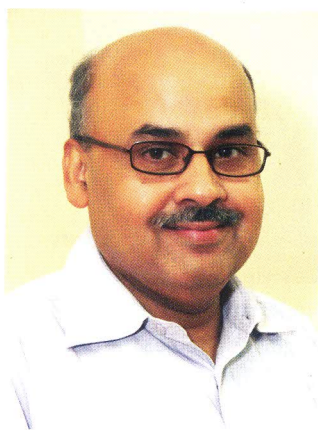




# NIOS: A class apart

NIOS strives towards promoting universal education resulting in an integrated development of people



**“NIOS is committed to serve the educationally deprived and excluded sections of the society for a sustainable, inclusive education.”**

*Dr S.S. Jena  
Chairman, NIOS*

## **National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS): The Largest Open Schooling System in the World**

**C**ome November 23, India’s largest open school--the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) celebrates its Foundation Day amidst great fanfare. And why not because this school works towards providing the basic education needs of every student. Headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, the NIOS operates through a network of 15 regional centres, two sub-regional centres and over 3,700 study centres across India, Nepal and the Middle East, and employs 251 full-time staff.

The significance of the institution lies in the fact that it serves the educational needs of school drop-outs and marginalised groups, including Scheduled Castes and Tribes (SCs and STs), rural youth, urban poor, girls, ex-servicemen and people with disabilities.

It must be noted that NIOS is the only national level Board under the Open Learning System and the secondary and senior secondary programmes offered here are equivalent to the grade 10 & 12 programmes of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and have the same status for admission to higher studies and employment. In

fact, many students go on to study at conventional schools and colleges including the prestigious Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). There is an instance of a student who after having passed out of NIOS completed a degree course in aeronautical engineering and is now pursuing higher studies in a prestigious university abroad.

### **OUTREACH PROGRAMMES**

While the NIOS offers secondary level courses in three mediums of English, Hindi and Urdu, these are also offered in five regional languages namely Marathi, Telugu, Gujarati, Malayalam and Oriya. Senior Secondary level programmes are offered in English, Hindi and Urdu medium.

Also, on offer are a number of vocational courses in different areas to meet the demands of the job market and the interest of the learners.

About 85 courses are on offer in the areas of Agriculture, Engineering and Technology, Health and Paramedical, Home Science and Hospitality Management, Computer and Information Technology, Business and Commerce and Teacher Training. The students taking the vocational programmes go on to provide the





Kapil Sibal, HRD Minister, Govt. of India, addresses the annual meeting of NCOS

skilled manpower, a critical element in driving India's economic growth. The NIOS also offers Elementary level courses through its Open Basic Education Programme (OBE), provides access to resource persons in voluntary agencies and district literacy committees and certification for school dropouts and neo-literates wishing to study at levels equivalent to standards three, five or eight in the conventional system. In 2010-2011, the NIOS had 4,70,834 enrolees and a cumulative student enrolment of 2.2 million in the 27 secondary subjects, 21 senior secondary subjects and over 80 certificate and diploma vocational programmes which implies an annual growth of about 14% to its total enrolment. Of the total learners enrolled, about 30% in the academic stream (Secondary & Sr. Secondary) and 55% in vocational education are girls, which is a substantial one. The majority of students are aged between 15-25 yrs.

### ODL THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

The NIOS reaches out to its learners through its study centres that provide administrative



International delegation at the inaugural meeting of COMOSA

and academic support. Those supporting the secondary and senior secondary students are called Accredited Institutions (AIs) and those supporting the vocational students are known as Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs). While the conventional schools in India use textbooks that are developed by the NCERT and are designed for teacher-based classrooms, NIOS develops its own course materials in forms appropriate to mainly self-study. Printed Self Instructional study materials are supported by Audio-Video programmes. A half-yearly magazine 'Open Learning' is also provided to the learners. Approximately 3.93 lakh copies of combined study materials were despatched to the learners during the year 2010-11. A Learner Support Centre (LSC) is functional in NIOS to address the problems of online learners that relate to admissions, courseware, examinations, results etc. Functioning on the pattern of a Call Centre, the Learner Support Executives respond to the queries of learners. The Adolescence Education Programme (AEP) of the NIOS in collaboration with MHRD and UNFPA has adopted a new approach with a focus on integrating subject knowledge with life skills. The NIOS is also in the process of developing a diploma course in Elementary Education for in-service training of elementary teachers.

### REGISTRATION AND LEARNER ASSESSMENT

The NIOS has taken a significant step of providing the facility of on-line registration for admissions and examinations under the NIOS



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1989-2011

### special features of NIOS

Imposes no maximum age limits, but expects learners to be 14 years and over.



Choice of subjects--A learner can combine academic and vocational subjects.



Every learner is given five years time and nine attempts to clear the examinations which helps in reducing the psychological pressure on the students.



Provision of On-Demand Examination System (ODES) at the Secondary and Senior Secondary levels, conducted throughout the year.



Facility of Transfer of Credits for CBSE and State Boards including State Open Schools.



Part-admission is also available wherein a student can take admission in one or more subjects and on passing, will be issued only the statement of marks.



