

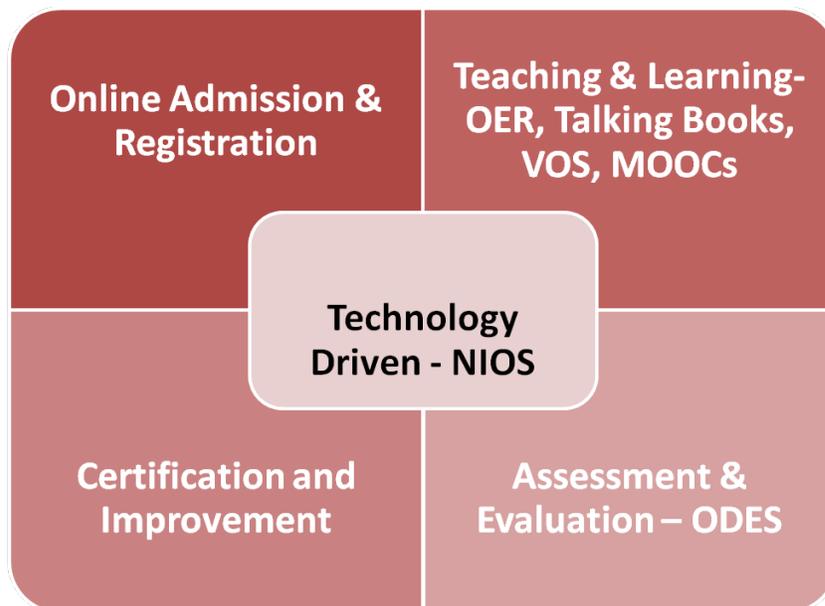
Title: Technology Driven Open Schooling – A case study of NIOS, India

Abstract

National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), formerly known as National Open School, is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India. It is an “Open School” which caters to the needs of a heterogeneous group of learners who are unable to attend conventional schools for a variety of socio-economic reasons up to pre-degree level. NIOS offers Secondary, Sr.Secondary and Vocational courses through ODL mode. The cumulative enrolment of NIOS is more than 2.81 million learners with annual enrolment ranging from 500 to 550 thousands making it as the largest open schooling system providing alternative education at school level.

Under the programmes and activities of the NIOS, Information and Communication Technology is being used as a major strategy towards reaching the unreached and management of NIOS. Internet and Web technology have proved effective in the teaching and learning process especially in the field of Open and Distance Education. The NIOS has its own web portal www.nios.ac.in for dissemination of information and for providing online citizen centric services as a major initiative of e-Governance. Being an institution in Open Distance Learning, ICT is being used for providing the quality support to NIOS learners especially to persons with disability through its web portal www.nios.ac.in .

The Technology driven NIOS is represented in the following matrix



A. Online Admission & Registration

The NIOS Online project initiated by NIOS has brought convenience to its learners/client group, transparency in the basic operations of NIOS in the area of admission, examination and accreditation and enhanced the quality of the support services to its learners.

The Online initiative of NIOS has brought convenience to its learners, transparency in the basic operations in the area of admission, examination and accreditation and enhanced the quality of the support services to its learners. The online admissions are open through out the year (24X7). The mobile technology was integrated with the online application for SMS alerts.

B. Technology driven Teaching-Learning

Online Self Learning Materials: The Self Learning Materials for secondary, sr.secondary and vocational courses are available in the public Domain and can be accessed at <http://www.nios.ac.in> The course materials are in the pdf format with ease of navigation for courses then subjects and then modules. These materials are accessible free of charge to all educational institutions, educationists and the learners of NIOS end-users. The learners can also download the materials for study offline.

Open Educational Resources: After successful implementation of On-line admission at Secondary and Senior Secondary levels in NIOS, it becomes imperative to provide online interactive instructions to the candidates taking admission online. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) initiated **Open Educational Resources (OER)** specifically for Vocational programmes to be offered at Secondary (10th) and Sr. Secondary (+2) levels, including standalone programmes, in partnership with state level institutions and organizations.

These educational resources are not only helpful for the learners pursuing their studies through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system at school level, but also are accessible to millions of learners interested in development of their skills in various vocations. This has also help in vocationalisation of the curriculum at Secondary and Sr. Secondary levels across the Boards in the country. Aim of the project is to make the vocational education system sustainable and ever changing in skill development and applications by creating partnerships with social and industrial institutions.

Virtual Open Schooling (VOS)

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) launched the Virtual Open Schooling (VOS) to serve learners with access to Internet, and those who may want to have complete online learning experiences for their education and skill development. Learners can study using asynchronously or synchronously technologies.

NIOS MOOCs

Free access to quality educational materials at schools level was a major challenge for NIOS in pursuance with the Govt. initiative. MOOCs are Massive Open Online Courses and are rapidly considered as one of the factors of game changer for higher education, executive education and employee development generally.

C. Assessment & Evaluation

Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation and online testing are part of the learning under MOOCs which is done on a fixed interval and after completion of each module so that the learners can self assess the status of their content knowledge and life skills enhancement.

If learners are satisfied with his/her knowledge and want to get certificate then he/she only pay for term end examination fee to appear through On-Demand Examination as per their convenience and preparation. The learners enrolled under Virtual Open Schooling (VOS) can also appear through online examination of VOS.

D. Certification & Improvement

The learners get 9 chances to clear their examination and ample number of chances for improvement of her/his performance in the examination through On-Demand Examination. The successful learners are given certificate once they are satisfied with their performance.

Conclusion

The Course Material of NIOS is available on its portal for free access to its learners. In order to overcome the challenge of numbers, Quality of Learning, cost and access, NIOS also offers Open Educational Resource (OER) and MOOCs. The material developed is in the format of Self Learning Material. The multimedia components have been incorporated in the MOOCs & OERs. Extending to this NIOS has also launched the Virtual Open Schooling (VOS). It provides opportunity to learners to study courses online and gain credit for online certification purpose. NIOS offers academic support and counseling to its learners through Virtual Classroom web radio known as Mukta VidyaVani. All Open Source software have been used in the development

This paper will present the recent initiatives of NIOS on online education without any payment. However, for the certification, the learners will register and write the examination at their own convenience through “On-Demand Examination System”. Through this new initiative NIOS aspires to provide complete “openness” and freedom to learners to study and get assessed anytime, anywhere. The paper would elaborate the academic and technical aspects of the online education and certification process.

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