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Honorary Fellow of COL

Mr. Mahesh Chandra Pant, who hails from Uttar Pradesh, has done his nation proud with his contribution to Indian Education in general and to the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in particular.

He started his career as a Lecturer in Physics in Government Colleges and served the Uttar Pradesh Educational Service for nearly 30 years, rising from District Basic Education Officer to Joint Secretary. He was later Director of Education in the newly created State of Uttaranchal.

He is well-known for focusing special attention on the weaker sections of society especially the Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), girls and minorities in planning the Education for All campaign. His interest in the most vulnerable children inspired his involvement with implementing health checks in schools.

Mr. Pant's contribution to India's Education for All programme (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan) went beyond traditional schooling. He was involved in the setting up of various state bodies as well as initiating Environmental Education in the general curriculum for School Education.

In 2004, he was appointed Chairman of the National Institute of Open Schooling, the largest Open School in the world with

1,427 million students. From his wealth of experience Mr. Pant has been able to put the open schooling system in India on a solid foundation. He has strengthened NIOS' planning process and introduced monitoring of its programmes. The Open Vocational Education programme has been expanded and innovations like on-demand examination and e-governance have been put on a sound footing. He has consistently emphasised capacity building under the Open Schools Advisory Council and the International Centre for Training in Open Schooling.

Through Vision 2020, Mr. Pant initiated a comprehensive re-engineering process to reinforce open schooling so that it can deliver on its promise of making schooling universal. One aspect of this is the development of Training Modules for student support staff, a significant step forward for NIOS.

Under his leadership, NIOS is setting the pace nationally and has become a model for open schooling in Asia and Africa. He is a valued partner of the Commonwealth of Learning.

Mr. President and Acting Chairman, I present Mr. Mahesh Chandra Pant and request that you confer on him the title of Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning.