

**The National Open Schooling System in India**  
**Venu Agarwal**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The aim of this project is to study in detail the institution of open schooling in India. In the process of doing so, the paper also aims at comparing this non-formal system of education to the more stringent formal systems (like those followed by schools affiliated to CBSE<sup>1</sup>, CISCE<sup>2</sup> and various State Boards).

The basic questions answered in this paper are:

1. Why is the open schooling system needed?
  - ✓ Special features, schemes of the NIOS
  - ✓ Loopholes in the formal system of education successfully overcome by the NIOS
  
2. Where does it stand with respect to the formal set-up?

Taking these questions as its stepping-stones, the research was structured so as to answer the following question:

*What can the open schooling system in India be best-described as-a secondary source or an alternative source of education to the formal system?*

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<sup>1</sup> Elaborated upon in the Introduction

<sup>2</sup> Elaborated upon in the Introduction

## **METHODOLOGY**

To understand the need of a system of open schooling it was imperative to understand in detail how each of the following systems function:

1. National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)
2. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
3. Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE)
4. State Boards

This was accomplished using the Internet, the National University of Education, Planning and Administration (NUEPA) Library and the NIOS prospectus.

From the information obtained, the following observations were made:

- a. Identification of those sections of the society, whose needs NIOS caters to.
- b. Understanding the salient features of the NIOS.
- c. Deriving comparisons between the formal and non-formal systems of education.

Field visits to certain study centres accredited to NIOS were made to examine the success of the implementation of NIOS principles at grass root level. I also interacted with officials working with each of these boards to fill in the gaps in my understanding. Interactions with a few teachers from the formal system were held, where in the syllabus of their respective board and NIOS were discussed.

The scope of this project was limited to studying the boards of secondary education at national level. State boards, because of the different patterns followed in different states, were not studied in detail in this project. It is same in the case with State Open Schools.

## **INTRODUCTION**

For any child, the process of 'self-learning' begins with the first breath it takes. Be it its progress from toddling to walking, or the transition of its gurgles into syllables and then into words. Its innate desire to learn, coupled with the support of the family aids its development. It is this concept of 'self learning in a congenial ambience' that is capitalised on in *open schooling*.

Open learning serves as a source of education for the marginalized and disadvantaged sectors of the society, besides being desirable due to its innate relation with human psyche and psychological development. Its benefactors include the physically and mentally handicapped, the female population, school dropouts, residents of rural areas and remote regions. Open schooling is also preferred by students pursuing careers, which require them to devote more time than what the stringent formal school systems with its time-bound structure and attendance compulsions can permit. Students who wish to choose specific combinations of subjects, which may not be possible under the formal system, also turn to open schools. The system also contributes to the cause of adult literacy.

The advent of Open Schooling in India was through the CBSE initiated Open School Project in 1979. A decade later, in the year 1989, the Ministry of Human Resource and Development set up an autonomous organisation that took charge of the project and the new institution was named National Open School (NOS). The NOS was renamed as National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in 2002. Hence, NIOS evolved from an off-branch of the Central Board of Secondary Education, from an institution serving about 40, 000 to the largest open school in the world, which enrolled 2,90,983 students in the year 2006-2007 and was serving a total of 14,27,000<sup>3</sup> according to the figures given.

Because of the 'open' or 'learner dependent' nature of open learning, it is classified as a non-formal mode of education. The formal mode of education, on the contrary, is the system followed by schools, where the learning is monitored by the school curriculum, which depends on the board it is affiliated to. These schools are normally affiliated to one of following boards:

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<sup>3</sup> Data from the statistics maintained by NIOS.

- Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)
- Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE)
- State Boards of the state where the school is located

Under British Rule, the Indian education system went through various stages of development. Back in 1921, the 'UP Board of High School and Intermediate Education' was the first board to be set up, which was later centralised in 1929 and given the name 'Board of High School and Intermediate Education, *Rajputana*'. Despite the centralisation of this institution of education, various regions<sup>4</sup> preferred education systems to have regional jurisdictions and often even have the regional languages as the medium of instruction. In order to cater to the region specific needs of students, State Boards came up in certain states. In 1952, the left out regions were also included in the jurisdiction of Board of High School and Intermediate Education, *Rajputana* and hence evolved the Central Board of Secondary Education with 8998 schools affiliated to it as on July 2, 2007.

Meanwhile, the Anglo-Indian community residing in India had a special Inter-State Board for Anglo-Indian Education, which was affiliated with the University of Cambridge, Local Examination Syndicate (i.e. the examinations conducted were based on the study material provided by the Local Examination Syndicate, Cambridge). In 1958, an Indian council moulded the syllabi as per the needs of the country and took control of the education and examination procedures there after. This council, 'Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination', over time not only catered to the Anglo-Indian community but also started having public schools seeking affiliation.

The CBSE, CISCE and NIOS come directly under the Ministry of Human Resource Development as boards of secondary education, while State Boards fall under the Education Ministries of the concerned state.

