

2. Overview

Introduction

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has been pursuing its mission to provide opportunity for continuing education to those who have missed the opportunity to complete school and developmental education through courses and programmes of general, life enrichment and vocational education from primary to pre-degree level. This unique organization in the area of open schooling encompasses (i) the functions of a teaching institutions, adopting open and distance learning (ODL) methodology, (ii) a National Board of Examination, and (iii) an apex agency at national level for quality assurance and resource support for planning, implementation and monitoring of its programmes and activities. The NIOS works through a network of five Departments viz., Academic Department, Department of Evaluation, Department of Student Support Services and Department of Vocational Education), three units viz., Computer Unit, Media Unit and Planning Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Eleven Regional Centres and two Sub-Centres. Highlights of programmes and activities of NIOS during the year 2006-07 are mentioned below.

Accreditation of Institutions

As on 31st March 2007, the total number of accredited institutes (AIs) established in different parts of the country to conduct Academic courses was 1863, which includes 34 special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged. Under the Open Basic Education programme, about 280 organised had been accredited as on 31st March 2007. As on 31st March 2007, the total number of Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs) established in different parts of the country was 1041 which included 37 Special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIEDs).

Enrolment in Academic and Vocational Courses

- During 2006-07, the overall enrolment at Secondary and Senior Secondary stage during 2006-07 was 2,90,983.
- During 2006-07, the overall enrolment in various Vocational Courses was 22,166.

- The total new enrollment in Academic and Vocational courses during 2006-07 was 3,13,149.

Recognition of NIOS Courses

As on 31 March, 23 Boards, 111 Universities and 9 other Certifying Institutions had recognized the NIOS courses.

Student Support Services

The student support services programmes included (i) publicity about NIOS programmes, (ii) facilitating admission, (iii) timely supply of study materials through the study centres, (iv) organization of Personal Contact Programme (PCP) and Tutor Marked Assignment (TMA) at the study centres, and (v) media support to the teaching learning programme. On the basis of district wise mapping of the Study Centres, NIOS has identified unreached and educationally backward districts for enhancing coverage. NIOS continued giving Transfer of Credits to ex-students of CBSE, CISCE, UP Board, Uttaranchal Board, State Open Schools (SOSs). For monitoring of implementation of the open schooling programme, the services of experienced Academic Facilitators have been provided at the Study Centres. Interactive Voice Response Systems (IVRS), installed at NIOS Headquarters as well as the Regional Centres, provide response to day-to-day queries regarding admission, examinations, procedure of issuing duplicate Identity Cards, change/addition of subjects etc. The services of experienced educationists are utilised as Academic Facilitators at the Study Centres. They oversee at the Study Centres process of admission, implementation of programme, conduct of PCP and TMA, and examinations.

Material Production and Distribution

During the year 2006-07, NIOS printed around 52 lakh copies of Secondary, Senior Secondary and Vocational Education Courses study materials in Hindi, English, Telugu, Marathi, Malayalam, Gujarati and Urdu. In addition, NIOS printed and supplied

study materials for the Students of the the Rajasthan State Open School. The study material was delivered to the NIOS students through the Study Centres.

Regional Level Inputs

Eleven Regional Centres of NIOS at Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati, Pune, Delhi, Chandigarh, Allahabad, Patna, Jaipur, Bhopal and Kochi, and two Sub Centes at Dehradun and Bhubaneshwar continued performing tasks such as admission, examinations, advertisement and publicity, liaison, orientation of personnel attached to study centres, public relations and students' grievances, etc. The Regional Centres also looked after matters related to inspection of institutions for accreditation as Study Centres.

Publicity

The publicity of NIOS programmes such as admission, examinations, fees and results etc., is done through national and regional dailies as also through the electronic media. Press releases are given from time to time to highlight NIOS programmes and significant events.

Courses of Study

The NIOS continued offering a wide variety of courses of study (academic and vocational) to meet the requirement of learners. The Academic Courses include (i) Open Basic Education Programme (OBE) for children below 14 years and for adults above 14 years, (ii) Secondary Education Certificate Course, (iii) Senior Education Secondary Certificate Course, and (iv) Vocational Education Courses.

For implementation of **OBE programme**, the NIOS is partnering with 280 agencies which are running their study centres for students. The curriculum related activities included (i) development of materials for academic and vocational education courses, and (ii) support to States for OBE material development. Detailed guidelines have been prepared for conduct of OBE examinations. A computerized format for OBE results was prepared and made available to OBE accredited agencies. During the year 2006-07, the OBE enrolment was 34,504. Between April 2006 to March 2007, 73,131 OBE learners were certified (level A, B and C).

