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TITLE OF THE THESIS-

“EQUITY AND QUALITY CONCERNS: A STUDY OF NIOS”

ABSTRACT

In the present study an effort has been made to find out the extent to which the equity and quality issues are taken care of by the open schooling system and the perception of NIOS learners, counselors and coordinators towards various services available at NIOS and any difference if perceived by various groups of NIOS learners towards the services at NIOS. The Socio-economic and Academic status of NIOS learners has also been studied in detail. The various factors responsible for bringing them in NIOS system has also been investigated very closely. An analysis of the demographic characteristics of NIOS learners in terms of equity in enrollment has been done. Finally the authorities of NIOS have been interviewed to know the recent initiatives taken by NIOS system for providing quality schooling and equity to its learners. 450 NIOS learners, 60 Counselors and 30 Coordinators from 30 Study centres (AIs) spread across 5 states of Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi were part of the sample. 3 regional directors, director student support services and Chairman NIOS were also interviewed as part of the sample.

The tools developed by the investigator included, Personal Data File, questionnaire and Quality Perception Scale for the NIOS students, separate questionnaires for counselors and coordinator and a common interview schedule for Directors and the Chairman NIOS.

The findings reveals that the important factors behind selection of NIOS by the students are- failure in regular mode, lack of time to go to regular school and to save time (to

have certificate quickly). The analysis of demographic characteristics of learners reveals that NIOS is still away from those who are really the unreached (i.e the rural learners, the females, the OBCs, the SCs, the STs, the backward minority groups and the differentially abled groups of society in the country).

While one third of the students perceived quality of services at NIOS to be good, about two third perceived it to be either average or poor. The major problems reported by the NIOS learners include- problem of internet facility, study center at a far distance, high money charged by cyber cafes, late receiving of SIMs, non holding of PCPs and counselor not giving feedback on Tutor Marked Assignments.

Coordinators and counselors raised the problem of rural background students (online activities and far distance of AIs), Girls (not allowed to come out from their houses) and over age students.- (shy and hesitant). Many coordinators and counselors were of the view that all round developed of the child is not possible through open schooling. Quality related problems raised by coordinators and counselors included- late availability of SIM, I-Card and other information to students, low remuneration of counselors and coordinator, lack of infrastructure (library, Practical, audio visual aid etc.), lack of coordination/information between AI and regional centre and less no. of PCPs classes.

Among the recent initiatives taken by NIOS and reported by the NIOS authorities included- establishing more network of study centres in educationally backward areas, Skill training as part of our special initiative in revisiting the curriculum, and Producing quality learning material, meetings with the functionaries, conference/seminars are being organized, trainings are being given, use of recent technologies and good quality of SIM is being prepared and provided to the learners.