A Study of the Development of the State Open Schools (SOSs) in India

Consultant’s Report
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Executive Summary

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

India with a burgeoning population of over 1.2 billion established the National Open School in November 1989 in Delhi. It soon became the largest open schooling system in the world with client groups like women, rural and urban poor, the unemployed and underemployed youth etc. The huge size of the country with many large States made it imperative to set up State Open Schools, mainly because of this reason: It is well nigh impossible to realise the laudable goal of EFA and universalisation of school education through the formal education system alone or through the National Open School in the Country’s capital Delhi. The needs of several regions must also be taken care of.

Open Schools in the 14 States which have set them up have evolved from specific needs of the States concerned. The models reflect a wide variety – the degree of openness covers a broad spectrum from low to medium to high. Not only that. The day-to-day functioning and mode of operation of these SOSs indicate large variations on account of the changing composition of the State Governments, many of whom are still to grasp the vital significance of the Open schooling concept.

Some of the State Open Schools were set up under the Societies Registration Act as registered Trusts. Some others have been tagged on to Departments of Non-Formal Education as adjuncts while yet a few are listed as autonomous entities. It is unfortunate that a good number of these SOSs do not get even limited appreciation for their roles. There is a lack of political will to consolidate and strengthen the open schooling system at the State level.

The target groups for SOSs include drop-outs from formal schools, marginalised sections of society like rural youth, rural and urban poor, girls, women, scheduled castes and tribes, backward classes, handicapped people, ex-servicemen and working population at the bottom level. Interestingly enough, some striking features deserve mention. The Madhya Pradesh SOS extends open schooling facilities to Class III and IV employees of the M.P. Corporation offices. The Rajasthan SOS offers cent percent fee exemption to the prisoners enrolled with it.

Some salient features in the functioning of the State Open Schools in India merit attention. For instance, almost in every SOS, data regarding the parental income, occupation, social strata from which students enter the school are not available. Again, there is undue reliance on print material (lessons) although broadcasting facilities, especially through radio, are in place all over the country. In Tamil Nadu, the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) in the State conducted the open school until the year 2002 and then it has been allowed to be in a limbo, if not wither away. In Delhi also (National Capital Territory or NCT), the Open School as such is virtually non-existent. In many open schools as in Kerala and Punjab, the examination schedule of the State Board is adhered to. The percentage of open school
participation in the entire secondary / senior or higher secondary scene varies from 15 as in Punjab to 25 as in Kerala. In Chhattisgarh, no mechanism has been developed to estimate this percentage.

To a question on whether the open school is getting adequate support from the political / administrative level, Kerala, Haryana and Rajasthan have replied in the affirmative while Assam has pointed out in an enigmatic fashion: there is no question of political / administrative support in running open schooling by the State Higher Secondary Education Council. The latter functions as per the provisions of the Act under which the Council was established by the Government.

Enrolment in the State Open Schools has been on the increase over the years – for instance, in Rajasthan it grew from about 23,400 to 27,670 during the years 2005-06 to 2009-10 for secondary stage, and from 4,640 to 9,120 during the same period for senior secondary stage. In Punjab, the student strength for Matric level was about 59,000 in 2008-09 and rose to 61,650 the next year. For Senior Secondary level, the figures are 21,050 and 21,570, revealing a modest increase. In many SOSs, the faculty strength is inadequate.

Taking an overall view, one cannot escape the conclusion that with very few exceptions, the State Open Schools resemble atrophied limbs of the State Education Department. They are like rudderless ships set adrift in a sea of low morale. This is a poignant situation when one considers the immense potential of SOSs to bring about a sea-change in the social set-up and improve the economic well being of the underprivileged people.

The historical perspective of open schooling in the country is provided in the full Report but it is worth noting that the National Open School set up in 1989 morphed into the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in 2002. NIOS soon became a remarkable example of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) at the school level benefiting generations of children by giving them self-esteem through the education path. Almost all the State Open Schools in India depend on NIOS for several inputs and therefore, the full Report dwells at length on many striking features of NIOS.

Report

Open Schooling is indeed a concept that has the potential of revolutionising society at large and bringing out the best in people. It is mainly because the development will motivate the learners who were hitherto beyond the reach of education - rural youth, disadvantaged sections of society, women, and child labourers for whom access to education was till now denied unfortunately owing to a multitude of reasons. The malady has been widespread very much in the developing world where the daunting task of coping with population explosion is still engaging the attention of the Governments. The Jomtien World Conference on ‘Education for All’ (EFA) in 1990 gave a clarion call to countries to develop strategies for enabling access to basic education. Ten years later, leaders all over the world reiterated the need for this in the form of the United Nation’s Millennium Development Goals in 2000.

India with a burgeoning population of over 1.2 billion established the National Open School in November, 1989 in Delhi. Its mission was to provide education for all besides striving for greater equity and justice in society. It soon became the largest open schooling system in the world with client groups like women, rural and urban poor, the unemployed, underemployed youth etc. Be that as it may, the huge
size of the country with many large states made it imperative for the setting up of state open schools. India is a country with 28 States, NCT of Delhi and six UTs with different languages and dialects, social customs and traditions. It is well nigh impossible to realise the laudable goal of EFA and universalisation of school education through the formal education system alone or through the National Open School only functioning from the capital Delhi since the regional needs must also be taken care of.

Open schools have been set up in 14 States but one can detect variation in the models adopted by them. One would presume that these have evolved from specific requirements of the states concerned. It is inevitable that the degree of openness of these SOSs will also cover a broad spectrum from low to medium to high depending on the adopted models. Not only that. The day-to-day functioning and mode of operation of the SOSs indicate large variations on account of the changing composition of the State Governments, many of whom are yet to grasp the vital significance of the open schooling concept.

