THE ROLE OF OPEN SCHOOL AND
THE EMPOWERMENT OF PEOPLE:
A SOCIOLOGICAL STUDY OF SURAT

THE PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO

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BY

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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I, Srikakolli Jayapradha Eliah, declare on oath that the references and literature that are used in the dissertation entitled "The Role of Open School and the Empowerment of People: A Sociological Study of Surat" are from original sources and acknowledged at appropriate places in the dissertation. I further declare that I have not used this information for any purpose other than my research. The thesis is submitted for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of Sociology, Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune.

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CERTIFICATE BY THE GUIDE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in the dissertation for the M.Phil. entitled "The Role of Open School and the Empowerment of People: A Sociological Study of Surat" submitted by Srikakolli Jayapradha Eliah was carried out under my supervision and guidance. Materials obtained from various sources have been duly acknowledged in the dissertation.

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CHAPTER – 1

AN INTRODUCTORY FRAMEWORK

Indian society is highly heterogeneous and is highly unequal- at the social, cultural, political and material levels. These disparities and differences were partly inherited during colonialism and partly exaggerated due to practices of electoral democracy in the post independence era. With India adopting a democratic model, these differences, which were social and cultural in nature, were soon translated into political identities. Identities such as caste, religion, language and ethnicity became important conduits through which power was organized. Despite these differences and heterogeneity, India functions as one nation. The colonial period enabled the formation of a 'nation' and with it its quest for independence was met. However it was the institutional building exercise of the British that enabled democracy and its varied practices to take root in India. Education was one of the institutions that enabled the natives to become 'modern'.

There are two moments of transitions experienced within the democratic phase of post 1947 India. The first involves the transition in terms of power from the colonial rulers to a select group of elite actors, who later framed the constitution and the second the post Nehruvian period wherein the Indian state recognized the need to allow markets to determine state policies or the age of neo-liberalism. The constitution reflected their imaginings of what the post-colonial "modern" India ought to be. This meant an imposition of the elite notions of modern that was read as secular, federal, democratic republic committed to an ideology of development. In this developmental model, the state controlled the economy, polity, media, civil society and cultural

resources. It was hoped that through a "top- down" disbursement of resources through an elaborately setup bureaucracy would ensure that a situation of extreme inequality would not persist and hence a "bloody revolution" would not take place. This would enable a smooth transition of power. But the ideology of development even though rooted in socialism in practice manifested compromises (Kohli 1991).

The filtering down process had two effects- on the one hand it benefited, one section (other than the elite) of society i.e. the upwardly middle classes who were just below the elite in the hierarchy and on the other it simultaneously led to marginalization of the already marginalized. The inequalities deepened and poverty actually increased.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s the contradictions that emerged from the developmental model (Nehruvian model of development), led to intense mobilizations around the demand for reprioritizing resources on the one hand. The marginalized sections of society that were deprived the access to resources now mobilized themselves into political movements that now questioned the legitimacy of the state. This period witnessed the growth of political movements led by marginalized sections of society i.e. tribal, environmental, linguistic, and regional, caste and class based movements (Kaviraj 1997).

One of the major theorists to examine the cultural capital that accrues through formal educational system is the French post structuralist Pierre Bourdieu and Passeron (1979). They examine how class reproduction takes place in modern societies in France (Universalized for Europe) generation after generation through the institution of education. He argues that the mode of acquiring and gaining what constitutes valued knowledge in schools matches the lifestyle and habitus of the dominant classes. The concept of cultural capital was posited to

challenge human capital, a concept designed to think consciously or unconsciously in terms of a meritocratic system of autonomous individuals who vary in their economically marketable skills and dispositions. Cultural capital aims at making explicit the cultural processes of reproducing class privileges and exclusions in societies. Individualized exclusion is carried out almost universally in modern systems of formal education which grade, classify, track and credential each of us with the force of a universally recognized authority whose publicly stated purpose is to recognize personally achieved knowledge and abilities and valued personal qualities such as intelligence, creativity, and character (Bourdieu, 1984, 1990).

Cultural capital bares the socially masked and misrecognized phenomenon that the knowledge, abilities, tastes and dispositions are anchored in skills of the individual. The concept of cultural capital demonstrates that these differences are grounded in leisure and freedom from the pressures of necessity that the dominant classes possess and their symbolic power to define their cultural repertoires as universal or most legitimate. From this view, cultural capital is economic capital put to use by the dominant classes to distance themselves culturally from the dominated classes to maintain their exclusive access to the most valued and valuable resources, activities and institutions. Thus the educational system evaluates people as autonomous individuals, but for dominant class cultural knowledge, beliefs and dispositions that are transmitted, often unconsciously, within the home, the family, and exclusive social networks (Bourdieu 1990).

The system of formal education thus works to sanctify the culture of the dominant classes and distribute credentials, universally recognized capital, on the basis of the possession of this culture. Fixed as this game is, it does allow

for those who are less endowed some chance to move up and it does require that those in the dominant classes apply themselves to the game. From this brief summary of formal education as cultural capital, it should be clear that educational credentials are a central form of cultural capital- the universally recognized symbol/exchange value of one's cultural and moral excellence. Thus, acquired credentials have rightly become the primary measure of accumulated cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1977, 1985, 1990).

Thus education as an institution in modern democracies can act as a catalyst for harnessing one's cultural capital which finally is transferable into various kinds of other benefits. Most critical scholars argue that the education system usually favours the dominant classes existing in society. But it also allows for a contested space. Thus with newer opportunities, the upwardly mobile sections of society now contest and bargain with the political and cultural elite for larger share in power. In a situation in which the marginalized sections of society questioned its legitimacy while simultaneously facing an ambitious upwardly section a compromise was reached between the elite and the upwardly mobile section for sharing power. This in effect meant suppression of the popular mass based movements of the marginalized sections. The upwardly mobile groups organized themselves on the basis of primordial ties such as caste, kinship, language, region, ethnicity and religion, thereby masking their class interests.

It is in this context of these inequalities that one need to locate the question of education as an empowering institution. Did the education system in the country allow for egalitarianism and socialism to flourish in the country? Did it lead to upliftment of the downtrodden? Did it provide the required social mobility for the underprivileged in society?

The colonial policies of literacy rates and higher education are still being followed today in India. However the Indian state has now come up with an exception wherein the state has taken up the responsibility of at least making the population literate. Hence programmess like *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* and right to education have enabled millions to come back into alternate educational school systems. But what about those adults who wish to pursue higher education outside mainstream higher education institutions such as regular colleges and universities? The present study attempts to capture the role of alternate higher education system called NIOS. The study of the role of open school and the empowerment of people appears to be important in view of the alarming number of drop-outs and their being excluded from the main stream. The NIOS as world's largest open school is open to drop-outs to get into and get necessary knowledge, skills, and qualifications. In a state like ours, where red tapism and bureaucratic practices and formalities play an important part in providing opportunities, it is not surprising to note that education as an essential service is relegated in importance. India does not have the social security system the way developed European Nations have. The absence of social security creates a situation of vulnerability of the marginalized communities. Poverty and illiteracy further the social and cultural problems and issues plaguing the country. The NIOS provides a platform that allows adults to participate in higher learning and self improve in terms of degrees and diplomas or as what the market demands. This allows the actors to get of the cyclical trend of illiteracy and poverty. Education is a field that is highly controlled and monitored by the state.

Althusser (1970) argues the state controls individuals through various state apparatuses such as the family, school and the media. He argues that the capitalist state generally patronises upper classes as they have the resources

and time to invest in such an endeavour. The labouring class children are usually left out of this system. Bourdieu (1984, 1990) has painstakingly shown how the ruling class consolidate their dominance through the educational institutions in Europe. This is also true of India. The ruling classes reproduce their advantage over generations by taking the benefit of quality education. Members of the marginalised groups remain at the periphery as they cannot afford quality education or are consciously excluded in the name of merit.

In such a case how does the alternate educational system the non-formal type of adult education enable individuals to claim higher social status in society? India is a welfare state, and the Human Development Index does matter with reference to India's regard for the Right to Life and Human Rights at large. Amartya Sen (1980) through research has pointed out that if the marginalised are to be brought on an equal platform with the advanced communities, they have to internalise certain 'capabilities' that will enable them to survive in the highly neo-liberal world dominated by the logic of the market and capital. Sen's (1980) idea of social justice and capability are interwoven into one another and he argues that if capability of individuals is increased then the society as a whole gradually moves towards the socially just order. Thus he warns the state from refraining from providing subsidies to the poor and instead urges it to create institutions that can impart quality and skilled education to the citizens. However as discussed earlier, it is generally found that the mainstream education system actually works to create and reproduce inequalities and social injustices (Bourdieu and Passeron 1977; Bowles and Gintis 1976; Ball 2003; Bowles and Gintis 2002; Kwesiga 2002; Aikman 1999). But there is also research that points towards how the formal schooling system offer conditions in which learners contest or change inequalities (Stromquist 1998; McLeod 2005; Lynch and Baker 2005; Brighouse 2002).

Bourdieu (1990) is of the view that cultural capital is inculcated by the upper class individuals who legitimates the dominant class position and reproduces this through generations and hence denies the lower class members to climb the social ladder. Those lower class individuals who manage to gain ample cultural and symbolic capital from the educational system are over a period of time co-opted into the dominant social group. Bourdieu (1984, 1990)

According to UNESCO estimates, 1.4 million children of India with age group of 6-11 are found to be out of formal school system. (The Times of India, July 7, 2014). The same daily also provides statistics that India's position goes to one of the top five nations with children belonging to the age group of 6 to 11. This alarming number (1.4 million) remains out of school. Globally, this number of primary school dropouts goes up to 57.8 million. The UNESCO report points out, among other things, the developing and underdeveloped nations have low budgetary allocation to education. This has contributed to the poor state of affairs in developing human resources. It is found in the same study that cut in aid to basic education effected many countries. The aid was reduced to $278 million between 2010 and 2012 (ibid). In Gujarat, it is estimated that14 lakh kids didn't go to school (The Times of India: Nov. 27, 15).

The study examines the variable relations between the open school system and the national integration in terms of accommodation and assimilation into the so-called mainstream society. It will also focus on the individual empowerment of those candidates who enjoy some sort of defining positions rather than being in the receiving end. The study address the various perspectives especially functionalism and conflict theory in juxtapositions to assess the functioning of the open schooling in promoting the national unity and integrity of the nation as well as empowerment on the part of the people.

The basic legal axiom is that ignorance is not an excuse (Concise Law Dictionary 2005). This gives us the right to have knowledge. The right to information (Right to Information Act: 2005) has been acknowledged by the Government in 2005. Subsequently, it was followed by the right to education (Right to Education Act: 2009). Adding to it the human rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights: 1948) and the Right to Life (Constitution of India: 1950), and socialization, it becomes clear that education stands at the very core of man making and nation building. Education generates human resource; and human resource makes other resources resourceful. No society is possible without human resource. Therefore, the importance of education, especially the formal education, is beyond doubt. Under Part IV of the Constitution of India where Directive Principles of State Policy (Constitution of India: 1950) are incorporated, the states are constitutionally duty bound to provide primary education to all belonging to the age group of 6 to 14. However, the Directive Principles of State Policy are not justiciable and require legislation / government decisions for implementations unlike that of the Fundamental Rights. Even in the RTE where the right to "free and compulsory" education has been guaranteed by the states and reiterated by the Supreme Court, a sizeable number of children remain out of formal schooling. India's child labour scenario can be compared in juxtaposition to understand the gravity of this scenario.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The researcher is to put in place a conceptual framework of variable relations between the open schooling and the empowerment of people from the perspective and methodology of Sociology of Education. With reference to time, i.e. in the middle of the second decade of the 21st century, connotations such as Information Technology, Knowledge Commission, Knowledge

Society, Social Media, etc. are not new. However, the interfaces between the social statics and social dynamics are ongoing. Challenges before a functional society are many. Education is such an independent variable that influences not less than a dozen dependent variables linked to the social solidarity of any given functional society. The researcher aims at exploring one of such dependent variables, open schooling, having its impacts on the consolidation of the so-called mainstream (macro) of a given society on one hand and the empowerment of the individuals (micro) on the other in the social context of Surat, one of the fastest growing districts of Gujarat including India. Therefore, the study focuses on both macro and micro aspects from the relevant sociological perspectives. The role of open schooling is to be studied in view of the emerging patterns of inclusion, exclusion, competition, conflict, accommodation, assimilation, etc. In the present socio-economic context, the evolving mechanism to implement the "Make in India" programme requires the involvements of educational and technical institutes. Therefore, it's high time to evaluate the role of National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) and (other) State Board Open Schooling systems, if any, fulfilling the basic educational needs of mostly the school dropouts and unconventional learners in need of both education and certificate. Such students are mostly backward both economically and culturally. They remain excluded from the mainstream of society and become the liability of state as well as society. However, in cities like Surat many children are joining NIOS from well-to-do families. It's pertinent to mention here that the Gujarat State Board unlike NIOS doesn't have the open schooling system. It gives opportunity to those dropouts who have completed their 7th Std. They are categorised as private candidates. They don't get study materials from the Board; nor is there any Personal Contact Programme (PCP) to help students overcome their difficulties. There is no

Basic Education Programme for the age group of 6 to 14. Comparing with NIOS, the Private Examination scheme of Gujarat Board can't be equated as Open School.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES:

There is little denial of the positive variable relations between education and empowerment which ultimately leads to national integration. Based on this proposition, let there be four hypotheses to carry out the present study:

- The open school system provides opportunity to dropouts to resume studies.
- The dropouts with open school certificates get into the mainstream and promote national integration and empowerment.
- The inclusive and flexible open school system is helpful in the fast changing industrial society.
- The open school system empowers the dropouts.

METHODOLOGY CUM RESEARCH DESIGN

The study includes the primary information obtained from the 200 candidates of NIOS. Keeping in consideration of the hypotheses, the purposive stratified sampling has been preferred as students belong to different categories. The main purpose of the proposed study is to make efforts to understand the open schooling and empowerment in variable relations. All the 200 candidates are asked to fill up the questioner. The semi-structured interview was also conducted with some students and those involved in the open school exam, such as the AF (Academic Facilitator), OSD (Officer on Special Duty), Study Centres / AI (Accredited Institutes). The data collection was conducted during the April-May and October-November Exams 2014 and 2015.

Techniques of Data Collection

Quantitative information would be taken on the basis of purposive stratified sampling with the help of interview guide. However, the qualitative empirical basis for the study will be provided by data collected through observation, conversation, personal contacts with the respondents depending on the social situations emerging at the time of fieldwork. The necessary interviews will be conducted, wherever required, to look into the sociological insights while putting things into (different) sociological perspectives.

ABOUT UNIVERSE

The study will be conducted at Surat. There are three Accredited Institutes (AIs) at Surat. Such AIs are popularly known as Study Centres. Every student enrolled to NIOS is allotted the nearest possible Study Centre possible where students are free to go for any academic help. The Study Centres are supposed to conduct Personal Contact Programme (PCP) to make students aware of the curricula and exam patterns and to address the query of the students. However, students hardly attend such PCPs as they opt for the private coaching. There are several private coaching centres that cater the needs of students. The majority of the students who opt for NIOS Exams are mostly dropouts and left schooling long back. They need intensive help from their tutors. The study centres are supposed to help the NIOS students on Saturday (after the school hour) and Sunday. In many occasions, the teachers remain absents as it is extra work for them for which they virtually don't get any extra remuneration. This trend of teachers has created another trend among students to avoid PCP sessions. It's also important to note that the Study Centres are private schools affiliated to either (Gujarat) State Board or Central Board (CBSE). The reputed schools are not interested to have the NIOS Study Centre or Exam Centre as there is little reputation involved in it.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

Mainstream:

The mainstream can be understood as the institutionally structured and culturally processed patterns of functional relations transmitted through the process of socialization and maintained more or less through AGIL as suggested by Parsons (2005). The status and role are well defined in the main stream society. Many get excluded as they fail to play the roles or robbed of the status.

Empowerment:

Knowledge is power, but in formal organizations, knowledge has to be supported by qualifications. It's an entitlement and the sense of confidence of having requisite qualifications. Empowerment in this context is to be understood in terms of opportunity. With knowledge, skills, and qualifications in hand, the NIOS students can have options and can select the job what is best to them. They can bargain for the best deal. This is to be understood as empowerment—to be in defining position.

National integration:

National integration is to be understood in terms of getting into the mainstream of society. Society is functional. The modern bureaucratic society prefers achieved status to ascribed status. Therefore, it's imperative to have formal qualifications apart from qualities informally acquired. The NIOS provides education and qualification to those who did not have opportunity to get formal education or regular schooling. This makes people, otherwise deprived, to get into the mainstream society. The exclusion marginalised and excluded community may pose threat to civil society in the long run.

Open Schooling:

The open schooling can be understood as open exam system. Anybody above a certain age can take exams. There is no need to go to school. The syllabus is well defined and the study materials are provided. It's like distance education. If required, the candidate can approach to the study centre duly accredited by the NIOS. The open schooling / home schooling facility is provided by the National Institute of Open Schooling (popularly known as NIOS) in a large scale across the country. According to the Right to Education Act, the "free and compulsory" education is up to the age of 14, i.e. up to the std. VIII. Those who cannot continue education any more can avail of the opportunities of open school exam in future and can have employment.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Literature in education is characterized with two things—both bulky in size and foggy in nature. Research requires precise and specific references. This is also a question before the researcher as to how many references are required of a study of this nature. A Physics paper of 9 pages had the reference of 5154 authors (Nature: May 15, 2015). For the present study, the researcher includes the observations and suggestions of different Education Commissions set up by the Governments including the international one for the 21st century education. This International Commission is known as the Delors Commission.

This commission was to decide the nature / kind of education required to society. As societies are not similar, therefore, education has to be customised to local needs. However, at the same time, it should be a meaningful bridge across nations and nationalities. The commission stated working with 15 eminent resource persons from across the globe to work out this. The group

was called the "International Commission on Education for the 21ˢᵗ Century." It was headed by Jacques Delors. That is why it is also known as the Delors Commission (1996). From 1993 to 1996, the group held lots of consultations meetings and consultations around the world. It took notes of the suggestions and remakes of a large number of experts. It came out with the report with the heading *Learning: The Treasure Within*. It provides necessary ideas and overview of the future society and its educational requirements. These ideas are keys to future education that can help peoples enter the 21ˢᵗ century with a meaningful purpose. Among other things, the report has raised certain tensions and addressed them at length. The researcher tries to explore methodologically the tensions and the questions of national integration in view of the Delors Commission report that emphasises living together. Such tensions, as commission envisaged, are between the local and the global, between the individual and the universal, between the tradition and the modernity, between the short-term and the long-term considerations. This dichotomy is also understood in terms of competition and opportunity. It's between the growth of knowledge and our capacity to assimilate it. It's also between the interfaces of spiritual and material ones. The Commission has underlined four different aspects of education, namely: **to know, to do, to be, and to live together**. The researcher explores and evaluates the scope of the open schooling system in meeting such objectives for an inclusive Indian society in consonance with the rest of the world (ibid).

There are many vulnerable groups isolated from society's main institutions, for example, family and / or job. A good number of people are known to be excluded from the main stream. Dalits are still economically and socially backward. The economic deprivation has pushed sizable number to below poverty line. The Constitution talks of justice—social, economic, and political.

What appears to be divisive is the forced alienation for which a decisive action plan is required. For any inclusive society, education has to be universal as education creates space for one's own accommodations in society and the world at large. This might be the reason why the Delors Commission has stressed the inclusive aspect of education to link individuals and groups in society and to make an inclusive society. The emerging expansion of the cyber society based on information technology creates enormous scope for those with knowledge and skill. India's Nation Policy of Education 1986 also talks of education to all. The Delors Commission suggests fighting against drop-outs. Today, unemployment rate is very high.

The Commission encourages us to look at other aspects of human activity that could become factors of social integration. The Delors Commission suggests that every school should provide students with necessary education and training for a participatory democratic life. The time has come to unleash the potentials of the youths for inclusive education which is very essential for inclusive socioeconomic growth. This is why the NIOS stands at the very centre stage.

EDUCATION COMMISSIONS AND COMMITTEES

The history of Indian education has its past deeply rooted in the Vedic period. However, to trace the birth of modern education, one has to go back to the British Rule (including East India Company) in India. To understand the nature of modern education, Comte's classification of three stages of development—theological, metaphysical, and positive needs to be understood. The modern education which is supposed to reflect modernity is synonymous with positivism. However, there is debate over the purpose of introducing modern education by the British rulers. While considering **Macaulay's**

Minute (1835), Lord Bentick issued an order stating that "the great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India; and that all the funds appropriated for the purpose of education alone" (www.teindia.nic.in/mhrd/50yrsedu/g/W/16/0W160301.htm). The Government Resolution suggests the indigenous learning system whatever existing to continue (ibid).

By 1853 lots of problems cropped up in education. It demanded serious attention and immediate solution. The then Secretary of State Sir Charles Wood had sent a Despatch, known as **Wood's Despatch**, to India. The recommendations of the Dispatch were both philanthropic and colonial. Among several recommendations, there was emphasis on mass education, women education, teachers training, etc. It also talked about the "supply of existing deficiencies, and the adoption of such improvements as may be best calculated to secure the ultimate benefit of the people" (Bose 1976:124). However, at the same time it proposed to "secure to us a larger and more certain supply of many articles necessary for our manufactures and extensively consumed by all classes of our population as well as an almost inexhaustible demand for the produce of British labour" (ibid:125). Taken as a whole, the Despatch was considered by some historians as the Magna Carta of Indian Education (Aggarwal 2001:22).

In due course, the foundation of the universities marked the culmination of the growth of Western education in India. However, Macaulay's expectations did not materialize. All1-educated Indians did not become English in tastes or in opinion or in morals and in intellect. Nor could they be brought under Christian faith.

In order to review the developments of the Woods Despatch, the **Hunter Commission** was instituted by the Government of India on 3rd February 1882. The Commission was asked to suggest the measures for development of primary education. The Commission suggested that secondary education was no less important than the primary education, and recommended the government to privatize higher education under state supervision (Bose 1976: 131). With reference to vocational and technical education, it was suggested by the Commission that options be given to academic pursuit or commercial / vocational pursuit (http 1).

By the end of the 19th century, the primary education failed to produce the desired results. The state of secondary education, though not a poor state of affairs, was far from expected. There were other issues like books, teachers' education, etc. to be looked into for improvement. Lord Curzon as the Viceroy took interests in educational reform. In September 1901, he held a conference of education officers at Simla. As a result, the **Indian Universities Commission** (January, 1902) was constituted under Thomas Raleigh. The Commission was asked to look into the existing situation and future prospects of the Universities established in British India. The Commission was also to consider and suggest measures for improvements of their workings which would, in turn, promote the quality of university education. It was also to promote the advancement of learning. The Commission submitted its report on June 9, 1902 (Bose 1976:132). The Universities Commission recommended that the secondary schools were to be brought under the jurisdiction and supervision of the universities. The Commission asked the universities to frame rules and regulation for this purpose (http 2).

Down the line, there was a Government Resolution in 1904 spelling out the initiatives taken by Lord Curzon who allocated Rs. 35 lakhs for the spread of Primary Education (Aggarwal 2001:23). The demand for mass education was growing. In 1913, the government came out with a resolution on education policy. It emphasized the standard of education, making primary and secondary education practical, and research in higher studies. Immediately, the Resolution was given green signal for implementation, but the outbreak of the World War I drew the attention and resources of the Government elsewhere. Yet, some new universities were established (Mukherji 1966).

Next came the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19) was headed by Sir Michael Sadler, with Asutosh Mukherji as a member. The commission reviewed the progress of the secondary and higher education in Bengal and came out with the suggestions for the reorganization of Calcutta University and the establishment of a new university at Dacca. Unlike the Hunter Commission of 1882, the Sadler Commission advocated more government investment in education (Chaudhuri 2011:202). The Commission's recommendations were very important with reference to the intermediate classes at high schools. It also recommended the setting up of a Board of Education to control High School and Intermediate Education. The Report of the Sadler Commission was comprehensive and many universities in India implemented its suggestions.

Under the Chairmanship of Sir Philip Hartog, the then Vice Chancellor of Dacca University, a Committee, popularly known as Hartog Committee, was instituted in 1929 to appraise the predicaments of primary school system. The committee observed dropout and stagnation at primary section. It advocated for quality rather than quantity. It recommended several measures on primary

education including problems pertaining to training of teachers and their service conditions (http 3).

In line with Sapru Committee Report (1934), the Abbot-Wood Report (1937) suggested vocation based education to generate much needed employability among youths. It suggested a parallel hierarchy of vocational institutions along with general education. As a result of its recommendations, the polytechnics have come into existence (http 4). The provincial Congress Ministries in seven major provinces of India also tried to help the elementary education to survive during 1937-39, but again it got neglected with the outbreak of World War II and subsequently the resignation of the Congress Ministers. Gandhiji also took personal initiative on free and compulsory education along with vocational training. In all India National Educational Conference at Wardha (1937), Dr. Zakir Hussain Committee was constituted which recommend the need based vocational education and the use of vernacular language. (http 5).

For the post World War educational set up, the Central Advisory Board of Education came out with a plan known to be the Sargent Plan in 1944. Sir John Sargent was the Education Adviser to the Government of India. One of the main recommendations of the Plan was to establish a body (University Grants Commission) to monitor the working of the university. The Plan also suggested the three year degree course, two year intermediate course, and establishment of Junior and Senior Technical Institutes. The objective of the Sargent Commission was to deliver quality education coupled with vocational training after the completion of school education (http 6).

The Sargent Plan was followed by the University Education Commission (1948-49). This Commission came at a time when the Constituent Assembly was busy making the Constitution of India. Therefore, it was the primary task

of the Commission to see how best such constitutional proposed goals to be realized. In absence of the relevant data during the volatile situation of transfer of power and the making of the nation state, the Commission preferred to play mostly the advisory role rather than coming out with concrete measures. Nehru, however, made an observation in early 1948 that this Commission is expected to be different and not to endorse the existing system with little modifications. He argued for the entire basis of education to be revolutionized (Naik 1965:13).

The **University Education Commission**, headed by Dr. Radhakrishnan, laid down several aims of higher education such as awakening the innate ability of the learners to grow with wisdom; to train students for democracy and self-development; to develop understanding of the present as well as the past; to acquaint students with cultural heritage ad its recognition; to impart professional and vocational training to students; etc. (Aggarwal 2001:107-8). The Commission laid great stress on education for agriculture and its improvement. (Report of the Education Commission, 1964-66, Vol. I). In order to have better understanding and cooperation of the university education across the country, the setting up of the University Grants Commission (UGC) was also reiterated (http 7).

In 1952, the **Secondary Education Commission** (1952-23) was headed by Dr. A. L. Mudaliar, the then Vice-Chancellor of Madras University, to look into the current position of the secondary education in India and to recommend measures for its improvement. The commission was to find relationship to primary, Basic and Higher Education in order to streamline them. It was also to find the inter-relation of secondary schools of different categories and other allied problems. The commission came out with 25 recommendations with

structural changes—the two-year 'intermediate' stage in the college to be replaced by a one year pre-university course. The other year would be shifted to the higher secondary stage, making it four years of education. Suggestions were given to continue with the degree course as a three-year course at college level (Report of the Secondary Education Commission, October 1952 to June 1953).

The Commission came out with the recommendations underlining the need for Primary or Junior Basic Education which should continue for four years and should include (a) the Middle or Senior Basic or Junior Secondary stage of 3 years, and (b) the Higher Secondary stage of 4 years. The Multipurpose Secondary School was a new concept recommended by the Commission (http 8).

With most comprehensive terms of reference, the **Kothari commission** (1964-66) was set-up under the Chairmanship of Dr. D. S. Kothari, the then Chairman of the U.G.C. This Commission is the sixth in its kind in the history of education commission. The special significance of this commission is to see education with an all-encompassing framework in lieu of the customized terms of reference attributed to the earlier education commissions. Therefore, it reviewed almost all aspects of the education system at different levels. Another unique feature of the Kothari commission had some foreign experts. In addition to eleven Indian members, it had five members from countries such as USA, U.K, USSR, France and Japan (http 9). Among others, the committee recommended the education structure and standards, teacher status, teacher's education, equalization of educational opportunities, expansion of school education, school curriculum, language scheme, etc. (Sharma & Sharma 2000).

The 42nd Constitution Amendment Act 1976 was introduced to bring education to concurrent list from the state list. This has enabled both the Central and the

State Governments to work in tandem to work out unity in diversity. This was followed by the National Policy on Education, 1986. Again in 2002, the "Right to Education" was incorporated in Article 21 by the 86th Constitution Amendment Act 2002. This was followed by the Right to Education Act. 2009. The common purpose of all commissions was man making and nation building.

ABOUT NIOS:

The NIOS is an open school system to take care of the necessitates mostly of the school dropouts with different age groups, cultural backgrounds, socio-economic strata, etc. The NIOS came out initially as a project by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) in 1979. In 1986, the National Policy National Policy of Education (NPE) states that "opportunities will be provided to the youth, housewives, agricultural and industrial workers and professionals to continue the education of their choice, at the pace suited to them. The future thrust will be in the direction of open and distance learning." It also argued that the "Open Learning System has to play an **interventionist role** in achieving objective of education for all." The NEP suggested having an independent open school with its separate syllabus and evaluation system. In due course, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) looking after education started the National Open School (NOS) in November 1989. The open school project of CBSE was merged to NOS. Through a Resolution, the National Open School (NOS) has been "vested with the authority to conduct and certify examinations for Secondary and Senior Secondary levels

by the Government of India as per the resolution issued vide No. F 5-24/90-Sch. III dated 14.9.1990." In July 2002, the MHRD changed the name of the organization from the National Open School (NOS) to the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS). It was done with some sort of mission and vision to extend supportive education at school level. Keeping in view of the National Policy of Education 1986, the NIOS was made to be decisive in respect to (a) to universalization of education, (b) to greater Equity and justice in society, & (c) the evolution of a learning society (http://nios.ac.in/wiki/index.php/About_NIOS). The NIOS provides opportunities for "what to learn, when to learn, where to learn and how to learn" (NIOS Prospectus 2015-16:5).

The NIOS gives opportunity to the drop-outs by providing following courses / programmes to study through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. The Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme is for children up to 14 years for their study equivalent to III, V, and VIII of the formal school system. The OBE programme envisages schooling with graded-curriculum to provide basic and quality education to children, neo-literates, school drop-outs / left-outs. The OBE programme is in tie up with about 350 organizations that give facilities to the study centres. The NIOS provides resource and logistic support to the voluntary agencies and *Zila Saksharta Samities* (ZSSs) etc., for implementation of its OBE programme. Such supports are curricula, study materials, certification, resource persons and popularization of OBE.

At the Secondary (X) and Senior Secondary (XII) levels, the NIOS gives ample facilities to students to choose their favourite subjects / courses, pace of learning, and the transfer of credits from the CBSE and State Board Education to enable the continuation of studies by the learners. An NIOS student is given freedom to as many as ten opportunities to appear and qualify examinations of

five subjects. One can take as many as five years period. The transfer of credit is also possible. Credits that a learner has already gained are saved / accumulated till the learner clears the required credits for certification. The learning strategies include learning through books, audio and video clips, taking part in personal contact programme (PCP) conducted by the study centres. The students are to write the assignment called TMA (Tutor Marked Assignments). A weightage of 20 marks has been attributed to TMA. There are some schemes like "Enrichment Programme" to motivate students through magazine (Open Learning), campaigns, advertisements, etc. The study materials are made available in several languages like English, Hindi, and Urdu mediums. In Gujarat, the study materials are available in Gujarati too for both Secondary and Senior Secondary subjects. The On-Demand Examination System (ODES) is in operation at Secondary and Senior Secondary level. According to the information available on the NIOS Prospectus (2015-16: 4), it offers total 28 subjects in which there are 8 languages at Senior Secondary (XII) level. At the Secondary (X) level, the total number of subject remains the same (i.e. 28) including 17 languages. The Students can write in English or Hindi or in any regional language. Besides these, the NIOS offers 10 vocational subjects in combination with academic subjects at Secondary level and 20 vocational subjects in combination with academic subjects at Senior Secondary level (NIOS Prospectus 2015-16:5).

As the young learners will be the assets of the nation, the vocational education programme has been customised for developing entrepreneur skills. It offers 86 programmes, vocational education in nature, in different areas. Among them, the most favourites are agriculture, business, and commerce, engineering and technology, health and paramedical, home science and hospitality

management, teacher training, computer and IT related sectors, life enrichment programmes and general services.

Within National Curriculum Framework (NCF-2005), the NIOS came up with a significant document titled "Vocational Education and Training: A Framework on Curriculum Imperatives with a Focus on Knowledge Acquisition and Skills Development: Initiative through Open and Distance Learning". It is expected that this document will be effective in making a programme for implementation of vocational education programmes through open distance learning. The NIOS programmes are made to popular among learners, physically and visually challenged and candidates from disadvantaged sections of the society.

The NIOS operates through a network of five departments, eleven regional centres and 3367 accredited institutions (study centres) in India and abroad. It has a current enrolment of about 1.6 million students at Secondary and Senior Secondary levels which makes it the largest open schooling system in the world. The NIOS has setup an International Centre for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS) in collaboration with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and UNESCO. It offers certificate and diploma courses.

The emergence of Open Schooling has a long history. The conventional education system has its own limitations. All can't get into it. It's otherwise expensive when provided by private institutions. The Commonwealth Open Schooling Association (COMOSA) has its Secretariat at NIOS, New Delhi. It functions as a liaising agency for information, dissemination, coordination, and mutual consultation among member countries. The mandate for Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth (OSAC) is to organize human resource development programmes for functionaries of Open Schools,

Promote research and development activities and take steps to ensure quality of standards (http 10).

SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

With Industrial Revolution which is also beginning of the bureaucratization of society, the responsibility of education was shifted to formal school from families. In India, the Gurukul system came to an end with the arrival of the formal education system during the British rule. Sociology of education tries to understand the role of school in society as secondary socialization starts here. There are three main sociological perspectives—functionalism, conflict, and symbolic interactionism. For the present purpose, functionalism and conflict can serve the purpose. In India, sociology of education is more significant as it has the second largest population. Population does not necessarily mean human resource unless and until it is with knowledge, skill, and character. Modern education, however, remains confined to knowledge and skills. It doesn't talk of character. Character is understood to be the outcome of socialization process. Here lies the role of school in imparting knowledge, generating skills, and socializing behaviours. In a country like India with demographic diversity, schools are playing vital roles in nation building.

Theory and research in the sociology of education seek to understand the limits and possibilities of schooling. In the United States, which has placed enormous faith in the power of schools to ameliorate all types of social problems, including poverty, and has viewed schools as the central institutions for social mobility, the sociology of education provides evidence about the extent to which schools can solve social problems. Until the 1960s, sociologists for the most part shared this optimism about the role of education in a modern society. They examined important themes, including how children are socialized for

adult roles, the school as a social organization, and the effects of schooling on students' life chances. Beginning in the 1960s, sociologists of education began to doubt that schools, by themselves, could solve social problems, especially problems of economic and social inequality.

Sociologists of education continued to believe that they could improve education through the application of scientific theory and research. Because of their scientific orientation, they are more likely to ask what is rather than what ought to be, although sociological research has been the basis for trying to improve and change schools. They want to discover what occurs inside of schools and what the effects of schooling are on individuals and groups. The distinctive feature of the sociology of education is empiricism, or the collection and analysis of empirical data within a theoretical context in order to construct a logical set of conclusions. Thus, the sociology of education relies on empirical methods to understand how schools are related to society, how individuals and groups interact within schools, and what the effects of schooling are for individuals and groups of children. Its findings are based on an attempt to be objective and scientific. It examines individuals and groups in their social context and examines the social forces that affect them. The sociological approach to education is crucial because it provides conclusions based on focused and tested observations. Without such an analysis, one cannot know *what is;* and without knowing what is, one cannot make what ought to be a reality. The sociology of education has its roots in the classical sociology of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Emile Durkheim. It has spread across modernist and post-modernist theories.

FUNCTIONALISM

The basic tenets of functionalism are to understand society in terms of interdependence and reciprocation. Solidarity is at the heart and soul of functionalism. More importantly, functionalism justifies the process that maintains social order through consensus and agreement. Even while understanding change, functionalism stresses on evolutionary process unlike that of Marxism that talks of revolution. One can understand the social change from mechanical solidarity to organic one as suggested by Durkheim, the father of Functionalism.

Although functionalists understand that change is inevitable, they underscore the evolutionary nature of change. Furthermore, although they acknowledge that conflict between groups exists, functionalists argue that without a common bond to unite groups, society will disintegrate. Thus, functionalists examine the social processes necessary to the establishment and maintenance of social order.

As the bonds that connected individuals to each other and to society became unhinged, modern societies faced disintegration from within. He did not believe that the solution to social disintegration was a return to the past, with its strict forms of social control and regulation. Rather, he believed that modern societies had to develop new forms of social control and cohesion that would allow for the newly developed individualism of modernity to exist within a cohesive modern society. Such a society would allow for a balance between individualism and community.

Durkheim was the first sociologist to apply sociological theory to education. Although he recognized that education had taken different forms at different times and places, he believed that in virtually all societies, education was of

critical importance in creating the moral unity necessary for social cohesion and harmony. For Durkheim (1947), moral values were the foundation of society. Durkheim (1977) argues consensus being the key to the stability of society. He also talks of organic solidarity and moral density essential for the society to be functional.

In a highly integrated, well-functioning society, schools socialize students with appropriate values and select students according to their abilities. Educational reforms contribute to make social actors play different functions and roles to cope up with social changes. Functionalism is concerned with the functions of schooling in the maintenance of social order. Whereas conflict theory argues that schools function in the interests of the dominant groups in a society, functionalism sees schools as functioning in the interests of the majority of citizens, at least within democratic societies. Therefore, functionalists examine the specific purposes of schooling and their role in society. These purposes or functions are intellectual, political, social, and economic and refer to their role within any existing society. Functionalists, however, are most concerned with the role of schools in modern, democratic societies.

This democratic-liberal functionalist perspective views education as a vital institution in a modern capitalist society defined by its technocratic, meritocratic, and democratic characteristics. Although considerable inequality remains, society in this framework is characterized by the movement from ascription to achievement, with equal educational opportunity the crucial component. The historical pattern of academic failure by minority and working-class students was a blemish on the principles of justice and equality of opportunity expounded by a democracy. This educational pattern necessitated the formulation of reform programs to ensure equality of

opportunity. Even though functionalist theorists disagreed on the causes of academic failure, they vigorously believed that the solutions to both educational and social problems were possible within the capitalist social structure.

CONFLICT THEORY

Conflict theorists argue that schools function in the interests of dominant groups, rather than everyone, and that functionalists confused what is with what ought to be. According to this critique, whereas schools ought to be democratic and meritocratic, the empirical evidence did not support the functionalist contention that they were. Although the specific nature of conflict theory is developed in the next section, it is important to note some of the problems with functionalism. First, conflict theorists argue that the relationship between schooling, skills, and jobs is far less rational than functionalists suggest. Second, conflict theorists point out that the role of school is to provide equality of opportunity and reduce discrimination. Third, large-scale empirical research on the effects of schooling casts significant doubt on the functionalist assertion that the expansion of schooling brings about an increasingly just and meritocratic social order.

Conflict sociology explains education in terms of power relation and do not subscribe that values pertaining to co-operation hold the society together. On the contrary, ongoing conflicts short-out the differences and make the society functional. However, it is argued that the dominant groups make use of education to maintain their domination. Any society is held together by its key institutions — like economy, polity, education, culture, and military, etc. Ideology provided some sort of justification to the power structure created by the powerful. This is designed to legitimizing inequality and the unequal

distribution of material and cultural rewards. Conflict sociologists see the relation between school and society as problematic. Whereas functionalists emphasize cohesion in explaining social order, conflict sociologists emphasize struggle. From a conflict point of view, schools are similar to social battlefields, where students struggle against teachers, teachers against administrators, and so on. These antagonisms, however, are most often muted for two reasons: the authority and power of the school, and the achievement ideology. In effect, the achievement ideology convinces students and teachers that schools promote learning and sort and select students according to their abilities, not according to their social status. The achievement ideology disguises the "real" power relations within the school, which, in turn, reflect and correspond to the power relations within the larger society.

Though Marx did not write a great deal about education, his analytic imagination and moral outrage were sparked by the social conditions found in Europe in the nineteenth century. Industrialization and urbanization had produced a new class of workers—the proletariat—who lived in poverty; worked up to eighteen hours a day; and had little, if any, hope of creating a better life for their children. Marx believed that the class system, which separated owners from workers and workers from the benefits of their own labour, made class struggle inevitable. Like Marx, Weber was convinced that power relations between dominant and subordinate groups structured societies, but unlike Marx, Weber (1978) believed that class differences alone could not capture the complex ways in which human beings form hierarchies and belief systems that make these hierarchies seem just and inevitable. Thus, Weber examined status cultures as well as class position. Status is an important sociological concept because it alerts us to the fact that people identify their group by what they consume and with whom they socialize. Weber also

recognized that political and military power could be exercised by the state, without direct reference to the wishes of the dominant classes. The Weber's approach to studying the relation between school and society has developed into a compelling tradition of sociological research. Researchers in this tradition tend to analyze school organizations and processes from the point of view of status competition and organizational constraints. One of the first American sociologists of education to use these concepts was Willard Waller. Waller portrayed schools as autocracies in a state of instability.

Collins (1978), a contemporary conflict theorist, believes that education can be understood in terms of the struggle of status group. He is of the opinion that qualification such as college degrees are no doubt status symbols which is more than mere indicators of success. The rise of "credentialism" does not indicate that society is becoming more expert. For him the dominant groups increasingly use education to secure better position in occupation as well as in social structure.

A second school of conflict theory is based on the work of Stanford sociologist John Meyer and his collaborators. Called institutional theory, Meyer (2009: 55–77) argues that the expansion of education worldwide has not been due to functional requirements or labour market demands but due to the belief that educational development is a requirement of a civil society. Like Collins, Meyer does not believe that such expansion is a proof of democracy, but rather the belief that educational expansion is necessary. Through comparative, historical, and institutional analysis, Meyer and his colleagues argue that educational expansion often preceded labour market demands and that educational expansion is legitimated by institutional ritual and ceremony rather than actual practices.

Unlike most Marxists, the cultural and social reproduction theorists, such as Bourdieu and Bernstein examined how the social and cultural processes of schooling reproduced society. For Bourdieu (1977), cultural capital (particular forms of culture, such as knowledge of music, art, and literature) is passed on by families and schools. The concept of "cultural capital" is important because it suggests that, in understanding the transmission of inequalities, we ought to recognize that the cultural characteristics of individuals and groups are significant indicators of status and class position. There is a growing body of literature that suggests that schools transmit specific social identities that either enhance or hinder students' life chances. Bernstein (1996) argued that the structural and interactional aspects of the educational system reflect each. He examined how speech patterns reflect students' social class backgrounds and how students from working-class backgrounds are at a disadvantage in the school setting because schools are middle-class organizations.

INTERACTIONIST THEORY

Interactionist theories about the relation of school and society are critical of the functionalist and conflict perspectives. The critique arises from the observation that functionalist and conflict theories are very abstract and emphasize structure and process at a societal level of analysis. Although this level of analysis helps us understand education in the "big picture," macro-sociological theories hardly provide us with an interpretable snapshot of what schools are like on an everyday level. What do students and teachers actually do in school? Interactionist theories pay attention to the taken-for-granted behaviours and interactions between students and between students and teachers. For example, the processes by which students are labeled "gifted" or "learning disabled" are, from an interactionist point of view, important to analyze because such processes carry with them many implicit assumptions about learning and

children. By examining the micro-sociological or the interactional aspects of school life, we are less likely to create theories that are logical and eloquent, but without meaningful content.

Interactionist theory has its origins in the social psychology of early twentieth-century sociologists Mead and Cooley. Mead and Cooley examined the ways in which the individual is related to society through on-going social interactions. This symbolic interactionism perspective views the self as socially constructed in relation to social forces and structures and the product of on-going negotiation of meanings. Goffman (1959) examined the microsociology of everyday life and the functions of interaction rituals in holding society together. He argued how everyday taken for-granted patterns of interactions serve to hold society together. Though Goffman did not directly study education, his writings on mental hospitals, on the labeling of so-called deviant behavior, and on patterns of interpersonal behavior provided a rich tapestry of concepts for sociologists of education, particularly through the use of labeling theory, which has been applied to the study of teacher expectations, ability grouping and tracking, and the study of schools as total institutions. Rist (2009: 411-455) has provided some of the most important insights on the ways in which school processes affect educational achievement. His research into the everyday processes of schooling in an inner-city school provides an understanding of how school practices and contributes to the reproduction of educational and social inequalities.

With the growth of market, the quantitative methods dominated the qualitative research. Large-scale and longitudinal data on schooling, staffing, etc. are collected by organizations such as the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago and the National Center for Educational Statistics and

are processed by using sophisticated statistical techniques. The purpose of this type of research was to examine the independent effects of schooling on educational and economic outcomes while controlling for a series of independent variables, both inside and outside of schools. These quantitative analyses examined the explained and unexplained variation in academic achievement among different groups based on race, social class, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, and others. This type of research also examined school effects on these groups by comparing different types of schools, including public, private, and charter schools, as well as the effects of school organization and processes, including ability grouping, tracking, and school and class size.

Although this type of research provided important evidence on the effects of school organization and processes and the independent effects of factors outside of schools, interactionists argued that research based on large-scale data sets often missed the reasons for these effects, as they did not examine school processes. As an antidote to large, data set, quantitative research, qualitative researchers provided complementary approaches to understanding schooling using ethnographic methods. Researchers such as Annette Lareau, Lois Weis, and Michelle Fine provided important analyses of how school processes affect students from various backgrounds.

Others are more rooted within interpretive traditions, including symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, hermeneutics, postmodernism, feminism, critical theory, and cultural studies, and in varying degrees they reject post-positivist notions of scientific rigor. Despite critiques of qualitative research as unscientific, qualitative research continues to be an important part of research in the sociology of education.

Based upon their strengths and weaknesses, both quantitative and qualitative methods should be an important part of sociology of education research. Qualitative research in the sociology of education has made valuable contributions to our understanding of educational problems and has offered policy makers useful data for school improvement. Quantitative large-scale data set analyses have provided essential evidence on the effects of schooling and have been invaluable to policy makers. Whether studies are quantitative or qualitative or part of a mixed method approach that uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, sociology of education research provides important data for public policy.

A FEW WORDS ON NATIONAL INTEGRATION:

When Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister, he convened the National Integration Conference in September-October, 1961. His aim was to develop strategies as to how communalism, regionalism, caste system, etc. can be curbed. The conference was to deliberate specific problems standing on the way to a modern nation building. Apart from the deliberation, the conference suggested to institute a National Integration Council (NIC) to consider all matters pertaining to national integration and to make recommendations thereon. The NIC was set up and had its first meeting in 1962. National Integration may be the outcome of a good number of factors involved. However, the like this requires specific understanding and operational definitions. For this purpose, the national integration is considered to a process of inclusion of the marginalised to the main stream and helps them get settled. The dropouts who, without basic qualifications, behave like free radicals or oxidants and cause damage to society or commit crime as there are little options left to them. The NIOS provides them with opportunity to qualify both Secondary and Senior Secondary exams and get settled. The NIOS also

provides with vocational training to find out placement at work or to be self-employed. This process of inclusion is promotional to national integration. The researcher will bring out the process of national integration as dropouts give up their vagrant lifestyle and get into the institutional framework for a social living with social status and recognition.

The statement of Dewey (1934) on the purpose of education can be cited to link education and its social demands. Going by the understandings of Dewey, the basic purpose of education remains to be the same over civilizations. This purpose he understands the man making and nation building components with which the youths can be the part and parcel of the main stream society. Irrespective of time and place, Dewey argues, education does the same to all—be it a little aboriginal of Australia or an Athenian. "Any education is, in its forms and methods, an outgrowth of the needs of the society in which it exists," Dewey (ibid).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study spells out the functional aspects of the open school system with regard to empowerment and national integration. This study is helpful for those policy planners in charge of education and its different aspects of man making and nation building. As there are several stake holders of education, especially the governments, at both central and state level, being the most powerful stakeholders will have sufficient impetus from this study.

LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY:

Every study, for academic purpose, should mention its limits and delimits. This study is not an exception. For the very purpose, the study mostly remains confined to Surat, the one of the most industrially developed districts of India. This growing industrial profile of Surat is also directly linked to the

reconstruction of society and its key institutions like economy, education, family system, religion, etc. Migration and migrant workers do come to picture as potent variables. The study of this nature requires all India data, and a much larger sampling than what has been stipulated here. Every study requires to furnish either confirmation of the existing theoretical framework or a new framework or a revised one.

The theoretical significance of the study of NIOS as open school and its promotional schemes to help dropouts access to main stream and be empowered may be derived from the statement of the (then) American President, Franklin D. Roosevelt's address at University of Pennsylvania on Sept. 20, 1940:

> We can't always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future. (http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=15860)

CHAPTER – 2

PATTERNS OF EDUCATION

WITH REFERENCE TO OPEN SCHOOL

Before getting into the patterns of education, let there be the structure of education before us. The pattern of education in India is numerically presented as 10+2+3.
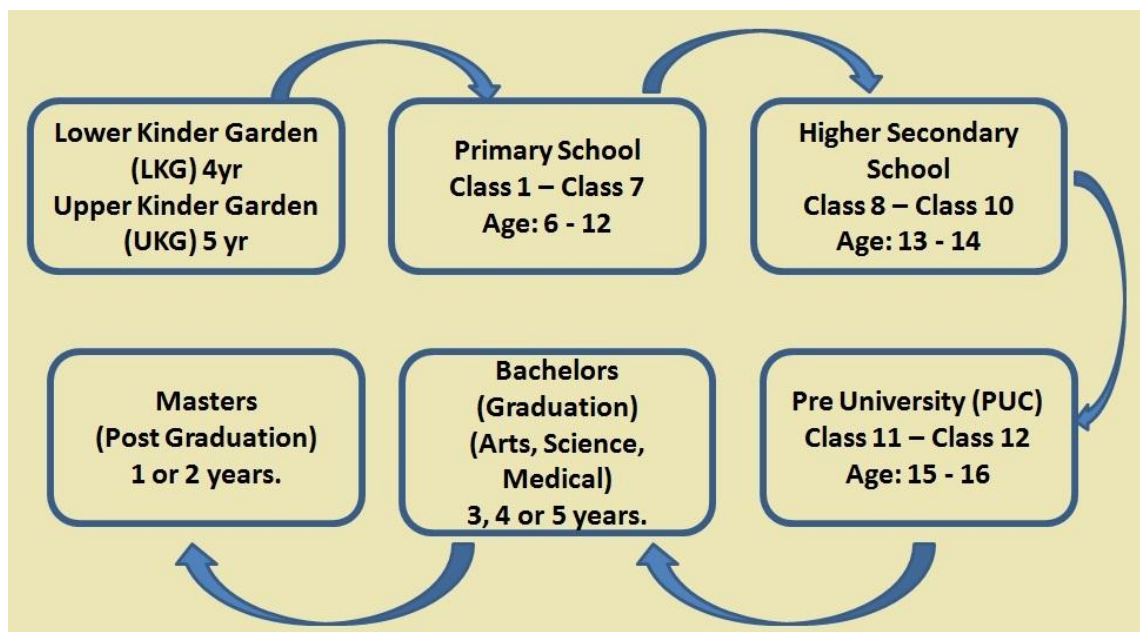
The pattern of education in India has its basic framework in the Constitution of India. Education comes under the Concurrent List. It suggests that both the State Governments and the Central Government can have their stake on education. This is how education connects the nation to its units, and this in turn promotes national integration in terms of unity in diversity. History records the journey of (Greek) city state to Nation State. That is the journey of modernity too. However, there are trends emerging to suggest the reversal. With technology, resource, and communication, provinces can claim to have the status of independent city states. It's all about how federation is made or

configured in the constitution. In the USA, the number of states remains to fifty. The unity of the United Kingdom is subject to the referendum of its constituent units whether to remain united or not. Europe with its gradual disintegration decided to have a European Union. With the LPG (liberalization, privatization, and globalization) in practice, the popular phrase "unity in diversity" turns to be diversity in unity. This diversity also accords integration. There cannot be democracy without differences of opinion. It may be a question of another research to study the relationship between dictatorship and national integration. In Indian context, the question can be put in different ways linking national emergency (1975—77) and national integration. It's ambit clear that the structure and content of education invariably link to national integration.

The education portfolio of India is in the custody of the government. The private institutes cannot make the syllabus, but implement the government syllabus as per government instructions. The final exam or public exam is conducted by the respective board / council.

The school education in India can be divided into four segments. They can be named as (i) primary, (ii) upper primary, (iii) secondary, and (iv) higher secondary. Today most of the schools have pre-primary section consists of junior kindergarten and senior kindergarten. The minimum age to get admission in junior kindergarten is about four years. The National Policy of Education (1968 & 1986) along with its revised recommendation that came up in 1992 provides a uniform pattern of school education across the country. This is 10+2 pattern that requires 12 years of schooling. It's pertinent to mention that education comes under the concurrent list under which both the central government and the state governments are entitled to make laws. It is

also understood constitutionally that any conflict, if at all, between the central laws and the state laws, the central laws will prevail over state laws. The argument given is "India, i.e., Bharat shall be a union of states," (Article 1 of the Constitution). As per constitutional framework, there are two types of education boards—central board and the state board. In addition, the minorities can have their own educational institutes under Article 29 and 30 of the Constitution. Mostly such educational institutes are affiliated to the State Board or the Central Board. In India the Madasa education covers a large number of Muslim youths.

The Council of Madarsa Education Board has been registered under Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860 of Govt. of India. It is an autonomous body and is also in tie up with the Ministry of Human Resource and Development and the erstwhile Planning Commission, Govt. of India. The main objective of Council of Madarsa Education Boards is to act as a coordinating agency between Madarsas, Madarsa Boards and Central/State Govt. /other non-Govt. organization for development and improving the quality of education in Madarsas (http 11). There are efforts to modernize Madarsas with secular and scientific studies.

The ancient educational system, popularly known as Gurulul, was monastic. Guru means teacher and Kul means domain. It was fully residential. Students and teachers lived in the same premises. Sanskrit was the language of teaching. Students were mostly from the Brahmin (priest) *Varna* as the Varna system was the order of the day. A few were from the Kshatriya (warrior) and Vaishya (business) *Varnas*. The Brahmin students were imparted knowledge of religion, philosophy, and other ancillary disciplines of knowledge. The warrior class, the Kshatriya, were trained about various aspects of warfare. The

Vaishyas were taught trade and commerce. In general, the Gurukul system of education focused mostly on the use of weaponry, reciting Vedas, music, art and self-defense. The Shudras (servants) were generally deprived of education. After the thread ceremony commonly known as "Upanayana" the child had to leave the parental home to Gurukul to acquire knowledge. The education system involved three basic processes, namely *sravana* (listening), *manana* (pondering) and *nidhyasana* (comprehending). Though three processes are part of learning, modern education doesn't give importance on such psychological aspects. The modern methodology is basically teaching methodology loaded with smart technology, whereas ancient education was based on learning methodology. This education was mainly for life. The modem education is for service as life becomes service oriented; today our identity is based on our jobs, not caste. With little sociological imagination, not strictly linking "biography and history", the research is of opinion that home schooling may become popular, and schooling would be left to (private) coaching centres in coming days. Having had required knowledge the students would opt for taking open school exams. After open school, they will opt for Open University exams. Even today, one can opt for Open University exams and can complete Ph.D. too.

The Central Board under the Ministry of Human Resources runs both CBSE and ICSE & ISC. They have the provisions of schooling from Std. I to Std. XII. The curricula are broadly similar but differences do prevail. However, the CBSE system is very popular across the country. Along with the Central Board, every state has its own education board under the Ministry of Education. The Central Government has some schools under Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan. It was started for the central government employees who are distributed throughout the country. The government started the

Kendriya Vidyalaya project in 1965 to provide uniform education in institutions following the same syllabus at the same pace regardless of the location to which the employee's family has been transferred (India 2009: A Reference Annual: 233)

They are popularly known as central schools. They are set up to cater to children of government servants who were subject to All-India transferability. In rural areas, the Central Government runs the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya. It's a residential school unlike the central school. There is reservation for girls as well as reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes commensurate with their population strength in the district. In addition, there are other purposive schools like Sainik Schools, Railway Schools, Tibetan Schools, etc. This is an overview of the school system of India for formal education where schooling takes place on regular basis and a certain percentage of attendance and marks is mandatory for promotion. The international schools are affiliated to the International Baccalaureate Programme and / or the Cambridge International Examinations. Though right to equality has been guaranteed in the Constitution, all are not equally blessed with same socio-economic conditions. Alternative Schooling: Non-Formal and Open Education under Gujarat Government

To impart basic necessary education to both non-starters and drop-outs, a major change in the policy has been adopted to ensure the enrolment and education of drop–outs in the elementary education system. This includes children from habitations without schools, children who assist parents in domestic works and girls who are unable to attend formal schools. Accordingly, every child in the age group of 6 to 14 shall continue to learn on a full time base, if possible, and on a part time bases, if necessary. It is in this

context that, alternative schooling and non-formal education system have been recommended by the Central government. Notwithstanding the fact that Gujarat State occupies a higher position in literacy compared to educationally backward states of the country, Govt. of India approved the Non-Formal Education (NFE) scheme from 1989-90 for the State.

In pursuance of NPE – 1986, State Government and voluntary agencies run NFE classes as per revised NFE policy in urban slums, hilly and tribal areas.

Yeas	State sponsored Centers	Centers by Voluntary agencies	Number of Beneficiaries		
			Boys	Girls	Total
1988-89	-	2119	25404	29724	55128
1989-90	-	2017	24197	30415	54612
1990-91	1533	2282	46192	41468	87660
1991-92	1533	2282	46192	41468	87660

Source: Shaksharta Abhiyan, Dept. of Information, Gujarat State, 1992

The target group includes children in the age group of 9 to 14 who belong to specified categories mentioned earlier. The Teaching Learning Material for NFE has been prepared in joint collaboration with the Directorate of Adult Education, State Institute of Education, State School Textbooks Board and subject experts. Curriculum and teaching-learning material thus prepared are relevant to local environment and learners' needs.

Considering the need for the staggering illiteracy among children, the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act gives the guarantee of free and compulsory education up to the age group (6-14) under Art. 21A of the Constitution and urge the states (under Art. 45) to provide Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children until they complete the age of six years.

Alternative Schooling (AS)

More than 2 lakh children are estimated who do not attend formal schools. District Primary Education Program (DPEP), therefore, has started Alternative Schools to provide access to primary education to children of disadvantaged sections living in remote and small habitations, aiming to provide schooling facility to non-starters and drop out children to a level where they can rejoin the formal system of primary education.

Models for Alternative School

In Banaskantha, Dangs, and Panchmahals, several AS models have been introduced to provide schooling facility to children not enrolled in formal schools. This includes: Back to School (2000 centers): AS center, Alternative School and Education Camp, Bridge Courses (138 centers): Vacation course, Ashram Shalas, Tent School, Community Hostel, Salt Pan School and Night Class. Under Alternative Schooling System, DPEP Gujarat has achieved enormous success. By February 2001, out of the proposed 2800 AS centers have been opened under Back to School program, covering 40516 out of schoolchildren of which 21974 are girls. Also, 138 Bridge Course centers have been opened covering 2347 working children and children of migrant laborers.

District	No. of Centres	No. of Students		
		Boys	Girls	Total
Banaskantha	800	8793	10305	19098
Dang	60	515	583	1108
Panchmahals	1140	9234	11076	20310
Total	2000	18542	21964	40516

Source: Gujarat Council for Educational Research and Training (Page-51)

Right to Education Act:

The Constitutional commitment in India is to provide free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of fourteen years (Article 45). When the

Constitution of India was introduced in 1950, we had seven Fundamental rights including the Right to Property which was later abolished. However, we did not have the Right to Education as Fundamental Right. The Right to Education was incorporated in the Constitution in 2002 by taking recourse to 68th Constitution Amendment. Article 21 A was incorporated stating that "The State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine." This effort was made when the nation failed to achieve its target of universalization of elementary education within ten years of the commencement of the Constitution, i.e. by 1960. In this effect, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) as resource and training centres. With this effect, the Right to Education Act 2009 was passed to provide free and compulsory education to children between the age group of 6 to 14. It came into effect from April 2010. Here is a twist in the tail. Education can be free, but how can it be compulsory? Who can compel the family to send the child to school? Probably, the answer is "Nobody". This gives space for home schooling, though not an old concept, but becomes relevant in context to an RTI reply in which the then MHRD Minister Kapil Sibal said that despite the RTE Act of 2009, one is free to decide whether to send his / her children to school or not. The government would not interfere (RTE: Home Schooling too is fine, says Sibal (http 12). Moreover, an inclusive approach has been adopted in the name of Sarva Shiksha Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). Even the education of the disabled children is the major thrust area. The Integrated Education for Disabled Children (IEDC) was started in 1974. Its main focus was primary education to be inclusive. The Governments both at the Centre and at State are making

efforts to promote professional / vocational based education even at secondary level.

For any country, the school education is an important aspect both for man making and nation building. The primary education is found to be the most potent independent variable in the socio-economic development of any given country. As development paradigm has got shifted from primary sector to secondary sector and then to tertiary sector. Today we live in the knowledge economy supported with information, internet, and intellectual property. Therefore, the paradigm of primary education looks completely different today in compare to the past. In a developing country like India, many households can't afford to have primary education for their children. Though it's made free in the Right to Education Act, the hidden costs remain involved in sending a child to the school. The poor understand education in terms of opportunity cost not so lucrative or profitable. The child can earn something if he stops going to school. The immediate profit is more important to the poor. They are hardly impressed by the long term impacts of education in making quality life. The fact is that the quality of life also has bearings on economy and health. Therefore, no nation can ignore the primary education so essential for being social actors.

However, due to rigidities of the formal schooling system, quite a large number of school going children drop out at various stages of school education. Moreover, due to poor socio-economic conditions, many children belonging to marginal section are not able to take advantage of the formal schooling system. Today, the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and the Babasaheb Ambedkar Open University are playing significant role in promoting open and distance education at higher education

level. The University has many achievements in terms of access to a variety of courses of study and training of personnel.

Literacy Rate in India:
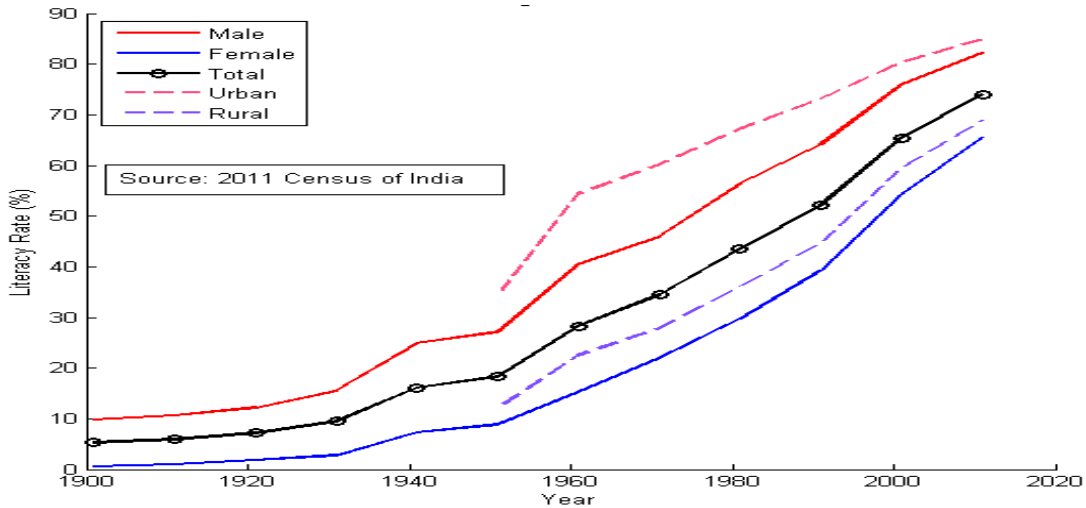
The history of open school is a long and complex one. Distance learning at school level is different from that of university level. At the university system, it came into existence 1965 with a different approach and purpose. For school, the purpose is to address the drop outs without sufficient literacy and essential qualifications. The idea to start the correspondence courses at the secondary level originated in 1964. Madhya Pradesh Board of Secondary Education started correspondence courses to provide coaching for secondary-school students in 1965. In 1968, Delhi Patrachar Vidyalaya (correspondence school) came into existence (Sujatha 2002) along with Rajasthan Boards of Secondary Education. Orissa and Uttar Pradesh subsequently started offering correspondence education to private candidates. The Open School Project started in 1979 under the supervision of CBSE. The NCERT constituted a working group to examine the feasibility of the Open School to meet the demands of universalization of elementary education and secondary education. The concept of open school took concrete shape only in 1978 and was strongly endorsed by the International Conference on Correspondence Education held

in New Delhi in 1978(ibid). In 1986, the National Policy on Education (NPE) recommended the Government to initiate some concrete measures to promote NIOs to facilitate the open school system. The NPE also suggested promoting the distance open learning in step by step both at secondary level. It's recommended that the open learning system should have its separate syllabus and study materials as well as examination and certification system. In November 1989, the MHRD took a decision to set up the National Open School (NOS). The pilot project of CBSE on Open School was fused with NOS and was delegated with power to register, examine, and certify students up to pre-degree level courses through a Resolution (No. F.5-24/90 Sch.3 dated 14 September 1990 published in the Gazette of India on 20 October 1990). The concept of an Open School at the secondary level was a big and bold departure from, and a considerable advance over, the concept of correspondence education. The aim was to liberate the system from its ingrained rigidities and orthodoxy (Dewal 1994).

The NIOS has the scheme for vocational education and trainings. It's to cater the needs of those who prefer vocational skills to academic studies to ease the financial burden of the family. This vocational training is stated to provide the middle level manpower for the growing sectors of economy, both organized and unorganized in both urban and rural settings (http 13).

The vocational education programmes are also offered on line. Courses are e-Typewriting, Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology, Web Designing, Diploma in Modern Secretarial Practice, Certificate in Computer Application, Basic Computing Skills, Computer and Office Applications, Secretarial Practices (Hindi), Diploma in Insurance Services (English), and Construction Supervision (Civil) (http 14).

It is notified (Notification No. F. No. NIOS/SSS/ADM/Prosp./2010-11/1214-1239 dated 26th November 2010.) that NIOS has decided to accept the data provided by the United Nations High Commissioner (UNHCR) for Refugees on a mutually designed certificate in order to facilitate refugees / asylum seekers for admission to NIOS courses in the absence of birth certificates / school leaving certificate.

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

- φ   From fixed place of school to any place or every place;

- φ   From educator at the centric to the learner at the centre;

- φ   From educator as demonstrator to educator as helper;

- φ   From oral aural to digital and distance communication;

- φ   From fixed time to flexible time;

- φ   From customised approach to cafeteria approach;

- φ   From education as single opportunity to lifelong opportunity.

This is provided in the Final Report: International Conference on Promotion of Open Schooling on 23-25 January 2005 in Goa, India (http 15).

In fact, the Open Distance Learning (ODL) is becoming widely popular among students. The growing acceptability of NIOS certificates has added sufficient credibility. Therefore, many students are getting into the Open School System. With frequent transfer in jobs or migration of people from one state to another, the regular schooling for over twelve years at a particular place creates so many problems for the family. This is one of the reasons why the open learning is becoming popular. The NIOS at the helm of affair is present across the country. One can get enrolled at any time and at any place. The NIOS can pose challenge to formal schooling in coming days.

The practice of open schooling may be as old as civilization, but the concept of open-schooling with a formal bureaucratic structure working under the ministry of education / human resource is chronologically a recent phenomenon. The need for open school may be understood from the following facts and figures, and there in no point disputing on its growing popularity of the NIOS. According to UNESCO estimates, 1.4 million Indian children aged 6-11 are out of school (TOI: July7, 2014). The same daily also provides statistics that India ranks among the top five countries having children aged between 6 and 11 out of school. Globally, this number of primary school dropouts goes up to 57.8 million. The UNESCO report points out that the budgetary allocation, among other things, got reduced. Its aid fell by a massive $278 million between 2010 and 2012 (ibid). Since the Right to Education Act (RTE) 2005 is implemented recently, these dropout numbers should not be linked to the said Act under which a child can continue schooling without failure up to VIII without being demoted.

Here is another chilling story on 196 Odisha schools shut down for having less than 5 students (The Hindu 28-08-2015). The Hindu reports that the Odisha government has closed down 196 government run schools those that could not manage to enrol more than five students. According to information provided, in 2012-13 academic year, 43,41,046 students have taken admission in government primary schools. In the next year 2013-14, the number of students dropped down to 42,77,710, and last academic year 2014-15, it further reduced to 42,23,628 students in government primary schools (ibid). In a clear indication of parents preferring private schools over government school, in urban centres of 10 districts, students studying in private schools have outnumbered their counterparts in government schools. With sociological imagination, the researcher is made to understand that students are forced to be

dropouts in public schools as there is poor infrastructure and little schooling, but at the same time, students, mostly of lower strata, are also forced to stay outside the private schools as education is expensive here.

A sizable number of students are taking religious education in madrassas, seminaries, and gurukuls. They do not have formal schooling under state board or central board schools. However, to get into the main stream of society, they require requisite certificates from the state run educational organizations. Here at Surat, the students of Aljamea tus Saifiyah take NIOS and Gujarat Board Open School Exams on regular basis. It's a centre for religious and cultural studies of the Dawdi Bhora community. Having had their regular formal schooling up to 7th or 8th standard, the students get admission to Aljamea tus Saifiyah for religious and cultural studies. In due course, they realise the importance of formal qualifications and appear open school exams. There is good number of Madrasa students appearing open school exams and Madrassa education and certificate as well as certificate are not considered valid by the public authorizes. Recently, Maharashtra Government

WE DON'T NEED NO EDUCATION

Age group	Total Population		Never attended schools	
	India (In cr)	Gujarat (In lakh)	India (In cr)	Gujarat (In lakh)
6-8 years	7.75	35.16	2.13	7.38
9-11 years	7.87	36.82	0.67	2.00
12-14 years	7.74	36.00	0.56	1.84
15-18 years	9.97	47.86	1.033	3.70

Never attended school in state

Age-group	Total	Male	Female
6-8 Years	7.38	3.84	3.54
9-11 years	2.00	0.93	1.07
12-14 years	1.84	0.76	1.08
15-18 years	3.71	1.47	2.24

Figures in Lakh

triggers fresh controversy, saying that madrasas without formal subjects are not schools (Indian Express: July 3, 2015). However, there are efforts to link National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to Madrasas as accredited centres for providing education and vocational training which will enable students studying in such madrasas to get the benefits of both and a better opportunity to get steeled in life (MHRD 2014).

In Uttar Pradesh, over 3.7 lakh students have applied for the exams for clerics conducted by the Madrasa Education Board for clerics, which is a steep rise from the miniscule number of applications it received last year, officials said (TOI 09-01-2015). Apart from the religious studies by the religious institutions to the respective students, India sustains a sizable number of SC, ST, and OBC. These socially and economically backward communities do not consider it necessary to send their children to schools for formal education. When children grow up to enough to be able to work, they leave the school and start working for income. The MHRD Report (2014) provides with some sort of estimation that 14.6 million students joined the elementary schools between 2007-08 and 2012-13. Among them, 56% were girls; 32% were from the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, and 59% belonged to Muslims. The same report accepts the incidence of dropouts but claims it to be reduced. It may be due to the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, one of the world's largest, which provides meals to 108 million school children daily to help retention of students at schools (ibid).

Reshma Shaikh

18-year-old Reshma never attended school because her financial conditions prevented her. Reshma wanted to study, but the death of her father prevented her from pursuing her studies. She was forced to take care of her younger brother and sister. After the death of iliyat, she said that her mother remarried and left them. "Our aunt took care of us. I have never been to a school," said Reshma who stays in Juhapura.

Farhana Malik

18-year-old resident of Juhapura did not go to school as she missed the opportnunity in the childhood. Now she has lost interest in studies. "My brother went to school, but I never went to a school. My parents even sent me to a mehendi classes and even stitching classes, but at this age I don't find it interesting to pursue studies. I used to go to Gyan Kendra to study but when children called me elder sister, I stopped going there," she said.

The Times of India (Nov. 27, 2015) has recently published a story stating that in Gujarat, 14 lakh kids in the age group of 6—18 didn't go to school. It is shown that in India, out of 33.33 crore children and youths in this age group, 4.40 crore have never been to school which comes to 13.20% of the population

in this age group. There are two model cases of Reshma and Farhana (Times of India: Nov.27, 2015). Many women like Reshma and Farhana opt for NIOS or Gujarat Board Open School. In Surat, there are about 400 students enrolled this year under three AI Centres.

The NIOS has kept certain things into consideration while framing its curricula and rules. The students of NIOS come from the very diverse backgrounds with regard to age, literacy, society, economy, culture, and personal conditions. Foe an inclusive education, the curricula has been made diverse. Efforts have been made to give maximum options to students to choose their own subjects they like or need in life or at workplace. This is known as cafeteria approach to education. Take whatever they like. The NIOS reaches it students through the Study Centres also known as accredited Institutes. There are 6700+ Study Centres. In addition to the Study Centres, the NIOS is relying on ICT supported Mukta Vidya Vani in which students can listen to the lessons on http://nios.iradioindia.in. There are Academic Facilitators to have a link between the Study Centre, the students, and the NIOS. They inspect the Study Centres regularly, talk to the students and give report to the NIOS. The special problems are also met. Though it is Open and Distance Learning (ODL), the distance has been bridged with technology, Study Centres, and Academic Facilitators. The NIOS offers five categories of programmes that include (a) Open Basic Education equivalent to VIII of the formal school system, (b) secondary education course, (c) higher secondary education course, (d) vocational education courses and (e) life enrichment programmes. As of now, the NIOS with its Headquarters at Noida has 19 Regional Centres in different states. There are two Sub-Regional Centres, one cell and 6700+ accredited institutions (study centres) in India and abroad. It has the enrolment of about 2.59 million students at Secondary and Higher Secondary Levels as well as

Vocational Courses. A total of 560,867 students (Male: 378,390: Female: 182,477) were enrolled in the secondary and higher secondary level and Vocational Courses during the academic session 2013-14.

Student Category	Enrolment	% to total Enrolment
General	384,852	68.62
Scheduled castes	59,495	10.61
Scheduled tribes	48,894	8.72
Other backward castes	65,229	11.63
Differently-abled	1,855	0.33
Ex-servicemen	542	0.10
Total	560,867	100.0

Source: National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)

Going by the figures of NIOS and Gujarat Board open school exams (initially it was known to be for private exam opposed to regular exams), it suggests that a large number of students mostly belonging to the category of dropouts are taking exams to get into the main stream.

However, there has been a compulsion to have qualifications to get gobs. For example, one can learn driving on one's own efforts and in due course he / she can have expertise. However, expertise alone is not enough in order to drive vehicles on road. One has to have a licence provided by the state. Vocational training centres run by the state or affiliated to the state can give such licences to practise. Knowledge and skill are not enough. One has to have the due licence to do so. This need for state recognition of skills and getting a licence drive students to acquire minimum qualification or the stipulated qualification. For example, to be the driver of the state transport corporation, one is expected to have minimum educational qualification of SSC/HSC. Many dropouts are

experts in driving and working as drivers in the private sector. As there is little guarantee of jobs and low salary, they try their best to get into the government jobs as drivers. Here they fail to satisfy the government criteria to be a driver. Skill alone is not enough; one is expected to have the requisite qualifications too. This demand makes open schools so necessary. If we consider the age group of students appearing SSC (X) and HSC (XII) exams, it will be very clear that the majority students are averaged and are already in jobs. They take the NIOS / State Board open exams as they find better opportunity with qualification. The same situation draws students to the Open University system. If we take the open school and Open University system together, then we can see a complete and parallel alternate open education system prevailing in our society. This complete system of alternate open education without any liability of formal schooling has created another trend, though not very strong, to opt for open education system not as compulsion, but choice. A sizable number of students who can afford normal schooling are also taking interest in the open school system. Their construction of logic is little different.

As poor people can't afford their children to study in the formal school for all the years, the government of West Bengal has introduced parallel open school system to help students especially drop–outs to take the benefits of open school system education. The presence of both NIOS and state open school has created an atmosphere of confidence among people that education is beyond their reach. This confidence is also linked to their sense of empowerment and the construction of social reality in everyday life. In 1997, the West Bengal Government launched its own open school in the name of Rabindra Mukta Vidyalaya under the Education Department, Government of West Bengal. However, in 2007, it was given a new name Rabindra Open Schooling. It's just the translated version of the same. There is a separate state law to give the

open education system statutory status and to have separate budget for it. A sizable number of students including the school dropouts are coming from the economically and socially backward class and castes. Many are unemployed and self-employed young men and women who are taking the advantages of open school mainly because of its flexibility and low cost benefits (http 16). The Study Centres of Rabindra Open Schooling are mostly in Government / Government Aided Secondary, Higher Secondary Schools, and Madrasahs spread across the state.

Keeping NIOS rules into consideration, the minimum age of admission in the Madhyamik Course is 14 years. There is no upper age limit. The word "Madhyamik" is used to mean Secondary Exam (X), and for Senior Secondary (XII), it's is "uchcha madhyamik". Admissions take place two times a year for the Secondary Courses and once for the Higher Secondary Course. Once registered, a student is given five long years to complete the course. As said before, the WBCROS has framed rules and regulations in consonance with NIOS. It suggests two things: (a) there is little scope for others to be critical of the rules and regulations made so liberal. In West Bengal, the State Board, in the assessment of educators, is tougher than the Central Board or CBSE, (b) there can be uniformity of schemes which will provide equal status to students of open schools. There will be no hierarchy or stratification among students and between boards. This hierarchy system is very impediment to national integration. The basic tenets of functionalism is the hierarchy system, but the growing demand for equality, the spirit of functionalism has got shifted from the acceptance of hierarchical status and roles to equality before the law. The Article 14 of the Constitution of India suggests that the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India. There is obvious conflict between hierarchy and equality.

A little clarification requires. The logic or organic solidarity seems to be fading away. As we are equal, we stand united. Such is the basic argument of public discourse. The logic of public discourse works in shaping and sharing social relations. Society is not a one-way traffic. The reciprocity is the basic mechanism of social forces and social living. The study seeks to understand the process of inclusion of open school students to mainstream and promote national integration. It's also learnt that many women who take NIOS exams are from the backward community. They are coming out of their backwardness for self-empowerment. Many women get established in the SHG (Self-Help Group) scheme very popular in rural areas of South Gujarat like Dharampur. These initiatives of women appear to have multiplier effects on social institutions on-going organizational behaviours. A lady with SSC or HSC qualification would not prefer to get married with an illiterate man without qualification. Therefore, there will be the demands for educational qualifications, and this demand will subsequently propel other social forces to get required shape.

Under the prescribed rules of NIOS, students can ask for the transfer of credit. Those who can't qualify the exam at time, they are given several opportunities. Whatever subject they quality is counted and carried forward. This is known as credit transfer. This credit transfer is possible across school boards—be it central board or state board. It's clear that the similarity between two boards – state board and central board – help assimilate students and stand at par with others. In addition to literature on the same, the researcher has found an Office Order - 6/2014 bearing Ref. No. 26.3/2014/NIOS/SSS/PA dated 15.05.2014 on the Standing Operating Procedure for Transfer of Credit.

The Right to Education Act gives the guarantee of "free and compulsory education" to all children belonging to the age group of six to fourteen. With 86th Constitutional Amendment, it has been the constitutional guarantee of giving education. It has gone a long way especially with regard to its shifting from the Directive Principles of State Policy to the Fundamental Rights. The Parliament of India has passed Right to Education Act in 2009, declaring education a fundamental right of all children of age group 6-14 year.

