – Level 1 (equal to grades 6-7), Level-2 (equal to grade 8-9) and level 3 (equal to grade 10-11). The general component would develop values, civic sense, ethics and human qualities and also enhance social skills needed for a multi cultural society. The vocational component is aimed at developing the existing skills and providing skills in trades that are more in demand locally and in the region.

The Sri Lanka Open School proposes that those who are eligible would be encouraged to sit for government examinations such as SCE (OL) and only later would develop a new and separate examination system for the open school learners. This would be developed gradually.

The question session revolved round the need survey that was conducted by the Sri Lanka Open School, how the survey was conducted, how the learners were identified in different age groups and decisions regarding the courses that the Sri Lanka Open School chose to introduce.

EDUCATIONAL SCENARIO IN INDIA

Provision of Elementary Education to all children in the age-group 6-14 has been a slated goal of the Government of India since independence. Although Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) is yet to be achieved, the Government has affirmed its commitment to this goal through various measures. The Government has launched the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement) for promoting UEE with a clear time frame. This programme aims at providing useful and relevant elementary education of satisfactory quality for all children in the age group 6-14 by 2010. SSA has a number of special components that are targeted at specific groups of children. One of these is the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) launched in 2003 and provided additional components for education of girls in almost all the 2, 600 educationally backward blocks where rural female literacy rate is lower and gender gap is higher than the national average.

Consequently, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) at the Elementary stage has increased progressively since 1950-51, rising from 32.1 in that year to 82.4 in 2001-02. Moreover, the GER of girls has been higher than that of boys. This has resulted in decline in gender gap in enrolment. Between 1990-2000 the increase in the girls enrolment at the Primary level has been from 23% to 40%. At Upper Primary Level the increase in the enrolment has been from 38% to 40%.

With this background the theme on **Educational Scenario in India** was presented by nine states in Sessions IV and VII respectively.

Assam

In Assam the educational scenario during post-independence era has witnessed decadal growth of elementary school enrolment. The goal of Universalisation of Elementary education envisioned under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (Education for All Movement) is by the year 2010. The enrolment position in Primary and Upper Primary stage during the decade 1991-2001 was quite encouraging. The total enrolment of students at Primary level in 2001 was 4080610 and 1518648 at upper primary stage. The percentage increase in enrolment over the decade in primary and upper primary stages were 148.05 and 169.90 respectively.

As regards dropout and retention position at Elementary level, 75.98% of boys and 75.20% of girls are attending schools and the drop out percentage for boys is 5.21. For girls it is 4.71%. The retention position at the Elementary level is 95.035.

However, some of the pockets being located in geographically isolated areas, due to insurgency factors and above all, in-built rigidity of formal system of education a need has been felt to search or alternative educational delivery mode.

In response to this, NIOS opened a Regional Centre of Open Schooling at Guwahati for the North Eastern Region. It caters to the educational needs at Elementary as well as Secondary and Senior Secondary level. The NIOS offers vocational courses in addition to academic courses. The State has introduced Assamese language courses as well.

The Government of Assam is in negotiation with NIOS to explore the possibility of setting up a State Open School in Assam with Assamese as medium of instruction and gradually to extend this facility of using mother tongue as a medium of instruction to Bodo and Bengali students.

Andhra Pradesh

In Andhra Pradesh, the formal education sector provides education up to secondary level divided into four stages. These are:

- ♦ Pre-primary
- ♦ Primary
- ♦ Upper Primary
- ♦ Secondary

Enrolment in the schools is ensured through generating awareness campaign about the education/educational needs and enforcement of existing legal provision, wherever necessary. However, inspite of adopting adequate measures and required facilities, 70% of children are dropping out before reaching the secondary level. At the Elementary level, 0.55 million children are out of school.

In view of prevailing educational scenario of the State, Open School was set up in 1991 to provide a flexible alternative system of schooling. Open schooling has become an inevitable necessity for the state. It is increasingly being seen as a potential alternative and complementary system to formal education to achieve the goal of education for all.

The Andhra Pradesh Open Schooling Society (APOSS) reaches out to socially and economically backward sections and other marginalized groups in the State in a big way.

The courses offered by APOSS cover the following stages of education:

S.No.	Level	Courses	Equivalence with Formal School System
1.	Open Basic Education	OBE	Grade III
2.	Upper Primary Education	Stage II and Stage III	VI / VII
3.	Secondary Education	Stage IV	VIII

Bihar

In Bihar due to Government's concern for educational development in the State, some progress has been made at different stages of school education. Consequently the gross enrolment ratio at the Primary and Upper Primary level has gone up to quite an extent. The enrolment ratios at the Primary and Upper Primary levels for boys and girls are as under:

Gross Enrolment Ratio of Boys and Girls at Primary and Upper Primary Level

Primary(I-V)			Upper Primary(VI-VIII)		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
95.45	61.19	78.70	38.22	21.07	30.07

The enrolment ratio at Upper Primary level is much below the national average.

Dropout Rate at Primary and Upper Primary Level

The dropout rate is very high at Elementary Level (I-VIII). While at Primary Level (I-V) it is 6.06, at Elementary stage it is as high as 74.79. The dropout figures clearly indicates the need for adoption of alternative system of education to provide educational opportunities to a large section of school going age children and adults who due to compulsions of life cannot attend formal schools. In view of this, to begin with, NIOS may establish State Centre of Open Schooling in Bihar.

Delhi

In Delhi, Sarvashiksha Abhiyan (Education For All Movement) has been launched by the Government in its full swing. Concerted efforts are being made to widen educational access to wider number of school going age children. The disparity between enrolment ratio of boys and girls at the Elementary stage is not too high. The enrolment position at the Elementary stage is as under:

Enrolment Ratio of Children at Elementary Stage

Primary(I-V)			Upper Primary(VI-VIII)		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
85.36	80.85	83.14	88.15	82.37	85.41

The enrolment ratio is slightly higher at Upper Primary level. Whereas at Primary level it is 83.14 the ratio is 85.41 at Upper Primary level.

The main challenge before the educational planners of Delhi is that every year due to heavy influx of people and students from outside, there is considerable pressure on the education system of Delhi. Moreover, there are incidences of dropouts. At the Primary level, it is 27.67 which is 16.29 at the Elementary Stage (I-VIII).

The State Open School was set up in Delhi in 2003. This has opened up opportunities for continuation of educational pursuits by those children and youth who cannot avail formal stream at their own convenient time and place. The State Open School proposes to introduce Vocational Education courses either as a stand alone or along with academic course. The one year tourism course is being converted into six months course.

Jharkhand

In Jharkhand there is wide gap between enrolment ratio at Primary and Upper Primary level. Whereas it is 88.56 at lower Primary level (I-V) at Elementary stage, (I-VIII) as a whole it is 37.56. There is also disparity between enrolment ratio of boys and girls at both Primary and Elementary level. The enrolment ratio is as under:

Enrolment Ratio at Elementary Level

Primary(I-V)			Upper Primary(VI-VIII)		
Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
100.51	76.34	88.56	43.86	30.76	37.56

A large area of the State is covered by forests that are inhabited by tribals. The infrastructure facilities in schools are lacking that affect classroom teaching resulting in high dropouts.

Another problem relates to teacher absenteeism. It is felt that school education would improve if Panchayats is involved to monitor the programme. There is a need to evolve special measures to make the teachers committed and accountable and making the school environment conducive and friendly to learners. In order to give impetus to education of girls, a novel experiment has been to provide bicycle to girl students. This has shown encouraging results. Moreover, girl students are exempted from paying fees. The setting up of open school could be an important step towards meeting the challenges of education. To start, with establishment of a State Centre for Open Schooling in Jharkhand would serve a very useful purpose.

Himachal Pradesh

Himachal Pradesh has a large number of educational institutions catering to the educational needs of school going age children through 10660 Primary Schools, 2088 Middle Schools, 938 High Schools, 686 Sr. Secondary Schools and a good number of colleges. The State provides formal education to seven lakh students, out of which 1.75 lakh are scheduled castes and 33,000 belong to scheduled tribe communities. About 3.56 lakh boys and 3.41 lakh girls are attending high and secondary schools. The State Government is providing IT education in 494 Government Sr. Secondary Schools.

The State has a large isolated area having hilly terrain. Open Learning through distance mode of education has great potential in providing comprehensive access to education in such type of geographical areas. The state centre for open schooling was set up in the year 2000 to provide a viable alternative to cater to the learning needs of non-school goers, working children, street children, school drop-outs, disadvantaged, marginalized and vulnerable groups such as rural youth, working men, women, SCs/STs, and handicapped children.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra has planned school education programme at three levels, namely, primary including lower and upper primary, secondary and senior secondary.

In 2002-03, the number of schools and enrolment figures in each of the educational stages were as under:

Number of Schools at Elementary Level

S.No	Schools					
	Lower Primary (I-V)	Upper Primary (VI-VIII)	Total Primary	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Total Secondary Schools
1.	40850	25775	66625	13181	3481	16662

S.No	Enrolment					
	Lower Primary	Upper Primary	Total No. of Learners	Secondary	Higher Secondary	Total
1.	4548877	7081698	1163057	5214664	3935428	9150092

From classes I to IX the dropout rate is 53%. To tackle the problem of dropouts and for their mainstreaming, Maharashtra has adopted a unique system of providing opportunities for Private Examination. There is a provision for direct enrolment at the contact centres for those students who have dropped out from schools or have missed the formal school system.

The salient features of the scheme are :

- ◆ Students can appear privately for SSC examination alongwith regular student following same curriculum.
- ◆ Guidance is provided by expert teachers through contact centres.
- ◆ Study materials are provided to students.
- ◆ Assignments are corrected by experienced teachers and guidance is provided to students.
- ◆ Provision of doing science practicals is also made.

The State Government proposes to provide facilities of continuing education to dropout children and other prioritized groups by establishing the State Open School. The process has already been initiated.

Punjab

The system of school education in Punjab is divided into four levels – Primary (I-V), Middle (VI-VIII), High School (IX-X) and Senior Secondary (XI-XII).

The number of schools at different levels is as follows:

Primary Schools	=	12972
Middle Schools	=	2353
High Schools	=	1739
Sr. Secondary Schools	=	1382

Currently the enrolment at Primary level is 15 lakh. At Middle, High and Sr. Secondary level the total enrolment is 13.23 lakh.

The State now proposes to switch over to two levels of education, namely, Elementary (I-VIII) and Secondary (IX-XII).

Although the State Government has adopted a number of measures for accelerating the progress of Universalisation of Elementary Education, the ground level situation reveals that the dropout rate at the first to tenth class is 50%. For girls, the dropout rate is 52.80%. This calls for adoption of alternative delivery mode of education to bring back these dropouts into educational stream. The other challenges emerge from the problems of educating underprivileged groups of children, adults, migratory labour, working children, out-of-school girls, vocational workers, artisans and other technicians and military and paramilitary persons. The Punjab Open School was launched in 1992 in response to the above mentioned problems of education. The State Open School programme has been specially designed to meet the educational needs of above mentioned prioritized groups of persons. The Open and Distance Learning System of education takes education to the door steps of lakhs of students who dropped out from the formal system. Efforts are being made to make functioning of the Punjab Open School more effective and efficient.

Rajasthan

In Rajasthan, the female literacy rate has gone up significantly during the decade 1991-2001. The State has been awarded 'Decadal Literacy Award' for outstanding achievement in the field of literacy.

One of the innovative schemes launched by the State for achieving the goal of 100% enrolment and retention is known as Child Tracking System (CTS). Under CTS, 6-11 age group children are being encouraged to be in schools and a continuous watch on their scholastic achievements is made. To ensure enrolment and retention and promote girls education, free text book distribution scheme was introduced by the Government in the year 1994-95. All girls studying in the Government Schools in classes 1-12 and all boys of classes 1-12 are provided free textbooks under State Plan Budget. Presently all the boys of classes 1-12 except the boys of OBC and general category of income tax payer parents are getting free text books under this scheme. Besides this, a number of measures have been adopted for promotion of education of girls and children from underprivileged section of society, especially from rural areas. In spite of all these interventions the dropout rate from classes I to V is about 50% due to economic and socio-cultural reasons. As such the need for adoption of alternative mode of educational delivery was felt in the State. The State Open School was established in 1992-93 at Secondary level as an alternative to the Formal System. The State Open School, Rajasthan aims at helping those who are not able to stay in the educational mainstream on account of social, economic, geographical and other constraints.

West Bengal

Formal education at the school level has been vastly expanded with the aim of ensuring Education for All. The position of enrolment rates at the Primary and Elementary level is as follows:

Enrolment Ratio at the Primary and Elementary Level

Level	Boys	Girls	Total
Primary(I-V)	112.72	106.82	109.80
Elementary(VI-VIII)	60.51	46.96	53.88

The enrolment ratio is quite encouraging and gender gap is also quite less.

The Dropout rates at the Primary and Elementary level are as follows:

Grade	Dropout Rate
I-V	39.86%
I-VIII	70.87%

The dropout rate is quite high at Elementary level. It has been found that a large section of the community cannot avail the educational provisions provided through formal system of education because of socio-economic and other compulsions of life. In order to provide education to this section of men and women of different age groups, the State Government has felt the need for open learning system and set up the State Open School as a wing of the School Education Department in 1997. In 1998, it was named Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya (**RMV**), which became a Statutory Organisation with effect from 1st August 2001 under the Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya Act 2001 passed by the West Bengal State Legislature.

MODELS OF OPEN SCHOOLING

The Session V on **Models of Open Schooling** was chaired by Dr. Puspha Ramakrishna and the speakers were Ms. Susan Phillips, Education Specialist, Basic Education, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), Canada and Dr. Sushmita Mitra, Director (Academic and Student Support Services), NIOS, New Delhi. Prof. Ramakrishna pointed out that operation of the Open Schools vary with the models chosen. She said that there cannot be one model – models evolve for adoption, adaptation and replication looking into the context.

Presenting about Open Schools across the world, Ms. Phillips said that there are different ways of categorising the available models of Open School in different countries. Some of the dimensions can be the management, organisational structure, delivery method, types of materials, subject/level of offerings, target audiences and primary objectives.

The seven different institutions which were chosen for a study on models of open schooling are:

1. Open Access College (Australia)
2. Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL)
3. National Institute of Open Schooling, India (NIOS)
4. Open School, British Columbia (Canada)
5. Secondary Education Distance Education (SEDE) (Mozambique)
6. Telesecundria (Mexico)
7. The Correspondence School (New Zealand)

Categorising the available models of Open Schools in different countries

Ms. Phillips highlighted that if the open schools are categorised by the management structure, the Open School British Columbia and the Secondary Education Distance Education Project, Mozambique are parts of the Ministry of Education of the country. The Open Access College, Australia and the Bangladesh Open School are parts of publicly funded institutions. Institutions like the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning and the National Institute of Open Schooling are autonomous in their functions although they are government funded. She further said that although each of these institutes are based on different models and functioned differently on the basis of their mission and objectives, the points that were chosen to compare and contrast these different institutions were dates of establishment, material development, delivery methods, and provision of student support services.

The different open schools were established at different points of time. While the British Columbia Open School was established as a Correspondence School in 1919, the Correspondence School New Zealand came next in 1928 followed by Telesecundria in 1969. The National Institute of Open Schooling (India) started as a project in 1979. The most recently established Open School is the Secondary Education Distance Education (SEDE) Project of Mozambique which started in 2001 and the students were registered first in 2004.

Objective of establishing Open School

Whatever be the date of establishment, the objective of establishing an open school is to provide educational opportunities to students who cannot attend conventional schools. The reasons may be distance, illness, travel, temporary residence outside the country in the wake of (Open School, British Columbia), lack of schools to accommodate secondary students in smaller communities (population less than 2500 as in Mexico), lack of educational opportunities for (disadvantaged) people in remote districts of Mozambique and New Zealand or reaching the unreached (NIOS, India). The aim, therefore, is to improve and widen accessibility to quality education lack of conventional schools and trained teachers. The main purpose of Open School British Columbia is to develop high quality learning resources and other courses that local schools cannot provide.

The courses offered by the open schools varied from Kindergarten to Grade 12. While Open Schools in Australia, British Columbia and New Zealand took care of learners from reception (Kindergarten) to grade twelve, the open school in India catered to children primary to pre-degree level. Botswana, Mexico and Mozambique, on the other hand, concentrated on elementary and secondary grades. NIOS and BOCODOL offer vocational courses also. Telesecundria, Mexico deals in community development topics such as land and cattle management. Both British Columbia and New Zealand provide for dual enrolment system, where regular school students can opt for courses not available in their local schools. The enrolment figures naturally varies from country to country as the grade levels catered to are

different. While there are only 250 registered students under the SEDE project for grade 8 (only in the province of Nampula in Mozambique), the Open School British Columbia supports over 25,000 learners across the province. Botswana has a cumulative enrolment of 21,000 learners in secondary schools across the country (from 1998 to 2004) while in NIOS the cumulative enrolment stands at 3,00,000. The current enrolment for Telesecundria, Mexico has been established at just over one million while New Zealand has more than 18,000 students. There are 1360 students enrolled with Open Access College, Australia.

Although many of these open schools are autonomous in their functioning, all schools reflect the national curriculum framework for equivalence and recognition. While DAC uses the same curriculum as all other schools in South Australia, Telesecundria students compete examinations based on national standards and are certified by the Ministry of Education. In Botswana, BOCODOL learners write the same examinations as conventional school students; and in Mozambique although the curriculum is the same, the SEDE learners take an end of the module test which is purely objective in nature. The NIOS has been authorised by the Government of India to conduct its own examinations on a curriculum, which although on the lines of national curriculum framework, is not the same as in conventional schools.

A course team approach is followed in many of these institutions like in the Open Access College, Australia, the Open School, British Columbia, the National Institute of Open Schooling in India, the Botswana College of Distance Education and the Open Learning and for Telesecundria, Mexico. A unique team approach cutting all boundaries across countries is followed by SEDE, Mozambique. The materials are written by teachers in Maputo (Capital of Mozambique), monitored by a local project manager, instructional designers are in Canada and from local area, typesetting and graphics are done in Canada while the printing is taken care of in South Africa.

The package of learning material in many open schools include printed booklets, texts, CD ROMs, on-line resources, as in the Open Access College, Australia, the Open School British Columbia and NIOS, India. In Botswana, all courses conducted through distance learning use print, audiotapes and radio programmes, while Telesecundria, Mexico ensures the delivery of curriculum in three ways- broadcast television, print based materials and teachers. Each lesson consists of a fifteen minute televised programme that introduces the key concepts and themes. Students then complete a series of activities from print based materials followed by discussion between the teacher and the students. Face-to-face support to learners is available in NIOS, India, BOCODOL, Telesecundria, Mexico and SEDE, Mozambique.

The use of Information and Communication Technology also provided a reference point. While there is a heavy dependence for learning material on ICT resources in

Australia, British Columbia and New Zealand, NIOS, India uses ICT in a limited way for offering of online courses, database management and admissions, On Demand Examination System and Computerisation of Library. Both NIOS and BOCODOL have an interactive website where learners and prospective learners can find information on the institution. In Mozambique, technologies are used mainly for materials development process and only in a limited way to deliver the course content. The cluster schools of New Zealand not only operate through videoconferencing but with multi-point videoconferencing and exchanges between teacher and learners is more symmetric. Also students can now communicate with one another in New Zealand, and in Australia many students submit their assignments through e-mail.

*Future thrust of
Open Schooling*

The future thrust of the open schools has two major converging points, which are the further use of technology for offering of courses and staff/professional development. Collaboration with other institutions and forming of partnerships with national, regional and international institutions is an important future thrust for BOCODOL, while adaptation of the Telesecundria model for other parts of Central America is being planned for the future.

Regarding the State Open Schools in India, Dr. (Mrs.) Mitra said that the analysis of the existing State Open Schools of India was based on the profiles submitted by the States.

The eleven State Open Schools (SOSs) in India are spread all over the country. They are situated in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and NCT of Delhi. There is also a State Centre for Open Schooling in Himachal Pradesh.

The State Open Schools were established between the years 1991 and 2004. Andhra Pradesh was the first state that set up SOS in 1991, Rajasthan launched its correspondence courses in 1992, while most of the State Open Schools came later between 1995 and 1999. The later ones in the list are Jammu and Kashmir (2001) and Delhi State Open School (2003).

Models of SOS

The nature of management under which these State Open Schools (SOSs) function is different. Andhra Pradesh is an Autonomous Registered Society, while Haryana is an integral part of the State Board of School Education. Madhya Pradesh is a registered society but under the State Board Rajasthan. Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir are part of the Boards of Secondary Education. Kerala is a wing of the State Council of Educational Research and Training while the Tamil Nadu State Open School is a part of the DTERT. The Karnataka State Open School operates under

a private trust as per government order. The NIOS is an autonomous organisation under the Department of Education, MHRD, New Delhi. Thus there are different models of State Open Schools – Free standing autonomous institutions, Bimodal institutions and as extensions of a department like the SCERT or DTERT. Only one State Open School is run by a Private Trust whereas all others are government organisations.

There are obvious consequences of the adopted model. The scope and coverage varies as does the degree of openness inbuilt in the system. Different State Open Schools have different priority, for example, the Andhra Pradesh State Open School takes care of Open Basic Education only. Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal offer Open Basic Education apart from Secondary and Senior Secondary Education like NIOS does at the national level. Most of the State Open Schools except Kerala offer courses at the secondary level. Only Madhya Pradesh offers the Vocational Education programme like the NIOS. The scope of systemic changes that can be built in is also decided by the model adopted. For example, because NIOS is an autonomous organisation, it can implement changes faster. Earlier NIOS held once a year intensive Personal Contact Programme where face to face contact with learners was established continuously for a duration of fifteen days at a stretch. But the students were left without any support throughout their period of study. For this, the pattern was changed and week end classes throughout the year were introduced. Similarly, in Karnataka Open School, which is run by a Private Trust, the decision to upgrade from secondary to senior secondary level came after few years of setting up of the State Open School. Because both Haryana and Rajasthan State Open Schools are integral parts of the Secondary Board of their State, the students have to study five compulsory subjects in Haryana State Open School and six compulsory subjects in the Rajasthan State Open School like their conventional counterparts. However, while the students take the same examinations as the formal schools in Rajasthan, in Haryana the examinations are different as Haryana State Open School has adopted the NIOS curriculum and study materials.

*Consequences of
adopted model*

The model for learner support in NIOS is based on the following three premises :

- ◆ sharing of available resources for optimum utilisation;
- ◆ building a partnership model; and
- ◆ a decentralised model functioning through Regional Centres.

*Learner
Support*

The activities and functions for learner support are at three levels – at the institutional level at NIOS, at the regional level at the regional offices, and at the Accredited Centres at the field level. The Accredited Institutions which function as study centres of NIOS are existing formal schools – both private and government. The Accredited Vocational Institutions are located in community centres, private institutions,

government institutions and NGOs. The Accredited Agencies for the Open Basic Education (OBE) courses are either non-government organisations or other educational organisations/institutions.

The different state models adopted for implementing OBE programme in Haryana and Rajasthan were also detailed out. It was pointed out that while Haryana offered courses for children at the elementary level, the clientele in Rajasthan was mostly adults.

The questions posed were centered around how to decide the honorarium to be paid to the teachers in the Accredited Centres. It was pointed out that there were no fixed rates but these depended on the time spent and local conditions. There were some observations on the Uttar Pradesh Patrachar Vidyalaya and it was mentioned that NIOS would take a lead to set up an Open School in Uttar Pradesh.

SETTING UP AN OPEN SCHOOL – ISSUES AND CONCERNS

The theme for the Session VI was **Setting Up an Open School – Issues and Concerns**. The session was initiated and coordinated by Prof. B.P. Khandelwal, Ex-Director, National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration and the speakers were Prof. Puspha Ramakrishna and Prof. D.C. Pant. Prof. Puspha Ramakrishna elaborated the Academic and Evaluation Aspects pertaining to setting up of an open school and Prof. D.C. Pant talked about student support service related issues to be considered while setting up of an open school.

Prof. Ramakrishna pointed out that basically two categories of issues – mega issues and micro issues-may be visualized while talking of setting up of an open school. Among the mega issues, the problem of coming out of the prison walls of formal schools was a major one and on it depended the approach to be adopted, the openness that would be built into the system, and the kind of openness that would be deemed essential. The type of programmes and subjects to be offered at various levels by the open school was also an important issue. Another mega issue was related to the policy of accreditation for vocational courses. The approach to be followed and the criteria for accreditation need to be clarified very clearly. The issue of networking between NIOS and the State Open Schools also needs to be defined and explained well, highlighting the possible difficulties.

Among the micro level issues related to setting up of an open school, the importance of a well designed project report for the open school was the utmost. The project report should clearly justify the need of an open school, its usefulness, methodology to be followed,

the type of open school model to be set up and the logical sequence of the programmes to be offered by the proposed open school. The necessity for self instructional materials and the need to have an institutional house style was also emphasized. The need of modernization in the development of self-instructional material was also addressed. It was suggested that the profile and characteristics of the learners and their socio economic and educational background should be kept in mind while preparing the self-instructional material. This is specially important as upon the linguistic abilities of the learners the success of the self instructional material would depend.

Prof. D.C. Pant initiated discussion on **Quality Student Support Services in ODL**. He talked about the dimensions of Quality Student Support Services in ODL adopted by IGNOU. Talking about the student support service related issues to be considered while setting up of an open school, Prof. D.C. Pant said that in India, basically a three tier system of student support service was popular which included the Headquarter at national level, regional centres and the study centres. The learner is the soul of the open and distance learning system. The learner is the center and other things revolve around him/her. Different kinds of people (learners) have different kinds of difficulties because of different circumstances.

The students' support service is the key component in the ODL system and it includes the services regarding information, advising, conselling, tutoring, practical training, hands on experience, feedback, problem solving facilities, conduct of examination and maintenance of student's record. In Open and Distance education system, a learner is like 'Eklavya' and the tutor is like 'Dronacharya' who most of the times are far away from each other. Right from the pre-enrolment stage up to the completion and graduation, the learner requires one or other kind of support in terms of information, academic conselling, career counselling, motivation, and advice for further studies.

Unlike his counterpart, a distance learner is a part time learner and the study is a secondary activity for him/her. The learner is an adult and mature and has ability to learn on his own, but he/she has very rare contact with the tutor.

Prof. Pant enumerated the factors that influence the adult learners. Such factors include poor learning ability, access to other learners, access to resources at work place or house, prior training, motivation etc. The problems often faced by the open and distance learners are family pressure, worries about work and money, lack of other study material, lack of own study space, isolation from other learners, lack of transport, lack of confidence, low level of reading skills, poor study techniques and lack of time to attend the tutorials. Besides problem solving and tutorials, the person specific and individual problems of the open learners also need to be taken care of through conselling supported by positive humane attitude. The important decision points to be taken by the students as well as by the counsellors at various stages are, for example, how much time to devote for family, work

and study, and that too how? In open and distance learning system, there should not be any scope for the word “no” while dealing with the learners and provision might be made for single window system to solve learner’s problems. The student support service should be such that a student walking in with credit card should be able to meet his/her need [may come out with credit].

However, Prof. Pant stressed that, in ODL system Student Support Services (SSS) refer to timely provision of services at different stages of learning cycle from pre-enrolment of learners upto his/her completion and graduation. According to him about ten types of support services are envisaged. These are:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| - Information | - Feed back on assessment and progress |
| - Advising | - Administrative problem solving |
| - Counseling | - Library facility |
| - Tutoring | - Conduct of examinations/practical |
| - Practical Training | |
| - Hands on Experience | - Maintenance of Learners' records |

*Ten types of
Support Services*

At pre-entry stage, support services include:

- ♦ Information about programmes and courses
- ♦ Pre-admission counseling

Information is provided in terms of:

- ♦ Instructional system
- ♦ Entry requirements
- ♦ Fee structure
- ♦ Duration of the programmes
- ♦ Recognition of awards

During the course, the support services are offered by way of:

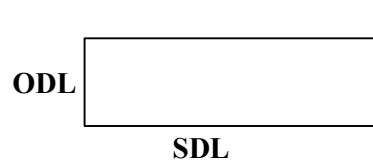
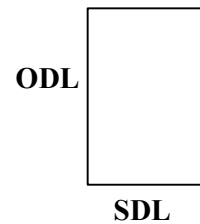
- ♦ An induction into the system
- ♦ Dispatch of print materials
- ♦ Counselling and tutoring
- ♦ Practicals and Hands on experience
- ♦ T.V and radio broadcasts, teleconferencing, etc.
- ♦ Library facilities.
- ♦ Assignment evaluation and feedback
- ♦ Development of study skills
- ♦ Conduct of examinations
- ♦ Communication of results
- ♦ Award of degrees and diplomas

Citing examples, Prof. Pant said that IGNOU's Learner Support System is at three levels, namely, study centre, regional centre and headquarter. However, time to time review of support services is required to ensure timely provision of inputs in response to learner needs.

While concluding the session, Prof. B.P. Khandelwal said that it was very important to strengthen the Student Support Services in open schooling system. He emphasised that both empowerment and enlightenment are very important for counselling, tutoring and support in open system.

Prof. R.H. Dave suggested that for effective student support services in the Open and Distance Education System the Self Directed Learning (SDL) model may be followed. In this context he gave the following graphic presentation of progression from other directed learning to self-directed learning.

Predominance of ODL (Other-Directed Learning) with Minimum of SDL (Self-Directed Learning). In this case there is a need for help to be provided by others to the learner, especially at the initial stages of human development. But there is often too much of rigidity and conventionalism in the other-directed learning, which should be avoided as much as possible.



As the time passes in the process of the learner's educational development and as the degree of maturity increases the ODL decreases and SDL increases. In this situation, there is an increase in the degrees of freedom in favour of SDL, but ODL is still quite high.

The ODL is necessary at the initial stages of learning for initiating new learning, but as the age and maturity advances, SDL (Self-Direct Learning and Self-Learning) is fully optimised. At this stage, the learner becomes her/his own master and carries out self-learning, inter-learning and guided-learning at her/his on initiative and internal acceptance.

RESEARCH ISSUES IN OPEN SCHOOLING - PROSPECTS AND PRIORITIES

The Session VIII on **Research in Open Schooling – Prospects and Priorities** was chaired by Prof. J.W. Wikramsinghe, while the speakers were Prof. ABL Srivastava and Dr. Alicia Fentiman.

Prof. ABL Srivastava emphasized that Research in Open Schooling had immense potentiality for planning future growth and development and establishing credibility of the system. Besides, research in open schooling serves in multidimensional directions such as, monitoring the progress, strengthening student support services, identifying strong and weak areas in the system and providing research based solutions to emerging problems.

He said that the Priority areas of research could include the following:

- ♦ need assessment surveys of divergent target groups coming from different socio-economic communities and geographical locations;
- ♦ tracer and follow up studies of passouts;
- ♦ studies on efficacy of alternative delivery modes, use of multimedia approach, ICT and instructional package on learner's achievement;
- ♦ analytical studies to assess quality of question papers and achievement;



- ♦ comparative study of the performance of passouts of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system with that of formal school system on specific indicators;
- ♦ analytical study of the examination results of different socio-economic groups, caste groups and other disadvantaged groups;
- ♦ cost-effectiveness of the ODL system for different types of courses.

To strengthen and systematize research activities of national level, ODL Institutions like NIOS, the research agenda and strategy for research need to be spelled out for short term, mid-term and long-term periods. The need assessment survey of different courses may be carried out as a nation-wide sample survey once in five years.

In terms of framework for planning, implementation and monitoring, research activities may be carried out both at the level of the Institute and as a collaborative endeavour by organizations outside NIOS with a focus on the priority areas. To make it a vibrant programme, a directory of potential research organizations and well meaning persons in the field may be prepared. This calls for earmarking yearly budget for research in open schooling. For this, regular meeting with members of Research Advisory Committee will be required. This committee may concretely identify priority areas of research and mechanism of conducting/commissioning research.

Presenting on the **Research Issues in Open Schooling** Dr. Alicia Fentiman referred to the need to provide routine monitoring of activities and performance involving all staff-members of an organization. Some of the vital aspects that such kinds of researches may take into account are enrolment and quality of teaching, curriculum, material, learner support, needs of learners etc. Researches in these area may include specific issues such as pre-testing of new course, monitoring of new system, learner-tutor role in open learning situation and effectiveness of the appropriate media.

According to her, ODL research may focus on specific themes such as:

- ♦ programme planning and curriculum design;
- ♦ development of learning material - print and non-print
- ♦ teaching and learning processes
- ♦ student evaluation
- ♦ cost of education per learner in distance education vis-à-vis in formal school
- ♦ media programme
- ♦ management of the system
- ♦ application of new technology
- ♦ quality assurance
- ♦ staff learning and development

More and more countries in Asia and Africa are to-day engaged in integration of ODL system in their educational planning. But there are only a few research studies to find out the effectiveness of application of open schooling. In this regard she mentioned the initiative

taken up by the International Research Foundation for Open Learning (IRFOL), Cambridge, England as a collaborative endeavour. The study aimed at finding out the effectiveness of Open and Distance Learning for basic education programme. During 2001-03, IRFOL took up this study under the sponsorship of DFID in partnership with APOSS, BOCODOL, BOU and NAMCOL. The twofold objectives of the study were to strengthen research capacity and to identify a topic of research that would provide feed back to the Institution.

The research activities were designed in a way to :

- ♦ identify relevant research issues;
- ♦ provide training in research methods;
- ♦ delegate roles and responsibilities for data entry and analysis to the research team;
- ♦ disseminate the results to a wide range of stakeholders

One of the recent studies in Open Schooling in the context of India is that of the case study of APOSS by IRFOL, Cambridge, England and APOSS, India.

Dr. Fentiman pointed out that during 2001-02 the Andhra Pradesh Open School was studied as an action research. The study addressed to the following issues:

- ♦ How effective is the State Open School?
- ♦ Baseline survey: 2001-2002
- ♦ Parents Background
- ♦ Why the learners dropped out of formal schools
- ♦ Whether the learner supplemented his/her family's income
- ♦ What attracts the learner to APOSS?
- ♦ Perceptions from Teacher Counsellors about the AP State Open School
- ♦ What difficulties do learners and Teacher Councilors (TCs) encounter?

The research methods adopted for carrying out the study were:

- ♦ Questionnaires for the learners and the teacher counsellors
- ♦ Focus group discussions
- ♦ In-depth interviews with learners and counsellors
- ♦ Field Visits during the Contact Programmes (compulsory programme) was done in 108 study centres in 55 clusters from 29 mandals of eleven districts in the 3 regions of AP. 39 TCs and 800 Learners responded to the questionnaire.
- ♦ Data was analysed and presented in the UK at a workshop

She shared some of the highlights of the findings of the study which are as under

- ♦ APSOS was established as back as in 1991.
- ♦ It is open to 12+ learners
- ♦ Its main focus is on children and adults who have dropped out of formal school, especially those belonging to minority group.
- ♦ The delivery system and the learning set-up provide immense opportunity for learning through one's own pace of learning pursuing semester system.

- ♦ Condensed approach based curriculum has been adopted which is culturally and linguistically relevant to local needs.
- ♦ The subjects offered are language, mathematics and environmental studies and instruction is through regional language - Telugu and Urdu.
- ♦ Flexible face-to-face instruction 2 to 3 times a week.
 - compulsory contact classes followed by examination;
 - equivalence of the certificate issued to learners with that of formal school;
 - teacher counselor from the local community;
 - provision of regular training to the teacher counselor and community members;
 - remuneration to the teacher counselors based on the number of students appearing in the examination.
- ♦ Coverage of the disadvantaged groups (Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes) in APSOS is more.
- ♦ Even in respect of Backward Classes the same trend is evident.
- ♦ In case of other advanced castes/communities there is a reverse trend i.e., this group which has more population in the state is covered less in the enrollment of APOSS.
- ♦ 42.86% of the sample covered were male.
- ♦ 57.14% of the sample covered were female.
- ♦ Majority of the learners stopped their studies before completing the primary level 66.12% in Telugu medium. It is especially high in Urdu medium.
- ♦ 45.34% of the learners of the sample were from 12 to 15 years age group.
- ♦ 28.21% of learners were in the age groups of 16-20 years and 20 years and above.
- ♦ The learners prefer open school system as:
 - (i) it will not interfere with their work
 - (ii) helpful to dropouts
 - (iii) there are only three subjects
- ♦ The desire to continue the education is more in the learners' mind.
- ♦ Performance of the learners in completing the course indicated that overall percentage in APOSS was 63.35% whereas SC with 63.25% was short of overall % of 63.65; BC with 61.74% was short of overall % of 63.65; ST with 59.80% was not much behind that overall % of 63.65.
- ♦ In the sample, overall performance was 83.85% whereas SCs with 85.18%, STs with 95.18% and BCs with 87.89% were all above the overall performance level.
- ♦ 89.36% of the learners of total population and 71.05% of the sample appeared for the examination.
- ♦ 63.33% of the learners appeared for the examination and 81.48% of the sample completed the courses.

The AP Open School Society has 4,700 centres reaching over 1,00,000 learners, many of them being dropouts, children from scheduled castes and learners with disabilities.

QUALITY ASSURANCE IN OPEN SCHOOLING

The Session -IX on **Quality Assurance in Open Schooling System** was chaired by Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal and the other speakers were Dr. (Mrs.) Sushmita Mitra, Mr. V.J. Williams and Dr. Derek Wenmoth. While Dr. Mitra talked about Quality Assurance concerning curriculum and learning materials and student support services, Mr. Williams dwelt upon Quality Assurance in the context of Evaluation and Examination. Dr. Wenmoth discussed the theme against the perspective of the School of Correspondence in New Zealand. The major points that emerged during the session are as under:

The statement, “Every learner has the right to a quality education” is an affirmative statement that is accepted universally. Several aspects of quality assurance in Open Schooling were highlighted based on the experience and visualisations in NIOS, India and the School of Correspondence, New Zealand. The practices and indicators of quality highlighted during presentation are as follows:

- ♦ While quality is impossible without access, access without quality is meaningless to those for whom access is made available. Access is critical but not very meaningful without evidence of learning.
- ♦ Under the open schooling system, quality assurance is required in the programmes such as (i) curriculum and study materials, (ii) support media materials, (iii) student support services, (iv) evaluation tools, and (v) allied activities.
- ♦ A significant quality indicator is that the materials and methods should conform to requirements.

*Practices and
indicators of quality*

- ♦ One of the ways to ensure quality through appraisal based on the principle of prevention includes communicating, planning and working in a way that eliminates opportunities for non conformance i.e., work always to meet the job requirements. A significant criteria to measure quality is to assess what it costs to do things wrong which has direct bearing on evidence of learning.
- ♦ In the context of quality assurance in curriculum development., the programme should take into consideration the needs of the target groups, flexibility, relevance and standard. Development of entrepreneurship skills in learners is a good criteria of the quality of open schooling programme, particularly in the area of vocational education.
- ♦ The steady increase in enrollment over a period of more than a decade is a good indicator of quality of the programme, the benefits of which are being reaped by disadvantaged sections of the society, among others.
- ♦ The NIOS has taken several measures to ensure quality in its courses of study and evaluation system. These inter alia include (i) involving reputed educationists in development of self instructional materials, (ii) organizing personal contact programmes(PCP) for students for removal of their difficulties, (iii) opportunity to learners through Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA), (iv) On Demand Examination Systems(ODES), and (v) improving quality of question papers to make them comprehensive to assess various instructional objectives.

Mr. V.J. Williams discussed about the special Quality Measures taken up by NIOS in Evaluation and Examination System. Against the backdrop of Open Schooling context he elaborated the system and highlighted the following points:

- ♦ For **Academic Stream**, the scheme of evaluation comprises of:
 - Terminal Theory Examinations
 - Continuous Assessment through Assignments (TMAs) whose Marks are however, not added in the final assessment
 - Practical examinations
- ♦ For **Vocational Stream**, the scheme of evaluation comprises of:
 - Practical Examinations
 - Internal Assessment Assignments
 - Portfolio-Assessment
 - Terminal Theory Examinations

The schemes of examination have been developed according to the principles of open and distance learning. As a first step in this direction, two full-fledged examinations at secondary and senior secondary stages are organized every year. This enables the students to avail of two chances in a year to take the examination as well as an opportunity to the candidates who have not qualified in the first attempt to appear again

within a period of six months. The candidates can also make use of this opportunity to improve their performance in the subject(s) where their achievement was not to their satisfaction.

In order to provide flexibility in the scheme of examination, nine chances to take public examinations at secondary and senior secondary levels are provided to candidates registered with NIOS. The candidates have choice to appear at a time in single subject or a combination of up to seven subjects. However, they must qualify at least in five subjects to be successful in the course. A candidate who could not successfully complete the course within a period of five years from his admission is eligible to seek re-admission in the NIOS. There is no upper age limit for the candidates seeking admission in NIOS course.

- ♦ The evaluation procedure adopted in the **Open Basic Education Programme** is different. NIOS provides to the Accredited Agencies Blue Print and Sample Question Papers for development of questions papers and evaluation of learners. The successful candidates are issued Joint Certificates by NIOS and concerned Accredited Agencies. During the last three years, NIOS has issued more than 27,000 Joint Certificates to OBE pass outs.
- ♦ A significant venture of NIOS is the ICT based **On Demand Examination System (ODES)** where assessment takes place when learner feels ready. Respecting the individuality and sovereignty of the learner, this scheme attempts to remove the stress of appearing in all subjects at fixed time and schedule. The On Demand Examination System reduces considerably malpractices, as every question paper for each learner is different having comparable difficulty level.

A learner can walk into any of the identified Testing Centres of NIOS on any day of his/her choice and appear in examination in any subject. The computer generates a question paper randomly out of already developed Question Bank based on the Blueprint and Question Paper Design of the subject as and when demanded. The questions in the Item Bank test learning objectives under knowledge, understanding, application and skill competencies.

The On Demand Examination System (ODES) has already been launched selectively for Open Basic Education and Secondary Education examinations. In NIOS, a learner can choose any of the following modes of examinations for getting evaluated and certified.

- ODES for all subjects
- Traditional Public Examinations conducted by NIOS twice a year
- One can choose Public Examination in some subjects and ODES in others.

*Use of ICT in
Evaluation at NIOS*

- ♦ The **Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)** in different subjects help students to (i) develop regular and study habits, (ii) understand the subject matter better, (iii) write properly responses to questions, (iv) receive feedback about correctness of response, and (v) check progress in study. TMAs are developed each year and supplied to the NIOS Study Centres.

- ♦ **Special Features of Evaluation System**

- *Setting of Question Papers*

The question papers for the public examinations are set by the experienced subject experts according to the blue print and guidelines laid down in the designs of question. These question papers are moderated by subject experts with a view to make question papers error free and easily comprehensible to the students.

A number of training programmes and workshops are organized every year to improve the quality of question papers with a view to ensure that the question papers not only test the acquisition of knowledge but also competencies such as problem solving ability, critical thinking etc.

- *Supervision and Monitoring of Conduct of Examinations*

NIOS examinations are conducted at the examination centers all over the country. To oversee and ensure fair conduct of examinations, observers (officers on special duty) are appointed to supervise and monitor the examination at each centre. Special teams from the NIOS headquarter are sent to some examination centres in different states. The assistance of state educational agencies is also taken for fair and smooth conduct of examination in the states. The monitoring of examination centres is undertaken at three levels viz., (i) the Director (Evaluation), (ii) the concerned Regional Directors of NIOS and (iii) State Education Departments.

- *Spot Evaluation*

In order to make the evaluation of answer scripts more objective and transparent, NIOS switched over from home evaluation to spot evaluation. Spot evaluation involves the evaluation of the answer scripts with fictitious serial numbers by the team leaders and evaluators with the assistance of co-ordinators at fixed evaluation centre in a centralized way under the overall supervision of Regional Director of NIOS. The team leader maintains the standard of evaluation by ensuring uniformity and marking of answer scripts according to marking scheme. Under the supervision of team leader, the award lists are prepared and checked by the co-ordinators as per the prescribed instructions.

- *Processing and Declaration of Results*

The results are processed by the external computer agencies and are approved by the Examination Committee before their declaration within 4-5 weeks of the close of examination.

- *Transparencies/Flexibilities in NIOS Examinations*

In order to maintain standards and enhance the quality of examinations, NIOS has introduced the following innovative measures in the procedure and process of its examinations.

*Measures adopted for
Quality Assurance
in Evaluation*

- NIOS has removed “Fail” or “Failed” words from their usage in the documents concerned. The words “Subject Yet to be Cleared” (SYC) have been substituted in lieu of them.
- The students of NIOS are given the freedom to write their answers in any of the scheduled regional languages although the question papers are set only in English and Hindi.
- The name of the mother is included in the certificates issued by the NIOS.
- In order to promote open schooling in the states, NIOS has introduced the use of several regional languages as media for its secondary courses. The examination in regional languages viz., Urdu, Telugu, Gujarati and Marathi are also conducted by NIOS.
- The Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) as a tool of learning, have been introduced in different subjects to help the students.
- The subject teachers in the Accredited Institutions correct the assignments and provide suggestions for improvement.
- The awards of the TMAs at Secondary/Senior Secondary courses are in Grades, which are not considered for overall weightage in the public examination.
- In consonance with the tenets of open learning, students are allowed to avail of nine chances to appear in the examination spread over a period of five years. The credits earned by students in different subjects are recorded in NIOS computer till they have cleared all the required subjects for certification. This flexible scheme of accumulation of credits aims at better learning and better performance by the students in the examination.
- The provision of Credit Transfer is a special feature of the examination system followed in the NIOS. This offers an opportunity of credit accumulation to the students who have passed at least in one subject but have not successfully completed the examination conducted by other recognized examining boards in the country.

- To improve transparency in examination system the question papers and marking schemes are displayed on Internet immediately after declaration of result. These are made available on the NIOS website to enable learners to make self-evaluation of their performance in the examination.

◆ **Research and Investigations in Examinations**

*Studies
conducted*

The NIOS accords high priority to undertake analytical research studies in the area of evaluation and examination. A few studies conducted in the NIOS are:

- Post-examination Analysis of Question Papers
- Students' Performance Analysis in Examination
- In near future studies pertaining to analysis of results of open schools, both at national and state level, analysis of the question papers of the NIOS and some selected balanced School Education will be taken up.

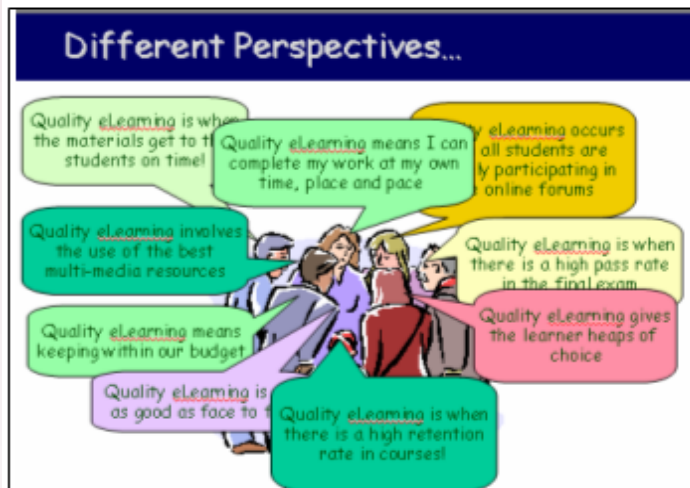
The National Institute of Open Schooling has taken the measures to bring transparency and efficiency in its examination process. It has ensured to build reliability, validity, objectivity and practicability in its examinations to maintain high standards of education.