The State Open Schools in India are not some sort of monolithic entities and they are organised in various modes. Even the establishment of these SOSs reveals several differences. Some have been set up under the Registration of Societies Act as registered Trusts. Some others have been tagged on to the Department of Non-formal Education as adjuncts while yet a few are listed as autonomous entities. It is unfortunate that a good number of these SOSs do not get even limited appreciation for their roles, mainly because of the apathy among top level bureaucrats who are subject to transfers quite frequently. Again, the political leaders from whom Ministers of Education are appointed seem to have scant respect for even the concept of open schooling. Hence, it is easy to conclude that there is a lack of political will to consolidate and strengthen the open schooling system at the state level. This is in stark contrast to the lip service paid by politicians to the cause of expanding educational opportunities. If, in spite of such an attitude, some progress has been made towards universalisation of primary education, it must be attributed to the march of inexorable events in the last two decades.

Against such a background, it is worthwhile to examine the functions of the SOSs. These can be broadly grouped under three heads: (a) admission of students at the school level in different stages like the 5th, 8th, 10th standards and delivering lessons through the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode; (b) development of curriculum framework for open schooling at the state level. This involves the creation of self-learning materials with inputs from information and communication technology, and the setting up of study centres which will look after programme delivery through ODL mode; and (c) evaluation of the learners and certification.

In the formal schooling system that has been in position for several decades, all the functions under the three heads are in fact performed by different departments of the State Governments. For example the Directorate of School Education looks after the first. State of Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) looks after the second. The State Board of Education looks after the third function through the Directorate of Government Examinations. Thus, all three functions being entrusted to the State Open Schools makes SOSs unique and one well imagine the nature of the challenging task.

What are the avowed objectives of State Open Schools? Essentially, the SOSs aim at providing relevant, life related and employment oriented courses at different stages of school education through open and distance learning path. To be more specific, the following components come under the term objectives:
1) To identify the educational needs of the youth in the state who are outside the formal stream of school education.
2) To make opportunities available to this segment for study through ODL mode.
3) To design and develop courses, self-learning materials and create enough learning support for courses identified at different time periods.
4) To organise orientation and training programmes for the functionaries working under the open schooling system.
5) To promote learning standards in the ODL mode.

In addition to the above, the following aspects are also to be given importance:

1) Collaboration with other agencies in the state and outside for developing content for skill-oriented vocational education courses and arranging for delivery of these.
2) Promotion of open schooling programmes and activities in the state.
3) Taking care of maintenance of standards and equivalence with formal education system without sacrificing the flexible nature of the open learning process.
4) Coordination with national and international agencies involved with the ODL system.

This agenda looks formidable, but thanks to the resilience of human ingenuity, some progress has been in evidence.

Target Groups and Clientele

Now, it is somewhat easy to identify the target groups. In general, any child or person who likes to pursue studies through the ODL mode at school education level becomes a target. Also, the child or youth who does not have opportunities for the formal system of school education and whose educational needs are left uncared for must be given attention by the State Open School.

These target groups include: drop-outs from formal schools, marginalised sections of society like rural youth, rural and urban poor, girls, women, scheduled castes / tribes, backward classes, handicapped people, ex-servicemen and the working population at bottom level. Interestingly enough, some striking features (or may be innovations) deserve mention. The Madhya Pradesh SOS extends open schooling facilities to class III and IV employees of M.P. Corporation Offices. The Rajasthan SOS offers cent percent fee exemption to prisoners who are enrolled with the open school.

Open Schooling and the Mammoth Task Ahead

India has witnessed a phenomenal expansion in the educational system but even now, about 70 million children in the age group 6 to 18 remain outside the schools. It is well nigh impossible for both the Central and State Governments to provide facilities in the formal, conventional system to those who had missed opportunities to complete schooling. A very large number of out-of-school children are simply unable to enter formal schools owing to several socio-economic reasons like going to the aid of parents for augmenting the family income. This takes different forms: working in mechanics sheds and girls engaged as domestic servants or looking after siblings when mothers go to work. Hence there is an imperative need to provide alternative schooling facilities for these children. There are of course, several NonGovernmental Organisations (NGOs) engaged in imparting a modicum of education in the beginning stages but they are few and far between. Herein lays the vital importance of the state open schools since
these are organised according to some pattern with the implicit sanction / consent of the state education departments. A few state level organizations offering correspondence courses do not in anyway alter the picture. This applies also to some Non Government Organisations (NGOs) found here and there trying to help these out-of-school children.

**Historical Perspective**

Even as early as 1965, the Board of Secondary Education in Madhya Pradesh started introducing correspondence courses at the level of ten years school completion. Other State Boards such as Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh followed this example. But in all these cases, the curricula and the examinations for correspondence courses were the same as in the formal schools. The advantage was that students could study at their own pace, time and place. This is the genesis of the open school concept in India.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in Delhi set up an open school as a project in 1979. This project can be considered as a landmark because in a literal sense open entry, open choice, open time and place were its built-in features. This project blossomed into the National Open School (NOS) in 1989. In course of time, this morphed into the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). Over a period of time successive heads of NIOS have been able to make the NIOS a remarkable example of open and distance learning (ODL) at the school level. It redounds to the credit of NIOS that its functioning at the National level has benefited generations of children by giving them a lot of self-esteem through the educational path.

In this context, it is appropriate to recall a full page advertisement that appeared in **THE HINDU** dated September 5, 2001. This day is observed as the Teacher’s Day in India and the then Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Professor Murli Manohar Joshi wrote in a message: “National Open School has been doing the laudable job of reaching education to the unreached children promoting the cause of Education for All. Open learning is different from correspondence courses as the former takes the help and assistance of the teachers in their Personal Contact Programmes (PCP)”.