## **A STUDY OF THE OPEN SCHOOLING SYSTEM IN INDIA**

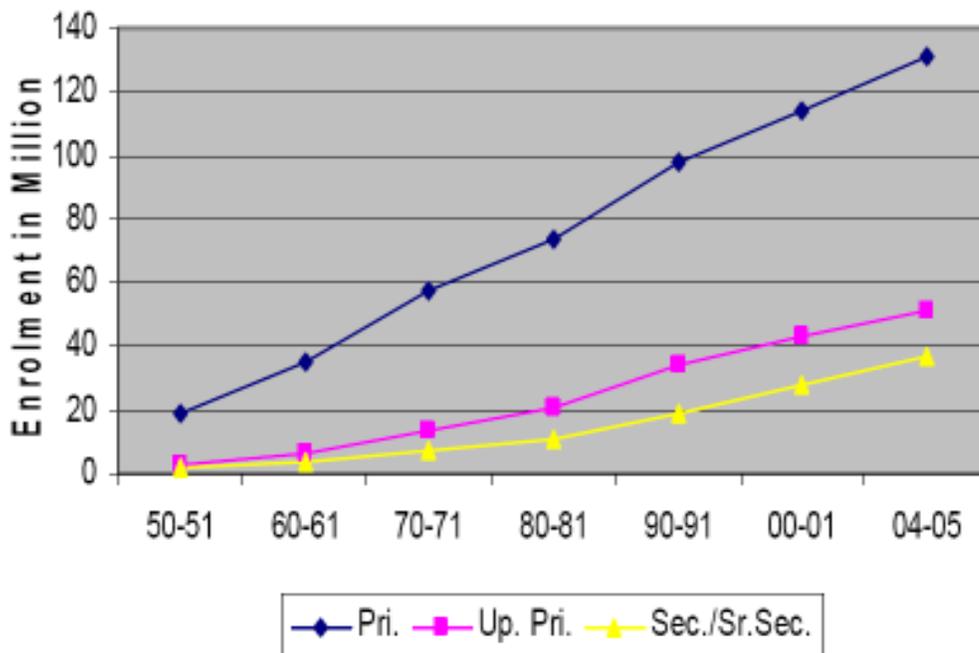
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<sup>4</sup> States of modern India- with frontiers similar to those demarcated on the Indian political map today as state boundaries.

### ***Need for Open Schooling***

According to the RGI definition a person is considered literate if he or she can **both** read and write with understanding. Attaining higher rates of literacy in this basic form topped the list of educational concerns for the government in the past two decades. Schemes like the National Literacy Mission, Universalisation of Elementary Education, *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) and other related government schemes have accrued to the increase in numbers of people receiving primary education/basic literacy. Following is a graphical representation of the increase in the number of enrolments at various levels of schooling since 1950s, showing that the increase at Primary Level had been much steeper as compared to other levels. Consequentially, the need for institutions of secondary and senior secondary education and their governing educational boards is there.

**ENROLMENT BY STAGES FROM 1950-51 to 2004-05**



Source: Selected Education Statistics 2004-05

Besides catering to the 'high-school' population of students, (approximately 15-20 years of age) it was also important to find a way of making secondary education viable for those who for one reason or the other could not attend regular school. It was important to give students who dropped out of school a chance to complete their education, especially looking at the marginal decline in the percentage of dropouts (from classes I-X) from 69.6% in 1995-96 to only 61.92% in 2004-05<sup>5</sup>. To reduce the number of dropouts and to attract more of them to complete their education, there was a need to bring in the option of skill-based learning or vocational education at secondary and senior secondary levels.

Equally substantial was the need to target the adult population of the country, with the adult illiteracy rates being as high as 39%<sup>6</sup> according to the 2001 census. Attending regular school classes from morning till afternoon daily was not a feasible option for full-time or part-time workers. Giving them independence from the time-bound concept of studying followed by the formal system was utterly essential. There was a need to make higher education an option for people even for those who didn't have schools in their vicinity. Many stopped sending their daughters to school because they considered it dangerous for them to travel large distances to reach school. Female dropout rates, female illiteracy rates are much higher than those of their male counterparts. Women, after getting married early, had very little option of continuing their studies even if they wanted to. Hence a relaxed system in terms of time constraints was a much-welcomed respite from the inflexible formal system. To encourage people from economically backward sections of the society to participate, the fee structure also had to be kept low.

Considering such grave needs for an alternative to the formal system of education, the open schooling system was introduced in India. The need still remains and hence the system is being used, but the question is whether the open schooling system has proven to be the alternative it was structured to be?

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<sup>5</sup> Refer to Table 1, Appendix.

<sup>6</sup> Table 2 in Appendix

## ***Functioning of NIOS***

### ***I) COURSES OFFERED***

The NIOS offers courses under:

1. \*Open Basic Education Programme (OBE) why is it there? For detailing?
  - a. OBE- A level (equivalent to class III)
  - b. OBE- B level (equivalent to class V)
  - c. OBE- C level (equivalent to class VIII)
2. \*Secondary Education Course (equivalent to Class X)
3. \*Senior Secondary Education Course (equivalent to Class XII)
4. Life Enrichment Courses<sup>7</sup>
5. Vocational Education Courses<sup>8</sup>

\*Academic Courses

### ***II) ADMISSION***

#### ***Accredited Institutions***

Distance education causes a 'disconnect' between learners and the institution of learning. Certain institutions (schools or NGOs satisfying certain conditions) affiliate themselves to the National Institute of Open Schooling and serve as the student interface. These study centres are classified as:

1. Accredited Institutions (AIs)
2. Accredited Vocational Institutes (AVIs)
3. Special Accredited Institutions for the Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIEDs)

It is at these study centres that all transactions between NIOS and the learners take place. The forms can be purchased and submitted here along with the fees. NIOS study material is delivered to these centres and thereafter collected by students.