In the case of the secondary and senior secondary course of NIOS, a student can remain on its roll for five years. The Public Examinations are held twice a year in the months of April-May and October-November. A student gets nine chances to appear in examinations for a course of study and his/her credits are accumulated. A student has freedom to complete one or more subjects at a time. The question papers and marking schemes are placed on the Internet after the examinations are over (Websites www.nos.org and www.nios.ac.in). The examination results are also placed on the Internet.

The prevailing system at NIOS is dependent on examination technique for the evaluation of learners. These are mainly paper pencil tests requiring the students to answer in black and white. The NIOS has made efforts to improve the validity and quality of question papers and make them comprehensive enough to assess various instructional objectives through a combination of different types of test items. In order to improve the quality of question paper efforts are made to develop a balanced question paper on the basis of a well planned blue print and question paper design.

Following this, Dr. Wenmoth shared the New Zealand Perspective for Quality Measures in ODL

He highlighted different perspectives of 'Quality' as shown below.



He said that the traditional organizational approach focused on the following four aspects which were operating as separate sub-systems:

- Resource Production
- Support
- Teaching/Marking
- Delivery System : The whole approach was highly industrialized model ('Production & Delivery' focus) where the teacher's primary role was as 'marker'. Further, the course design was not informed by needs of the learner – the approach was 'one size fits all'.

*Traditional
organisation approach*

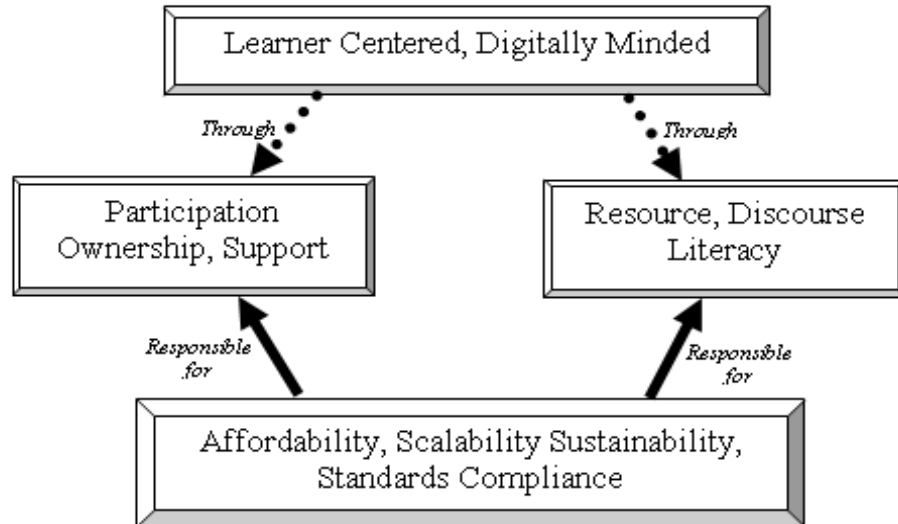
Realization of these facts led to the adoption of some of the new approaches for Quality measures in New Zealand ODL Programme. These measures are as follows:

- Commences with the student's inquiry about learning options.
- Facilitates learning design to meet student needs.
- Encourages co-construction of curriculum.
- Identifies everyone as a participant in learning.
- Allows for iterative development of learning programme
- Draws resources from a variety of sources
- Captures the activities of a full student enrolment period.
- Involves the teacher at all stages

*Quality measures in
New Zealand
ODL Programme*

There are two dimensions of quality, namely, one with product focus and the other with learning focus. The former includes enrolment number, retention/dropout, completion rates, cost effectiveness, test scores/pass rates. The learning focus covers points such as, access to learning, learning design, learning resources, learning experience and learning outcomes. New Zealand Quality Framework lays special emphasis on accessibility, relevance, quality, learner centeredness, best practice, collaborative endeavour, innovativeness, affordability/sustainability.

The quality framework for New Zealand is based on the following:



In other words, the diagram indicates the New Zealand Quality Framework for the Student Support Services programme.

Quality Framework - NZ

<p>Vision →</p> <p>What impact can we reasonably hope e-learning will have on our education system?</p>	<p>The development of New Zealand's e-learning capabilities will lead to –</p> <p>"A networked, flexible education system offering accessible, relevant, high quality learning opportunities to all New Zealanders"</p> <p>Accessibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Learning will help remove barriers to educational opportunity and success, leading to increased participation from marginalised groups at all levels in the tertiary system <p>Relevance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Learning will lead to life-long learning opportunities that are increasingly relevant to learners' individual needs <p>Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e-Learning will lead to better quality teaching and improved learning outcomes
<p>Principles →</p> <p>What principles do we need to follow to have the best chance of achieving the e-learning vision?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take a learner-centred approach Follow and share best practice Exploit opportunities for collaboration Be innovative Develop models for financial affordability/sustainability
<p>Priorities →</p> <p>What are the key action areas for developing tertiary sector e-learning capability over the period 2004-07?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of a vibrant, inclusive 'community of practice', through which practitioners are able to share e-learning information and experiences in a collegial manner Reliable research into e-learning in the New Zealand context Professional development for staff in tertiary organisations Adoption of relevant technical and design standards for e-learning developments Development of appropriate legal and policy frameworks for digital rights management Development of new e-learning opportunities for marginalised learners

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The Session X was a Panel Discussion on the theme **Vocational Education** held under the chairmanship of Prof. S.Z. Haider. The three panelists were Dr. C.K. Misra, Shri S.K. Misra and Dr. A.P. Verma who deliberated on the following areas:

- Vocational Education-Significance for Open Schooling
- Status of Vocational Education in NIOS
- Networking and Linkages in Vocational Education

Prof. Haider initiated the Session by pointing out that the Government of India policy document has over and again laid special emphasis on Vocational Education as a crucial input of development. It is, infact, the life line of the country. The ground level reality is that 90% students do not go for higher education. Inclusion of Vocational Education in the educational planning is necessary for upliftment of learner's life and manpower requirement for sustainable national development. Non-formal, flexible and need based vocational programmes are priority areas in the context of offering educational opportunities to neo-literates, youths at the completion of primary education, school drop-outs, persons engaged in economic activities, unemployed/ partially employed men and women. Moreover, the village artisans and craftsman and the industrial workers need upgradation of skills to increase productivity. Besides there are some prioritized target groups like disabled and housewives for whom the access to formal education is limited. The vocational education programme must take into account the emerging socio-economic environment, rapid scientific and technological changes and globalization.

*Challenges facing
vocational education*

Following this, Dr. C.K. Misra highlighted the challenges facing vocational education which are:

- ♦ How to increase the access of Vocational Education programme to all? Learning has to occur at a time and place of the choice of the learner.
- ♦ How to remove the time driven element from the schools and colleges on the face of learning environment becoming more open, interactive and challenging?
- ♦ How to develop entrepreneurial qualities among students to ensure that they set up their own enterprises and take up self-employment?
- ♦ What measures will be required for accreditation and giving recognition to Government as well as NGO-Government organisations offering vocational programmes of varying duration to a large variety of target groups facing problems of recognition and certification?
- ♦ How to widen access to certification to youths who acquire skills informally?
- ♦ What measures will be required for providing opportunities for up-gradation of skills for upward mobility in career/workplace to industrial workers and people engaged in a variety of jobs?
- ♦ How to enhance infrastructural facilities in rural areas to ensure that vocational education find a strong foothold?

These issues have abiding significance for open schooling. The open learning system seems to be a potential strategy for reaching the unreached and may contribute towards Universalisation of Elementary Education and vocational education for all. The quest of NIOS for a new philosophy of Vocational Education has begun. It is a philosophy in the context of equitable and sustained development suited to country's educational scenario, job market and pre dominantly agrarian economy. The philosophy also suits to a technologically advancing world, globalization and market competitiveness as well as a knowledge based social order.

NIOS symbolizes a new vocational education system that is modern, resilient and responsive to the emerging times and the needs of the deprived millions. Free choice of subjects from a wide choice-matrix of skills and academic subjects at par with each other without any barrier or prescription, elastic time frame, pass or credit accumulation, and emphasis on high quality has brought NIOS to add new dimension in Open Vocational Education programme and benefits to million who cannot benefit from the formal schooling for one reason or the other. There is an influx of rural youth in the cities because of absence of proper vocational training and employment opportunities in the rural areas. In order to discourage this trend, NIOS has introduced the concept of Rural Community Workshop to provide vocational training to the rural youth. By integrating vocational and academic subjects through credit transfer, the vocational subjects offered by NIOS have been given the same status as Physics or Economics or Computer. NIOS provides a certificate that is recognized. NIOS accredits institution and organisation offering Vocational Courses as per its norm. The collaboration exists with ITI, Community Polytechnics, KVK, Shramik

Vidyapeeth, NGOs etc. Thus Open and Distance Learning will be the main stream of Vocational Education in near future.

Highlighting the Status of Vocational Education in NIOS, Mr. S.K. Misra stated that the major objectives of Vocational Education in NIOS are to:

- ♦ impart education relevant to increased production and productivity, economic development and individual prosperity;
- ♦ meet the need for skilled and middle level manpower for the growing sectors of economy, both organised and unorganised;
- ♦ prepare learners for self-reliance and gainful self-employment.

*Status of Vocational
Education in India*

The main focus of NIOS is to provide Vocational Education and training to general and prioritised groups, namely, SCs/STs, women, rural people, neo-literate, disabled and disadvantaged groups of the society.

Some of the special features of Open Vocational Education at NIOS are:

- ♦ Round the year admission
- ♦ No age limit
- ♦ Evaluation twice a year
- ♦ Practical training centre at learner's own choice of place
- ♦ Flexibility of opting for one
- ♦ Combination of Vocational subjects with academic subjects
- ♦ Utilisation of the existing infrastructure of partner institutions called AVIs
- ♦ Adoption of quality control in curriculum and material development
- ♦ Staff development

It was highlighted that NIOS offers following types of Vocational Courses

- ♦ Six months Certificate Courses
- ♦ One year Certificate Courses
- ♦ Package courses

The Broad areas of NIOS Vocational Courses are:

- (i) Agriculture
- (ii) Business and Commerce
- (iii) Computer Science
- (iv) Engineering and Technology
- (v) Home Science
- (vi) Health and Para medical
- (vii) Teacher Training
- (viii) Life Enrichment Courses
- (ix) Library Sciences and Security Services (Certificate Courses)

New courses are being introduced as per the demands of the market and learners' needs. However, Dr. Verma stressed in his deliberations that there was a need to strengthen linkages and networking in the area of selection of courses, preparation of courses in modular forms, training of the teachers, guidance and placement services etc. There is also a need to evolve strategies for sustaining partnership among national institute and international organizations working for promotion of open schooling and distance education. Proper collaboration will ensure enrichment of human capital.

The figure below indicates the modality of NIOS Vocational Courses.

A new effort has been made by NIOS to develop minimum Vocational Education infrastructure in the rural areas. Under this scheme, financial assistance is provided to the institutions to develop local specific need-based courses and purchase of equipment and tools to set up the workshop.

Some significant issues in the vocational education relate to:

*Significant issues
to consider*

- ◆ Selection of Courses
- ◆ Availability of Trained Teachers
- ◆ Informed Career Choices
- ◆ To cater to the needs of varied client groups
- ◆ Adoption of competency based evaluation
- ◆ Recognition of NIOS vocational certificate by the Ministry of Labour for the purpose of registration with the employment exchange.
- ◆ The Primary emphasis of vocational education programme of NIOS to be on self-employment rather than on wage employment. In-built entrepreneurship development programming to be integrated in all the vocational education programme.
- ◆ Steps needs to be taken for Quality Assurance in Vocational Educational.

GROUP WORK

A number of issues that emerged from different plenary sessions were placed before four Groups in this Session. The specific themes around which each group interacted were as under:

- Group-I : Resource management in open schooling system
- Group-II : Promotion of Open Schooling : Quality vs. Quantity
- Group-III : Setting up of State Open School: Role of State Government
vis-à-vis NIOS
- Group-IV : Collaboration in Open Schooling at different levels



Each group discussed at length the emerging issues, identified the Key areas and spelt out action points on the basis of deliberations in different sessions. Broad recommendations were also arrived in the group session. Presented below are reports of the four groups.

Group I: Resource Management in Open Schooling System

Issues	Key areas	Specific Action Points for NIOS/SOS
<p>Issue 1: What kind of infrastructural resource management (e.g. building/space, equipment etc. may be planned with State) for organizing programmes and activities under State Open School?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Clear statement about NIOS policy Guidelines and Framework for setting up of open schools ♦ Circulation of the document in each State. ♦ Assistance in the process of setting up State Open School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to conduct a survey for open schools in each state to formulate the development of guidelines and a model plan.
<p>Issue 2: What may be some of the resource management strategies for sharing of human resources in open schooling at different levels?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Sharing experts by NIOS and regional centres with State Open Schools through short term exchange programmes/ conducting orientation programmes and workshops. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to collect information and document about available expertise across India in specific fields. ♦ SOS to utilize services of experts during the training of state level functionaries.
<p>Issue 3 : What measures may be evolved for exchange of technical know-how in open schooling at International, National and State level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Organization of workshops/seminars with invited experts. ♦ Establishment of a database of information ♦ COL to support evaluation of Learning Material packages. ♦ Seminars, conferences workshops and short term study visits at each of the three levels – State, National and International. ♦ Establishment of short term exchange programmes among SOSs. ♦ Formulation of a scheme to undergo study for a short term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS/COL to organize workshops/conferences in open schooling ♦ All SOSs to set up their own website. ♦ Availability of materials through Website. ♦ NIOS to develop an action plan in collaboration with International leading Institutions. ♦ Government of India and International Agencies to formulate schemes for exchange programme and provide funding for these.

<p>Issue 4: What strategies may be adopted for identification, categorization, processing, sharing and exchange of available resources in open schooling (e.g. books, pamphlets, learning and support materials, research reports, journals, ICT enabled materials etc.)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Exploration by NIOS of the implementation of a robust Knowledge Management System enabling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) Linkages of State Websites (ii) Exchange of documents (iii) Searchable database of all documents and newsletters etc. (iv) Collaborative development of resources including quality assurance, editing etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to establish a documentation centre to act as a central collection and dissemination point for all newsletters etc. ♦ Each State to establish a similar documentation centre with newsletters etc. to facilitate sharing among all open schools. ♦ NIOS and each state to establish a publication centre.
<p>Issue 5: What may be some of the steps needed for drawing support from different levels for strengthening library and documentation services in open schooling institutions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Inclusion of specific additional money in the seed money allocated by NIOS to SOSs for the establishment and strengthening of libraries. ♦ State Governments' contribution for the development of libraries in a continuous manner. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to make financial provision for establishment and strengthening of library services at SOS level. ♦ NIOS to provide SOS with a list of materials that should be provided in the libraries.
<p>Issue 6: What kind of steps may be taken for capacity building of faculty involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of open schooling programme?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Implementation of current plan to provide training of trainers of State Open Schools. ♦ Revision/adaptation of courses as per situational requirement of each State in consultation with national level apex organizations ♦ State's own training package to meet specific needs. ♦ Collaborative support by national and state institutions having expertise in planning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to upgrade and implement its current plan for training of trainers of SOS. ♦ SOS to revise/adapt its courses in consultation with NIOS, SCERT and other State level institutions. ♦ States to develop their own training packages to meet specific needs with assistance from NIOS. ♦ National and State level Institutes having expertise in planning to collaborate with SOS to provide assistance.