"Teachers as we all know, are the pivot of any civilised society as they shape the future citizens. In 'Open schooling' they are playing significant role more as service to society with a sincere and missionary spirit”.

How does NOS contribute to Education for All? The advertisement spells it out like this: "Open Basic Elementary Education (OBEE): Partnering with NGOs in reaching the unreached out-of-school children, setting standards providing support for development of local specific materials and exemplar material for evaluation / testing, Innovative Certification System reflecting talents and also personality aspects, values etc.”

"Open Basic Education for Adults (OBEA): Partnering with NGOs in setting evaluation standards for equivalency; development of exemplar materials with ‘Good Parenting’ as central theme, recognising parents as the most potent source influencing child's personality and its values".

Even at that time, special accredited institutions for education of the disadvantaged were in place. This aspect deserves commendation since catering to the needs of people with physical and mental disabilities,
the socially and geographically isolated, street children, working children, rural women, SC/ST has been fully included in its ambit. Similarly, vocational programmes in the broad areas of agriculture, engineering and technology, health and paramedical science have also been placed in the right perspective.

While this is the position at the national stage, the State Open Schools (SOS) in India that were set up in response to compulsions of circumstances seem to have been limping along. With the exception of a very few SOSs (Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab), these organisations resemble atrophied limbs of the state education departments whose officials look askance at their own units. It is mainly because of two reasons: the threat of frequent transfers from one unit to another and the posting of uninterested, uncommitted officers to the SOSs as heads. At the moment, this problem requires urgent attention and its redressal calls for quick action. Only then, the SOSs will gain credibility and help in the process of universalisation of elementary education; otherwise Education for All (EFA) will remain a mirage.

The Indian Scenario

India has witnessed a massive growth in the number of private, aided schools in the years since independence. This is in addition to the primary and secondary schools coming directly under the government system. The aided schools in many states received grants from the government for recurring expenditure etc. This sort of private provision for conventional secondary education in classrooms served a useful purpose for many years but could not help the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of society since its reach was limited. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) seems to feel that private agencies could take an active interest in providing open schools at scale.

The COL has stated a dialogue on this issue with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) which is the World Bank's unit for encouraging private sector investment in public goods.

Be that as it may, the ever growing numbers of children in the developing countries can not wait for more and more schools to be constructed in order to get on with their education in the formal system. Even now, the drop-out rates for the learners in schools after the primary and secondary stages are quite alarming. If the state governments in India mean business, they must mobilise all resources, especially from the private sector, to make open schooling attractive.

Open Schooling in a Nutshell

Several characteristics mark the idea of open schooling as unique and innovative, for instance, the physical separation of the learner from the teacher for the majority of the time. Again, the utilisation of unconventional teaching methodologies coupled with Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). The flexible approach is another. Openness and flexibility are more significant features compared to physical separation.

What is significant in this context is the rapidly increasing demand for secondary education from the growing population of young people. Open schooling in the true sense of the term is a response to this demand. This is not an end in itself because the next step is towards higher education (the tertiary level). The most attractive aspect of open schooling is its cost-effectiveness when conducted at scale. For the young adults who need further schooling but who either cannot or do not wish to go back to the conventional classroom in formal schools, open schooling is a boon.
States Where Open Schools Have Been Established

In such a vast country as India with a diversity of languages, races, cultures spread over different geographical regions, it is surprising to note that only 14 state governments (out of 28 states) have so far set up open schools. The following is the list: Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chattisgarh, Haryana, Jammu and Kashmir (J & K), Karnatak, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh (M.P.), Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh (U.P.), West Bengal. The National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi seems to have virtually wound it up.

A questionnaire sent by this Consultant in September 2010 received a lukewarm response after repeated reminders and that too, only six out of the 14 sent the feedback even around January 2011. This speaks poorly of the commitment of those in charge of the open schools in India.

The backbone of the open schooling system in India is the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), the apex body functioning from the capital Delhi. This was "vested with the authority to register, examine and certify students registered with it up to pre-degree level courses". Its objective is "to provide relevant continuing education at school stage, up to pre-degree level through Open Learning system to prioritised client groups as an alternative to formal system, in pursuance of the normative national policy documents and in response to the need assessments of the people, and through it to make its share of contribution to universalisation of education, to greater equity and justice in society, and to the evolution of a learning society".

NIOS - VISION

With international recognition and presence, NIOS provides "access to sustainable and learner-centred quality school education, skill upgradation and training through open and distance learning organisations, resulting in an inclusive learning society, human resource development, national integration and global understanding".

NIOS - MISSION

Included in the mission objectives finds features that are fairly comprehensive and ambitious. For example, NIOS provides a dynamic flexible system of open schooling for developing a knowledge society, acts as a national resource centre, develops professional support network using current technologies, imparts need based vocational education for making the students entrepreneurs and not simply job seekers. In addition, NIOS strives for promotion of open schooling at national and global level through advocacy and consultancy programmes. Capacity building of 12 open schooling functionaries by way of training and attachment programmes is also envisaged.

NIOS has adopted the spirit of open and distance learning and its new paradigm, namely from teacher centred to learner centred, from teacher as instructor to teacher as facilitator, from oral instruction to technology aided instruction, from fixed time to any time learning, from education as one time activity to education as life long activity. NIOS offers the following courses:

1) Open Basic Education (OBE) for children up to 14 years of age, adolescents and adults at A, B and C levels that are equivalent to Class III, V and VII of the formal school system.
2) Secondary Education Course, Class X.
3) Senior Secondary Education Course, class XII.
4) Vocational Education Programmes.
5) Life Enrichment Programmes.

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in Delhi has been vested with the authority to examine and certify learners registered with it up to the pre-degree level courses. It has Regional Centres in Hyderabad, Pune, Kolkata (Bhubaneswar as sub-centre), Guwahati, Chandigarh, Delhi, Allahabad (Dehradun as sub-centre), Patna (Darbhanga as sub-centre), Jaipur, Kochi and Bhopal. The number of study centres are as follows:

Accredited Institutions (AIs) for Academic courses (2,220), Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs) for Vocational Educational Courses (1,129) and Accredited Agencies (AAs) for Open Basic Education (OBE) courses (367). In addition, united Arab Emirates (UAE) and Nepal have together 18 AIs and AVIs indicating the reach of NIOS to foreign lands.

The enrolment in NIOS has been steadily growing over the years and in 2008-09 reached the figure of 3,71,625 for Academic and 22,343 for vocational streams. The 13 cumulative enrolment of over 1.6 million is very striking. These impressive figures no doubt place the NIOS as the largest open schooling system in the world. The admission is done once a year during July-August through online and AIs for Academic Courses and throughout the year for Vocational Courses.

The Flexibility Factor in NIOS
The freedom to choose subjects and continuous assessment through Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA) make flexibility a marked feature of NIOS. Also, the facility of Online Registration for Admission and Examination, Credit accumulation, nine chances in five years to complete a course and provision for re-admission after five years are all there. Further, learning support through Personal Contact Programme (PCP), and Transfer of Credits (up to two subjects) from some other Boards are notable features. Telecasting and Broadcasting of programmes are also there.

True to its mission, NIOS has been organising the training of Open Schooling functionaries. It has also setup an International Centre for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS) in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO. NIOS also houses the Secretariat of the Open Schooling Association of the Commonwealth (OSAC). The latter functions as a liaisoning agency for information dissemination, coordination, and mutual consultation among the member countries. The mandate for OSAC includes the organisation of human resource development programmes for the functionaries of open schools.

National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS)
This has been established with NIOS as its Secretariat with the objective of facilitating cooperation and interaction among the State Open Schools and NIOS. Although only 14 states have up to now set up open schools, some additional states, namely Orissa, Jharkhand, Goa, Bihar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand are in the process of doing so. Strangely enough, not much progress is seen in the matter of establishment of State Open Schools (SOSs) in India. Even the SOSs that have been set up depend heavily on NIOS for several inputs. Although this may make for uniformity in certain subject areas, local needs are getting neglected in the process. With the poor commitment of the State Governments to the concept of Open Schools, not much attention is focussed on this lacuna. There is a
need for public awareness of the situation, and only then the political leaders will lend their support to the
SOSs.

**NIOS - Adolescence Education Programme (AEP)**

It is noteworthy that a programme for empowerment of adolescents through education and life skills
development has been launched by NIOS. This enables adolescents to "make informed choices, keep off
infections like HIV/AIDS, and adopt a responsible behaviour leading to a healthy learning society". The
project is supported by UNFPA. NIOS has taken steps to integrate adolescence issues and concerns in the
printed self-learning materials and support material like audio and video programmes. The website of
NIOS and interactive Voice Response system (IVRS) give information on life skills development among
learners pursuing secondary, Higher Secondary and Open Basic Education Courses. The Commonwealth
of Learning (COL) has helped in the preparation of a Tutor's Training Manual on AEP.

**What makes NIOS so special?**

Open learning must in no way be considered inferior to the formal system if it is to emerge as a credible
alternative. "Quality assurance in the ODLS is not negotiable". Learning is essentially a progress and
hence open learning is learner-centred. NIOS has done remarkably well in using Information and
Communication Technology (ICT). Its on-line registration for Admission and Examinations under NIOS
online Ni On Project bears testimony to this. This is a truly interactive process enabling students to fill up
forms on line. Similarly, the Online Payment Gateway introduced by NIOS during 2007-08 is a welcome
step. The computer unit of NIOS takes care of students’ data through Relational Database Management
System (RDBMS).

Other features which merit attention in this context are:

1) On-Demand Examination system started at Senior Secondary level in 2007 and extended now to
secondary level.
2) Connectivity (NIOS: The way forward), Nov. 2009 with Regional Centres under Wide Area
Network.
3) eLearning through Virtual Classroom.
4) On-line applications for Accreditation of institutions as study centres of NIOS. This last aspect
enables transparency because online application for accreditation will help learners / schools /
institutions in knowing their status online.

Not only the On-Demand Examination System (ODES) is “independent of time but it also allows the
learners to improve their performance till they are satisfied with the mastery level set by them
individually. Thus ODES has added the dimension of openness in the Open Schooling System where
examination is self paced and degree of performance is learner controlled”.

In addition to all this, the Mind Map or Concept Map developed by NIOS enables students to understand
the topic of an entire chapter more clearly. “Like a spider's web, the Mind Map has major anchor lines
and sub-lines attached to these; MM demonstrates a pathway to better learning”.

The education of special disadvantaged groups has received much attention from NIOS. The minorities
get help and the Project ‘Hunar’ aims at giving skill training / upgradation to Muslim Girls all over the
Bihar State. In the same category is the scheme for providing quality education in madrasas, especially at the secondary and Senior Secondary Levels.

Other Salient Features of NIOS
The NIOS "strives to select best brains. Criteria and Tools for preparation and evaluation of SIM are made available to the authors and evaluators of SIM. One faculty member in each subject coordinates the entire programme of preparation and evaluation of SIM". Here, SIM denotes Self Instructional Materials. Now, steps have been taken to make geographic spread of study centres more rational. This follows a school mapping exercise undertaken by NIOS. The study centres are "meticulously selected" after screening the applications received for accreditation.