The flexibility of open schooling is an advantage to students coming from backward or downtrodden community. Once registered with NIOS, one can remain eligible as examinee for five years. Every year, exams are taking place twice—one in April-May and the other in Oct.-Nov. It means one can take ten attempts to qualify a subject. To understand the flexibility at large, one can qualify one subject each year. In five years, five subjects will be completed. There is a policy of credit transfer. Once qualified in a subject, the NIOS will transfer that credit to the next and so on. In aggregate, one has to qualify ten subjects in five years. The pass percentage is 33 per cent. It's much lower than the State Board and Central Board pass percentage. This has been made much simpler with others schemes to score the pass percentage. Every student is supposed to submit an assignment to the Study Centre (technically known as Accredited Institutes) on every subject. There is particular marks assigned for the same and this gets added to the marks of the written exam. There are practical exams even at secondary level. It's easy to get marks in practical exams. This also is added to the total which needs to be 33 % minimum. If anybody fails to qualify all five subjects in five years, he / she may get readmission to NIOS and can get another five years. Whatever subject(s) he / she has qualified in previous registration will get transferred to next registration. This is known as Transfer of Credit. The NIOS considers the

credit of other State or Central Boards exams even though it is negated by the respective board. The researcher has come across seven candidates who failed in Gujarat Board Exam, and surrendered their Mark Sheet to NIOS and appeared for other exams where they failed.

There may be glossy pictures of government schemes on record, but the reality looks different. In the recent report of the CAG, it has been found that 54 schools among others run by the Gujarat Government are found to have been running without teachers (Times of India, April 1, 2015). The daily has clarified that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has been critical of the measures taken by the Gujarat government in its audit report. It is reported that the government has failed to appoint teachers in sufficient numbers in schools run by it. It contributed the dropout of these schools. In the *Sarva Siksha Abhiyan* (SSA) scheme in Gujarat for the year 2013-14, the CAG report states that out of 43,176 government run schools in the state, 64 schools having 5,698 students run without any teacher. It's also found that 874 schools are being run with merely one teacher as on March 2014 (ibid). The report has been placed before the Gujarat Legislative Assembly. The daily has quoted the CAG report saying, "Teaching work was assigned by authorities to teachers of nearby schools as an alternate arrangement. Thus, the state has not ensured availability of adequate teaching staff as per the norms. This could have an effect on the quality of education imparted to students" (ibid).

Open and distance learning are considered to be complementary to conventional education system. Open learning system provides students with greater flexibility, choice of subjects and the freedom to take exams at opportune time. The NIOS conducts public exams twice in a year: April-May and October-November. The students are free to write in English or Hindi or in

the regional language, i.e., Gujarati. The researcher visited other schools to know the awareness of NIOS among students, parents, and school management. It's found that many are unaware of NIOS. It's mostly prevalent to individuals with special needs, migrants, and cultural and linguistic minorities. A few students are opting for NIOS with a completely different purpose. After completing 10th exam, they go to Kota, Rajasthan to get coaching for JEE / IIT. They get full two years for coaching. After two years of coaching, they get registered with NIOS and take the NIOS exam. After two years of rigorous coaching, it becomes very easy for such students to qualify the NIOS exams with distinctions. Those who complete their Senior Secondary through normal schooling do not get sufficient time to get prepared for JEE / IIT Exam. Though there some fundamental ethical questions are involved in bypassing normal schooling for the preparation of JEE / IIT, it is left to the policy makers to decide. The research has no entitlement to pass on value judgment which does not belong to the research.

In the foreword of the report (Vol. 3) of the Kothari Commission (1964-66) on "Education and National Development" Dr. S. Kothari wrote to M. C. Chagla, the then Education Minister of India, that "In a science-based world, education and research are crucial to the entire developmental process of a country, its welfare, progress and security. It is characteristic of a world permeated by science that in some essential ways the future shape of things is unpredictable," (Education Commission Report 1964-66). The researcher is of the understanding that technology has surpassed science. In a market driven economy without social security, people are very busy in money making. People may not have the knowledge of science behind technology, but they are very expert in using technology, for example, smart phone. In the world of science, metaphysics has little space to grow. However, the growth of

metaphysics today in public discourse, even in electronic media, suggests the suppression of science by technology. NIOS is not established to promote science to fight against metaphysics, but the necessary literacy and skill to those who are otherwise excluded from the making of a social living. The observations of Atal (2003) can be linked to this context to understand the spread of religion through technology. The researcher is of the opinion that the present economy is more in need of technology than science, and the NIOS serves this purpose in creating and recognising skills in short spans. One can opt for the "On Demand" exam and get the due recognition of his knowledge and skills. It seems to be surprising to see the foresightedness of The Kothari Commission that suggested that the education system should have "built-in flexibility" to be versatile and to meet the changing demands of the country. The commission also suggested the importance of research and development in order to meet the emerging challenges. In Kothari's own statement, "If I may say so, the single most important thing needed now is to get out of the rigidity of the present system. In the rapidly changing world of today, one thing is certain: yesterday's educational system will not meet today's, and even less so, the need of tomorrow" (Kothari Commission Report Vol. 1). The NIOS seems to have that potentiality in view of the growing demands for tuition classes / coaching centres.

The recognition and equivalency of NIOS certificates at Secondary and Senior Secondary level is questioned by various bodies. This is also a common query of students and parents. The judgment of the Gujarat High Court in S.C.A. No. 7406 of 2010 at Ahmedabad holds recognition and equivalency of NIOS certificate for taking admission in Professional Courses. The High Court is of the view that all the 3 Boards CBSE, CISCE and NIOS have been constituted by the Education Department, Govt. of India. Therefore, for all purposes,

certificates issued by them are equivalent. The Hon'ble High Court has further held that as NIOS has been constituted under a Notification issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Education Department, Government of India (similar to CBSE), non-consideration of the case of the petitioner on the ground that he has not passed from the Central Board is arbitrary and violation of Article 14 of the Constitution.

The NIOS has made provisions for the children with disabilities to make use of the Open Schooling. Such children are registered through Accredited Institutions, Accredited Vocational Institutions, and Special Accredited Institutions for Open Basic Education. The NIOS is reaching to a range of people in a range of circumstances. Learning materials, audio-visual cassettes, or working kits are sent to the doorsteps of disabled learners. At the time of exam, they are given special facilities and extra time to complete the exam. It's found that vocational courses are catered for current demands for employment. They are updated to meet the needs of the industry and business. It creates opportunities for the disabled in open employment. To enhance access, retention, and achievement, the NIOS has established a Cell for the Education of the Disabled.

The NIOS has signed an MoU with Ramakrishna Math & Ramakrishna Mission, Belur (Howrah), West Bengal on 6th August 2014 for the purpose of promoting education among the downtrodden, marginalized, and the disadvantaged section of the society along with other general section with focus of raising academic standards, knowledge, and skill development, vocational training, specially emphasizing inculcation of higher values in life, character building and personality development to become socially responsibility global citizens (http 17).

The Muslim Minority A.Is/ A.V.Is/A.As are given full freedom to allow students to opt any medium of instruction in these study centres (Notification dated Oct. 22, 2010. No. NIOS/ M Cell/ Accr./2010). The NIOS has the scheme for vocational education and training for those who are not so well in studies. It's to cater the needs of those who prefer vocational skills to academic studies to ease the financial burden of the family. This vocational training is stated to provide the middle level manpower for the growing sectors of economy, both organized and unorganized in both urban and rural settings (http 18).

The NIOS vocational education programmes are also offered on line. Courses offered are e-Typewriting, Diploma in Medical Laboratory Technology, Web Designing, Diploma in Modern Secretarial Practice, Certificate in Computer Application, Basic Computing Skills, Computer and Office Applications, Secretarial Practices (Hindi), Diploma in Insurance Services (English), and Construction Supervision (Civil) (http. 19).

OPEN SCHOOLING AT SURAT:

There are 85 Accredited Institutes popularly known as Study Centres in Gujarat. There are four study centres in Surat District. They are Logos Mission Hr. Secondary School, Ichhapore; Shree Swaminarayan Academy, Adajan; Sungrace Vidyalaya, Udhna; and Gangadhara High Palsana. The Logos Mission School, Ichhapore is the oldest NIOS centre at Surat. Icchapore is the suburb of the Hazira industrial belt. According to NIOS rules, the same school may have two or more centres depending on the medium of instruction they are allowed to have (http 20).

There are several coaching centers imparting necessary training and teaching to such NIOS students. Though it is distance learning, but personal coaching is found to be the unavoidable necessity. It's also found that the actual PCP (Personal Contact Program) is taking place not at the Accredited Institutes, popularly known as study centres, but at the coaching centres. The study is conducted on how students get incorporated to the mainstream and become empowered. There are interviews of candidates to know about what has actually made them take the open school exams. The family being the structural and functional unit of society we live in family, the smaller unit of the larger family. There can be some more interviews of those who have completed their studies and are in the process of settlement or already settled. The study does not consider gender separately as the purpose of this study is to understand the process of alignment of the non-privileged with the main stream through Open School Exams. However, the sense of rising feminism may not be overlooked, considering the number of women candidates taking Open School Exams. The secondary data have been collected from the study centres and coaching centres and NIOS organizations, Gandhinagar. The primary data have been collected from the respondents who have been registered with NIOS, took NIOS exams, and are in jobs / business with NIOS certificates.

It has also come to the light that the Board of Governors of the Medical Council of India has declared the 10 + 2 certificate of the NIOS to be considered valid to get admission to MBBS provided other conditions are fulfilled (Notification No. MCI-34(1)/(UG)(Gen.) /2012-Med/129570 dated 14/09/12)

The Secondary Course gives the students a long list of languages to select. Considering the linguistic diversity in states and to allow students take exams in their vernacular, the NIOS has incorporated as much as seventeen languages. They are English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Telugu, Gujarati, Kannada, Punjabi, Nepali, Assamese, Marathi, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Oriya, Arabic, Persian and Tamil. For the qualification certificate, a student has to take exams and quality at least five subjects including at least one language or at the most two languages. However, over years he or she can do that. The registration with NIOS remains valid up to five years. The other subjects offered are Psychology, Data Entry Operations, Business Studies, Science and Technology, Mathematics, Economics, Home Science, Social Science, Indian Culture and Heritage and Painting. Every subject has its code number. The code number starts with "2" in case of secondary subjects and "3" in case of senior secondary subjects. For example, the secondary English paper bears the code no. 202 and the senior secondary English paper bears the code no. 302.

In Senior Secondary Course, there are good number of subjects covering all streams—Science, Commerce, and Arts as well as other vocational trainings. The students can take any number of subjects from any discipline—be it Arts, Science, and Commerce, but he / she has to qualify any five subjects. Ghadiyali Huzefa (Enrolment No. 040037133512) is going to take English, Physics, Chemistry, Computer, and Business Studies for the coming April – May 2016 Exam. He told the researcher that he is not so strong in Mathematics; therefore, he opts for Business Studies which is basically a Commerce subject. However, his father is an engineer and has family business. Huzefa wants to help his father with his knowledge of Physics. If he fails in the Science subject(s), then he would opt for any other subject(s) of his choice to appear exam to be held in October – November 2016. The credit (marks) of

any subject he qualifies will be carried forward until he qualifies all the subjects at a time or one by one over a period of five years. If he can't qualify five subjects in five years, he can again take (re)admission which will give him another lease of five years.

On personal request, the data provided by the NIOS Regional Centre, Gandhinagar are as follows:

Year / Course	2013	2014	2015
Secondary Course	1452	3076	4392
Senior Secondary Course	1350	2069	3070
Vocational Education	565	755	567*

*Data only for Session-I (January to June Session Only)

ENROLLMENT OVER YEARS:
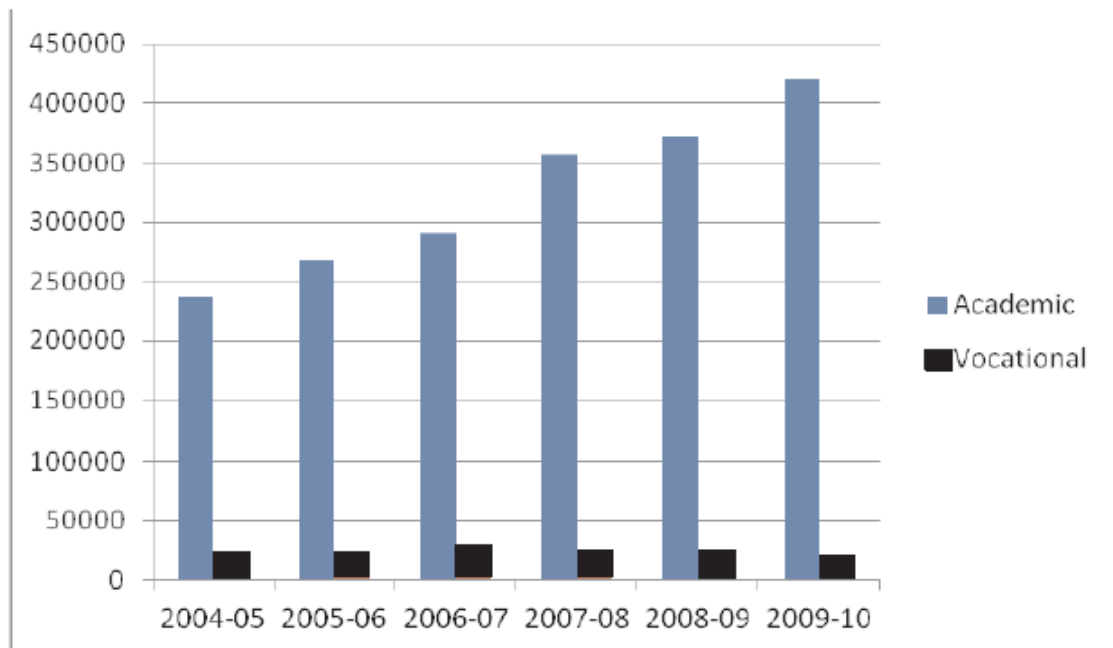
Source: COMOSA Journal of Open Schooling; Vol.1. No.1. July to December 2010.

CHAPTER – 3

THE VOICES OF THE RESPONDENTS

The researcher will take into account the students enrolment in the NIOS and use both questioner and interview guide to get into the process of alignment with the main stream. It is found in the preliminary study that there are three categories of students. A good number of candidates are over-aged and already at work either in private or public sector. Many have their own business. They get enrolled and take exams to have promotions at work or to have better jobs elsewhere. Many students are of normal age. The minimum age to appear the NIOS 10th Exam is 14 years, and for 12th Exam, it's 16. Many students who could not continue their regular schooling get enrolled to NIOS Exam. They want to continue with their studies. The third lot is over-aged but without job. They get enrolled with the hope of getting jobs. A good number of candidates have been found taking this NIOS Open School Exam. As stated the study includes the primary information obtained from the 200 candidates of NIOS. The purposive stratified sampling has been preferred as students belong to different categories. The purpose of the study is to understand open schooling and empowerment in variable relations. All the 200 candidates are asked to fill up the questioner. The semi-structured interview was also conducted with some students and those involved in the open school exam, such as the AF (Academic Facilitator), OSD (Officer on Special Duty), Study Centres / AI (Accredited Institutes). There are several coaching centres imparting necessary training and teaching to such students. Though it is distance learning, but personal coaching is found to be the unavoidable necessity. It's also found that the actual PCP (Personal Contact Program) is taking place not at the Accredited Centres, popularly known as study centres, but at the coaching

centres. The study is conducted on how students get incorporated to the mainstream and become empowered. There are interviews of candidates to know about what has actually made them take the open school exams. There can be some more interviews of those who have completed their studies and are in the process of settlement or already settled. The study will not consider gender separately as the purpose of this study is to understand the process of alignment of the non-privileged with the main stream through Open School Exams. However, the sense of rising feminism may not overlooked, considering the number of women candidates taking open school exams. The secondary data have been collected from the respective organizations, and the primary data have been collected from the respondents who take

The researcher has been in need of those who have been associated to NIOS and its activities at Surat. The researcher approached to the accredited centres of NIOS popularly known to be the study centres met the co-ordinations of the study centres and met the coordinators. The oldest NIOS study centre of Surat is the Logos Mission School at Icchapore village tentatively 10 km away from Surat along the Surat Hazira road. It's an English medium private school affiliated to Gujarat Board. In 20.., the next study centre came up at Adajan area. It's the Swaminarayan School. It is at the heart of the city and students prefer mostly because of territorial proximity. The third study centre that came up recently is the Sun Grace School at Udhna, Surat. The school is mostly surrounded by the industrial units of various kinds. However, the school appears to be prospective with regard to NIOS as migrant industrial labourers go to school for help. They are not able to enrol themselves through online system and private coaching centres are expensive. Though NIOS provides study materials, i.e., books for self-study, many students opt for private

coaching. There are stories of giving guaranteed success by the coaching centres. This not being the area of study, the researcher prefers to understand the reality of NIOS on ground. In a sample survey, it is evident that 87 per cent NIOS students go for coaching centre at least three to four days a week. There are a few coaching centres at Sargam Shopping Centre at Piplod, a few are found at City Light, a few are at Adajan and at Udhna. Those who are on jobs go for coaching in the evening. There are many private coaching centres. They help students enrol and provide study materials.

An Interview with the OSD cum Academic Facilitator:

Question: What is distinctive in open schooling?

Answer: The Open School has inherent virtues. It caters the needs of the students. In normal schooling, students are to oblige the syllabus of the Government. Here students can select their own subjects. A good number of opportunities are given to qualify exams. Credit accumulation and credit transfer is possible. At large, it's mostly for drop-outs.

Question: Is open school becoming popular?

Answer: Of course. It's mostly for the needy and down-to-earth lot being dropouts and in jobs but without academic qualifications. The migrated, displaced, and economically backward families find it easy to have their children enrolled in the open school especially in NIOS. On demand exam is also becoming popular.

Question: What are the benefits of open school?

Answers: The benefits are many. The main benefits are — its flexibility, accessibility, affordability. When the regular schools shut their doors, the open school opens it up. It's an inclusive school for those who

have been excluded. Subject selection is also left to students. One has to select only five subjects from a list of twenty-two subjects in any combination, but there should not be more than two languages.

Question: Is it a way out or an alternative?

Answer: Right now, it may be a way out, but in future, it can be an alternative school challenging the so called regular school.

Question: Are students opting for open school not fit for normal schools?

Answer: Going by rules and regulations, many are unfit. It may not be so in terms of intellectuality. There are many brilliant students coming to NIOS.

Question: What sort of students mostly comes to open school?

Answer: Mostly dropouts, repeaters in the same class in regular schools, many job holders for promotional benefits.

Question: How do they get into the main stream?

Answer: They are excluded from the main stream education. Without open school system, they would remain excluded and may, in future, become the liability to the nation or threat to the nation. It's good that the open school system provides them opportunity to take care of themselves. This is how it's to be understood. Opportunity is not denied until they qualify all the exams.

Question: Are students coming to open school increasing or decreasing?

Answer: The number is increasing and the emerging trend suggests so.

Question: Is there any future of open school?

Answer: The open school system has huge potentials. It's not properly understood by the parents and society at large. Maybe there is little scope for schooling at home. Therefore, children are sent to schools

without options. The basic philosophy of open school is self-study at home. Unfortunately, it is mostly attended by dropouts.

Question: Is open school diluting quality of education?

Answer: The allegation is not baseless. Its flexibility has compromised the quality of education as poor efficiency can serve the purpose.

Question: Is open school student friendly?

Answer: Yes. The Open School is very student friendly. Even students can take On Demand Exams whenever they like. The credit transfer is also very helpful to students. The PCP (Personal Contact Programme) addresses the individual difficulties of students. Those who are not comfortable in browsing, they can get their work done through study centres.

Question: Can open school replace regular schools?

Answer: Not in the near future. But with changing needs and society's approach to schooling, there are possibilities. The open school like NIOS that claims to be world's biggest Open School, has, according to me, infrastructural and organizational limitations. The State Board Open School can be a great help, but society needs some sort of parity between the two systems of education. Differences must not invite discrimination.