At the **Secondary and Senior Secondary** stage, NIOS follows cafeteria approach while offering various courses of study. The students have been given full flexibility in selection of subjects. Only one language is compulsory. NIOS offers 27 subjects in seven mediums at secondary stage and 25 subjects in three mediums at Senior Secondary stage. During 2006-07, revision of course materials in different subjects at senior secondary level was in progress. During 2006-07, development of course material in non subjects like Fashion Studies, Mass Communication, Functional Hindi, Environmental Science and Sanskrit at senior secondary level was initiated.

Under the Regional Language programme, Arabic language as a new subject at Secondary Level was introduced and Persian, as a new subject at secondary level, was initiated. Tutor Marked Assignments in all regional languages were developed in the year 2006-07. Revision of Kannada Language Curriculum at Secondary level was in progress. The Curriculum Committees for Tamil, Persian and Gujarati were being constituted. Development of material for Arabic language as a subject was in progress. Translation work of Course Materials in Gujarati, Telugu and Marathi languages was in progress.

As a measure of continuous assessment of learners, Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA) were developed in all subjects both in Hindi and English for Secondary and Senior Secondary Education Courses for the year 2006-07.

Admission to Vocational Education Courses continued during 2006-07. Some Vocational Education Courses such as Early Childhood Care and Education, Cutting Tailoring and Dress Making, Computer Application, Jan Swasthya, Electrical Technician and Beauty Culture Courses are very popular. The future thrust of NIOS Vocational Education Courses is on training of educated unemployed youth for meaningful and skill oriented employment. NIOS has planned to launch traditional and non-traditional technology oriented and competency based courses, rural oriented courses, courses for girls/women and disadvantaged, and linkages with industries, markets and service sectors.

The Curriculum Framework for Open Vocational Education is being prepared. In this context, four regional seminars were held during the year 2006-07 to deliberate on the draft of the Curriculum Framework.

Media Support to Open Schooling Programme

During 2006-07, 15 video programmes were produced and 7 video programmes are at various stages of production. In order to feed the time slots for telecast of NIOS programmes on Gyan Darshan and DD-1 Channel, Capsules of NIOS video programmes are prepared in-house. These capsules are sent for telecast on Gyan Darshan and DD-1 channels.

During 2006-07, 9 multimedia programmes were produced in Chemistry and uploaded on the Educational Portal of MHRD Sakshat for class XII. During this period, 60 capsules of the video programmes and 35 audio programmes were produced. During the period from 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007, 2500 audio cassettes/audio CDs were duplicated and sent to the study centre.

Examinations

The National Institute of Open Schooling is the only Board in the country which conducts two full-fledged examinations every year. In order to provide reliability, validity and credibility to examinations, several in-built checks and balances have been incorporated into the examination system. The question papers are developed in such a manner that they test not merely the knowledge of the candidate but also the ability to apply knowledge. After administration of the question paper, the marking scheme is finalized. Meetings of paper setters, moderators and experts for preparation of marking schemes were organized to ensure that appropriate balance is maintained in preparation and administration of question papers.

The system of assigning fictitious roll numbers on the answer scripts of students was started from October/November 2001 examination to ensure more secrecy in the evaluation system. This system continued during 2006-07 also. From Oct/Nov. 2001 examination, the system of outdoor evaluation was replaced by spot evaluation in order to maintain uniformity in

evaluation and early declaration of results. To ensure transparency in the examination system of NIOS, the question papers and marking schemes were placed on the internet immediately after the examinations were over. Date Sheets of the Secondary and Senior Secondary examinations were published in all important national dailies. The results of NIOS examinations were also made available on the IVRS of NIOS. The cases of unfair means in examinations were considered by the Unfair Means (UFM) Committee.

During 2006-07, 3,24,582 candidates appeared in the Academic and Vocational Education streams. In order to promote distance education in the States, NIOS has introduced the use of several vernacular mediums for its Secondary Education Course (Urdu, Malayalam, Telugu, Gujarati, Marathi). During 2006-07, NIOS certified 1,04,010 candidates for the Secondary Education Examination and Senior Secondary Education Examination.

On Demand Examination

The NIOS has developed an innovative “On Demand Examination System (ODES) which gives freedom to learner to appear in examination in the subject(s) of his/her choice whenever he/she feels confident taking an examination. Under ODES, the NIOS has designed a software to generate a test paper out of the test items in the Item Bank stored in computer. The software has been so designed that each student gets a different question paper. In this system, there is no possibility of leakage of question paper and copying, and no need to set up raid parties to oversee the conduct of examinations. The ODE System has been implemented at Secondary stage by establishing an examination centre at NIOS Headquarters with effect from 8 February 2005. The ODES testing centers are being set up in Regional Centres of NIOS. From February 2005 to March, 2006, the number of candidates appeared under ODES was 8802 in 12 subjects. Of these, 2820 students passed.