Feedback from Students
This is enabled through Personal Contact Programmes (PCP) and Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA). The media programmes also help in this task. In fact, the Academic Facilitators submit feedback reports in respect of PCP and TMA. The efficacy of delivery mechanism is judged through a process of analysis and synthesis of feedback reports.

Resource Support to State Open Schools
Since NIOS is the apex open school in the country, it is also a resource organisation. Its activities in this area include: (a) advocacy and consultancy programmes for setting up Open Schools in the states, (b) sharing of course material, audio / video tapes and capacity building of SOS functionaries, and (c) providing a forum for Open Schools in the country to deliberate on matters of common interest, the ultimate aim being quality improvement.

Open Education Resources (OER), the digitised versions of learning materials has now become a worldwide movement for acquisition of knowledge. It is significant that NIOS is working out strategies to promote OER whose major plus point is that its resources are available free of cost.

The National Consortium of Open Schools (NCOS) launched in 1997 with its secretariat in NIOS campus is striving to promote establishment of Open Schools in different states (nearly half the number of states in India have not so far set up open schools). NCOS facilities capacity building of functionaries engaged in open schooling and creating data bases for SOSs. Up-scaling of Open Schooling programmes, ensuring quality and evolving strategies for resource sharing and networking are also in the agenda.

While all this sounds impressive, it is unfortunate that no data regarding the number of students who had enrolled for degree courses after completing the senior / higher secondary / class XII course in NIOS and SOSs are available. In fact, some mechanism to find out how many students go further on the learning curve must be devised since, in a way, this is a measure of the success of open schooling.

Taking the country as a whole, out of a total of 80 million students in the secondary and senior secondary stages, the total enrolment in open schools comes to about 3.5 million only, not even five percent. The Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) of the Union Government envisions raising this percentage to 15 by fully developing the Open School system. In other words, the total enrolment in NIOS and SOSs must become 12 million by 2016-17. This seems to be a herculean task at present in the context of the apathy of state governments.
Regional / Geographical Spread of NIOS

The NIOS has commendably reached out to all the geographic regions of this vast country with its Regional Centres. The Region-wise academic admission (2008-09) reveals interesting figures: Delhi (99,880), Chandigarh (62,914) and Kolkata (33,289) for instance, are the three regions accounting for high figures. In all the 13 Regions mark a total of 3,71,625 students (for Secondary and Senior Secondary Stages).

Medium-wise also, Hindi, English, Marathi, Telugu, Urdu, Gujarati and Malayalam seem to enjoy popularity. Compared to the academic stream, vocational courses do not have many takers (during 2008-09, only 22,343 students were enrolled). Available data indicate a diverse student profile with young and old learners ranging from 14 years to 50+ years of age enrolling in NIOS. But expectedly enough, the age range of 14 to 20 has registered the maximum number (2,83,004) with age range 21 to 25 coming next (55,178). Even in the 50+ age group there are 390 students.

Cost Effectiveness of NIOS

According to some estimates, unit costs of programmes in NIOS are less than ten percent of those in the conventional central schools. One reason for this may be the large numbers of students who are enrolled validating the formula: volume brings down costs. Open schooling has the merit of addressing the challenges of increased demand and reaching out to diverse target groups, from older secondary school-age children to young adults. It is significantly more cost-efficient than formal education and can have "high retention rates approaching 90 percent". In addition, the production of video learning materials in print, audio / video, CD ROMs "creates an asset for the whole school system not just the open school". This aspect is crucial in countries (with HIV/AIDS pandemic) which cannot afford substitute teachers. The learning process is thus not disrupted.

A close look at the scene reveals the fact that the focus of NIOS and SOSs is mainly on academic programmes. However, NIOS has taken up the challenge and offers several vocational courses in which include: welding technology, mushroom production, bee keeping, goat rearing, Indian embroidery, soil and fertiliser management, poultry farming, computer hardware assembly and maintenance, etc.

Over the course of time, these vocational courses are bound to become more popular. Whether academic or vocational, there is a paramount need for the open schooling system to train their staff to operate a different pedagogy. This, in effect, means that the staff from the conventional schools must be trained in the special and unique requirements of open schooling. "Investment in learner support should be approached from the angle of staff development". Again, the opportunity for partnerships with several government bodies and NGOs must be deemed valuable when an open school is created. This factor will no doubt be a truly win-win situation for all the segments of society.

One should admit that “crisis generates creativity”. The pace of change taking place now leaves us in a constant state of crisis. So the SOSs must look for innovative solutions and new strategies to face the future which “lies in partnerships, collaborations and networking”.

Significant Landmarks in some State Open Schools

In Andhra Pradesh, SOS was set up in February 1991 with “an objective to provide a highly flexible non-formal type of education at Upper Primary Level to the drop-outs, especially girl children, who are 12
years and above”. The Chief Minister was named the Chief Patron and the Education Minister as Patron of A.P. Open School Society (APOSS). During 2008-09, the A.P. Government restructured the APOSS at various levels. SSC (APOSS) pass certificates issued by APOSS were made equivalent to corresponding pass certificates issued by regular Board of Secondary Education, and Intermediate (APOSS) Pass certificates issued by APOSS were made equivalent to corresponding pass certificates issued by the Board of Intermediate Education, according to a Government Order.