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<sup>7</sup> NIOS offers various life enrichment courses like *Paripurna Mahila*(Women Empowerment), *Yog, Bhartiya* Culture and Heritage, *Jan Swasthya*, Hindustani Music etc. A few of these courses are Certificate Courses, while the rest are just self-development courses and no exams are conducted for them.

<sup>8</sup> These provide necessary life skills to find direct employment. They include two year courses, one-year certificate courses, one year package courses, one year stand alone certificate courses, six month's certificate courses

While admission for the Vocational Courses is open throughout the year, that to Academic Courses is open only for a specified period of time. The fee to Secondary Courses is under Rs.1000 while that for Senior Secondary Education is under Rs.1200<sup>9</sup>. There are special concessions for girls, SC/ST, ex-servicemen, differently-abled persons.

#### *Personal Contact Programme (PCP)*

Each accredited institution is supposed to organise Personal Contact Programmes on weekends and holidays under the guidance of a facilitator, who is generally a scholar associated with the NIOS. During these sessions, teachers (teachers of the school if the school itself is a study centre, or those of a school working in collaboration with the study centre if it is an NGO) help students with the course work. Special practical classes are also held for the students who take up courses that require the same.

These institutions also have to carry out motivational sessions for the enrolled students, to keep them enthusiastic about the course.

#### *Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA)*

Each student has to submit three assignments in each subject taken up by him/her. These are corrected by the teacher teaching that subject at the accredited institution (if the AI itself is the school) or at a school associated to the accredited institution. The final grades have to be sent to NIOS before the student appears for the final exam, and the better two out of three are counted with the total score.

### III) *SYLLABI AND STUDY MATERIAL*

The NIOS has its own scholars prepare the study material for various academic and vocational courses that it offers. This material is available in English, Hindi and Urdu medium. They use the National Curriculum Framework, as designed by NCERT, as a source of reference. The study material is designed in a self-explanatory way and it comprises of books, and may include audiocassettes and videocassettes also. They also use televised mediums like the *Doordarshan* and the Radio to broadcast study programmes.

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<sup>9</sup> Details of the Fee Structure are given in the Appendix, table 3

#### *IV) EXAMINATIONS*

Examinations are held twice a year, once in April- May period and then again in October-November. These examinations are conducted with government schools, *Kendriya Vidyalayas*, *Navodaya Vidyalayas* and some accredited institutions as centres.

##### *On-Demand Examination System*

NIOS also extends to students the facility of taking exam at anytime of the year when they feel prepared, in case seats are available in that examination. This facility can be availed at an additional cost of Rs.25.

##### *Giving Improvements and Repeating papers*

A student is allowed to appear for an exam in the same subject as many as nine times in a time span of five years. He/she is allowed one attempt to retake an exam to improve the score, but the fee for that subject has to be paid again. NIOS follows the system of 'credit accumulation' (i.e. credits are added up till the student finally passes the exams in all subjects of a course)

##### *Transfer of Credit*

In case a student fails to qualify a course but passes in at least one subject of the course, then he/she can take the open school examination for the rest of the subjects (provided these subjects are offered by the NIOS). In the process, credits from at most two subjects, which he/ she had already passed, can be transferred to NIOS and he would be exempted from giving those papers again. This is done at a cost of Rs.75 per paper.

#### ***Functioning of CBSE and CISCE***

The CBSE, CISCE and the State Boards function along very similar lines. The following is a brief description of how this happens:

##### ***I) ADMISSION:***

They operate through institutions, which affiliate themselves to the board. An institution can get affiliated to one of the above boards if it satisfies certain

conditions, as decided by the respective board, emphasis is laid on the infrastructure, medium of instruction, minimum qualification of teachers, fees charged, conducting examinations and keeping records.

Once affiliated, an institution can commence its functioning as a school, based on the guidelines of that board. The admission of students into any of the boards happens through schools affiliated to them. Hence, the curriculum of the school is imposed upon the students. Both CBSE and CISCE follow minimum and maximum age bars imposed by the state in which the affiliated school is situated.

## II) *COURSES*

Each board has a set of subjects that it offers for every class and a list of recommended books for the same. At Secondary and Sr. Secondary levels when students have an option of choosing subjects they want to study, it varies from school to school what combinations can be offered. This depends on the availability of teachers, classrooms, time constraints and few other factors depending on the school. Only those subjects in which regular classes are held at the schools can be taken up by students. While CBSE allows students to take an additional subject at both Secondary and Senior Secondary levels if the school at which they're studying has a department for that subject even if he/she does not attend regular classes in the same.