National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS)

NIOS remained in touch with the States for setting up/upscaling of the State Open Schools (SOSs). The NCOS Secretariat located in NIOS continued tak-

ing follow up action on the recommendations of the conferences on Promotion of Open Schooling organized during 2006-07. A meeting of the National Consortium of Open Schooling (NCOS) was organized by the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) in collaboration with JSS Karnataka Technical Institutional Campus, Mysore. The recommendations emphasized to intensify efforts to substantially upscale the open schooling programme in the country on priority basis, particularly to meet the educational needs of students for secondary education. In pursuance of the suggestions of the CBE Committee on universalisation of secondary education (USE) that open school network when fully developed should be able to cater to at least 15% students in secondary education, the NIOS has accelerated the pace of its efforts to promote open schooling in each state and up scaling the existing state open schools.

International Relations

- Under the aegis of the Open Schooling Association of Commonwealth (OSAC), the NIOS continued publishing and disseminating the half yearly OSAC Journal of Open Schooling of international standard. During 2006-07, the NIOS prepared and published one issue of the OSAC Journal.
- Thirteen senior educators from Sierra Leone, Ghana, The Gambia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Kenya, and Trinidad and Tobago were intensively trained in open schooling under the NIOS-COL programme in September 2006, at New Delhi. The outcome of the training programme was the development of a country report by each participating nation, proposing a framework for instituting an open school in their respective nations.
- A five-day workshop on “*Editing Of Self Learning Materials In Printed Medium For Open Schools*” in collaboration with COL was organized in May 2006. The outcome of the training workshop was the development of a pool of top-rated open schooling professionals at NIOS who can be used as master trainers/ resource persons for open schooling elsewhere in the world.
- UNESCO-Asia Pacific Programme of

Education of All (APPEAL), Bangkok in collaboration with NIOS, organized a five-day “*Regional Planning Workshop on Equivalency Programmes for the Promotion of Lifelong Learning*” at Jaipur in July 2006. The objective of conference was to review and share experiences as well as to build capacity of NFE personnel to effectively develop, implement and evaluate programme amongst different countries of the Asia in the implementation of the Equivalency Programme. The report of the workshop has been printed.

- An “*International Roundtable On Increasing Access To Quality Basic Education For Girls*” was organized by NIOS in collaboration with COL in September 2006. The objective of the Roundtable was to identify barriers to the access to education by girls and develop strategies to overcome these barriers and increase access to girls to basic education. As an outcome of the Roundtable, recommendations were made to national governments and COL to strengthen efforts for girls’ education, formulate quality indicators for assuring quality in schooling and develop strong inter-linkages for working in the area. The report of the programme has been printed.
- A delegation of officials from NIOS led by Shri M.C.Pant, Chairman NIOS participated in the 4th Plan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held in Jamaica in October 2006. NIOS officials at this Forum also presented papers and took part in the deliberations of the PCF4.
- Founder Chairman of NIOS Father T V Kunnunkal was designated Honorary Fellow of Commonwealth of Learning (COL) at the Pan Commonwealth Forum for his outstanding individual contribution to open schooling.
- Dr. K R Chandrasekaran, Director (Academic), NIOS participated in the two-day conference on “*Making Inclusive Education a Reality*” in March 2006 at Gwalior, India. Measures to encourage inclusive education and the special provisions made by NIOS in this regard were discussed.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

The Computer Unit of NIOS maintained database about admission, examination and certification. The admission data of 2,90,000 students was processed. Pre-exam processing of data of 500000 students and processing of their result was done. During 2006-07, an additional email-id was created for all the Regional Heads of NIOS for smooth and direct communication with the Chairman, NIOS and Heads of Departments at Headquarters.

NIOS is in the process of scanning of Admission Forms and preparation of Smart I – Cards for the learners. The organization is also in the process of providing its learners the facility of Education through Virtual Classroom.

Library, Documentation and Information Services

The NIOS Library has a collection of 15,308 books, 12,600 loose issues of journals and 690

audio-video cassettes/compact discs. The Library continued providing services such as (i) Reference Service, (ii) Circulation Service, (iii) Inter-Library Loan, (iv) Referral Service, (v) Reprographic Service, and (vi) scanning of newspapers, magazines and journals for news related to education. During 2006-07, more than 581 books were added to the NIOS Library

Promoting Use of Hindi

Besides taking various measures to promote the use of Hindi in its constituents, the NIOS celebrated the Hindi Fortnight from 14 to 28 September 2006. Various competitions for promotion of Hindi were organized. These included (i) Official Language Competition (ii) Computer based Hindi Knowledge Competition (iii) Mono-acting Competition (iv) Story writing Competition (v) Quiz Competition, and (vi) Extempore Speech Competition.