Question: How does open school help students to get into the main stream?

Answer: Students who come to NIOS are mostly adults. They are in need of certificates, i.e. basic qualification to get into jobs. It's difficult to get a job without qualification. NIOS simply gives them an opportunity. Only a few have the age to continue study. I know a good number of students who are in jobs with NIOS certificate.

Interview with a Student:

Question: Why are you here taking open school exam?

Answer: I left school in 2010. I was in Std. VII.

Question: Who suggested you to join NIOS?

Answer: My friends took me to a centre. I was told that I can appear exam. No
need to go to school.

Question: How do you find this exam?

Answer: Good. I may fail in two subjects, but I can appear again.

Question: What do you do?

Answer: I work at a departmental store, and study at night.

Question: What will you do after 10th?

Answer: I will study computer science.

Question: How many of your friends are like you taking NIOS exam?

Answer: Two of my friends have joined the NIOS.

Question: Is it easy to qualify exam?

Answer: Not so. One has to study and keep on writing.

Interview with a Job Seeker:

Question: Are you not over aged to appear the open school exam?

Answer: Yes, I am.

Question: What's your age?

Answer: I am now 22.

Question: What will you do with this qualification?

Answer: It's difficult to get a job without qualification.

Question: What sort of job you are seeking.

Answer: Preferably marketing. I want to be an insurance agent.

Question: What went wrong with regular schooling?

Answer: I could not qualify the 10th exam. Then I left.

Question: Is NIOS easy?

Answer: Not so, but I can qualify the exam in two to three attempts.

Question: Are you confident?

Answer: Two of my friends have qualified in this way.

Question: What are they doing?

Answer: They are in jobs.

Interview with a Job Holder:

Question: What's your age?

Answer: Approx. 32.

Question: What do you do?

Answer: I am in a job.

Question: What job?

Answer: Working in an NGO.

Question: What's your qualification?

Answer: I completed my SSC in 2009 from NIOS.

Question: Were you a dropout?

Answer: I left my school in 7th std.

Question: What happened then?

Answer: I was badly in need of a job.

Question: What happens now?

Answer: I am in need of higher qualification for promotion.

Question: Is NIOS going to fulfil your dream?

Answer: I am confident.

CASE STUDIES OF SOME NIOS CANDIDATES:

At large, the NIOS is still not the selection but the last option available. While conducting interviews, the researcher gets confronted with the research ethics in asking them very personal questions pertaining to tragedy. The researcher mostly remains confined to two aspects—getting into NIOS and subsequently getting established in life.

Case Study No. 1

Purohit Laxshman Motilal (DOB: 28/11/1995 and Enrolment No.: 040010153042) is presently working at a medical shop at Parbat Patia, Surat. He is a migrant from Maharashtra. He completed his XII Commerce from Maharashtra Board and then migrated to Surat. Now, he wants to have his own medical shop and for the same he needs to have at least a diploma degree in pharmacy. He got enrolled in NIOS and opted for Chemistry (313), Physics (312), Biology (314), Data Entry Operations (336), and English (302). The researcher was told that he would pursue a diploma course in pharmacy and have his own medical shop. I was difficult for the family of Rohit to live on farming as there was scarcity of water for agriculture. There is a good number of Marathi speaking people living in Surat for long. Rohit's family has a few relatives living in Surat and working in the textile market. The expanding economy of Surat has attracted migrants to Surat and to get settled. Many of Rohit's other friends who are migrated from Maharashtra have joined NIOS in order to continue with their study and to have basic qualification to join technical or IT courses. Surat provides a good atmosphere for start-up business. However, there is growing demand for qualification as society is becoming more and more bureaucratic and technical.

Case Study No. 2

Gaurav Jodhani (DOB: 14/07/1997 and Enrolment No,:   040010153004) completed his Secondary Exam (X) from Radiant School, Surat. It's a CBSE School. He got admission in XII Commerce because of not having sufficient marks in Science subjects. He wants to be an architect, and this is not possible if he goes with Commerce. The demand for architects is very high in Gujarat as there is real boom in real estate business and other construction works. In order to pursue his dream of becoming an architect, he left the Radiant School, Surat and joined the NIOS for fulfilling his dream. While talking to the respondents, he researcher was told that the opportunities in normal regular schools are very limited. Many students are denied to take their own preferable subjects. On the contrary the NIOS gives opportunity to select any five subjects across streams—be it Science, Commerce, and Humanities. The candidate has also informed that he is now preparing for Mathematics (311), Economics (318), Data Entry Operations (336), and English (302), Painting (332), and Computer Science (330). He has paid fees for all the subjects. It's interesting to note that he has paid fees for the six subjects, though he has to qualify any five subjects. Data Entry Operation (336) may not be required in the profession, but to be on the safe side, the respondent has taken more subjects than the required. This is also found in other cases. The respondent did not forget to express his ambition to study architecture abroad. He lives at Varachha area of Surat well known for diamond industry mostly run by people migrated from Kathiawar region of Gujarat. Many of his friends are pursuing their diploma courses in retail management at NCBT (Newton College of Business and Technology) in New Zealand.

Case Study No. 3

Tejas Tanaji Chaure is from Maharashtra. He completed his Secondary Exam from Maharashtra Board at his native place in Jalna. He is now living at Hazira village known to be the industrial hub of Surat. He has been working as a Crane Operator at Essar Steel. In order to have his promotion, he wanted to have the Senior Secondary Qualification and got enrolled with NIOS and took Computer Science (330), Home Science (321), Data Entry Operations (336), Business Studies / Commerce (319), English (302) and Painting (332). His Enrolment Number is stated to be 040037143051. He, however, could not complete all five subjects in April 2015 Examination. He qualified only three subjects: English, Data Entry, and Painting. This time he is preparing for Business Studies / Commerce (319), Home Science (321), and Computer Science (330). He has to qualify two more subjects. He is going to take the exam in April 2016. Since he lives at Hazira, he has opted for Logos Mission School as the nearest Accredited Centre (No. 040010). He informed this researcher that he would like to have Diploma in Engineering especially in Fabrication which can ensure him a good future.

Case Study No. 4

Valvi Sumit Mohan completed his Secondary Examination (X) from the Gujarat Board. He studied at Shri K. B. Patel English Medium School, Vyara. His father Valvi Mohan has been working at Kakrapara Atomic Power Station (KAPS), Surat. After completion of his Secondary Exam, Sumit got admission to Diploma Engineering which is very popular in Surat because of ongoing industrialization process. There are several engineering colleges offering Diploma Degree in Engineering. After completing the Secondary Exam, many students, who come mostly from the lower middle class families and not so good in studies, opt for Diploma Engineering, hoping that they would easily

get jobs in industry. Sumit did the same. His friends who completed their Diploma in Engineering are in jobs, but mostly low profile. Sumit is of the view that he needs to complete his Bachelor Degree in Engineering in order to get a good job. He talked to his friends and come to know about NIOS. Now, he finds that his Higher Secondary qualification is essential for his future and getting admission to Bachelor in Engineering. He got registered with NIOS and is going to take his exam to be held in April-May 2016. He has paid the fees for Physics (312), Chemistry (313), Biology (314), Mathematics (311), English (302), and Data Entry Operations (336). His enrolment No. is stated to be 040010153055. He has paid for six subjects though he is to qualify only five subjects. The researcher was told that he does not want to take risks.

Case Study No. 5

Shilpa Jain, a house wife with two children. The family basically hails from Rajasthan and now settled at Surat. Her husband is in confectionary business. When interviewed, she told that she appeared the Secondary Exam (10th) from the Gujarat Board as a private candidate. Now she wants to have the Senior Secondary (12th) Degree. On a pertinent question about her pursuing NIOS, she told the researcher that she did not have opportunity to study in her student life. She is found to be one of the over aged candidates. Her date of birth is 8th November 1988. She specifically mentioned that her husband is also helping her in pursuing NIOS. Her enrolment No. is 040010153052. However, owing to her family problems, she did not pay the fees for the upcoming April-May 2016 Exam.

Case Study No. 6.

Here is an interesting case of the meeting point of the personal initiatives on one hand and the public opportunities on the other. Mohan Vasant Tandlekar

has been working as a conductor in BRTS (Bus Rapid Transport Service) at Surat for two years. His father Vasant Tatiyaba Tandlekar used to have farming, but it was not profitable. Many farmers of his locality committed suicide. This led Vasant to migrate to Surat with his family. A few of their relatives had already been here at Surat. Mohan could not continue his study beyond 7th Standard at Amravati in Maharashtra as the family migrated to Surat. Mohan started searching for a job, and luckily he got it in BRTS. Initially, it provided him much needed relief, but payment has not got increased reasonably over the years. For any further promotion, the criteria of academic qualification stood on his way. This made him decide to join NIOS. It's very popular in Surat. Many of his friends are pursuing NIOS, and at the same time, they are doing other activities too. He is going to appear NIOS Secondary Exam in English (202), Hindi (201), Science & Technology (212), & Data Entry Operations (229). His enrolment No is 040010152036. He is also over aged for Secondary Exam. His date of birth is June, 01, 1980.

Case Study No. 7

Cherub Epenetus Victor is found to be one of the youngest candidates of NIOS. His date of birth is 15th July 2001. He is suffering from chronic ailment and is under medication. He is not fit for normal schooling, and hence preparing for NIOS 10th Std. Exam. Tutors come to his house and do the needful. He has chosen English (202), Home Science (216), Painting (225), Guajarati (207), Data Entry Operations (229), Social Science (213), and Hindi (201). His enrolment No is 040010152059. He has paid the fees April 2016 Exam.

Case Study No. 8

Purav Kayal is also one of the youngest candidates appearing the NIOS Exam. His date of birth is 15th May 2000 and bears the Enrolment No. 040010152010. He has been the regular student of Shree Swaminarayan School, Surat which is also the Study Centre of NIOS. The researcher was informed that Purav was asked to leave the school as there was a breach of discipline. He left the school while he was in Std. IX and then joined NIOS. He selected the Logos Mission School, Ichhapore as the Study Centre. He is preparing for Hindi (201), English (202), Mathematics (211), Science and Technology (212), Painting (225), Home Science (216), Data Entry Operations (229). His elder brother also appeared the NIOS Exam in November 2015. He is not very good in studies and is in job at a KFC outlet in Surat.

Case Study No. 9

Lakdawala Jumana Mohammadibhai belongs to Dawdi Bhora community. She has completed her 10th Std. from Madrasa Tayabia, Zampa Bazar. Now she is a student of NIOS preparing for 12th Exam. She has already qualified her Hindi (301) and Computer (330) Exam. In coming April 2015, she will take Mass Communication (335), Home Science (321), Commerce/Business Studies (319), and English (302). She is in job, but did not want to disclose. Her date of birth is 15th August 1999 and has the Enrolment No 040010153069. She is registered with Logos Mission School, Surat Study Centre. Every candidate of NIOS has to select a Study Centre of his/ her choice.

Case Study No. 10

Yadav Vikas Kumar is enrolled with NIOS for the Senior Secondary Exam. He completed his Secondary Exam from a Gujarat Board School at Limbayat, Suart. He was in need of a job as the financial status of the family is not very

affluent. He is yet to get a job, but does some contract works for his pocket expense. One of his relatives is in a medical store, and he might have given him some sort of direction to have pharmacy qualification or BDS. There is good number of medical stores, and the margin of profit is very high. There are many small dispensaries at Limbayat run by local resident doctors. Vikas's father is working in a private company. The payment is not satisfactory. Yet his father wants Vikas to read more and do something good that can ensure a decent living.

Yadav has the age to study. His date of birth is 5th December 1997. He approached to the Logos Mission School, which is the AI Centre of NIOS and got enrolled. His enrolment No. is 040010153089. He has chosen Hindi (301), English (302), Physics (312), Chemistry (313), Data Entry Operations (336), and Biology (314). He has paid fees for the April 2016 Exam.

Case Study No. 11

Akshita Jain had her normal schooling up to Secondary level (10th) from Agarwal Vidya Vihar, a CBSE school in Surat. Thereafter, she could not continue her Senior Secondary studies as a regular candidate owing to some family problems. In 2014, she got enrolled with NIOS for the Senior Secondary Exam and took exams of Economics (318), Business Studies (319), English (302), Data Entry (336), and Computer (330). Now she is pursuing her BBA at Metas Adventist College, Surat as a regular student.

Case Study No. 12.

Bhavesh M Vishnani was in Lancer Army School, Suart. He was in Std. IX (Gujarat Board) when he left the school as he was not at par with others. The school advised him to opt for NIOS. He completed his X and XII from NIOS in 2014. He took English (302), Data Entry (336), Home Science (321),

Painting (332) Accountancy (320) subjects, and now he got admission to Metas Adventist College, Surat, pursing his BBA / B.Com. His Enrolment No is 040005123006.

Case Study No. 13

It's a unique case of schooling and then being drop out and again getting into the main stream. Mehul Balkumar Saraf completed his Secondary Exam from Ryan International School (ICSE), Surat. He took Commerce in Senior Secondary Section, but had to drop out as the school denied promotion because of poor his performance in XI Exam. He wants to be a business finical adviser. In order to avoid any brake in academic record, he decided to join NIOS. A few of his friends are in NIOS pursuing Secondary and Senior Secondary Exams. Mehul, accordingly, got enrolled in NIOS and completed his XII in Commerce stream. He is now pursuing his BBA (Hon) from the Metas Adventist College, Surat. His Enrolment No. is 040010143065.

Case Study No 14

Here is an interesting case of coming back to main stream. Ankit Anand aged about 20 completed his VIII standard from a Chennai School. His father was in Bank of Baroda. In due course, his father was transferred to Hong Kong. Ankit had little option but to accompany him. He wanted to study there, but did not find any school to get admission in IX standard in the middle of the academic session. Within a year, the family came back to India as there was nobody to look after the ailing grandmother of Ankit. While browsing options on internet, they came to know about NIOS and its inclusive education policies. Ankit got registered with NIOS study centre at Ranchi, Jharkhand and completed both X and XII from NIOS. Now he is pursuing BBA from the

Metas Adventist College, Surat. His enrolment No is 260046133022. There are about 15 NIOS students studying at Metas Adventist Colleges, Surat.

Case Study No. 15

Hari Malhotra having NIOS Enrolment No. 040037153065 hails from Shahdara, Delhi. He completed his Secondary Exam (10th) from Dewakar Model Senior Secondary School, Delhi and then got admission to Greenway Modern Senior Secondary School, Delhi for his Senior Secondary studies. Hari could not continue his studies as his family met problems, and it was difficult for his parents to continue staying in Delhi. When asked, the respondent expressed his reservation to disclose the family problems, but he said that his uncle has been living in Surat and doing textile business. That is why, they are here. Without spoiling time, the respondents got admission in NIOS as he knew about it. He seems to be a sincere candidate and good in studies. However, he goes to a coaching centre for help in difficulties. He told that he would go back to Delhi after the exam to be held in April-May 2016. His parents have already gone back.

Case Study No. 16

Nivedha Suvarnarao Chandolu completed her 10th Std. from the Vyara International School affiliated to ICESE, New Delhi. She started her XI standard in Science, but because of some family problems, she could not continue with her studies. Without losing any year, she got enrolled with NIOS and opted for the same science stream that she studied in her XI. She is planning to go for medical stream and be a doctor. She has chosen English (302), Biology (314), Physics (312), Computer Science (330), and Chemistry (313). Her Enrolment No is. 040037153012.

Interview with NIOS Chairman:

It seems to be relevant to incorporate the excerpt of an interview of the Chairman of NIOS by Swati Roy (Education World, Dec. 2010: Page75)

Question: What were the objectives behind the promotion of NIOS and to what extent have they been achieved?

Answer: The primary objectives behind the promotion of NIOS were to provide education to children unable to attend school for a variety of socio-economic reasons; to meet the educational needs of differently-abled children, and provide a safety-net to school drop-outs for continuing their education. Since its inception in 1989, NIOS has been working consistently to achieve these objectives by offering need based programmes through the   open distance learning mode. We offer a wide spectrum of pre-degree level courses including secondary and senior secondary curriculums, vocational education and training, skills development and life enrichment study programmes. NIOS emerged as a flexible alternative to the rigid formal education system with the mandate to expand access, ensure equity and cost effectiveness in the context of democratising school education. The journey of the institute has been quite successful thus far. With an enrolment of 1.90 million students, NIOS is the largest open school in the world.

Question: What are the advantages of NIOS over conventional schooling?

Answer: It is free from the rigidity of the conventional system and takes education beyond the classroom. NIOS is a flexible and student-friendly board which places learners at the centre, unlike the conventional system where the teacher dominates the learning process. Students have the flexibility to choose study subjects depending upon their aptitude and interest. For example, a student in the science stream at the Plus Two level can also choose to study music/art/painting, etc. Similarly, a student of the arts stream can choose to

study physics. Our exam system is also non stressful with students given nine chances to dear the class X/XIT exam over five years. The primary objective of NIOS is to create an inclusive education system and reach education to disadvantages groups.

The general public perception is that NIOS is academically less rigorous vis-à-vis other exam boards such as CISCE and CBSE. Moreover, there are doubts about the quality of open schooling programs as compared to certification from formal schools. What's your comment?

Quality is a major issue in the formal and open schooling systems. Barring a few schools located in the metres, most schools suffer on this count in the formal system as well. Since open schooling is heavily dependent on the formal education system for help and support, it also suffers. NIOS is an autonomous organisation and hence is not guided by CBSE norms as far as access to education and curriculum development is concerned.

Question: How effectively has NIOS incorporated new age media including internet, radio, television, and satellite to deliver its programme?

Answer: Apart from using learner-friendly print study materials, NIOS uses a host of non-print learning materials including audio and video inputs broadcast over Gyan Darshan, a government-run television channel. NIOS has also successfully completed its Ni-On project, which enables online admission, student counselling and provides on-demand examination facility. We have also finalised plans to digitise our print study materials, introduce an e-leaning platform and a dedicated 24/7 channel in collaboration with the Union HR.D ministry.

Question: What are NIOS future plans?

Answer: We are in the process of revisiting NIOS instructional material as per guidelines of the National Curriculum Framework 2005. We've also launched several initiatives to intensify the use of ICT to strengthen the learning process, rather than merely utilising it for governance purposes. But we still have a lot to do. So far our attempts have been somewhat sporadic in nature. There is a need to assess the varied educational needs of NIOS, diverse target groups, link education with vocational training for empowerment, evolve workable public private partnerships for vocational education, and integrate open with the formal schooling system. NIOS is committed to taking education to Lin-reached segments of the population, particularly first generation learners, physically challenged children and those from socio-economically disadvantaged groups.

CHAPTER – 4

INCLUSION TO THE MAIN STREAM: CASE STUDIES

School education is seen as a necessary requisite for literacy, higher studies, and quality of life since it relates directly to population growth, health practices, economic activities and productivity. The NIOS data reveals that in spite of 105 million children drop out of school every year, 10 million challenged children excluded from mainstream education system, and about 240 million adult illiterates denied access to secondary school and formal vocational education certificates (Handbook for Academic Facilitator). This reality demands for a viable to provide schooling opportunities to all. If population of any given country is not an asset, it's the liability of the nation. Education and human resource are concomitant. In India, population is not considered to be an asset. The word "population" comes with another word "explosion". The picture given is India is over populated. The questions that come with this popular phrase "population explosion" are: (1) the optimum number of population and (2) the extra population. We may have the answer of the first question, but the second question is humanitarian. When China can grow faster than India, why can't India grow with its population? The answer to this riddle is not in number but in quality of education, i.e., human resource generation. Human resource makes other resources resourceful. When population is resourceful, the nation will prosper. The NIOS provides students with much needed knowledge and skill and several opportunities to qualify exams. The students are free to select subjects of their choices. One can, for example, select Arabic, Physics, Accountancy, History, and Data Entry. In formal schooling, this is an absurd combination and there is no place of such absurdity. However, this is valid in NIOS. The flexibility of NIOS has given it

wide acceptability among the drop outs; many of whom are in jobs. Today NIOS maintains a network of more than 2265 accredited study centers know as Accredited Institutions (AIs).