## III) *SYLLABI*

The CBSE syllabi for classes I through VIII are chosen by the school authorities and mandatory verification of the middle school syllabus is required by the board. While for the CISCE, for classes below class IX, the syllabus affiliated to the State Government is followed. Syllabi for CBSE are prepared normally by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), while those of the CISCE are put together by the Research, Development and Consultancy Division of the board. Different state boards have different reference standards for setting their syllabi.

## IV) *EXAMINATION*

CBSE and CISCE conduct national level exams for classes X and XII only. For the lower grades, the affiliated schools conduct exams. It is the schools that decide the frequency and syllabus of the examinations that they conduct. State Boards conduct state level annual exams for certain classes differing from state to state. The system followed for the remaining classes is same as that of the CBSE or CISCE. The fees charged by CBSE for the board exam at All India level is Rs.300-350, while the same for CISCE is about Rs.500. But students have to an annual school fees too, which varies from school to school

### **COMPARISON OF THE EDUCATIONAL BOARDS**

	<b>NIOS</b>	<b>CBSE</b>	<b>CISCE</b>
<b>Admission</b>	Through Accredited Institutions on first come first serve basis.  Accredited Institutions form student interface where learning is made easier through PCPs, TMAs. It had 2745 study centres functioning under itself till July 2007.  There is a minimum age limit of 14 years for a student giving Secondary Level	Through Affiliated Schools as per their selection procedures.  Affiliated institutions (schools) are centres for regular classes. It had 8999 affiliated schools till July 2007.  Age limits as specified by the government of the state in which the	Through Affiliated Schools as per their selection procedures.  Affiliated institutions (schools) are centres for regular classes. It had 667 affiliated schools till July 2007.  Age limits as specified by the government of the state in which the school is located as

	exams, and 15 years for Sr. Secondary Level.	school is located as followed.	followed.
<b>Courses</b>	<p>Any choice can be made from a large list of available options.</p> <p>CLASS X and XII (I) <i>Basic Req:</i> Any combination of academic courses (minimum 5 in number, with at least one language) OR 4 academic courses and 1 vocational/life-enrichment course (with at least 1 language.)</p> <p>(II) <i>Additional Subjects</i> 1 or 2 additional courses can be taken.</p>	<p>Only those courses which are taught in the school</p> <p>CLASS X (I) <i>Basic Req.</i> English, Second language and at least 3 more subjects</p> <p>CLASS XII English and at least 4 more subjects. Also required is the school's assessment in work experience, art education, and physical education.</p> <p>(II) <i>Additional Subjects</i> 1 additional subject which is taught in school or school</p>	<p>Only those courses which are taught in the school</p> <p>CLASS X (I) <i>Basic Req.</i> English, 2<sup>nd</sup> language, Environmental Issues, Social Studies.</p> <p>(II) 2 subjects from group II<sup>10</sup>, 1 from group III<sup>11</sup>.</p> <p>CLASS XII (I) <i>Basic Req.:</i> 5 subjects with English and Environmental Education.</p> <p>(II) <i>Additional</i> 1 or 2 subjects which are taught in school.</p>

<sup>10</sup> Group II includes Maths, Science, Economics, Commercial Studies, Technical Drawing, a modern foreign language, a classic language, computer science, environmental science, agricultural science.

<sup>11</sup> Group III includes Computer Applications, Economic Applications, Commercial Applications, Arts, Performing Arts, Home Science, Cookery, Fashion Designing, Physical Education, Yoga, Technical drawing Applications, Environmental Applications, Modern Foreign Language.

		has a department for it.	
<b>Vocational courses</b>	1 vocational course can be taken at each level, or can be taken independently.	It has started offering vocational courses as regularly taught courses at some affiliated schools. Private candidates can't appear for this exam.	It has a few skill-based programs offered by certain schools and a candidate can take them up only when he/she attends regular classes in the same.
<b>Syllabus</b>	Based on the National Curriculum Framework (by NCERT) put together as comprehensive reading material by NIOS academicians.	Based on the National Curriculum Framework (by NCERT)	The Research, Development and Consultancy Division, a division of the board itself decides its syllabus.
<b>Examination FIRST ATTEMPT  REPEATING</b>	Biennially conducted exams. On-Demand Exam facility available too.	Annually conducted exams have a pre requisite of 75% attendance	Annually conducted exams have a pre requisite of 75% attendance

<p>A) DUE TO FAILURE IN FIRST ATTEMPT</p>	<p>A candidate has as many as 9 attempts in 5 years to clear the examination in each subject. Concept of Credit Accumulation (for 10 years) and Transfer of Credit is followed.</p>	<p>On failing in ONE subject in the first attempt (say Mar-April 2007,) candidate has 3 chances to reattempt the paper:  a) Compartment Exam (July 2007)  b) CBSE annual exam (Mar-April 2008)  c) Compartment Exam (July 2008)</p> <p>If he fails in more than one subject, he has to take all the exams again in the next year.</p>	<p>Out of 7 subjects that every student should take, passing in 6 ensures a pass Certificate.</p> <p>If he/she fails more than 2 subjects, they take the exams again the following year with the next batch.</p>
<p>B) TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE</p>	<p>Only one attempt for improvement is allowed after paying fees for the respective subjects within 5 years from the first attempt.</p>	<p>Single attempt for improvement in the subsequent year, provided the candidate hasn't pursued higher studies in the mean time. It can be taken as Regular candidate- if all subjects have to be taken again</p>	<p>No such attempts are allowed.</p>