“APROSS could not provide either X class or vocational courses through Open Learning scheme even after 17 years of its existence and as a result it could not become popular as was envisaged”. The open learning system in the state was “revamped on the recommendations of NIOS, duly incorporating the missing links, to make it more flexible, foolproof, vibrant and learner friendly”. This led to the introduction of SSC (APOSS) course in 2008-09 and Intermediate (APOSS) course in 2010-11. Over the years from 1992-93 to 2006-07, the pass percentage came to an average of 66.

In Karnataka, three stages of development could be discerned starting from Karnataka Government permitting JSS Mahavidyapeetha to take over the SOS:

1) The Mahashikshana Trust presented students to KOS exam from 1997 to November 1999. The first five exams were conducted by NOS (now NIOS) and in five subjects.
2) JSSKOS presented students to KOS exam (Secondary course) through K.S.E.E. Board and in five subjects till May 2006.
3) The Government recognised this exam as equivalent to regular SSLC conducted by KSEE Board in six subjects with some conditions.

The Jammu & Kashmir Open School had also passed through difficult times, as may be inferred from the feedback to the questionnaire (received by the consultant only in February 2011). “Given some initial start in around 2006, the further headway could not be made for unknown reasons as a consequence now in 2010 the present administration of the Board of School Education took some initiative and necessary pre-project exercise took place by virtue of which:

1) The Executive Body for J&K SOS was constituted and persons nominated.
2) Accredited institutions both in Private / Public Sector identified.
3) MOU with NIOS for procuring their SLM for class 10th was signed and SLM for class 10th procured by investing Rs. one crore for 20,000 sets of SLM.
4) Prospectus, Admission Forms and manual for study centres framed and printed.
5) Two coordinators identified for Jammu Division and Kashmir Division out of the existing staff of the Board with additional duties.
6) Everything is now ready but for the nod from the Government to go ahead”.

Tamil Nadu SOS presents a strange picture. The constitution of the Board of Open School Education through a Government order dated 16 August 1993 was encouraging but only the facilities of the District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET) were used. To a question, how is the faculty selected for preparing lessons in print and also for broadcast? the reply from the Directorate of Teacher Education, Research and Training (which is now in charge of the defunct SOS) is: “Resourceful faculty members of DIET were roped in for the preparation of materials”. In fact, the DIET in 29 districts conducted the Open
School up to 2002. To the question on infrastructure the reply is “Open school is not functional now”. Since the Directorate of Government Examinations conduct X standard examination for private candidates, “Open school system will become another parallel system offering class X. Hence State Open School System is not yet revived in Tamil Nadu”. One could only hope that the State Government will not delay further this revival.

The Punjab SOS has been conducting personal contact programmes successfully. Job-oriented vocational courses are not offered. The State Government is not offering any subsidy and the SOS is working as one of the wings of Punjab School Education Board following the same schedule. “More of political / administrative support is required to strengthen the Punjab Open School Education” according to the feedback. In Kerala, self-learning materials are prepared by organizing workshops with the help of “eminent practicing Senior Secondary teachers”. The Kerala SOS is planning to translate the SLMs to the regional language Malayalam in order to help those who prefer this. The possibility of converting Kerala SOS into an independent autonomous institution is being explored.

The Rajasthan SOS (established in 2005) was registered under the Rajasthan Society Registration Act 1958 and RSOS is governed by the State Government regulation. Chhattisgarh State Open School (established in 2008) was also set up under Society Act 1973. In West Bengal, the Open School was established in 1997 as a registered society. However, by an Act of the West Bengal State Legislature (The Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya Act, 2001) this became Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya by March 2001. By an amendment of the Act in 2006, the name was changed to the West Bengal Council of Rabindra Open Schooling.

In Delhi, the Open School is virtually a correspondence course entity since Patrachar Vidyalaya of the Delhi administration is now in charge. The U.P. Open School is virtually non-existent as can be inferred from the fact that no feedback to COL questionnaire is forthcoming even after repeated reminders. This is indeed a sad reflection on the state of affairs. The student’s profile in the State Open Schools reflects more or less the large diversity of regions, cultures, and languages in India. Also, one can detect in the demographic scene the attention being given to the segments like rural poor, women and backward classes in society. This is as it should be although one would wish that more strenuous and sustained efforts are made by the SOSs to get more such people into the fold.

Technology has become the anchor on which education must depend for further progress. How is Information and Communication Technology (ICT) pressed into service in the State Open Schools? The answer is: In varying degrees depending on the vision of the administrators at the helm. Unfortunately, many SOSs are low down in this aspect and where some bright patch is gleaned, there is no evidence of sustained action. Again, the quality of the transaction of the curriculum leaves much to be desired. Student support systems are not as good as one would expect. In fact, all the State Open Schools which depend on the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) for support can well emulate the NIOS in many functional areas including developing their own self-learning materials or SLMs. The crucial factor here is the one concerning quality which needs to be continuously monitored (this aspect is adored in the abstract but ignored in the specific). Here also, NIOS has set a good example but it is for the SOSs to take a leaf out of NIOS functioning.
The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has come to symbolise all that is good in Open and Distance Learning (ODL). COL has been engaged in the task of reaching the unreached for many years now, extending its operations to all commonwealth countries. It can catalyse the SOS system in India by suggesting to the Indian Government the formation of an active wing in the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) exclusively for Open Schooling.

Conclusion

Open schooling stands to gain in a country like India where access to electronic communication technologies is growing at a fast pace. However, many educational administrators and teachers in the conventional stream do have some instinctive resistance to the concept. This aspect also needs attention since only from the pool of teachers in the formal system, SOSs can draw the people to prepare self-learning materials and broadcast lessons. A sort of bench-marking, of course, becomes essential for purposes of comparison with the conventional / formal system.