Going by the variations, the researcher has found five different types of students opting for the open school exam conducted by the National Institute of Open Schooling. They mostly get into the main stream with NIOS certificate.

1. Drop-outs want to resume study (Age Group: 14 to 20),

2. In anticipation of getting a job (Age Group: 20 to 25)

3. People in jobs but without basic academic qualifications (Age Group: 25 to 35)

4. For matrimonial purpose: a higher qualification may help get a better partner.

5. Need to have basic academic qualification to get a job in compensatory ground.

6. Meritorious students who want to escape regular schooling in senior secondary section to prepare for IIT / JEE at Kota, Rajasthan. It's a new trend. A few students have had this adventure. The logic behind this is the time factor. The senior secondary requires two years in regular schooling. After two years, there is little time left for IIT / JEE coaching. This consideration is explored by the parents / students. The researcher has come to know this from the owner of a coaching centre at Surat. He has tentatively 20 NIOS students. Such a case has been found in the AI centre No. 040037. The researcher could talk to his father as the child was at Kota.

The following are the successful candidates of AVI 6506, NICE, Bolangir:

Source: NIOS website (http 21)

Sl. No.	Name	Year	Regd. No	Organization	Designation
1	Dhanraj Arawala	1999	650697557	Data Processing Unit	Business
2	Maguni Sahu	1999	650687557	CENDRAT (A unit of XIMB)	Office Assistant
3	Rabi Narayan Satapathy	1999	650687535	Krushi Vigyan Kendra	Programmer
4	Sujit Satapathy	1999	650687509	Balangir Anchalik Gramya Bank	DEO
5	Pradeep Ku. Sahu	1999	650687511	………………	DTP & Printing Business
6	Priyaranjan seth	2000	650607564	Bolangir Block	Asst. programmer
7	Biswadhananda Mishra	2000	650607522	Data Processing Unit	Business
8	Rajesh ku. Jena	2000	650607551	Reliance India Mobile	Data Entry Operator
9	Silpi Ranjan Seth	2000	650697557	Screen Graph	DEO
10	Pragyna Parimita Mahapatra	2001	65000656003	Reliance	Data Entry Operator
11	Geetanjali Sa	2001	650617823	WORLP, Balangir	Co-Ordinator

12	Rashmi Ranjan Purohit	2001	650617035	NRHM	Asst. Programmer
13	Sucharita Paricha	2003	650637016	Oriental Public School	Computer Teacher
14	Priyanka Majhi	2004	650647512	Bajaj Allianz	Data Entry Operator
15	Rajesh Satapathy	2004	37509	ICICI Bank	Data Entry Operator
16	Jyotiprabha Satapathy	2004	65000647013	R.T.O Bolangir	Data Entry Operator
17	Monalisha Nanda	2004	6500064701	Ably Computer	Data Entry Operator
18	Banashree Subudhi	2004	650647513	ICICI Prudential	Office Assistant
19	Manoj Kumar Singdeo	2005	65000657002	HDFC Bank	Office Assistant
20	Sasmita Pattnaik	2005	65000656006	NRHM	B.P.O
21	Snigdha Pattnaik	2005	65000656005	NRHM	B.P.O
22	Gouri Rani Pradhan	2005	65000656002	Samaleswari Printer	Data Entry Operator
23	Trupti Laxmi Mishra	2005	65000656008	NRHM	Office Assistant
24	Amaresh Ch. Sarangi	2005	65000656009	Samaleswari Printer	Data Entry Operator

The following are the successful candidates available on the website of the NIOS Regional Centre, Bhopal (http 22):

Agriculture – Ramakrishna Mission, Ranchi – Sir Prabhu Bedia did his Vocational Course in Water Mgt. &Crop Production along with his Sr. Secondary Examination. He is using the skill of water mgt. for his potato cultivation and is also working with Water Shed Programme of Ramakrishna Mission.

Refrigeration & Air Conditioning - SGTBITC – Shri Darshan Singh after doing his Refrigeration Course is successfully running his own job work for his family livelihood

Electrician Trade – SGTBITC (AVI-990011) – Sh. Ajay Kumar after doing his Electrician Course is running very successfully Electrical Contract Business

Amanjyot Singh could do his class 10th and could play his International Golf Championship due to the flexible time schedule of ODE. (Best child of the Year Award)

Nitin Sharma could join his course in Fine Arts in Singapore as he could complete his class 10th through ODE.

Zubein Shekh could join her specialised course in Home Science after improving her result in the subject in class 10th through ODE for which 60% was the requirement.

The following are the cases of the successful candidates available on the NIOS website: (http 23).

Doctor by profession, **Dr. Prabhleen Singh**, is a successful NIOS learner who is presently preparing for the MD/MS entrance exams. Sharing his experiences at a seminar recently held by the NIOS, he said that he had benefitted immensely from the system of open schooling. A student of Delhi Public School, R.K. Puram, Delhi, Prabhleen chose to enrol for the Senior Secondary course of the NIOS to enable him to pursue education in a flexible manner. Dr. Singh is also a published author. His first work, "And the Mirror Kissed Back" was published in 2008 by Cinnamon Teal Press, Goa.

Charles Thomas Correya bearing the Sr. Secondary Enrolment No. 09001593329 was a drop out at the Senior Secondary level as he could not qualify the mathematics paper. Charles Thomas Correya completed the Senior Secondary Course of NIOS in humanities. This enabled him to join the MG University in Kerala for a BA course. Having simultaneously completed a certificate course in Electronics, Charles is now employed as an engineer with Birla Sunlife. Equipped with both Academic & Vocational skills, he now wishes to pursue an MBA Programme and also upgrade his technical qualification through different online certification programmes. He strongly believes that flexibility in NIOS courses and programmes has contributed in the progression of his career.

Jaspal Singh completed his both Secondary (Enrol. No. 27020212195) and Senior Secondary (Enrol. No. 92279300066) examinations from the NIOS. When his parents met with an accident, he was forced to discontinue his 10th class in 1993 in order to earn a livelihood to support his family. Jaspal Singh resumed his studies in 2003 by enrolling himself with NIOS for the Secondary

Exam. The flexibility of the NIOS system enabled him to pursue his studies along with his vocation. He acquired skills in fashion designing while working as a freelancer in garment export houses. Having completed his Senior Secondary course from the NIOS and moved by the desire to continue studies, Jaspal Singh has managed to obtain admission to a three year course in Fashion Management at the University of Thames Valley, London.

Alex P. Joseph was an NIOS student bearing Enrol. No. 09000363015. Due to severe economic problem, Alex had to discontinue his schooling for earning livelihood. He is self-employed (Door to door sale of Engine oil and running a Flower shop) for 10 years. Schooling got discontinued when he was in class X in 1995. He lost his mother all on a sudden in 2005. His father was not able to maintain himself and the family due to a brain stroke occurred in 2003. Alex had to bear heavy responsibility from the tender age. He is looking after his aged sick father and his younger brother in addition to his wife and daughter. Despite of all these, he could complete the NIOS Secondary Exam in 2006 and Sr. Secondary Exam in 2008. He had persuaded his wife and younger brother to complete their schooling. His wife **Ms. Ann Shyla Fernandaz** had completed the NIOS Secondary Exam in 2010 vide Enrolment No. 09000372008 and joined for the Sr. Secondary Exam. His brother **Mathews P J** whose schooling was discontinued after Class X in 2003 had joined the NIOS in 2006 and completed the Sr. Secondary Exam in 2008 wide Enrolment No. 09000363016. In due course, he got studied B. Com as external candidate from the Co-operative College, Trivandrum, under Kerala University.

Ashok Rohilla was a drop-out owing to unfavourable personal situations. He had a strong desire to continue education and got admission in the Open and Distance Education System. Delighted with the flexibility of the system,

Rohilla completed his Secondary and Senior Secondary Courses from the National Institute of Open Schooling (Enrolment No. : 000033911/920938). Presently employed in the Academic Department of NIOS, Sri Rohilla attributes his desire to continue education even in his forties. He is truly an example of a learner who pursued studies by fully utilizing the opportunities provided by the distance education system.

Ms. Sudha (Enrol. No. 27029182593) was a housewife until such time her husband passed away and she was offered the job of a constable in the Delhi Police. She then took up the job to support the family consisting of her two children. Sudha was motivated by her children to join the NIOS as she had little formal education. In due course, she passed the Secondary Examination from NIOS in April 2009. A resident of Sant Nagar, Burari, Delhi and posted at the Rohini Court, Delhi, Sudha today feels more confident and empowered by the qualification acquired by her.

Ishant Gandhi (Enrolment No. 27012962269) passed the Secondary Examination from the NIOS in 2007 and has appeared for the April / May 2010 Senior Secondary examinations. Belonging to a family of artistes, Ishant started acting at the age of eight. Although he attended a regular school up to class IX, he found it difficult to cope up with formal schooling along with his schedule as an actor. The NIOS which offers the option of flexible education enabled him to enroll and pass the Secondary examination. A highly talented learner, Ishant performs kathak dance and also cultural and devotional programmes such as bhajans and kirtans. He is presently playing a supporting role in a Zee TV serial titled "Karol Bagh, 12/24".

Jithin Jose (Enrol. No.: 09001533003) had to drop out of school when he was in class II as he was suffering from haemophilia, a disorder in which blood does not clot as in the case of a normal person. Severe and frequent internal bleeding prevented him from even going to school for writing the exams. When he was about sixteen years old, his parents came to know about the NIOS and got him registered for the foundation course. This enabled him to start his second innings as a student. Due to the flexibility of the NIOS system, Jithin could choose subjects of his choice as he further enrolled for the Secondary Course.

He found that the books were self-explanatory and prepared in a simple language. Although there were frequent interruptions due to internal bleeding, Jithin studied on his own imagining that books were his teachers. At the age of nineteen, he passed his secondary exams in 2003 with 72% marks. He further enrolled for the NIOS Senior Secondary Course and qualified the exam in 2005 with 81% marks. By that time, this aspiring student became ambitions and decided to register for a course in Chartered Accountancy. Although he missed the first few attempts due to severe bleeding, he managed to clear the CA Inter exams with 41st rank at the All India level. Jithin Jose who viewed studying on his own as a limitation realized that it was his strength. It not only expanded his horizons of thinking but also sharpened his analytical skills. He acknowledges that the NIOS led him from ignorance to knowledge, by initiating him into the world of studies. He feels extremely proud to be an NIOS Product.

L. Athira Krishna, Enrolment No. A01431799, has been an internationally acclaimed prodigy violinist. She has an enviable musical lineage as the granddaughter of the illustrious Vidwan Sri. Gopala Pillaiand, the daughter of

the noted Veena player Sangitha Vidwan Sri. K.C.Krishna Pillai. Performing across the globe as a Carnatic Violin Soloist from the age of nine, Athira is the proud recipient of many coveted recognitions including the prestigious Guinness World Record for her unique 32 hour long non-stop Carnatic Violin Solo Concert. She is among the youngest cultural ambassadors of India taking the rich Indian classical music tradition to every part of the world through her violin solo concerts. Popularly hailed as the "Princess of Indian Violin" and honoured with the title of "The Musical Gem of India" by Former First Lady of India, Smt. Usha Narayanan, Athira Krishna has enthralled audiences across the world including performances at prestigious International Music Festivals in India and abroad. She has also given "Trans Global Fusion Concerts" and lecture demonstrations on Indian classical music at World Music Festivals.

The flexibility of NIOS Scheme enabled Athira to complete her school education. She has completed the NIOS Senior Secondary Course with psychology as one of the subjects in 2004. She is presently pursuing MBA in Marketing from the Madras University from where she also completed her graduation.

In spite of suffering from Aspergers Syndrome, Manas Harith Swaroopa secured 97% in Economics in class X Exam. The Times of India has coverage of that story.

[TIMES OF T.NAGAR – 4.07.2010]

sunday, july 4, 2010
the times of t nagar

events 7

Above normal

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OPEN SCHOOLS (NIOS) MAKES IT EASIER FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES TO COPE WITH THEIR STUDIES AND GRADUATE ALONG WITH THEIR PEERS. NO ONE KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN MANAS HARITH SWAROOPA, A BOY DIAGNOSED WITH ASPERGERS SYNDROME WHO SECURED 97% IN ECONOMICS IN HIS CLASS 10 EXAMS AND GOT 80.4% OVERALL.

The immediate question relates to NIOS is of opportunity to inclusion. This inclusion suggests the avoidance of exclusion. India doesn't have the social security system. This dire need demands qualifications and skills. Looking at the impact of the literary mission from the following graph, it's clear that India will have 80 to 85 per cent literacy rate in 2020. Literacy is one of the main variables of empowerment and an entry to the main stream, but the quality of literacy is something that needs to be addressed. The NIOS, as stated to be World's largest open school, cannot be exonerated of diluting the quality of education. Going by its rules, a candidate is to qualify five subjects in five years. The candidate is free to select any five subjects from the stipulated list including language(s) (not more than two). If it's not possible in five years, the candidate is free to get registered again and gets next five years to qualify the exams. The credit transfer from one term to another makes it clear that that candidate is virtually given 10 years to qualify five exams and the pass percentage is 33 per cent (NIOS Notification No. F-84-1/ 2012/ NIOS/ Acad./ Ac/1133 dt. 11th July 2014). This omnibus design of spreading literacy may compromise with the growing competitions in intellectual property especially in a knowledge society, but it can very well contribute to the working force the much needed qualifications and skills.

The National Institute of Open Schooling in association with Apparel Made-ups & Home Furnishing Sector Skill Council and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) launches a unique training programme free of cost with guaranteed job placement and Govt. of India Certification. The starting salary would be between Rs. 7000 to 8000 (including PF and ESI) after successful completion of the training programme. This is a major drive to boost up the inclusion process and empowerment (http 24).

Here is a unique case of admission. The NIOS certificate is officially equivalent to CBSE, CISCE and State Boards. However, its inclusive policy to admit drop-outs including challenged children is responsible for diminishing its credibility and face value. This makes most of the colleges and universities prefer students passing from CISCE, CSBE and other State Boards for admission. Here is a case. **Lubiana Motiwala**, a dyslexic student, cleared her Secondary Exam from NIOS with 73 per cent. Most of Mumbai's top-ranked colleges refused to admit her for her NIOS background. She was told by the K. C. College that it won't admit NIOS students as they are insufficiently equipped to cope up at college level. Ultimately, she was given admission by the prestigious St. Xavier College (Education World: Dec. 2010).

PROUD LEARNERS OF NIOS

- MC Mary Kom who won the Bronze Medal in London Olympics in 2012 got admission in NIOS in 2014.
- M.C. Akarsh, a differently abled artist painting with legs, is also an NIOS student.
- Kavya Madhavan, a leading actress in Kerala and the winner of state award, took admission in NIOS in 2010.
- L. Athira Krishna, an international violinist cum Guinness World Record Holder, was the NIOS student.
- Dipika Rebecca Pallikal, a professional squash player and 13th rank holder, opted for NIOS.
- Somdev Devvarman, India's First Tennis Gold Medalist in the Commonwealth Games, was also an NIOS student.
- Muktha Elsa George, a film & serial actress, was a student of NIOS.

Among the prominent others are:

- Leema Babu, a film artist;

- Jai Quehaeni R, a professional Bharatanatyam dancer & Tamil film actress;

- Armaan Mahomed Ebrahim, Car Racing Formula-1;

- Pradyumna Prakash M.V, a professional golf player;

- M.S. Ganesh Vishwanathan, a professional classical music singer;

- Amanjyot Singh, an international golf player;

Source: NIOS website (http 25)

The NIOS Calendar 2016 contains the pictures drawn by NIOS students.
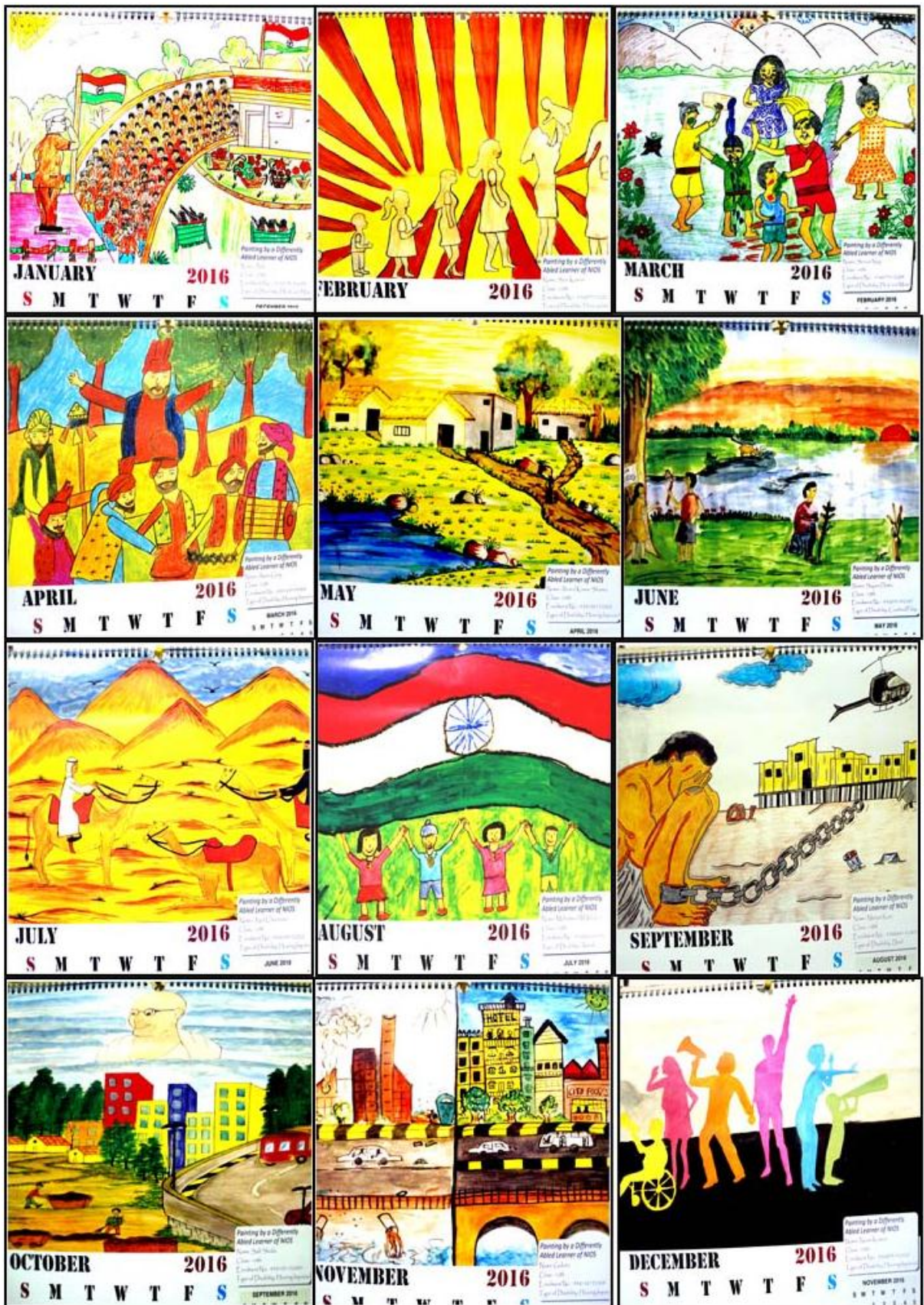
Source: NIOS Calendar 2016

CHAPTER – 5

PUTTING THREADS TOGETHER

A few words on the study:

To look back and to articulate facts and figures with sociological perspectives require some sort of paraphrasing of the text and context. The need for such a study is self-evident on many counts. The study shows the inclusion and empowerment of the dropouts through NIOS and Gujarat Board Private Exam system. However, this staggering number also reflects the conditions compelling learners to be dropouts. Surat is growing city with industries, business, and real estates. The migration of labour force to this city is also growing proportionately. It does not suggest that the students (dropouts) enrolled in NIOS are basically from Surat. A good number of students are from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. They have come along with their relatives. The growing awareness and need for qualification have drawn many slum dwellers to this system. A dissertation study of this nature has limitations to study several variables / categories into consideration. The dissertation has been undertaken to bring out the process of inclusion and empowerment of those excluded from the main stream because of their being dropouts during school education. The study does not try to understand gender and caste issues separately. The NIOS, as the world biggest open schooling system, is catering the much needed help to those excluded and help them get into the so-called main stream and make them empowered. However, there is a glossy picture of NIOS. Many celebrities who had had opportunity to be celebrity could not complete their schools. They are now joining the NIOS to have secondary and senior secondary certificates. They empower the NIOS as the NIOS is empowering those backward. Therefore, it's a two way process, though the

study is mainly to understand the inclusive process of the open school exams (NIOS and Gujarat Board Private Exam System) and the subsequent empowerment.