		Private candidate- in case of few subjects.	
Pass Criteria	33% marks in each subject	33% marks in each subject	40% marks in each subject.
Pass Percentage	CLASS X 28% of total appearing annually. CLASS XII 44.4% annually.	CLASS X 86.4% annually. CLASS XII 86% annually.	CLASS X 94.3% annually. CLASS XII 93.6% annually.
Funding & Fee Structure	Deficit funding by Government  For a <i>general</i> candidate- Rs.300- Rs.350 as fee to the board. The remaining expenditure is dependent on which school the candidate goes to.	Self Funding  For a <i>general</i> category candidate the fee for 5 compulsory subjects (including study material) is Rs.1000 at Secondary Level and Rs.1150 at Sr. Secondary Level. Every additional subject costs Rs.150 at Secondary and Rs.180 at Sr. Secondary Level.	Self-funding  For a general category candidate, fee comes out to be around Rs.500.

## **SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE NIOS**

1. The lenient time constraint of five years given to students to clear each of the Secondary and Sr. Secondary (with either or both Academic or Vocational courses) with as many as nine possible attempts, makes it much easier for students with
  - a. Learning disabilities
  - b. Physical handicapsto take exams and even do well as compared to their probable performance under the formal system of education. It also has the provision of readmission after 5 years.
2. NIOS gives the student freedom to choose when they want to study and does not keep them time-bound as is the case with the formal systems. Hence, it is a feasible option for:
  - a. People engaged in part-time or full time jobs
  - b. House-wives
  - c. Students who would like to pursue a personal extra-curricular interest as a profession<sup>12</sup>.
3. Chained by societal norms or bound by family responsibilities, it serves as a lucrative option for the female population. They don't even have to travel to school and can learn from home itself. Similar is the case in regions where no schools can be built in the vicinity and in rural areas.

The NIOS has even used media through *Doordarshan* and radio broadcasts to reach the rural population of the country.
4. Because it has no age bar and is very lenient on the numbers of attempts a student is allowed, NIOS gives a chance to school drop-outs (even adults) to continue with studies.
5. As observed by a developmental worker<sup>13</sup>, "Street children, child workers and child prostitutes who have been rehabilitated cannot cope with formal

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<sup>12</sup> For instance, a student of Classical Dance can have classes during day time, hence preventing her from attending a formal school.

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Vibhuti Patel, Centre for Women Studies, University of Mumbai

education.” Hence open schooling comes handy. Footnote 13 on the same page!

6. NIOS allows students at Secondary and Senior Secondary level to take up any combination of subjects from those it offers in both academic and vocational fields. This may not be possible through schools because of the unavailability of teachers in particular subjects.
7. A student can take admission into just one or two subjects at any level and get a mark sheet (not certificate) for the same on passing the examination, without having to do the whole course. This is called 'Part Admission'. Though the CISCE also allows students to do the same at Senior Secondary level, but for this, the student has to pass their old school's final exam for class XI in the same subject. Only then in the subsequent year is he/she eligible to appear for the class XII exam in the same. Though unlike the NIOS, these candidates cannot appear as individual candidates, and can only go through the school where they passed class XI and XII from.
8. A student can branch out of the normal academic programme and take up vocational courses after class V, VIII, X or XII depending on the basic qualifications required to learn the skill. For instance, a student can choose a vocational course like 'House Wiring and Electrical Appliance Repairing' after clearing class V exams or 'House Keeping' after passing class X.
9. NIOS offers students the option of choosing one or two subjects extra, i.e. in addition to those chosen by them at Secondary or Senior Secondary level. Though under CBSE, a student can take up a sixth subject, besides the basic 5 if the school has a department for the same irrespective of whether the school can hold classes in the same or not. CISCE allows 7 subjects, all of which have to be regularly taught at school, though the pass certificate is given even if the student passes any 6 out of the 7.

## **CONCLUSION: THEORY VERSUS REALITY**

As highlighted in the last few sections, the policy of open schooling is the bridge between India today and an India with 100% literacy. The syllabus of CBSE and NIOS is based on the same reference structure compiled by NCERT called the National Curriculum Framework. As observed by the principal of a CISCE school<sup>14</sup>, the syllabus followed by NIOS is comparable to that followed by CISCE or any other national board. Hence, open schooling in theory seems to be reaching where the formal system cannot reach, while maintaining the quality of education.

But as is the case with many policies, there is a stark contrast between the policy of open schooling in theory and in reality. It is far from being implemented the way its makers may have wanted it to be. Despite having completed almost two decades as an autonomous board of education at national level, the pass rates for academic courses at both Secondary and Senior Secondary levels have been stuck in the late 20s and early 30s<sup>15</sup>, when those of their counter parts (CBSE, CISCE) are consistently maintained in late 80s and early 90s<sup>16</sup>.