Group II: Promotion of Open Schooling Quality vs. Quantity

Issues	Key areas	Specific Action Points for NIOS/SOS
<p>Issue 1: What may be some of the priority tasks to extend open schooling programme at different levels of schooling to ensure wider access to educational opportunities to all categories of target groups?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Well defined parameters of the target group ♦ Reach out to especially disadvantaged and excluded groups ♦ Constraints to education at all levels with the Ministry of Education, State Education Board/ Directorate and District level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS/SOSs to identify and re-define the target group through baseline survey and indepth researches. ♦ NIOS/SOSs to intensify advocacy campaign for education for all, especially the disadvantaged and hither to unserved groups adopting social marketing modalities. ♦ NIOS/SOSs to study closely the people and their socio-economic constraints and factors impeding access to formal education and build up educational plan accordingly.
<p>Issue 2: What kind of strategies may be adopted by open schools to meet the challenge of large number with a view to provide access, relevance, quality and success?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Situation specific and culture specific planning for education of proritised target group. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to liaise with States, find out the existing implementation strategies and advise some viable strategies
<p>Issue 3: What may be some of the indicators of quality in open schooling?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Non-negotiable indicators of quality open schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS and SOSs to evolve checklist covering the indicators of quality open schooling. ♦ NIOS-SOSs to ensure that the non-negotiable indicators of quality are adhered to.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Standardized curriculum and relevant quality material ♦ Database of learners ♦ Mode of delivery ♦ Teacher qualification, experience and capacity building ♦ Access to resources including availability of resource persons ♦ Internal and external monitoring system ♦ Analysis of examination results, success stories through tracer's studies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS and SOSs to ensure that the curriculum and material are of standard quality and relevant to needs of learners. ♦ SOSs to generate a database of learners keeping in view the figures of enrolment, dropouts and passouts. ♦ SOSs to adopt a mix model of open learning with components of face-to-face delivery mode with ICT enabled modality. ♦ SOSs to systematically plan and organize capacity building programmes for teachers and other functionaries as a regular programme. ♦ SOSs to identify and involve experts as Resource persons in developmental/training programmes. ♦ SOSs to hold internal and external monitoring system as per NIOS. ♦ SOSs to adopt electronic devices for analysis of examination results and recording of result with accuracy. 	
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<p>Issue 4: What steps may be planned to ensure quality of open schooling in terms of its basic parameters, namely, curriculum, instructional material, application of ICT, face-to-face delivery, student support services and learner friendly evaluation?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Periodic Review of Policies and Mid-term plan, whenever necessary. ♦ A well defined set of guidelines and a framework reflecting the step-by-step process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Regular scrutiny by SOS/ NIOS of programmes as per guidelines and checklist on quality indicators. ♦ Maintenance of feedback data and monitoring of programmes and activities by NIOS/SOSs as a regular activity.
<p>Issue 5: What measures may be adopted for evolving an effective and sustainable system of monitoring and evaluation of open schooling system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Networking at different levels ♦ Adoption of monitoring proforma ♦ Inbuilt monitoring at various levels from the State-district and study centre level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ SOSs to work out networking pattern within and outside the State. ♦ SOSs to formulate a comprehensive plan and proforma for monitoring. ♦ SOSs to adopt internal monitoring through periodic project report at state level. ♦ Internal monitoring at District Study centres level through periodic project report. ♦ Internal monitoring at learner level through feed back data ♦ External monitoring at district study centre level through independent agency

<p>Issue 6: What may be some of the priority areas of research in open schooling for making the system vibrant and linked to quality improvement of on-going programmes?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Internal as well as external evaluation from State/District to study centre level. ♦ Cost benefit analysis ♦ Open schooling vs. formal schooling ♦ Action research on field based programme ♦ Analysis and scrutiny of data recorded through MIS system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ External monitoring at study centre level through formal education machinery ♦ SOSs to adopt external evaluation at state level through independent agency and formal education machinery ♦ External evaluation at District study centre level through independent agency and formal education machinery ♦ SOSs to adopt external evaluation of learners by parents/family members ♦ Internal periodic evaluation report at state level ♦ Internal periodic reports at District study centre level ♦ Market research to be conducted by NIOS/SOS to find out the demand of the programme ♦ SOSs to study models of open schooling and NIOS to provide academic support to SOSs. ♦ NIOS to study models of open schooling in India and in other countries. ♦ NIOS/SOSs to study evaluation outcomes and impact of open schooling system for a specific period ♦ NIOS/SOSs to conduct tracer studies
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Group III : Setting up of State Open School: Role of State Government vis-à-vis NIOS

Issues	Key areas	Specific Action Points for NIOS/SOS
<p>Issue 1 : What may be the envisaged role of NIOS in setting up and operationalisation of SOS from the point of view of the State Government?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Primary responsibility with the State. ♦ NIOS in supportive partnership role 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ State Government to take initiative for a need assessment study, prepare a plan proposal focusing on the need for open schooling for the identified groups of learners as per the Guidelines provided by NIOS. ♦ NIOS to assist the state in the finalization of state specific model of open schooling.
<p>Issue 2: What may be the specific tasks for the State Government in setting up of State Open School at the initial stage in terms of planning, provision of funds, infrastructural facilities and smooth implementation of programme and activities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Articulation and clarification of proposed state model of open schooling through public discourse of all stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ State Government to take decisions on vital aspects of open schooling, namely, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) envisaged structure of SOS (b) required infrastructure (c) nature of links with State Board (d) estimation about finance (e) step by step plan for implementation of State Open Schools.
<p>Issue 3: What specific roles and responsibilities may be shared by State Government, NIOS and other agencies for capacity building of functionaries working in open schooling at different levels?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Sharing of existing resources and expertise between NIOS and State Open Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to provide academic support to SOSs in capacity building of SOS staff in the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a d a p t a t i o n , development of new set of curriculum and learning materials; (ii) development of need based vocational courses;

<p>Issue 4: What roles and responsibilities may be shared by NIOS and State Government in facilitating sharing of resources and materials among the SOSs, NIOS and other countries? Issue 4: What roles and responsibilities may be shared by NIOS and State Governments in facilitating sharing of resources and materials among the SOSs, NIOS and other countries?</p>	<p>♦ According to needs and request, sharing of material, documents, development of state specific curriculum and courses, training of functionaries, setting up of Website for public access to information sharing.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (iii) adoption of distance education delivery mode; (iv) building up electronic database; (v) providing exposure in conducting learner friendly evaluation and monitoring system based on electronic mode. (vi) SOS to plan for need based capacity building programme combining face-to-face mode with teleconferencing devices for functionaries at different levels. (vii) SOS to develop training package as back up materials for training of its functionaries and network at different levels within and outside the state for capacity building of functionaries <p>♦ Decisions at Government of India level needed for utilization of services of EDUSAT</p>
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<p>Issue 5: What roles are envisaged for the State Government in seeking recognition and equivalence of SOS courses and certificates?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Utilization of formal education infrastructure, monitoring and evaluation mechanism as well as human resources, wherever deemed necessary. ♦ SOS to fulfill essential ODL requirements in matters of admission norms, quality of distance learning text, media support and quality delivery mode. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ SOS to design innovative programmes/case studies/ action researches in open schooling under the sponsorship of COL and other International agencies for strengthening of open schooling programme. ♦ SOSs to depute its faculty during National/ International Conferences/ Workshop organized under NIOS/COL/UNESCO etc. ♦ States to take formal decision to set up a separate registered society. ♦ Equivalence of curriculum with that of formal school system. ♦ Transfer of credits between State Board and SOS and between NIOS and other State Boards.
<p>Issue 6: In what ways NIOS and International organizations may extend support to SOSs in improvement of functioning of SOSs?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Exposure through participation in National/ International conferences in open schooling ♦ Launching of field based research projects ♦ Providing support through establishing electronic MIS system for effective monitoring, Student Support Services and Evaluation ♦ Creating opportunities for utilization of services of EDUSAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS/COL/UNESCO to invite and involve SOSs in national/international workshop/conferences in open schooling. ♦ Sponsoring study visit programmes and extending services of ICTOS by NIOS/COL. ♦ State Government to facilitate utilization of EDUSAT services at State level.

Group IV : Collaboration of Open Schooling at Different Levels

Issues	Key areas	Specific Action Points for NIOS/SOS
<p>Issue 1: What may be some of the critical areas for collaborative endeavours at different levels- State, National and International?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Sharing resource – academic infrastructural and financial ♦ Training of personnel ♦ Use of learning material including curriculum through adoption/adaptation ♦ Sharing of information at different levels ♦ ICT and knowledge resource sharing in line with WTO. Evaluation and marking in the process of conducting examination ♦ Governance ♦ Research findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with States to be signed by SOSs with NIOS. ♦ NIOS/SOSs to initiate Inter-state dialogue for resource sharing/utilization of research findings, innovations in open schooling as a regular activity
<p>Issue 2: What kind of collaboration is envisaged for development of academic and vocational courses keeping in view the emerging context of technological developments, learning needs of divergent categories of learners coming from different geographical areas?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Use of NIOS Guidelines/ Course Materials as per MOU/Generate State specific courses/course material. ♦ Preparation of study material by SOS in regional medium. ♦ Identification of specialized areas/trades for development of State specific vocational courses. ♦ Training of key persons/ coordinators/resource persons from the particular state. ♦ Conduction of research studies for identifying need based areas/courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to workout modalities regarding constituting experts groups for evolving different courses. ♦ NCOS to take initiative towards assisting the States in the formulation of need based courses.

<p>Issue 3: What kind of collaboration may be planned for seeking recognition and equivalence of courses and certificates offered and issued by NIOS/SOS at different levels of schooling?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Transfer of Credit ♦ Comparative study of the curriculum, implementation status and evaluation process adopted by NIOS and other States. ♦ Recognition and issue of joint certificate for vocational courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Bilateral dialogue between NIOS and SOSs. ♦ NIOS in collaboration with COBSE to initiate action. ♦ Collaboration with intersectoral departments at NIOS and SOSs level.
<p>Issue 4: What may be some of the alternative strategies of networking for open school staff development at different levels - International, National and State?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ On the job exposure and orientation of functionaries at different levels. ♦ Staff attachment programme at the State/Inter State/National and International level. ♦ Short term assignment on deputation basis ♦ Utilisation of expertise and pooling technical support of Resource Persons from National and International Organisations. ♦ Training/orientation of SOS staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Study visits to be organized by NIOS/SOS for different levels of functionaries under HRD programme. ♦ NIOS/SOSs to arrange for staff-attachment programme at selected Institutions. ♦ NIOS to initiate dialogue with COL, UNESCO and other apex ODL Institutions for staff attachment as per special areas of expertise of its faculty. ♦ NIOS/SOS to deploy its faculty on deputation basis for short term assignment to selected ODL Institutions. ♦ NIOS to take initiative and plan programmes for inviting experts from National and International level ODL Institutions during organization of workshops/training programme. ♦ NIOS to extend its support to SOSs by providing academic input in training/orientation of SOS staff.

<p>Issue 5: What steps may be taken at different levels for seeking mutual support among the countries and within the countries for capacity building?</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Forum may be created/strengthened at appropriate level for sharing of ideas/innovations at inter country/cross country level. ♦ Seminars/conferences/symposia may be organized concerning emerging issues by SOSs at the State level and by NCOS/COL/ UNESCO at the National/International level. ♦ Inter collaborative bodies may take initiatives for building up resources for enrichment of programmes and sharing of resources among Commonwealth countries. ♦ COL/UNESCO may sponsor joint research studies in the key areas of ODL and facilitate cross country level sharing of ideas and findings.
<p>Issue 6: What kind of Collaborative endeavours may be made for creating a comprehensive ICT enabled database in Open Schooling for the available resources (print as well as ICT based) at International, National and State level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Infrastructure for capacity building ♦ Collection of data on open schooling from different sources. ♦ Interconnectivity system at different level-local, state (upto institution level), national and international level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ SOSs/NIOS to create appropriate infrastructure at different levels for ICT enabled data base. ♦ SOSs/NIOS to develop a mechanism for collection of data from different sources, namely, study centres, NGO/Zila Shaksharata Samitis, district/block level, NCERT, Open Universities, NIEPA, SCERT etc. ♦ Setting up Internet services, Websites at SOS level for generating interconnectivity system at appropriate level for regular flow of data.

<p>Issue 7: What mechanism may be followed for regular flow of data and processing of these for planning intervention in Open Schooling at the International, National and State level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Continuous updating of data. ♦ Creation of an institutional base for standardized data at state/national and international level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Conduct surveys at regular interval of time and updating of data assigning specific responsibilities at both NIOS and SOS level. ♦ Dialogue by SOS with State level Institutions for standardized data. ♦ Dialogue with national/international agencies for standardized data, namely, NCERT/NIEPA, concerned Ministries, International Institute of Statistics, Montreal, IBS, Geneva, NIER, Tokyo, International Institute of Vocational Education, Brune.
<p>Issue 8: What kinds of networking may be evolved for adopting a sound and comprehensive monitoring mechanism in open schooling at different levels?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ Electronic Networking ♦ Monitoring at State Level ♦ Analysis of data national level ♦ Dissemination and sharing of data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♦ NIOS to provide necessary academic and technical support to SOS for introducing electronic monitoring device. ♦ SOS to adopt electronic monitoring system and train identified staff for generating data and upgradation of the data regularly. ♦ NIOS to pool the data from different levels and analyse these as a part of its regular activity, disseminate and share these data through regional centres, SOS, national level conferences and international conferences etc.

NIOS VISION AND FUTURE THRUST

In the Session XIII, the NIOS Vision Document was presented by Shri M.C. Pant. The session was chaired by Fr. T.V.Kunnunkal. The major focus points and the future thrust areas of NIOS have been spelt out in the Vision Document. In the document it is envisaged that:

- ♦ NIOS will act mainly as a Resource Organisation in Open Schooling at national as well as international level with its usual programme delivery role. Its major focus areas will be in research, development, training, programme delivery, networking, extension and other programmes of NIOS.
- ♦ The Vision Statement of NIOS will be to provide access to sustainable and learner centric quality school education. It will also organize capacity building programmes for open schooling functionaries at national and international level.
- ♦ The Vision Document envisages that the State Open Schools in India will assume major responsibility for expansion of open schooling, since the prospective students will prefer opting for regional languages as medium for their courses of study.
- ♦ In NIOS there will be moderate increase in enrolment in the following Courses of Study:
 - Open Basic Education Programme to cover 1.5 lakh students by 2010.
 - Secondary and Senior Secondary Courses to cover 25 lakh students by 2010.
 - A 10% increase in enrolment is envisaged every year after 2010.
- ♦ The Vocational Education Programme will lay emphasis on:
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Development of minimum vocational education infrastructure in rural areas through Rural Community Workshops (RCWs)
(The number of RCWs will be increased from 9 to 400 by 2020).
 - Networking with industries
 - Setting up of Field Laboratories for designing and experimenting new Vocational Education Courses.
 - Dissemination of success stories.

- ♦ There will be Academic Audit of courses/learning material with the help of experts and try-out in the field. Societal concerns like national integration, social justice, social reforms, environmental preservation, population education will be taken care of in syllabi and self instructional materials.
- ♦ Special attention will be paid towards first generation learners, differently abled children and youth, and other disadvantaged population groups.
- ♦ Use of Multi-Media in the learning process will be enhanced considerably. Time slots on the national television, Door Darshan (DD) and on the dedicated educational satellite EDUSAT will be increased.
- ♦ Electronic media and ICT will be used in a big way in various programmes and activities of NIOS.
- ♦ On Demand Admission and On Demand Examination facilities will be provided.
- ♦ Libraries of NIOS Headquarters and the Regional Centres will be interlinked.
- ♦ NIOS will network with MHRD, State Education Departments, and other apex organizations in Education and related sectors for planning and implementation of the open schooling programme.
- ♦ The Study Centres will be opened up to Block level.
- ♦ Special drives for admission will be intensified.
- ♦ ICT will be used in a big way to provide access to open schooling programmes, particularly in difficult contexts and for disadvantaged population in general.
- ♦ Provision of scholarships or fee waiver for needy students will be made.
- ♦ NIOS will continue working as the Secretariat of the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) to facilitate better cooperation and interaction among NIOS and State Open Schools (SOSs). In due course, the National Consortium is to be transformed as the National Council for Open Schooling for formulation of standards, accreditation and grading of State Open Schools. This will be a statutory body.
- ♦ NIOS will continue working as the Secretariat of the Open Schooling Association of the Commonwealth (OSAC) to facilitate liaison among Commonwealth countries in their programmes of promotion of open schooling. NIOS will strive for greater collaboration with international organizations like COL, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, UNDP for promotion of open schooling in developing countries and dissemination of information in open schooling in various ways, including Journals, Newsletters.
- ♦ NIOS will strive to ensure effective Student Support Services for (i) improving completion rate, (ii) reducing drop-out rate, (iii) providing sustainable quality education and enhancing credibility of the system.
- ♦ The Education Management Information System (EMIS) will be toned up to bring efficiency which will cut down wasteful time delays.
- ♦ Long term, medium term, and short term plans will be prepared and operationalised in order to implement the Vision Plan of NIOS.