In short, the full picture of SOSs in India does not look encouraging. Like the curate’s egg, it is good in parts. One can, with difficulty, spot a range of discernible peaks beyond all those egalitarian flatlands. With many controversial educational issues engaging the attention of Union and State Governments, open schooling may not get a high priority unless the agenda for EFA is taken seriously without remaining a sort of promotional rhetoric. The future of SOSs in India hangs on how successful the concept of open schooling is able to capture the imagination of political leaders, parliamentarians, legislators and bureaucrats apart from the public at large. What is required is a change in the mindset of all these groups. This only will make them realise the immense benefits to society that will flow from a flourishing open school system.
References

1. NIOS at a Glance – 2009

2. Prospectus 2010-11 – NIOS

3. NIOS: The Way Forward


6. Open Schooling: Communicating the Basics – Opening Remarks by Sir John Daniel at the workshop to Develop and Open schooling Handbook held in COL, Vancouver, February 2008

7. Signs of the Times: Change or be changed? Address by Professor Asha Kanwar, COL, at the Third Convocation of the Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai; January 2008
Annexure - 1

Table – 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of SOS</th>
<th>Qn.1 Year of Exit</th>
<th>Qn.2 Year of Establishment</th>
<th>Qn.3 Faculty Strength</th>
<th>Qn.4 Academic Programme(s)</th>
<th>Qn.6 Innovations to make learning effective</th>
<th>Qn.7 Govt. subsidy for innovations</th>
<th>Qn.8 data regarding parental income etc.</th>
<th>Qn.9 Nature of interaction between SOS and students</th>
<th>Qn.10 Evaluation process</th>
<th>Qn.11 &amp; 12 Reliance on printed material and aids from media?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>2008 - 09</td>
<td>3 levels of open basic education SSS (6th, 8th, 10th)</td>
<td>Vocational subjects integrated with academic subjects</td>
<td>Developed SMSs for open classes, adopted NIOS syllabuses and study material telecasting lessons on MANA TV</td>
<td>APISOS is functioning with 100% grant by State Govt.</td>
<td>Learner data including parental income etc. collected at time of admission</td>
<td>main through tutorial support and Personal Contact Programme (PCP)</td>
<td>Overall evaluation heavily dependent on end of year exams.</td>
<td>Printed lessons are the main source. Live telecast of lessons designed by APISOS is also done. There is synergy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assam State Open School</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Only word Processing</td>
<td>Choice of subjects irrespective of stream No upper age limit facility of transfer of credit upto two subjects</td>
<td>Rs. 5 lakh as seed money from NIOS for infrastructure development</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Personal contact programmes / Tutor marked assignments</td>
<td>Public Examination after every six months</td>
<td>SOS relies mainly on printed lessons; Not yet done.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh State Open School</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>61,591</td>
<td>not indicated by SOS</td>
<td>not indicated by SOS</td>
<td>Training given to subject teachers</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Reliance on print material only. No media aid available</td>
</tr>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Delhi State Open School</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>40,000</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Haryana State Open School</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
<td>not applicable</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Jammu &amp; Kashmir State Open School</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Karnataka State Open School</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Kerala State Open School</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>67,160</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Madhya Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>14,973</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Punjab State Open School</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Rajasthan State Open School</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>15,289</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>nil</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Not applicable</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Table – 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name of State Open School</th>
<th>No. of study centres</th>
<th>No. of students</th>
<th>Feedback from students</th>
<th>Network for counseling</th>
<th>Mechanism for counselling</th>
<th>Examination schedule</th>
<th>Bonds with community</th>
<th>Self learning materials of SOS</th>
<th>Assignment schemes</th>
<th>Learning outcomes; better quality alternative?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Assam State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Chattisgarh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Delhi State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh State Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Teachers of each subject and the heads of the Open School</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Subject-wise S.M. developed by local experts</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### A Study of the Development of the State Open Schools (SOSs) in India

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| Sl. No. | Name of State Open School | Qn.28 Nature of challenge from NIOS | Qn.29 How many students went on from secondary to Sr-secondary | Qn.30 Data reg. students from open school who enrolled for degree courses | Qn.31 Percentage of open school students sec/ Sr sec | Qn.32 Special awards for contributio to education | Qn.33 Region or culture specific problems related to your SOS | Qn.34 Any long term plan for extending reach of SOS | Qn.35 Mechanism for quality maintenance | Qn.36 Technology inputs in day-to-day operation of SOS | Qn.37 Support from political/Administrative level |
|--------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1.     | Andhra Pradesh State Open School | NIOS is a guiding force with logistical support in many areas | 70 percent | The question does not arise now since intermediate course started only in 2010-11. | About 9% at SSC level and 19% in intermediate. | No | No | Planning to raise enrolment to 35 percent of overall Sr sec level from 2011 onwards. | No | No | No | A.P. Govt. is providing full support. |
| 2.     | Assam State Open School | SOS established under guidance of NIOS, Financial and academic support given by NIOS. | Only Senior Secondary Course is offered by Assam SOS. Learners mostly drop-outs at H.S. level, working adults, housewives etc. | It is a new course. This can be accelerated after declaration of results of its first examination. | Freedom, flexibility are there to estimate learners participation. | Not Yet | Not Yet | Yes. There is a plan to give it independence in near future to live with NIOS. | Yes | Yes | Yes | A.P. Govt. is sending officials to academic and administrative components. |
| 3.     | Chandigarh State Open School | Yes | No actual data available | No actual data available | mechanism not developed | NO | NO | increase in number of study centres is proposed | State Level and district officials monitor the academic and administrative components. | Information Technology helps in day-to-day operation of SOS. | Yes |
| 4.     | Delhi State Open School | Not applicable | - | No | - | Nil | Nil | Yes | Efforts are taken through Study Centres | Nil | Yes. |
| 5.     | Haryana State Open School | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6.     | Jammu & Kashmir State Open School | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 7.     | Karnataka State Open School | NIOS guidance | 20 to 25 percent | Over 300 students | - | Nil | No | Problem | Hyderabad most backward | By proper monitoring | Experts help taken | Effects are made to get support. |
| 8.     | Kerala State Open School | Guidance of NIOS | data not available | No | 20 to 25 percent of the total population from secondary level | No | No | Yes | The project is under consideration of Govt. of Kerala | In-service training for developing SLMs | Students are engaging in Open School Online-Software developed by IT @ School. | Yes |
### Annexure – 2
Commonwealth of Learning (COL) State Open Schools in India Questionnaire