Does the option of having multiple attempts encourage students to procrastinate? Or does the low pass rate hint at genuine candidates who are unable to perform very well in a single attempt and need multiple attempts? But of the total enrolment carried out by NIOS in 2006-2007, only 0.55% students were handicapped, 12.53% were from the scheduled caste category and 7.23% were from scheduled tribes<sup>17</sup>. Shown below is the category-wise enrolment in the academic year 2006-07, with the

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<sup>14</sup> Ms. Sarita Mathur, Principal, Vasant Valley School, Delhi

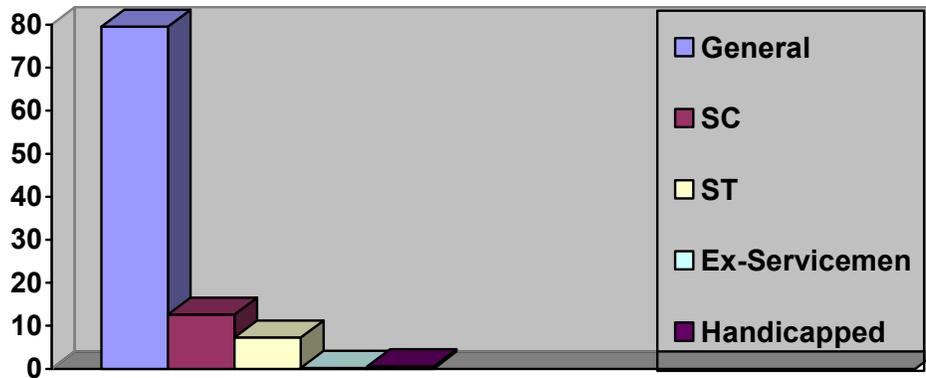
<sup>15</sup> Refer to table 7 in the Appendix

<sup>16</sup> Pass rates of CBSE and CISCE in 2005 are given in Table 4 and Table 5 in the Appendix

<sup>17</sup> Category-wise division of students enrolled in 2006-2007 as given in Table 9 in the Appendix

majority enrolments being from the general category.

### CATEGORY-WISE ENROLMENT IN 2006-07



Source: Table 9 in the Appendix

NIOS does not keep any record of the number of candidates based on economic status or categorised by the reason for joining open school (for example, classifying them as formal system dropouts, full- or part-time workers continuing education, housewives etc.) Clearly, the low pass rates have a major contribution from the general category.

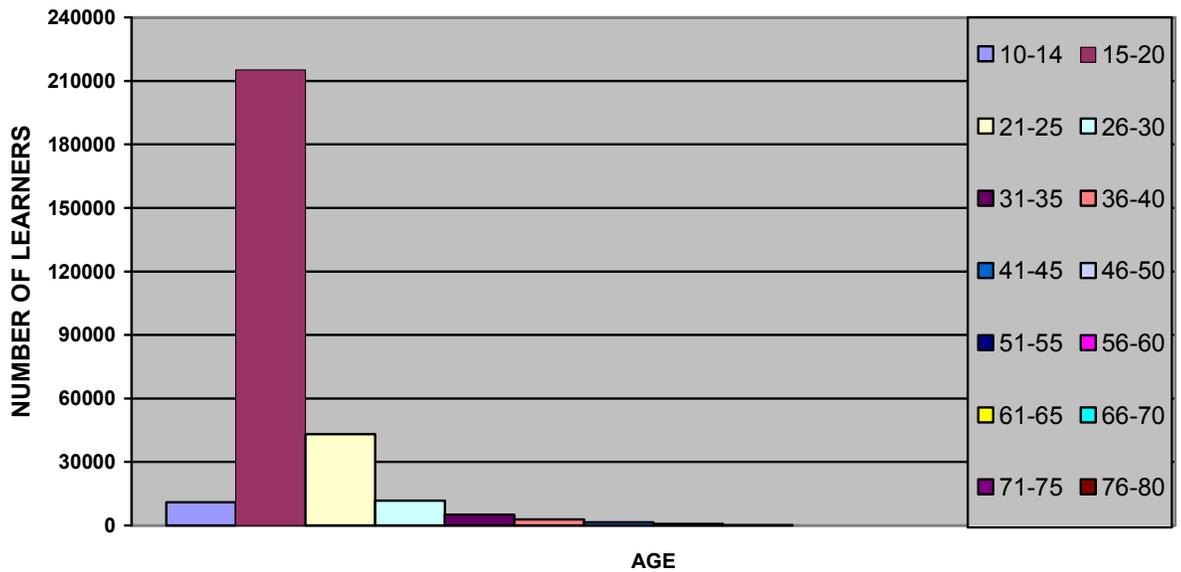
Hence, very little light can be thrown on what the reason for such low pass rates is. But it does raise a question about the quality of education or at least the comprehensibility of study material. Can this system be an *alternative* to the formal system of education, especially when the latter has almost three times the pass-rates of the former?