Method has to do, first of all, with how to ask and answer questions with some assurance that the answers are more or less durable. 'Theory' has to do, above all, with paying close attention to the words one is using, especially their degree of generality and their logical relations. The primary purpose of both is clarity of conception and economy of procedure, and most importantly just now, the release rather than the restriction of the sociological imagination (Mill 1959).

There is direct correlation between education system and economic development. It's because economy is knowledge based. Education and skill are required for developing and using technology. There are several premier institutes like IITs, IIMs, ISRO, etc. having had their contributions to the making of India. Education comes first as education is credited for man making and nation building.

The need for open school is directly linked to the bringing the dropouts back to the main stream. The Gujarat Board Private School System is also helping in this matter. However, there are several restrictions. A candidate has to have the promotion certificate of Std. 7th in order to avail of the opportunities of Gujarat Board Private School Exam.

Calculation of Dropout Rate:

$$(D_g^t) = \frac{D_g^t}{E_g^t} \times 100$$

where

D_g^t = Number of students dropping out from grade 'g' in year 't'

E_g^t = Total number of students in grade 'g' in year 't'

(http://www.educationforallinindia.com/Dropoutrates2003-04&2004-05.pdf)

Dropout Rates in School Education: All Categories of Students

Years	Boys	Girls	Total
2005-6	60.1	63.6	61.6
2006-7	58.6	61.5	59.9
2007-8	56.6	57.3	56.7
2008-9	54.0	54.4	54.2
2009-10	53.3	51.8	52.7
2010-11	50.2	47.7	49.2
2011-12	48.6	52.2	50.3
2012-13	50.4	50.3	50.4
2013-14	48.1	46.7	47.4

Source: Educational Statistics at a Glance, MHRD, Govt. of India, 2014.

The concept of distance education and correspondence education is not new though the concept of online education is somewhat new but very popular. Beyond concept, the practice of open education is getting momentum owing to several forces. A few can be attributed to globalization too. The open education gets a complete system today starting from secondary examination, higher senior secondary examination, graduation, and post-graduation including M. Phill and PhD. Let's try to understand with an example. Going by the established statutory understanding, the primary education has been made free and compulsory. It means all will have primary education up to the age of 14 that corresponds to the schooling of std. VII. It suggests there are no dropouts up to the age of 14. Reality may speak different, but the researcher is not going to counter this immediately for the understanding of what has been created as a system. The system permits children to be dropouts after the age of 14. That means those who can't afford school education at secondary level

(IX & X) and senior secondary level (XI and XII) can opt for open school exams undertaken by State Boards and Central Board (NIOS). What it suggests is exams without schooling and that is known as open schooling. It also suggests that one with knowledge can have qualifications accordingly. Society doesn't bar someone to study, but at the same time, society can't issue formal certificates to its members having knowledge of different subjects. For the same, the state conducts exams. This trend is growing in which individuals will take care of their education and take exams of the state. However, the main trend is the state sponsored formal schooling and subsequent formal exams. Therefore, there are two systems, fundamentally different, in place. This difference has its different societal impacts, and immediate impact may be construed in terms of social stratification. Bharat and India may have the same connotation in Article 1 of the Constitution, but the public (political) discourse, both are different. An analogy may cast a little clarity on the arguments being developed. Both the ITI and IIT impart technical education, but the earlier one is 'down to earth' and the latter one is 'state of the art'. The division between Bharat and India is institutionalised in several ways. Will this Open School System, actually no schooling open exam system, and regular schooling system create divisions in Indian society and justify the functional differences accordingly? This question appears to be important in view of the integration of the people in the so-called main steam. Can it be, for the sake of clarity, understood that there are different streams working at different level? The demand for reservation has raised questions. Is it to get into the main stream or to enjoy the benefits of reservation? Those who are agitating for the OBC status want to enjoy the benefits of reservation rather than being the part of mainstream. The Gurjars in Rajasthan and the Patels in Gujarat are fighting for the OBC status for the benefits of reservation. It suggests that there are

regional or local sub-streams prevalent vis-à-vis to the so-called main stream of society. This also suggests the relevance of NIOS as one can easily accesses to it. On Demand Exam system has given it the postmodern touch.

Postmodern approaches to education:

An important account of what postmodernism means for education is found in the work of the British sociologists Robin Usher and Richard Edwards. To Usher and Edwards (1994), theories of education that are based on functionalist or conflict theory are modernist. They project a meta-narrative scheme suggesting that education spreads rational beliefs in place of metaphysical dogmas. The dynamics implied in education enables individuals to think freely and rationally which makes social progress and innovation possible. As postmodernists, Usher and Edwards reject this meta-narrative. They are sceptical of the claim that science and reason can answer all human problems or that there is no other truth. They see no reason why one curriculum should be taught rather than any other, or why some subjects are more important than others. Their criticism of the modern education leads to the question as to what the postmodern education may look like. Although they discuss several possibilities, they are sympathetic to the development of a system of cultural pluralism and diversity which are essential to postmodernity thinkers. This system would give individuals the freedom to shape their own educational programmes, though lifelong learning or the exploration of cultural difference for example (Giddens 2006).

Is modernity static? Can the meta-narrative remain the same over generations? Schumpeter may have the answer in his remarks on "creative destruction" that rests upon the revolutionary nature of such qualitatively different goods, businesses, technologies, etc., being introduced into the economy. This is what

Schumpeter means when he says that the history of capitalism is the "history of revolutions" where the creation of the new upsets, overturns, and destroys the old (1975).

Let's have a picture of the process of getting into the main stream that we understand as the symbol of national integration. Here is the grim reality. There were more than 23 lakhs candidates including no less than 255 PhDs applying for 368 posts as Govt. peons (The Times of India, Sept. 26, 2015). It's not easy to get into the main stream. The modern industrial society is not inclusive. The competition for survival keeps on excluding a large number of candidates out of the so called main stream and creates a social gap between the employed and the unemployed. What came latest in response to unemployment is the claim made by the school textbook in Chhattisgarh that the working women cause of unemployment (Times of India, Sept. 22, 2015).

The answer to this question may be found in government policies on employment generation, promoting self-employment schemes, imparting training for start-up business, etc. It is found that the NIOS promotes social integration on both counts. Many candidates come from service to obtain degrees, and a lot more students enrol themselves to obtain a degree to get a job. The National Integration Committee appointed by the Ministry of Education under the Chairmanship of the late Dr. Sampurnananda recommended that from the point of view of national integration, the uniform pattern of 10 + 2 + 3 should be adopted for school and colleges in all parts of the country. The Resolution of the Government of India on the National Policy of Education also supports the uniform adoption of this pattern (Naik 2008).

Summing up the disintegrative trends, the Indian Education Commission 1964-66 had observed that the old values which held society together have been

disappearing and as there is no effective programme to replace them by a sense of social responsibility. Innumerable signs of social disorganization are evident everywhere and are continually on the increase. These include strikes, increasing lawlessness and disregard for public property, corruption in public life ad communal tensions and troubles (Mohanty 2004).

In a pluralistic society like ours, post-modernism serves better than modernism, the meta-narrative. Again, linking it to post-structuralism especially of Foucault's discursive practices, it appears to the researcher that power does not remain confined to any single entity in a liberal democracy like ours. Here, inclusion to the so-called main steam does not remain confined to state sponsored mainstream; society equally is also known for its exclusion and inclusion agenda. The Open Schooling System does provide necessary opportunities to make both state and society more inclusive. Here is a reality. In an interview to the President of the Sardar Patel Council, Bardoli, it was revealed that matrimonial selections are becoming tougher as boys do not have sufficient academic qualifications. They get into business or jobs even before becoming adult at the age of eighteen. The girls, without options, continue schooling and qualify the exams, and the mismatch of disproportionate qualifications surfaces at the time of matrimonial selections. One more factor has brought academically unqualified married women to NIOS or Open Schooling System. It's about getting a good job on compensatory grounds if one dies during his tenure of service. However, there is overall demand for qualifications as many low profile manual jobs need basic qualifications. There are many Guajarati people living abroad. Many prefer to go abroad with work/study visa and hence require minimum qualifications. Another empirical observation is that the NIOS qualification holders construct their social reality in a better manner which in turn promotes social status. There are a few

respondents (D group staff), already in service at SVNIT, Surat, are pursuing NIOS for social status though they know that promotion is unlikely.

One of the key effects of globalisation on education is an evident shift away from a predominantly national education system to a more fragmented, multi-scalar and multi-sectoral distribution of activity that now involves new players, new ways of thinking about knowledge production and distribution, and new challenges in terms of ensuring the distribution of opportunities for access and social mobility (Dale and Robertson 2007). One way of conceptualising the changing nature, scope and sites involved in the work of education is to see a new 'functional and scalar division of the labour of education' emerging (Dale 2003).

A study has mentioned seven 7 Global Trends in Education in the 21st Century (http 26)**:**

1. Technology use and integration − Technology will not only enhance education, but will promote education.

2. Expansion of mobile technology: Technology will become increasingly mobile. The opportunities for learning will exist everywhere.

3. Asset‑based approaches to evaluation: At the classroom level, at the regional or national scale and on a multinational or international level.

4. Increased creativity: Knowledge will be created and recreated, not simply imparted by teachers. Students are not just taking in facts, they are creating new knowledge.

5. Global approaches to learning: Shared interests, curiosity and a hunger for learning are driving us to reach beyond our own borders.

6. Global mobility: Teachers and students are experiencing more of the world, more often, starting from a younger age.

7. Borderless education: The barrier of geography is being transcended by technology, creativity and a desire to go global.

The open school system may not be able to fulfil the philosophical purpose of education as conceived by Tagore, Aurobindo, and Gandhi, but it will help students to play the active roles in nation building. The basic question of co-relation between education and empowerment stands contested. It's to be put to taste in the framework of social science. Can rights or empowerment be independent of the socio-economic system of any given society? Marx (1875) tried to answer this question in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme*. What he argued is that "Rights can never be higher than the economic structures of society and its cultural development conditioned thereby." Let's put this to test in Indian context. The school books published by NCERT and GCERT invariably contains the Fundamental Duties incorporated in the introductory pages, but there is little reference to the Fundamental Rights. One can very well pay attention to the Constitution Assembly Debate on the Fundamental Rights to understand its importance. When school children are badly in need of rights for their development, they are made aware of their duties. Education is after all human resource generation. The basic question is how there can be human resource generation without human rights taking into consideration. In his essay, Capitalist Development and Educational Structure, Bowles (1978:783-796) strongly argues that the school system may serve the interests of the capitalist class. In Marxian paradigm, the institution called education belongs to the superstructure very much dependent on the base, i.e. economy. The NUEPA's Vision Statement is "Evolving a humane learning society through advancement of knowledge" (www.nuepa.org/New/vision_mission.aspx).

The absence of the social security system has reduced education to the knowhow of making a living in India, keeping human values aside. Today, norms do not carry sufficient moral values but market values. Social science in school curriculum has become the most neglected discipline in industrial India.

Gujarat is industrially growing fast, but its social science chapter is very dismal. Most of the schools don't have Humanities in senior secondary section. Law is also not understood in terms of social engineering for social justice, but in terms of criminal, civil, constitutional, industrial, etc. No country can grow without capitals—be it capitalist or communist, but who owns the capital that makes things different.

There is a consensus that expanding education will have a beneficial impact upon individuals and societies if the education is of good quality. Quality, however, is a multi-faceted concept, referring to how learning is organized and managed, course contents, learning environments and final outcomes (Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2002). The recent study conducted by NCERT has come out with the observation that in 10th Std. only 41% students were able to answer correctly in English; in mathematics, only 40% students made the cut. In science, overall 43% students were able to come up with the right answers while the overall score in social science was 47%. The best result was in Indian languages where 53% were able to give correct answers. The private schools were found to be better than the Govt. and Govt. aided schools. (The Times of India, January 7, 2016).

The validity of NIOS can be referred to not only from its constitutionality, legality, jurisdiction, equivalency of degrees with other boards, etc., but also from the perspective of students. It's like a driving license. One might know how to drive, but one can't drive simply because of not having the driving license tendered by none other the state. Modern democracies are mostly bureaucratic states. The Rule of Law and the supremacy of law regulate human behaviour in public life. Society, though much older than the state, the scope of society is fast shrinking as conflict, as and when it occurs, is addressed by

society. Even for essential services like water, electricity, transportation, the society is dependent on state. It is nicely stated by Presthus (1962): "Our society is an organizational society. We are born in organizations, educated by organizations, and most of us spend much of our lives working for organizations.………Most of us will die in an organization, and when the time comes for burial, the largest organization of all—the state—must grant official permission." The NIOS provides the necessary certificates to go ahead in a bureaucratic state caged in the Rule of Law. There is no denial of the quality study material provided by the NIOS, but at the same time, there is little denial of the fact that private coaching centres prepare NIOS students for the exams. Therefore, the success of NIOS, empirically speaking, should not be linked to the success of distance learning particularly at school level when children are lacking of basic skills. Of course, it's a much needed boost-up programme to recognise the talents of students and provide them with necessary certificates. The distance education is successful to some extent at under-graduate and post-graduate level as students can independently grasp the contents and prepare themselves. A comparative study between NIOS and State Private School Exam System may seem to be necessary for the clarification of inferences drawn in the hypotheses. The pan Indian network of NIOS under the Ministry of Human Resources, Government of India, gives it, no doubt, upper hand over the state sponsored private exam system that does not have the provisions of cafeteria approach to selection of subjects, transfer of credits, relaxation of time, supply of study materials, personal contact programme by the study centres, submission of assignments, etc. like that of NIOS. This has provided the researcher with sufficient rationale to restrict study to NIOS.

A few words on NIOS and National Integration:

The study has been proposed to understand open schooling, empowerment, and national integration. The concept of national integration is linked to the concept of so-called "main stream" representing national integrity. The research is of the opinion that after 68 years of independence, the conceptual framework to understand national unity requires a different framework. Taking into consideration of the plurality of India and then to put it into in the federal structure of the constitution, the so called proverb "unity in diversity" seems to be irrelevant. Postmodernity has again diminished the mainstream mega truth and promoted diversity in the epistemology of knowledge. Keeping this perspective in mind, the researcher suggests that instead of "unity in diversity", it would be better to understand national unity in the framework of "diversity in unity". With LPG and Globalization, there are ample scopes created in which individuals with requisite knowledge and skill can get into an organization or can create an organization and link it the global organization. It pertinent to say that there is no single enormity of global organization; it's the network of plurality. Today, we do not live in the numerical world like 1st World, 2nd World, or 3rd World, but in the web world. With an email id and a Facebook / LinkedIn account, one can get into the web world and can get a dignified global status. What was social up to 1990s has become global in the recent past. With reference to this study, the dropouts, excluded in the past, have become empowered with the recognition, by the state, of requisite knowledge and skill and getting into the global network. Therefore, national unity should be searched for not so much in "unity in diversity" but as much as in diversity in unity.

With the announcement of the start-up business to be undertaken under the "Make in India" programme, there will be lots of initiatives to grab the

opportunities. This will create demand for the educational qualifications and other requirements to get bank loans, etc. In coming days, the demands for NIOS will increase manifold as many dropouts will come forward to have both the SSC and HSC qualifications as the gateway to higher education and getting into jobs. Can India get rid of dropouts? The answer "No" rests on both subsistent socio-economic conditions and the RTE Act. The Act offers free education up to the age of 14, i.e., up to Std. VIII. In many states, the primary education is not free of cost. Even it were free of cost, many would be compelled to give up schooling for acute financial crisis. Therefore, Indian society will have sufficient dropouts for the NIOS in days to come. No society can afford to have anti-social elements. Therefore, state must make provisions for all to get into the main stream.

In his speech to the Commonwealth Education Conference, Edinburgh on October 28, 2003, Amartya Sen raised a question as to why it is so important to close the educational gaps, and to remove the enormous disparities in educational access, inclusion and achievement. One reason he cited among others is the making the world more secure as well as fairer (http.27). HG Wells was quoted to have said in *Outline of History*: "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe." If we continue to leave vast sections of the people of the world outside the orbit of education, we make the world not only less just, but also less secure (Sen: ibid).

Scope of Further Studies:

Every study should leave some questions for further study. Studies of this nature are mostly done to fill the gaps found while reviewing the literature or to explore new areas with research questions. Whatever way we may proceed, searching for answers creates many questions for further studies. Nothing is

conclusive in social science. Therefore, this study needs to be studied with pan India data since NIOS is a pan Indian organization covering every state of the Indian Union. This study has establish the proposed link between the school dropouts as social exclusion, NIOS as inclusive organization, and the students coming back to the main stream as national integration on one hand and individual empowerment from the other—one is the macro aspect and the other is the micro one. It is also true individual empowerment without proportional national integration may be dysfunction to society and harmful to both. There should be a balance and harmony between the two. Going by the constitutional schemes and social pluralism, India can't think of a totalitarian state; nor can there be any individual superior to rule of law. There is little denial of the links between education and empowerment, but the same (formal) education system has created so many dropouts who can otherwise be threat to society without social inclusion with proper placement. The basic thrust of the study lies herein, and this needs to be studied with pan Indian data. There may some more variables to be taken into considerations in order to be precise as to the degree of national integration and empowerment contributed specifically by NIOS.

Findings and Suggestion:

It ambit clear that NIOS is doing the much needed service in bringing the dropouts and excluded lot to the main stream and promoting national integration and empowerment of individuals. However, the study reveals certain prospects and predicaments that need to be addressed and proper policy formulation, implementation, and propagation are required.

(i) **Quality Control** needs to be addressed. If a candidate is allowed to have cafeteria approach to the selection of subjects, taking any number of subjects, and, if required, to change subjects afterwards,

and then given five years (and then again five years, if required) to qualify five subjects with minimum pass mark, i.e., 33% and then given equivalency to be treated at par with other Board students, quality appears to be compromised.

(ii) **To revive the PCP** (personal contact programme) given to the Accredited Institutes (AIs) popularly known as the Study Centres. Such Study Centres are the Schools affiliated to CBSE / ICSE / State Board, etc. They are busy with their own routine work. There is little time for them address the difficulties of the NIOS students who need intensive care. Distance Learning is viable but not below the under-graduate level. Therefore, the NIOS requires an effective mechanism to address the difficulties of students through Personal Contact Programme in addition to what the Study Centres have been doing.

(iii) **Making people aware of NIOS** seems to be very important. During data collection and interview with the stake holders, it's found that many are unaware of NIOS and its different programmes like Open Basic Education, Vocational Training, and Life-enrichment apart from its Secondary and Senior Secondary Exams. Mass Communication and Social Media can be used to spread the programmes of NIOS. The NIOS can develop its own app and can include different features to attract students.

(iv) **Misuse of NIOS** by some meritorious students who do not go through their Senior Secondary Course (XI and XII) and directly go to Kota, Rajasthan for IIT / Medical Coaching and then enrol them with NIOS. For the overall development knowledge, skills, character, and sociability there is nothing better than regular schooling. If this can be allowed merely on technical ground, the larger question would be whether the open schooling can be allowed

to replace regular schooling. This is a question of larger debate in view of the emerging digital India and open market, open society, etc. The concept of home schooling is not new.

Limitations of the Study:

There are innumerable studies on education. Accordingly, the vast literature has been created. Education and national integration is also well established. However, there is scarcity of literature with regard to open school education and national integration studied from the sociological perspectives. Every subject in social science has its established methodological configuration. Therefore, it was not possible to rely on literature on education and national integration exclusively studied from the discipline of education. Many students, who are established and successful, are away from Surat. This study, so far, provides the confirmation of variables: education and empowerment uniquely with open schools.

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