1. When was your open school established? What are the regulations, Acts of Legislature/Parliament, Operational date of functioning etc?

2. How many students are enrolled in the open school in different streams, courses etc. (subject-wise)? What is the student strength on year-by-year basis?

3. What is the faculty strength in your open school? Is it adequate to fulfil the objectives of the open school?

4. Please list any special academic programmes that may be offered by your school. Which are the more popular subjects / programmes among all these?

5. Are there some job-oriented courses or programmes with a vocational bias offered by your open school?

6. Could you point to some innovations adopted by your open school in order to make learning by the students really effective?

7. In such a case, is the government (Central or State) offering any subsidy for these?

8. Have you any data regarding the parental income, occupation, social strata etc of the students enrolled in your open school?

9. What is the nature of interaction between the open school and the students / parents vis-à-vis the academic progress of the learners?
10. How is the evaluation as regards learning outcome measured? Is it solely dependent on end-of-year examination or periodical assessments through tests?

11. Are you mainly relying on printed lessons to reach the learners? Is there any assistance coming from the media: radio, TV, newspapers etc?

12. If media aid is available and made use of by your open school, is there a synergy between printed lessons and those broadcast over radio / TV?

13. How is the faculty selected for preparing lessons for print and also for broadcast?

14. How many study centres are functioning under your open school and what is their geographic spread (District, Taluk headquarters etc)?

15. Do you have enough infrastructure for the efficient operation of the study centres? (classrooms, blackboards, mini-libraries etc)

16. Are you getting regular feedback from the students regarding their learning outcomes and the delivery mechanisms of your open school?

17. What is the response from the school to the feedback?

18. Has your open school developed any network for sharing of course material, audio / video tapes etc with other institutions?

19. Are there periodical meetings among heads of different State Open Schools with a view to exchange experiences?

20. Is there a mechanism in the school for counselling of students?

21. What is the examination schedule followed by your open school? Is it possible to adhere to the schedule every year?

22. Can you enumerate some steps / measures for developing close bonds with the community around the open school?

23. Please elaborate on the self-learning materials which your open school makes use of.

24. What are the methods adopted to get assignment sheets returned by the students? How are the marked answer papers sent back to the students?

25. Is there as mechanism for remedial action in the case of low achievers?

26. Measuring / estimating learning outcomes requires careful monitoring. Examinations, per se, are not the only suitable indicators. How is this task carried out in your open school?

27. Is your open school in a position to offer a better quality alternative to the correspondence courses offered by some coaching institutions?

28. The National Institute of open schooling (NIOS) is the country’s apex body for offering guidance and other assistance to state open schools in India. What is the nature of guidance you have received? Please give your feedback.

29. After writing the secondary / class X examinations, how many students have gone on to complete senior or higher secondary / class XII course?

30. Have you any data regarding the number of students who have enrolled for degree courses after completing the senior / higher secondary / class XII course in your open school?

31. How would you estimate the percentage of open school participation in the entire secondary / senior or higher secondary scene.

32. Has your institution received any special awards for its contribution to education?

33. Are there any region-specific or culture-related problems connected with your open school? How is your institution trying to solve these?
34. Is there any long-term plan for extending the reach of the open school and its development in tune with the needs of your State and those of the Nation?
35. Is there a mechanism for quality maintenance in your open school? How is the monitoring done?
36. What are the technology inputs in the day-to-day operation of your open school?
37. Is the open school getting adequate support from the political / administrative level?

T. Rajagopalan Consultant, COL

Annexure – 3
National Institute of Open Schooling List of Heads of State Open Schools in India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No.</th>
<th>Administrative Heads of Open Schools of India</th>
<th>Contact No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | Dr. K Ananda Kishore, Director, Andhra Pradesh Open School Society, SCERT Campus, Opp. Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium, Hyderabad-500001, (AP) | Tel – 040-23299568  
Fax – 040-23299568  
Mob.- 09849909179  
Email – diraposshyd@yahoo.in |
| 2     | Dr. U. Deka  
Secretary  
Assam State Open Schooling  
Assam Higher Secondary Education Council  
Bamunimaidam, Guwahati-21 (Assam) | Tel. No. 0361-2551565  
Fax No. 0361-2550844  
Email- ahsec1@yahoo.com  
ahsecss@gmail.com  
Website- www.ahseconline.org |
| 3     | Sh. J. Minz, IAS  
Secretary, Chattisgarh State Open School, Old DPI Building, Pension Bara, Raipur – 492001, (Chattisgarh) | Tel – 0771-4221050  
0771-2429385  
Mb. 9425521805 |
| 4     | Smt. P. D. Yadav, Deputy Director (Patrachar)  
Patrachar Vidyalaya (Delhi State Open School), Directorate of Education, Govt. of NCT  
BL - Block, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi 110088 | Tel – 011-22913251/27497521  
Fax – 011-27497520 |
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name and Contact Information</th>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
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<td>13</td>
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