Similarly when analysing the age-wise enrolment of students by NIOS, almost 74% students are from the age group of 15-20 years, indicating that it has not been very successful in serving the adult population of the country<sup>18</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Refer to table 8 in the Appendix

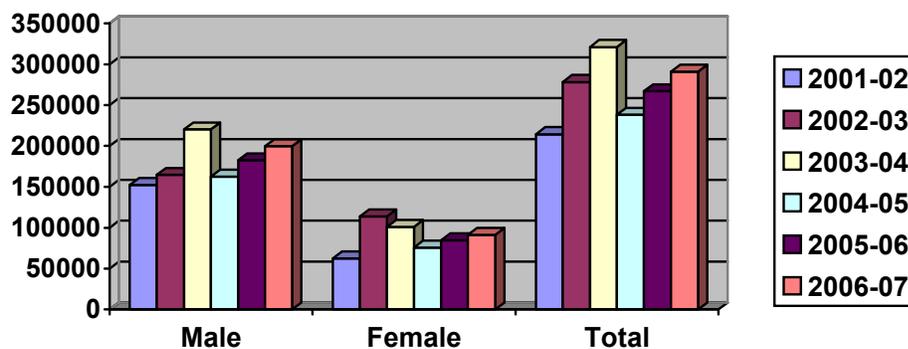
### AGE-WISE ENROLMENT IN 2006-07



Source: Table 8 in Appendix

A similar argument can be put forward from the gender point of view. Gender-wise enrolment of students, as in the following figure shows that every year, the number of females enrolled is less than half of the males enrolled in the same year, challenging the success of NIOS in enabling women to continue education at secondary level. This is despite the fact that one of its target sectors is the female population of the country. Even the total enrolment, from the above figure, does not show a consistent increase.

### Gender-Wise Enrolment



Source: Table 10 in Appendix

An NIOS co-ordinator, at the condition of being kept anonymous, elaborated on the delay in arrival of study material and even funds for Personal Contact Programs at their study centre. There have been complains about discrepancies between questions asked in the exams and the syllabus. All these factors place NIOS secondary to formal system of education.

Only a single conclusion can be drawn from the above reasoning: the concept of open schooling is an excellent alternative to the formal system in theory. But it is presently only a substitute to the formal system and has to go a long way in being implemented ideally enough to graduate from its present status to being an alternative to the formal system.

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**APPENDICES**

**TABLE 1**

**ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY MEMBERS, OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS AND PRIMARY, OF**

Year	Elementary (I-VIII)			Secondary (I-X)			Elementary (I-VIII)			Secondary (I-X)		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
1995	61995	56.6	58.8	60.3	43.0	40.6	61995	56.6	58.8	60.3	43.0	40.6
1996	59996	54.3	56.5	60.3	40.9	40.2	59996	54.3	56.5	60.3	40.9	40.2
1997	59997	53.8	56.1	60.5	41.5	39.2	59997	53.8	56.1	60.5	41.5	39.2
1998	59998	49.2	46.7	51.2	59998	49.2	46.7	51.2	59998	49.2	46.7	51.2
1999	58999	66.5	70.5	40.3	58999	66.5	70.5	40.3	58999	66.5	70.5	40.3
2000	57000	53.7	66.7	41.9	40.76	50.3	57000	53.7	66.7	41.9	40.76	50.3
2001	56001	54.6	64.3	69.8	30.00	52.9	56001	54.6	64.3	69.8	30.00	52.9
2002	55002	52.79	65.25	63.92	30.288	52.28	55002	52.79	65.25	63.92	30.288	52.28
2003	54003	52.32	60.98	64.92	30.439	51.85	54003	52.32	60.98	64.92	30.439	51.85
2004	53004	50.84	60.81	65.82	30.002	50.19	53004	50.84	60.81	65.82	30.002	50.19

**SOURCE: Selected Education Statistics 2004-05**

**TABLE 2**

**ADULT ILLITERACY 15 YEARS AND ABOVE, 1961 TO 2001**

Particulars	1961	1971	1981	1991*	1996 @	1998 #	1999^	2001**
<b>I-Illiteracy %age</b>								
Male	58.55	52.31	45.09	38.11	32.75	30	27.8	26.7
Female	86.85	80.64	74.30	65.91	59.33	56	56.0	52.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>72.24</b>	<b>65.92</b>	<b>59.18</b>	<b>51.46</b>	<b>45.48</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>41.5</b>	<b>39.0</b>

\*\* Census-2001, \*Excluding J&K, @ NSSO 52<sup>nd</sup> Round 1995-96  
# NSSO 54<sup>th</sup> Round 1998, ^ National Family Health Survey-1998-99

**SOURCE- Selected Education Statistics 2004-05**

**TABLE 3**

**FEE STRUCTURE OF NIOS ACADEMIC COURSES**

Course	General Category		Exempted Category*
	Male	Female	SC/ST, Ex-Servicemen, Differently Abled Persons
<b>Secondary Course</b>			
(i) for 5 subjects	Rs. 1000	Rs. 750	Rs. 550
(ii) for each additional subject	Rs. 150	Rs. 150	Rs. 150
<b>Senior Secondary Course</b>			
(i) for 5 Subjects	Rs. 1150	Rs. 900	Rs. 625
(ii) for each additional subject	Rs. 180	Rs. 180	Rs. 180