OUTCOMES OF THE CONFERENCE

Recommendations	Action Plan
<p>1. NIOS may intensify its efforts to persuade the State Education Departments to setup/upscale the Open Schooling System and take measures for quality assurance of open schooling programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS to intensify its programme of publicity of open schooling programme through electronic media and assist the states in focusing the cause of open schooling through State Open Schools. ◆ NIOS to make concerted efforts through its unit of the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) to expedite the setting up of State Open Schools. ◆ State Government to take initiative for a need assessment study and prepare a plan proposal for setting up/strengthening State Open School for identified groups of learners as per NIOS guidelines. ◆ State Government to take decision regarding envisaged infra-structure, management structure, step by step plan for implementation of SOS and ensure that these are strictly adhered to. ◆ State Government to formulate a policy for utilization of EDUSAT services in open schooling programmes.

Recommendations

Action Plan

- ◆ NIOS to provide consultancy services and appropriate financial assistance to State Education Departments in the setting up/ strengthening of State Open Schools.
- ◆ NIOS to make additional financial provision in the seed money for establishment and strengthening of library services.
- ◆ NIOS to provide SOSs with a list of materials that should be provided in the libraries.
- ◆ NIOS through NCOS Unit to prepare a Work Plan for developmental activities, training for capacity building of functionaries, survey/research activities, coordination and clearing house activities and regular monitoring of the follow up activities.
- ◆ NIOS to hold bilateral dialogue with states and concerned inter-sectoral Departments for ensuring transfer of credits between Board and NIOS, recognition and equivalence of certificates issued to learners pursuing Open Learning System.
- ◆ NIOS to pool the data from different levels and analyse these as a part of its regular activity, disseminate and share these data through regional centres, SOS, national level conferences and international conferences etc.
- ◆ SOS to adopt electronic devices for analysis of examination results and recording results and announcements.
- ◆ NIOS to initiate dialogue with national and international agencies, namely, NCERT, NIEPA, concerned Ministries, International Institutes of Statistics, Montreal, IBS Geneva, NIER, Tokyo, International Institute of Vocational Education, Brunei for collection of standardized data.

Recommendations	Action Plan
<p>2. In order to promote quantitative expansion and qualitative improvement of Open Schooling, NIOS may, on a priority basis, formulate an appeal in consultation with experts in the field, practitioners and State Open Schools (SOSs).</p> <p>3. NIOS may help States in developing programmes in regional languages over and above the existing provision of Hindi, English and Urdu.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS and SOSs to formulate a comprehensive plan and proforma for monitoring at different levels through periodic project reports, reports of the independent agencies as well as through formal education machinery. ◆ NIOS in collaboration with SOSs to prepare a check list covering the indicators of quality in Open Schooling. ◆ NIOS and SOSs to regularly scrutinize programmes and activities as per the quality indicators of the checklist. ◆ NIOS to establish a documentation centre to act as a Central collection and dissemination point for all newsletters/journals/documents. ◆ Each state to establish a similar documentation centre. ◆ NIOS may hold a workshop for interacting with a small group of well meaning persons in the field of open schooling for formulating an appeal to expedite the process of establishing State Open Schools where these are non-existent. ◆ The appeal may be circulated to all the states of India, State Open Universities as well as to COL for wider dissemination to all the Commonwealth Countries. ◆ SOS to develop courses in regional languages as per the requirement of learners.

Recommendations	Action Plan
<p>4. A Curriculum Framework for Open Vocational programme may be developed by NIOS for its own use and provide guidelines to the State Open Schools in the formulation of different courses of studies and development of material.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS may develop Curriculum Framework for Open Vocational Education in consultation with State Open Schools, Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE), NGOs with outstanding experience in the field, State Boards of Vocational Education, ITIs, Industrial Agencies, Institutes of Rural Development, Health Organizations, Department of Rural Craft, Department of Information Communications and Technology, Women and Welfare Department etc.
<p>5. The Vocational Education courses offered by NIOS and State Open Schools may be covered under the Apprenticeship Act 1961 so as to give benefit to a large number of students pursuing Vocational Education through open schooling delivery mode.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS in consultation with States and apex organizations may take initiative through networking at different levels for covering NIOS and SOS courses under Apprenticeship Act 1961
<p>6. NIOS in collaboration with COBSE, may take up from time to time comparative study of the curriculum, implementation status and impact of open learning programmes in different states.</p>	

Recommendations	Action Plan
<p>7. As an important measure towards staff development at different levels – national and state, study visits, staff attachment programmes at selected institutions may be taken up by NIOS, SOS and international institutions like COL, UNESCO etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS-SOSs to prepare a comprehensive plan for staff development programme and network with concerned institutions.
<p>8. A National Council for Open Schooling may be set up for formulation of standards in open schooling and accreditation/grading of open schooling organizations forging coordination and collaboration among various School Boards and Universities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS may take up, on a priority basis, the task of setting up a National Council for Open Schooling on the basis of constitution, role and functions adopted by similar councils. ◆ NCOS to take appropriate steps so that in the capacity of a statutory body the council may perform the task of ‘accreditation’ of State Open Schools and initiate action for developing a viable framework for transfer of credits (TOC) among SOSs, NIOS and State Boards of School Education. ◆ At the initial stage the National Council for Open Schooling may work under the aegis of the NCOS to be subsumed later on in the full fledged National Council for Open Schooling.
<p>9. The MHRD may be requested to formulate a centrally sponsored scheme for Promotion of Open Schooling in the country.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS may prepare a draft scheme for grant-in-aid for setting up of State Open Schools in consultation with State Open Schools and State Departments of Education and submit the proposal to the MHRD for consideration. ◆ State Departments of Education and existing State Open Schools may provide basic data in favour of urgent need for setting up/strengthening of State Open School to provide wider access to education to the identified target group through open schooling.

Recommendations	Action Plan
<p>10. COL/UNESCO may sponsor joint research studies in the key areas of ODL and facilitate cross country level dissemination of ideas and findings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NIOS in collaboration with SOSs and other identified apex organizations may conduct the study.
<p>11. For promotion of Open Schooling the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) may develop a detailed Work Plan of the Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth (OSAC).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The Work Plan may be jointly operationalised by COL and OSAC Secretariat in consultation with Commonwealth countries.
<p>12. Steps may be taken up by the Commonwealth countries to bring qualitative improvement in Open Schooling programmes in the wake of quantitative expansion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ COL may take the initiative in this direction.

VALEDICTORY SESSION

On 25th January, 2005 at the close of the third-day conference the valedictory session was chaired by Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal. In this session, Dr. Sushmita Mitra, Director (Academic) presented the major recommendations of the Conference. The international delegates and the Educational Secretaries of the States felt that the deliberations and recommendations of the Conference would go a long way for promotion of open schooling. The Education Secretaries of the participatory States assured that they would endeavour for setting up State Open Schools and upscaling of open schooling programmes as a priority agenda. The idea that permeated throughout all the sessions of the workshop was that open schooling must reach out to the masses, to the prioritized target groups in all the States of India and in Commonwealth countries. Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal opined that NIOS has become a school of international importance and also the resource centre for State Open Schools. He stressed that quality framework may be developed for setting up standards in open schooling programmes. The road map needs to be developed but will also keep on changing with the launching of EDUSAT. In his Valedictory address Fr. Kunnunkal said that the presentations and deliberations led to formulation of significant recommendations. He praised the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for organizing the Conference and the delegates for their valuable contribution by way of presentations, interventions and discussion. Ms. Susan Phillips thanked all the delegates for their active involvement and participation in the Conference.

CONFERENCE IN THE EYES OF THE PARTICIPANTS

At the close of the Conference an attempt was made to study the perceptions of the participants and seek their suggestions for the improvement of such kind of programme for future direction.

In this connection a Questionnaire-cum-rating scale was developed reflecting on the expected outcome of the conference in terms of new knowledge gain, conceptual clarity, understanding of the delivery mode and competencies acquired through participation in the three-day conference. The Questionnaire is appended at Annexure III.

The major findings with respect to Feedback Questionnaire are as under:

- ♦ The participants of the Conference were mostly involved in decision making in ODL at the Government Sector, a small number was engaged in making decision at International level with exception of two who are working as practitioner and as an implementer of Education For All programme.
- ♦ The overall rating regarding realization of objectives and expected outcomes of the Conference was quite high.
- ♦ According to 53.3% participants the deliberations in the different sessions helped in increasing awareness about potential of ODL at the school level.

- ♦ 13.3% felt that effectiveness was attained to some extent.
- ♦ As high as 60% participants stated that information about different successful models of open schooling was provided effectively to a great extent.
- ♦ A considerable number of participants (53.3%) stated that the objective of providing linkages and partnership in open schooling was realized to a great extent. For 13.3% it was accomplished to a little extent.
- ♦ For 46.6% the conference realized to a great extent the objectives of providing opportunity for networking and sharing of expertise and experience.
- ♦ Overall rating with regard to the item on enhancement of awareness about issues in open schooling (namely, quality assurance, use of ICT and priority research areas) was somewhat low.
- ♦ The rating on the item 'effectiveness of the conference towards accomplishing envisaged goals' was, on the whole, quite high.
- ♦ As indicators of success of the conference, the participants stated that clarity about the concept of open schooling, enlightenment provided about ODL system, exposure to models of open schooling, emerging open schooling scenario in India, Bangladesh and other countries, were helpful. Conference provided good opportunity for professional growth through interaction with different levels of functionaries in open schooling within and outside India.
- ♦ According to 60% participants, the conference was highly successful against 33% who said that it was extremely successful. While 6.6% felt that the conference was fairly successful.
- ♦ More time should be slated for group work to facilitate sharing of experience among the participants.
- ♦ Case studies of open schooling system in operation in different countries may be discussed at greater length.
- ♦ Number of topics that may be discussed at greater length in future conferences refer to flexible type of curriculum relevant to the contexts of learners from rural, urban setup, vocational education for class VIII onward through open schooling, step by step guidance for setting up State Open Schools, issue of certification and recognition of the same by State Boards, CBSE, Universities etc.
- ♦ About the level of knowledge and motivation before and after the conference, 66.6% felt that the knowledge gained after attending the conference was high to some extent, 46.6% said that the motivation level was high after the conference.

- ♦ With regard to acquisition of new knowledge and skills acquired for decision making ability in open schooling, the participants pointed to the following knowledge, understanding and skills:
 - Knowledge and understanding about crucial aspects of NIOS, its activities, target groups, course content, delivery and evaluation process etc.
 - Acquired skills in designing open schooling programmes, conducting examination, networking for open schooling, setting up of SOS.

- ♦ With regard to ability acquired to implement open schooling/increasing its use within Institution/country, fifteen out of twelve participants suggested a number of competencies, namely, to develop new set of learning materials, make efforts for bridging the gap between formal and open schooling, re-orient SOS programme in the state to realize objectives envisaged.

- ♦ In response to statements concerning various aspects of the conference, namely, planning, organizational activities, duration, quality of materials supplied, quality of transaction in different sessions and providing insight in open schooling 33.3% to 66.6% participants agreed.

- ♦ With regard to overall comments of the participants, it was a well organized conference and the learning materials are very useful. The participants desired that more seminars/conferences for continued education in Distance Education may be organized with special reference to other countries. All the Heads of SOS may be invited for participation in these events.

Other Comments of the participants were as under:

- (i) It was a well organised conference
- (ii) It was a good experience to be with persons, experts of different fields and faculties.
- (iii) The hard copies of presentation will be very useful.
- (iv) Got opportunities to discuss problems and difficulties regarding implementation of open schooling
- (v) Experience of evolving vocational education and training system for formal school sector can be integrated with that of open learning system – sharing of resources, collaboration between the two system for strengthening vocational education system.

- (vi) More seminar/conferences for continued education in Distance Learning to be organised alongwith field visits
- (vii) All the HODs of SOS to be invited in such conferences.
- (viii) In the conference the discussions were more and more on Indian context rather than on International context.
- (ix) The conference may not start on a Sunday
- (x) Arrangement for vehicle for purchase of medicines and other provisions should be made.

ADDRESS BY SHRI M.C. PANT

- ♦ One of the concerns that led to emergence of the **Open Schooling programme** in various countries was their endeavour **to provide education to those who could not attend conventional schools** for a variety of socio-economic reasons, as well as to **those who missed opportunities to complete school and developmental education**. Gradually the open schooling programme with inherent flexibilities about choice of subjects, place and pace of studies and the **paradigm shift from “you learn what we offer” to “we offer what you want to learn”** has gained ground and attained the status of an independent sub-system of education. This system makes **‘education as one time activity’ to ‘education as life long activity’**.
- ♦ The open and distance learning (ODL) **mode of education is now being preferred** not only by the disadvantaged and drop-outs but also by those who have easy access to school education.
- ♦ A human being is a positive asset and a precious national resource which needs to be nurtured carefully through relevant and need based education. Keeping in view the fact that education develops manpower for different levels of economy, some **World Education Forums on Education have been giving stress on Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE)** in developing countries.
- ♦ Realizing the fact that there will be a **huge influx of Upper Primary pass outs** due to operationalisation of Education For All Programmes, **Universalisation of Secondary Education is also a priority agenda of the Government of India**. Other developing countries may also be contemplating appropriate steps towards universalisation of secondary education.
- ♦ **The formal schooling system may not be in a position to cope with the heavy influx of Upper Primary pass outs** as huge infrastructure and human resource would be needed. The **open schooling system** with in-built flexibilities **would be in a position to meet this challenge of education** along with usual formal schooling expansion programme.
- ♦ The **open schooling programme** which is in a budding stage in the developing countries **needs to be given impetus** at the earliest. In order to translate it into practice, there is a **need to develop a long term perspective for open schooling**. Based on such perspective, **long term, medium term and short term plans** need to be prepared and implemented. **Certain other steps** in this regard include (i) **provision of funds** for expansion of open schooling programme, (ii) **networking** with formal schooling system for sharing of their infrastructural facilities and human resource, (iii) **up scaling of open schooling organizations** at national and state/provincial level, (iv) **identification of clientele groups** through surveys etc., and (v) **motivating them** to continue their education through user friendly open schooling programmes.
- ♦ Some **international agencies**, specially the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO are taking steps for **Promotion of Open Schooling** in different countries.

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) India, in collaboration with COL and UNESCO, has been **interacting with several developing countries** and has **set up an International Centre for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS)**. Since the beginning of the twenty first century, **NIOS has organized several advocacy programmes for developing countries of Africa and Asia**. NIOS is all set to offer Certificate and Diploma Courses in Open Schooling in its International Centre. In the building of NIOS, which is under construction, a Hostel for trainees will be an integral part. As soon as the NIOS Hostel is ready, the training programmes for open schooling functionaries from various countries will be organized periodically. Such **capacity building programme will facilitate up scaling of open schooling programme** in various countries as trained manpower will be available for various tasks such as planning, developing, implementing and monitoring the educational programmes.