Uses multi-media study materials, including audio and video to supplement the printed self-learning modules.



Provides continuous assessment through Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMAs).



Provides learner support through study centres and Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs).



Choice of subjects-A learner can combine academic and vocational subjects.



Provides 24X7 Call Centre support and motivational and adolescent programme support.

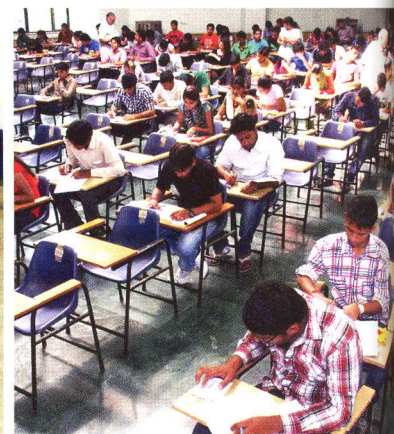


Online (Ni-On) Programme. There are four streams of On-line admission catering to learners with different needs. (See box) The NIOS conducts examinations twice a year in April-May and October-November for the benefit of the learners who can avail as many as nine chances to appear in the examinations. To introduce greater flexibility in the system, the NIOS has also introduced the On-Demand Examination System (ODES) at the Secondary and Senior Secondary levels. These exams are conducted at the NIOS headquarters in Noida as well as its regional centres. The results are made available within 45 days on the NIOS website: [www.nios.ac.in](http://www.nios.ac.in). NIOS has introduced the re-evaluation of answer scripts at the Senior Secondary level from April-May 2010 examination. This will be in addition to the already existing system of scrutiny/ re-totaling of marks for Secondary and Senior Secondary levels.

- Stream 1: is open to all learners as per the laid down eligibility criteria for Secondary and Senior Secondary level.
- Stream 2: is open to all learners who had appeared but could not clear the Public Examination of Secondary/ Senior Secondary levels from selected examination Boards.
- Stream 3: is open throughout the year for learners wanting to appear in On-Demand Examination System (ODES) of NIOS for Secondary Level.
- Stream 4: is open throughout the year for learners wanting to appear in On-Demand Examination System (ODES) of NIOS for Senior Secondary Level.



ONLINE LEARNING: A Learner Support Centre at Noida to address the problems of learners



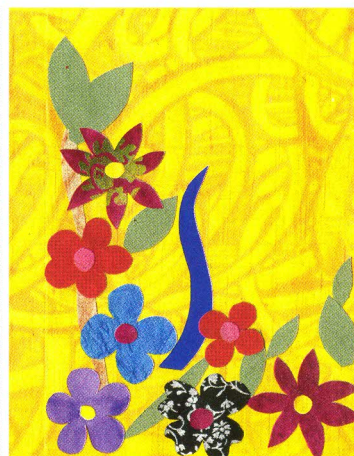
EXAM TIME: Students appearing for the on-Demand examinations (ODEs) at NIOS, Noida

### SPECIAL INITIATIVES

The NIOS also caters to the educational needs of differently-abled learners, both physical and mental, through its Special Accredited Institutes for Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIEDs). Apart from choosing subjects for study and learning at one's own pace, the learners are also given convenient locations for appearing in the exam. Overall, NIOS aims at promoting activity-based learning. The NIOS has been endeavouring to promote school education amongst minority communities by launching the HUNAR programme on skill training for girls, support through the SPEQM (Scheme for Providing Quality Education in *Madarasas*) programmes of Government of India, organising advocacy and mass sensitisation programmes in various states and developing its study material in Urdu. The NIOS has been entrusted with the task of providing academic support system for assessment of neo-literates and offering courses for basic education and skill training under *Saakshar Bharat* programme of the Govt. of India.

### COLLABORATIONS

The NIOS has a specific role to promote open schooling in the country under the banner of the National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS). It has facilitated the establishment of 16 State Open Schools (SOSs) in the country to reach out to deprived learners in the respective states in their own regional languages. Recognising the importance of NIOS in the context of achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the Commonwealth of Learning (COL), a premier Open and Distance Learning (ODL) international body formed by the Commonwealth Governments at Vancouver, Canada has facilitated in establishing the Commonwealth Open Schooling Association (COMOSA) with its founder Secretariat in NIOS, the largest open schooling system in the world. This model has been replicated in other parts of the world. NIOS has collaborated with ITDC to offer Certificate/Diploma courses in the area of Hospitality Management and SPSA (McGraw-Hill Education) to offer a Certificate Course in Retail Sales and Services. The average annual course completion rate in the Secondary and the Senior Secondary examinations is in the range of 35% to 40%. This is no mean achievement, considering NIOS serves a mix of dropouts, overworked adults, housewives and out-of-school children, many of whom start with more handicaps than do conventional students and are largely self-learners. NIOS is a school with a difference with an in-built mechanism of flexibility providing an answer to many of the woes that befall our education system.



Left: Learners of TAMANA (School of Hope), Study Centre of NIOS; Right: A greeting card made by a TAMANA learner

For Information and queries contact toll free: 1800 180 9393 or visit: [www.nios.ac.in](http://www.nios.ac.in)