**SOURCE: NIOS PROSPECTUS 2007**

**TABLE 4**

**Examination results of boards-SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMINATION 2005  
(All Students)**

S. N	Board Name	Number of Students		Pass %age		
		Appeared	Passed			

		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1	CBSE	34446	24687	59134	29455	21657	51112	85.5	87.7	86.4
		6	5	1	2	7	9			
2	CISCE	49183	38330	87513	46033	36455	82488	93.6	95.1	94.3
3	NIOS	11586	51305	16716	30376	16352	46728	26.2	31.9	28.0
		4		9						

**Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-2005**

**TABLE 5**

**Examination results of boards-SR. SECONDARY SCHOOL EXAMINATION  
2005  
(All Students)**

S. N	Board Name	Number of Students						Pass %age		
		Appeared			Passed			Boys	Girls	Total
		Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total			
1	CBSE	23135	17349	40485	19071	15738	34809	82.4	90.7	86.0
		7	9	6	4	3	7			
2	CISCE	22620	17060	39680	20765	16366	37131	91.8	95.9	93.6
3	NIOS	91946	44614	13656	40227	20451	60678	43.8	45.8	44.4
				0						

**Source: Selected Educational Statistics 2004-2005**

**TABLE 6**

**PASS RATES UNDER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

Exam	Vocational
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	<b>Appeared</b>	<b>Certified</b>	<b>%</b>
May-00	<b>5654</b>	<b>3670</b>	<b>64.91</b>
Nov-00	<b>3154</b>	<b>2126</b>	<b>67.41</b>
May -01	<b>5206</b>	<b>2680</b>	<b>51.48</b>
Nov-01	<b>6250</b>	<b>3997</b>	<b>63.95</b>
May-02	<b>8766</b>	<b>5795</b>	<b>66.11</b>
Nov-02	<b>4969</b>	<b>3671</b>	<b>73.88</b>
May-03	<b>12293</b>	<b>8251</b>	<b>67.12</b>
Nov-03	<b>5466</b>	<b>3536</b>	<b>64.69</b>
May-04	<b>12730</b>	<b>7254</b>	<b>56.98</b>
Nov-04	<b>8622</b>	<b>5220</b>	<b>60.54</b>
Jun-05	<b>13073</b>	<b>8006</b>	<b>61.24</b>
Oct-05	<b>9423</b>	<b>5676</b>	<b>60.24</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>95606</b>	<b>59882</b>	<b>62.6341</b>

SOURCE: Statistical Reports at [www.nios.ac.in](http://www.nios.ac.in)

**TABLE 7**

**PASS RATES UNDER ACADEMIC COURSES AT DIFFERENT STAGES**

<b>Exam</b>	<b>Secondary</b>			<b>Sr. Secondary</b>		
	<b>Appeared</b>	<b>Certified</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Appeared</b>	<b>Certified</b>	<b>%</b>
May-00	98948	31818	32.16	71453	13024	18.23
Nov-00	52039	13625	26.18	36842	8808	23.91
May-01	122101	33849	27.72	93175	17858	19.17
Nov-01	58880	15804	26.84	48403	12267	25.34
May-02	143782	48653	33.84	100942	23579	23.36
Nov-02	70263	20309	28.90	56100	14913	26.58
May-03	172533	99250	57.53	117872	39603	33.60
Nov-03	69896	23663	33.85	70385	20181	28.67
May-04	237300	77570	32.69	170052	36660	21.56
Nov-04	100680	26786	26.61	84474	17999	21.31

Apr-05	167169	46728	27.95	136560	36436	26.68
Oct-05	86262	26743	31.00	75605	24247	32.07
Apr-06	175699	56489	31.46	148883	47521	31.92
Oct-06	79170	28054	35.43	69834	22843	32.71
Apr-07	182680	59710	32.69	162371	51447	31.68
<b>Total</b>	<b>2527313</b>	<b>793196</b>	<b>31.38</b>	<b>1920710</b>	<b>516941</b>	<b>26.91</b>

SOURCE: Statistical Reports at [www.nios.ac.in](http://www.nios.ac.in)

**TABLE 8**

**AGE-WISE ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN 2006-07**

<b>Age – Range</b>	<b>No of learners</b>
10-14	10873
15-20	215233
21-25	43022
26-30	11642
31-35	5122
36-40	2864
41-45	1394
46-50	648
51-55	153
56-60	22
61-65	4
66-70	2
71-75	0
76-80	4
Total	290983

Source-NIOS Statistics

**TABLE 9**

**CATEGORY-WISE ENROLMENT OF STUDENTS IN 2006-07**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Academic</b>	<b>%</b>
General	231334	79.50
SC	36599	12.58
ST	21029	7.23
Ex-Servicemen	434	0.15
Handicapped	1587	0.55
Total	290983	100.00

Source: NIOS Statistics

**TABLE 10**

**GENDER-WISE ENROLMENT FOR LAST 5 YEARS (2001-2006)**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Total</b>
2006-07	199788	91195	290983
2005-06	182440	84586	267026
2004-05	162351	75718	238069
2003-04	220103	100907	321010
2002-03	164550	113684	278234
2001-02	152286	62296	214582

Source: NIOS Statistics