- ♦ **The NIOS has already organized several COL sponsored conferences** on various themes related to open schooling. Of these, **two conferences were organized in Goa. This is the third conference on open schooling being organized in Goa.**
 - The **first conference** organized in Goa from 21 to 23 November, 1998 was on the theme “Networking and Collaboration in Open Schooling”.
 - The **second conference** organized in Goa from 28 to 31 January 2002 was on “Promotion of Open Schooling”.
 - The **present conference** being organized from 23 to 25 January 2005 is again on “Promotion of Open Schooling”. In this Conference, the **invitee countries are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, Canada, UK and India.**
- ♦ **The COL sponsored conferences proved useful for promotion of open schooling.** In India, besides the NIOS at national level, **eleven States have already set up State Open Schools (SOSs)** and proposals for setting up of State Open Schools in **eight more States are in pipeline. We hope that as a result of participation in the present conference, more States in India will come forward for setting up of the State Open Schools** and the existing State Open Schools will up scale their programmes. We also hope that the **participating countries will also take steps for up scaling of their open schooling programme** and will exchange their ideas and experiences with other countries.
- ♦ As evident from the Programme Schedule, presentations and discussions will take place on various significant themes on promotion of open schooling. **We hope that the Conference will make significant recommendations** and action points for promotion of open schooling. The recommendations **will be disseminated widely** through the forum of the Open Schooling Association of the Commonwealth (OSAC) and particularly through the OSAC Journal of Open Schooling that is being brought out by NIOS in its capacity as the Secretariat of the Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth.
- ♦ I take this opportunity to impress upon the **Commonwealth of Learning to use its good offices for persuading all the Commonwealth Countries** (which are 53 at present) **to become members of the Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth (OSAC)**. May I suggest that COL may place this as an item of agenda for discussion in the next meeting of the Commonwealth Countries. It is needless to emphasize that **strengthening of the forum of OSAC will definitely accelerate the process of promotion of open schooling in the member countries.**

INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY PROF. R.H. DAVE

It is a matter of immense pleasure for me to associate myself with the Goa International Conference on Promotion of Open Schooling in India and other countries. Right at the outset, therefore, I wish to express my heartfelt thankfulness to NIOS and the Commonwealth of Learning, and in particular to Mr. Mahesh Chandra Pant, the New Chairman of NIOS, for inviting me to this important meeting.

May I also take this opportunity of congratulating Mr. Pant for his appointment as Chairman of NIOS. This is a very challenging position, full of possibilities to serve millions of children, youth and adults through a non-conventional and open system of school-level education by reaching the unreachable, often poor and marginalised, besides those who are reachable with less difficulty. I know that Mr. Pant possesses all the expertise, experience and deep commitment required to lead NIOS to new heights of excellence. I offer my best wishes and full cooperation in this noble mission.

I also wish to pay my compliments to the Commonwealth of Learning, and especially to Ms. Susan Phillips and other dedicated colleagues from COL, for joining hands with India and other countries in the task of promoting open schooling and distance learning for the benefit of the global citizens of the future.

The subject of 'Promotion of Open Schooling' chosen for this august assembly is succinct, significant and timely. Within the framework of this theme, I have been asked to highlight in this inaugural address "The Role of Open Schooling in the context of the Challenges in Education in the 21st Century."

The beginning of the 21st century is marked by an unprecedented phenomenon of multiple revolutions (– not one revolution or two revolutions but multiple revolutions) in sciences and technologies, commerce and industries, and in several other fields of life – all occurring simultaneously. And all of them have decisive and far-reaching implications for education. They have prompted some new *objectives* for different levels of education. They call for major revisions in the *curriculum*, in the regular areas of study and introduction of some frontline areas of learning in order to keep our learners in the forefront of new developments. They emphasize a new significance of cultural areas of learning for a *balanced growth* in cognitive, emotional and psychomotor domains of human development. They have implications for the application of *multimedia* in order to expand coverage and strengthen quality. In fact, these multiple and recurrent revolutions call for *new kinds of organizing*

principles and delivery systems to match the requirements of the 21st Century among our learners.

We are all aware that there is an emergence of knowledge society ज्ञानयुक्त समाज, बोधयुक्तक समाज. In fact, altogether a new set of vocabulary has sprung up in the past few years such as knowledge economy, knowledge jobs, knowledge workers, knowledge management, and knowledge-based quality of life.

There are recurrent and revolutionary advancements in information and communication technologies, computerization, internetization, mobile telephony, space technology, satellite-based telecommunication systems, bio-technology, analysis of DNA and Human Genomics as well as Epigenetics, medical technology, nanotechnology and miniaturization processes, liberalization and privatization of economy, entrepreneurship, and of course globalization.

These developments correspond to what Lord Krishna said in Bhagaved Gita:

ज्ञानं विज्ञानसहितं यद्ज्ञात्वा मोक्ष्यसे अशुभात्।

These and other similar advancements in society anticipate that all citizens of the 21st Century must have a minimum of school-level learning. Quite a sizeable number will receive higher education as well. After acquiring this basic educational input at the general level as well as vocational and technical level for some learners, they should continue learning throughout life and become self-directed lifelong learners. For this purpose they will have to focus on four interrelated aspects:

- (1) Learning – what – to-learn,
- (2) Learning – how – to – learn,
- (3) Learning – how – to – evaluate one’s own achievement, and
- (4) Self regulated progress – monitoring throughout life.

These are the new learning needs of the new century.

Thus, in a comprehensive learning system of the 21st century covering both general and occupational aspects, we have to face the challenges of new learning strategies, new goals and content and more illuminative and self-regulated, self-directed progress evaluation and monitoring mechanisms. Some learners may follow *incremental education system* by progressing subject area by subject area. Others may pursue *an omnibus education system* by studying a number of subjects at a time. We should allow them to do so by adopting a self-paced learning pattern. In such a learner-friendly system, multiple opportunities should, therefore, be created at the school level and made available to different categories of learners of all age-groups. In other words, we must move from a single, monolithic and monopolistic structure to the promotion of an open and flexible schooling structure to allow the re-emergence of a knowledge society in India.

Establishment of such an open and multi-faceted learning system has become all the more necessary in India in the context of a new demographic reality taking shape in the 21st century regarding population growth and life expectancy. Let us remind ourselves that the 20th Century was the century of *increasing population* while the 21st Century is becoming a century of *aging population*. In India, the average life expectancy in the year 1900 was around 30 years, whereas in the year 2004 it has increased to about 60 years. In the state of Kerala, and in certain parts of other states as well as in educated families, average life expectancy has already increased to 70 years and beyond. Therefore, the school-level education provided to all through open learning system, formal system and application of multimedia will have much longer rewards and cost-benefit returns, and will make the lives of educated individuals, their families and communities much better and higher in quality.

After all, what is learning and what is education in its ultimate analysis? Education is nothing else but a process of human empowerment and human enlightenment, and thus human transformation मानव परिवर्तन in the general and vocational domains of development, so that the empowered and enlightened lifelong learners can achieve an increasingly better and higher quality of life for themselves, for their families and for the society.

It is because of this realization that during the past 57 years after Independence, India has undoubtedly taken great strides in education. But unfortunately, it had to start with a pathetic scenario that emerged during the colonial period:

- **In the field of literacy**, the percentage of illiterate people in India in the year 1900 was as high as 94. Only 6% (5.7) of the population was literate. Female literacy was just 0.6 per cent. But by the year 2000, the overall literacy rose from 6% to 66%, despite the fact that the population increased from 230 million in 1900 to more than 1000 million in 2000. However, there still remains a lot more work to do in the domains of literacy, post-literacy and adult basic education, of both general and vocational variety.
- **At the primary stage**, almost full enrolments have now been achieved in most parts of India. Retention rates are gradually improving at the lower primary stage, but at the upper primary level, the dropout rates are unacceptably high, at around 50% or more, besides the problems of quality and relevance.
- **At the secondary schooling level**, a great deal of expansion has taken place. The number of secondary schools has increased from 7000 in 1947 to some 147,000 in 2004. And yet, more than 75% of the age-cohort remains unserved. They have no access and opportunity to formal secondary schooling in many parts of India. **Vocational Education** is also not sufficiently developed and coordinated to meet the challenges of an anti-poverty and anti-marginalization drive that is much needed at the present time.

Thus, compared to the lamentable pre-Independence situation of the first half of the 20th century, India has made remarkable progress in education, and still much more remains to

be done both in terms of *extensity* and *intensity* of school-level learning. It is here that the open schooling has a decisive role to play for the teeming millions of potential learners.

To meet the challenges of the staggering numbers and also to ensure quality, relevance and functionality of learning in actual life, we have to adopt new educational policies and plans to institute a *multimodal schooling system* adopting multimedia approach. This should include open schooling, distance learning, EDUSAT, TV and DVD learning systems, multimedia computers where feasible, contact courses, peer learning arrangements and self-study through modular textual materials. All this implies that time has now come to modernize our *organising principles of both formal and open schooling* treating them as major components of a holistic system of general and vocational learning. Such a modification is often described as paradigm shift. Particularly when India is well on its way of emerging as a global economic super-power, its schooling arrangement has to be recast to respond to the new challenges implicit in this mass-scale progress.

The formal system of education has of course contributed a great deal in the 20th century. But its monolithic and inflexible approach to education will have to be drastically changed. In India, we have been talking about सा विद्या या विमुक्तये which briefly means that education results in liberation. But the formal school system of Macaulay's variety has created visible and invisible prison-walls that has imprisoned विद्या—education itself. There is a prison-wall in the name of *the place of learning* called a school and a classroom without which education cannot be expected to occur in the formal system. There is another invisible prison-wall of *age of learning*, a prison-wall of *time of learning*, a prison-wall of *duration of learning*, a prison-wall of *credentials and pre-requisites* for further learning and so forth. In this situation, the need of the day for us is to 'liberate' education so that education can 'liberate' us. The process of promoting open schooling, मुक्त विद्यालयी शिक्षा,

is precisely an action in this direction. Formal schools should be deformed and deconventionized without destroying the minimum essential learning discipline required and should be interconnected with open schooling, distance learning, EDUSAT and other such dynamic initiatives to evolve a new *multimodal learning system* based on a major paradigm shift to respond to the demands of the 21st Century.

NIOS is already providing a commendable lead in this direction, thanks to the early initiative taken by MHRD. It has produced excellent modular textbooks for self-learning and progress evaluation. A number of other steps to assist different levels of learners have been taken. It has also promoted State Open Schools. Some of them are functioning well, others need further help. But a large number of states have not yet established State Open Schools at all. In this context, it is heartening to note that the new Chairman of NIOS, Mr. M.C. Pant, has taken a commendable action with full and active co-operation of Mr. B.S. Baswan, our esteemed Education Secretary in MHRD, for the promotion of open schooling and setting up of open schools in all States of India.

Finally, it may be brought to the notice of the states, open schools and formal schools that studies and observations throughout the world have shown that a good school-level education gives nothing less than जीवन दान (Jeevan Daan) to learners and their families besides other benefits. How? – In three ways: **First**, it contributes towards reducing infantile mortality. **Second**, it contributes towards reducing maternal mortality. And **third**, it contributes towards increasing average life expectancy.

Just to take a quick example, the state of Kerala, having the level of schooling very high, has the lowest infantile mortality rate of 13 per thousand, whereas in the states having low schooling rate, the infantile mortality rate is *four to five times more* than Kerala. Similarly, Kerala has the lowest maternal mortality rate and highest average life expectancy of 70 years and rising. This is the जीवन दान (Jeevan Daan) that I'm talking about. There are of course other such significant benefits of open or formal schooling of good quality. For example, the illiterate parents tend to keep their children illiterate. But it is the schooled parents who send their children regularly to school and help us solve the problems of retention as well as quality since they expect better grades and higher results from their children. They also tend to send their girl child to school and also not compel her to dropout. It has been further observed that the primary schooled parents send their children at least upto secondary schooling; secondary schooled parents send their children to universities, and higher education. The university educated parents have the tendency of sending their children abroad for higher studies. Through this generational process, they attain better earning, socio-economic mobility of the family, and better quality of life. Thus, a typical school graduate may or may not immediately get a job these days, but the other benefits of schooling are simply invaluable. It is for this reason, among many others, that we have to universalize elementary education quickly and expand general and vocational secondary education to near – universalization level through a multi model education system for which promotion of open schooling is most urgently required in all parts of the country – rural and urban – without exception..

Mahatma Gandhi used to recite a सुभाषित in his daily prayer:

न त्वहं कामये राज्यं न स्वर्गं न पुनर्भवम् ।
कामये दुःख तप्तानां प्राणिनां अर्तिनाशनम् ॥

‘I do not long for any political power, wealth or even emancipation. All that I desire for and long for is to participate in creating conditions(through education, etc.) to eradicate the miseries of those suffering from poverty, diseases, destitution and marginalization’. Let us all make a solemn commitment to work towards this ideal through the instrumentality of Open Schooling and Multimodal Education.

Thank you. नमस्कार

QUESTIONNAIRE-CUM-RATING SCALE FOR FEEDBACK STUDY

Please circle the number on the rating scale that best describes your perspective and add comments.

1. How would you rate the effectiveness of this conference with respect to accomplishing the following goals?

Rating scale: Not effective 1 2 3 4 5 Very effective

To encourage practitioners and Government Ministry officials to consider the use of open schooling to increase access to School-level Education.

Goals	Effectiveness of conference in furthering these goals	Your comments

2. What indicators would *you* use to evaluate the success of this conference? How does this conference measure up against these indicators? (For example, one of your success indicators might be “conference participants make new contacts for the sharing of ODL knowledge” and your assessment might be “I made five new contacts that will help broaden my knowledge of ODL.”)

Your Success Indicators for Conference

Your Assessment

3. Overall, how do you rate the success of this conference?

Not at all successful 1 2 3 4 5 Extremely successful

Comments:

4. What changes would you recommend, if any, to improve this conference?

5. What topics would you like to spend more time on, if possible, in future activities in this topic?

6. How you would rate the level of knowledge and motivation that you had regarding the use of open schooling before attending this conference and now, at the finish of the conference? (please circle one response per row)

BEFORE Conference:

Level of KNOWLEDGE	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
Level of MOTIVATION	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High

AFTER Conference:

Level of KNOWLEDGE	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High
Level of MOTIVATION	Low	1	2	3	4	5	High

7. Due to the acquisition of new knowledge, do you think you are now better able to make decisions relating to Open Schooling? If yes, Please provide examples.

Yes ____ No ____

Examples:

8. Do you anticipate being able to implement Open Schooling or increase its use within your institution/state/country as a result of this conference? If yes, please elaborate.

Yes ____ No ____

Comments:

9. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements by circling one number for each row.

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree

10. What is your primary involvement in open and distance learning?
(please tick one)

Institutional decision maker / institutional policy maker

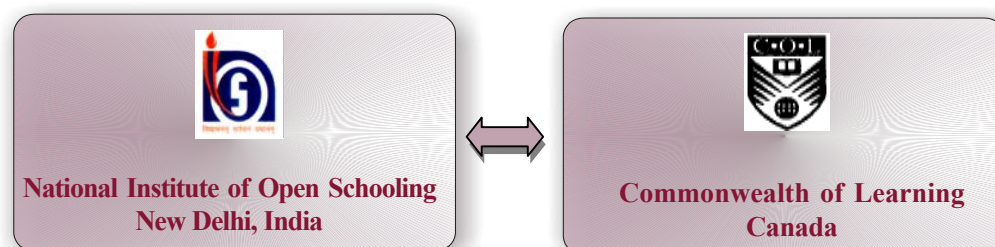
Government decision maker

Practitioner

Other (please specify):

Other Comments:

Thank you for your input!



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
ON
PROMOTION OF OPEN SCHOOLING

23rd to 25th January, 2005,
Cidade De Goa Beach Resort,
Vainguinim Beach, Goa-403004 (India)

23rd January, 2005 (Sunday)

Time	Session	Speakers
09:00-10:30 hrs.	Inaugural Session	
09:00-09:05 hrs.	Welcome	Dr. Sushmita Mitra, NIOS
09:05-09:10 hrs.	Lighting of Lamp	
09:10-09:20 hrs.	Opening Remarks	Ms. Susan Phillip, COL
09:20-09:35 hrs.	Address by Chairman, NIOS	Mr. M.C. Pant, NIOS
09:35-09:50 hrs.	Address by the Joint Secretary School Education, MHRD	Shri Keshav Desiraju, MHRD
09:50-10:10 hrs.	Presidential Address	Prof. H.P. Dixit, IGNOU
10:10-10:25 hrs.	Inaugural Address by Chief Guest	Prof. R.H. Dave
10:25-10:30 hrs.	Vote of Thanks	Mr. V.J. Williams, NIOS
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. J.D. Sharma
	Compere	♦ Dr. Sushmita Mitra

Time	Session	Speakers
10:30 – 11:00 hrs.	TEA/ COFFEE	
11:00 – 12:00 hrs.	Technical Session : I ICT for Open Schooling	<p>Chairperson Prof. M.M. Pant, Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU</p> <p>Presenters :</p> <p>♦School Net : Mr. Vis Naidoo, COL</p> <p>♦Cluster Model : Dr. Derek Wenmoth, The Correspondence School, New Zealand</p> <p>♦Using Satellites for Education : Role of EDUSAT : Dr. B.S. Bhatia, ISRO</p> <p>Rapporteur ♦ Mr. S.K. Prasad</p> <p>Compere ♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas</p>
12:00 – 13:00 hrs.	Technical Session : II Open Schooling System	<p>Chairperson Prof. Amrapali M. Merchant, BAOU</p> <p>Presenters :</p> <p>♦Introduction to Open Schooling : Ms. Susan Phillips, COL</p> <p>♦Setting up of NOS : Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, NIOS</p> <p>♦Consortium and Association for Open Schooling in India : Mr. M.C. Pant, NIOS</p> <p>Rapporteur ♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh</p> <p>Compere ♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas</p>
13:00 – 14:00 hrs.	LUNCH	

Time	Session	Speakers
14:00 – 15:00 hrs.	Session : III - Presentations Educational Scenario in Commonwealth Countries	Chairperson Mr. Vis Naidoo
14:00-14:20 hrs.	♦Bangladesh :	Dr. Arshad Ali Matubber Open School
14:20-14:40 hrs.	♦Pakistan :	Ms. Lubna Saif Institute of Mass Education, AIOU
14:40-15:00 hrs.	♦Sri Lanka :	Dr. Nanda Wanniarachchi Open School
	Rapporteur	♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas
	Compere	♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh
15:00 – 15:15 hrs.	TEA/ COFFEE	
15:15 – 16:30 hrs.	Session : IV - Presentations Educational Scenario in different States of India	Chairperson Mr. D.C. Pant
	♦Andhra Pradesh	Dr. S. Chellappa Pr. Secretary (SE)
	♦Punjab	Mr. R. Venkat Ratnam Special Secretary (SE)
	♦Maharashtra	Mrs. Vijaysheela Sardesai Divisional Chairperson, M.S. Board of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education,
	♦West Bengal	Shri Pallav Kumar Goswami Special Secretary (SE),
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. Mamta Srivastava ♦ Dr. O.P. Sharma
	Compere	♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh

24th January, 2005 (Monday)

Time	Session	Speakers
9:00 – 9:45 hrs	Technical Session : V Models of Open Schooling	Chairperson Prof. C. Pushpa Ramakrishana B.R.Ambedkar Open University, A.P
	♦ Models of Open Schooling adopted in different countries	Ms. Susan Phillips, COL
	♦ Existing models in Indian State Open Schools	Dr. Sushmita Mitra, NIOS
	Rapporteur	♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas
	Compere	♦ Dr. Mamta Srivastava
9:45 – 10:45 hrs.	Session : VI - Panel Discussion Setting up an Open School- Issues and Concerns	Chairperson Prof. B.P. Khandelwal
	♦ Academic and Evaluation Aspects	Prof. Pushpa Ramakrishna B.R.Ambedkar Open University, AP
	♦ Student Support Services	Mr. D.C. Pant, Former PVC, IGNOU
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. O.P. Sharma
	Compere	♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas
10:45 – 11:00 hrs.	TEA/ COFFEE	
11:00 – 12:00 hrs.	Session : VII Presentations Educational Scenario in different States of India contd...	Chairperson Dr. S. Chellappa, Pr. Secretary (SE), Andhra Pradesh
	♦ Rajasthan	Shri C.K. Mathew Pr. Secretary (Elementary & Secondary Education)
	♦ Jharkhand	Shri Ashok Kumar Singh Commissioner and Secretary, HRD

Time	Session	Speakers
	♦Bihar	Shri D. Singh Gangwar Director, Primary Education, Patna Bihar
	♦Delhi	Dr. M.C. Mathur Additional Director
	♦Himachal Pradesh	Shri J.R. Katwal Additional Secretary (SE)
	♦Assam	Shri Paramesh Dutta, Commissioner, Secretary
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. A.P. Verma
	Compere	♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas
12:00 – 13:00 hrs.	Technical Session : VIII Research in Open Schooling : Prospects and Priority Areas	Chairperson Prof. J.W. Wickramasinghe National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka
	♦Importance of Research in Open Schooling System	Dr. A.B.L. Srivastava Chief Consultant, (R&E)EdCIL
	♦Research in Open Schooling – A world view	Ms. Alicia Fentiman, IRFOL Cambridge, U.K.
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. O.P. Shrama
	Compere	♦ Dr. Mamta Srivastava
13:00 – 14:00 hrs.	LUNCH	
14:00 – 15:00 hrs.	Session :IX - Presentations Quality Assurance in Open Schooling System	Chairperson Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal
	Curriculum and Learning Materials	Dr. Sushmita Mitra, NIOS
	Student Support System	Dr. Sushmita Mitra, NIOS
	Evaluation and Examination	Mr. V.J. Williams, NIOS
	The School of Correspondence – New Zealand Perspective	Dr. Derek Wenmoth E. Development Manager, The Correspondence School
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. J.D. Sharma
	Compere	♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh

Time	Session	Speakers
15:00 – 15:15 hrs.	TEA/ COFFEE	
15:15 – 16:15 hrs.	Session : X- Panel Discussion Vocational Education	Chairperson Prof. S.Z. Haider, Joint Director, PSSCIVE
	♦ Vocational Education –	Mr. C.K. Misra
	♦ Significance for Open Schooling Status of Vocational Education in NIOS	Mr. S.K. Misra, Head Regional Centre, Zone-I, Delhi and Joint Director (Voc.)
	♦ Networking and Linkages in Vocational Education	Mr. A.P. Verma, Vocational Education, NIOS
	Rapporteur	♦ Dr. Mamta Srivastava
	Compere	♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh
16:15 – 17:30 hrs.	Session: XI Group Work	Group Coordinators
	♦ Resource management in open schooling system	Mr. S.K. Misra
	♦ Promotion of Open Schooling : Quality vs. Quantity	Dr. (Mrs.) Neelam Sinha
	♦ Setting up of State Open School: Role of State Government vis-à-vis NIOS	Mr. V.D. Seveker
	♦ Collaboration in Open Schooling at different levels	Dr. O.P. Sharma
	Compere	♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh

25th January, 2005 (Tuesday)

Time	Session	Speakers
09:00 – 10:30 hrs.	Session : XII Group Recommendations ♦Presentation by Groups ♦Discussion and Adoption of Recommendations Rapporteurs Compere	Chairperson Ms. Susan Phillips, COL ♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh ♦ Mr. S.K. Prasad ♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas
10:30 – 11:00 hrs.	TEA/ COFFEE	
11:00 – 12:00 hrs.	Session : XIII- Presentations Highlights of the NIOS Vision Document Rapporteur Compere	Chairperson Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal Presenter Mr. M.C. Pant, NIOS ♦ Dr. J.D. Sharma ♦ Ms. Gopa Biswas
12:00 – 13:00 hrs.	Valedictory Session ♦Welcome ♦Recommendations of the Conference ♦Participants Observations ♦Concluding Remarks ♦Valedictory Address ♦Vote of thanks Rapporteur Compere	Mr. V.J. Williams, NIOS Dr. Sushmita Mitra, NIOS - Mr. M.C. Pant - Ms. Susan Philip Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal Mr. D.S. Bist, NIOS ♦ Dr. O.P. Sharma ♦ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini Singh
13:00 hrs.	LUNCH	

PARTICIPANTS

International Delegates

- ◆ Dr. Md. Arshed Ali Matubber
Dean
Open School
Bangladesh Open University
Gazipur, Bangladesh-1705
- ◆ Mr. Vis. Naidoo
Education Specialist, Educational
Technology,
Commonwealth of Learning
Suite 1200, 1055 West Hastings St.
Vancouver, Canada-V6E2E9
- ◆ Prof. J.W. Wickramasinghe
Director General
National Institute of Education Highleve
Road, Mahoragama, Sri Lanka
- ◆ Dr. Nanda Wanniarachchi
Chief Project Officer,
Open School,
National Institute of Education,
Highleve Road, Mahoragama
Sri Lanka
- ◆ Ms. Alicia Fentiman
International Research Foundation for
Open Learning (IRFOL)
Purbeck Road, Cambridge CB2 2PG
United Kingdom
- ◆ Dr. Derek Wenmoth,
E. Development Manager,
The Correspondence School,
New Zealand
- ◆ Ms. Susan E. Phillips
Education Specialist (Basic Education),
Commonwealth of Learning,
1055 West Hastings Street, Suite 1200,
Vancouver, BC V6E 2E9, Canada
- ◆ Dr. B.S. Bhatia
Director, DECU,
Space Application Centre
Indian Space Research Organisation
(ISRO),
Amrawadi Vistar P.O.,
Jodhpur, Tekra, Ahmedabad-380015

Delegates from India

- ◆ Dr. S. Chellappa
Principal Secretary to Government of
Andhra Pradesh
J Block, Andhra Pradesh Secretariat,
Hyderabad-500004
- ◆ Shri Parmesh Dutta, IAS
Commissioner & Secretary Education
(Elementary and Secondary)
Assam Secretariat,
Dispur, Guwahati, Assam-781006

- ◆ Dr. Dharmendra Singh Gangwar, IAS
Director, Primary Education,
New Secretariat, Patna
Bihar-800014
- ◆ Dr. M.C. Mathur
Additional Director of Education & Vice
Chairman, State Open School
Directorate of Education,
Government of Delhi,
Room No. 5, Old Secretariat,
Delhi- 110054
- ◆ Shri J.R. Katwal
Additional Secretary (Education)
Government of Himachal Pradesh,
Armsdale Building, HP Secretariat,
Shimla-171002
- ◆ Shri C.K. Mathew, IAS
Principal Secretary, Elementary,
Secondary Education,
Secretariat Building, Jaipur-302005,
- ◆ Dr. Babu Sebastian
Director, SIET & Kerala State Open
School,
State Co-ordinator
Kerala State Open School
Vidyabhavan, Poojapura
Trivandrum-12 Kerala
- ◆ Shri Keshav N. Desiraju
Joint Secretary, Ministry of HRD
314-C Shastri Bhawan
New Delhi- 110 001
- ◆ Mrs. Vijaysheela Sardesai
Divisional Chairperson, M.S. Board of
Secondary & Higher Secondary
Education,
Mumbai Divisional Board,
Vashi Navi Mumbai (Maharashtra)
- ◆ Shri Ashok Kumar Singh, IAS
Principal Secretary, Education,
Government of Jharkhand,
M.D.I. Building, Dhurwa,
Ranchi – 834002, Jharkhand
- ◆ Shri Pallav Kumar Goswami
Special Secretary to the Government
of West Bengal
School Education Department, Bikash
Bhawan, Salt Lake City,
Kolkata-700091 (West Bengal)
- ◆ Mr. R. Venkat Ratnam
Special Secretary, School Education,
Government of Punjab,
R.No.217, Mini Secretariat
Sector-9, Chandigarh

Special Invitees

- ◆ Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal
10 Institutional Area,
Lodhi Road, New Delhi – 110 031
- ◆ Prof. D.C. Pant
Former Pro-Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
A-45 Regency Park1
DLF Phase-IV, Gurgaon-122002
- ◆ Prof. H.P. Dixit
Vice-Chancellor,
Indira Gandhi National Open University,
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi – 110068
- ◆ Prof. R. H. Dave
C-9 Kailash Tower,
Navrang Pura,
Ahemdabad – 380009

- ◆ Dr. A.B.L. Srivastava
Chief Consultant
(Research & Evaluation)
EdCIL's Technical Support Group
for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan,
10 B, IP Estate, New Delhi – 110 002
- ◆ Prof. B. Khandelwal
Educationist
(Former Director, NIEPA, CM, CBSE)
4503, ATS Greens II, Sector-50,
NOIDA-201307
- ◆ Shri C.K. Misra
C.K. 33/7, Neelkantha
Varanasi – 221001
- ◆ Prof. S.Z. Haider
Joint Director
Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central
Institute of Vocational Education
(PSSCIVE), NCERT,
131, Narula Complex, MP Nagar,
Zone-II, M.P. Nagar, Bhopal-462016
- ◆ Prof. Madan Mohan Pant
Chairman
Planet Education
E-57, Green Woods City,
Sector-46, Gurgaon-122001
- ◆ Dr. C. Pushpa Ramakrishna
Professor of English & Controller of
Examinations,
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University,
Road No.46, Jubilee Hills,
Hyderabad-500033
- ◆ Dr. Amrapali M. Merchant
Vice Chancellor
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Open
University,
Government Bungalow No 9,
Dufnala, Shahibaugh,
Ahmedabad-380003
- ◆ Ms. Lilla Balint
The Learning Foundation India
C-775, Sushant Lok - I
Gurgaon - 122001, Haryana
- ◆ Ms. Lilla Nikolas
The Learning Foundation India
C-775, Sushant Lok - I
Gurgaon - 122001, Haryana

NIOS Participants

- ◆ Shri M.C. Pant
Chairman
- ◆ Shri V.J. Williams
Director (Evaluation)
- ◆ Dr. Sushmita Mitra
Director (Academic and Student
Support Services)
- ◆ Shri D.S. Bist, IPS
Secretary
- ◆ Shri Sunil Kaura
Joint Director (Admn)
- ◆ Shri S.K. Misra
Head Regional Centre, Zone – I,
Delhi and Joint Director (Vocational)
- ◆ Dr. Neelam Sinha
Joint Director & Head,
Regional Centre, Delhi Zone-II

- ◆ Sh. V D Sevekar
Joint Director & Head,
Regional Centre, Pune
- ◆ Shri S.K. Anand
Deputy Director (Accounts)
- ◆ Ms. Gopa Biswas
Deputy Director (Academic)
- ◆ Dr. J.D. Sharma
(Academic Department)
- ◆ Dr. A.P. Verma
(Vocational Education Department)
- ◆ Shri S.K. Prasad
SAP
- ◆ Ms. Anita Priyadarshini
Deputy Director, (Academic)
- ◆ Dr. O.P. Sharma
Assistant Director (Academic)
- ◆ Dr. Mamta Srivastava
Assistant Director(Vocational)

NIOS Supporting Staff

- ◆ Ms. Sandhya Kumar
Academic Officer(Home Science)
- ◆ Shri Vipin Kumar
Assistant
- ◆ Shri Praveen Saini
A & A
- ◆ Ms. Neelam Sachdeva
Office Assistant
- ◆ Shri Sunder Singh Rawat
Office Assistant
- ◆ Shri Duli Chand
Peon
- ◆ Shri D.N. Upreti
Section Officer
- ◆ Shri Pramod Tripathi
Sr. Executive Officer
- ◆ Shri K. Srinivas
Assistant
- ◆ Ms. Suman Nagpal
Office Assistant
- ◆ Ms. Girija Mattoo
Office Assistant

