

3. Academic Courses

3.0 Introduction

In response to the diverse learning needs of its geographically spread and unreached client group, NIOS develops multi channel learning packages for different levels. The learning packages include both print and non-print mediums. The print and non-print mediums are further supported by open schooling bulletins, open learning magazine, teleconferencing audio video programmes, Personal Contact Programmes, etc. The expansion and extension of academic activities are carried out through the projects like Regional Language programme, Open Basic Education, etc. Action and promotive research in the areas of instructional strategies, Student Support Services etc., are undertaken by the faculty. Efforts are made to determine and control the quality of education at several points such as framing of curriculum, development of self instructional material, designing evaluation strategies, monitoring, supervision, etc. Courses are designed at Open Basic Education (OBE), Secondary and Senior Secondary levels.

3.1 Open Basic Education Programme

In response to the imperatives of joint initiatives in Distance Education of the E-9 summit held in December 1993, the Open Basic Education (OBE) Project was initiated in June 1994 in the National Institute of Open Schooling. The objective of the project in its first phase was continuing education for the neo-literates along with a proposal to link the neo-literates to the pre-secondary level education through open and distance learning. The Foundation Course that was prerequisite qualification for getting admission in NIOS Secondary course was clubbed with OBE programme. In the year 2000 OBE programme was implemented in collaboration with accredited governmental and non-governmental agencies and the process of joint certification between NIOS and Accredited Agencies (AAs) was initiated. The Open Basic Education Programme is recognised by the Government of India as equivalent education to the

elementary education programme of formal schools and for pursuing higher education.

The target group for the OBE programme consists of neo-literates under the National Literacy Mission's Equivalency Programme of the Continuing Education Scheme, school dropouts, dropouts of NFE programmes, girls and women, marginalized groups, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, persons below poverty line (BPL), first-generation learners, and out of school children and adults.

The OBE programme is conducted for both children and adults learners. These learners fall under two categories – (i) Children of 6 - 14 years, and (ii) Adults of 15 years and above.

The OBE programme has three levels-A, B and C. Level 'A' is equivalent to Standard III, Level 'B' is equivalent to Standard 'V' and Level 'C' is equivalent to Standard VIII of the formal school system.

- **Activities Under OBE Programme during 2006-07**

- (i) **Accreditation and Programme Implementation**

The OBE programme is implemented through the accredited agencies at the grassroots level. The agencies may be non-government organizations, government bodies or government-aided institutions. The accredited agencies (AAs) are responsible for registering learners, conducting personal contact classes and examinations, and maintaining record about the learners. The AAs are selected by NIOS after screening the applications and inspecting the short listed organizations. During the year 2006-07 five meetings of Screening Committee were held in which 108 applications were discussed and scrutinized. Out of that 61 applications were considered for inspection. Similarly, four Accreditation Advisory Committee (AAC) meetings were held in which 46 inspection reports were placed

for accreditation and disaccreditation. Out of that 18 institutions were granted accreditation and 8 OBE agencies were disaccredited and remaining were asked for some clarification. Efforts were made to ensure that agencies working in difficult regions in different states might be accredited. Most of these agencies are those that are supported under different schemes of the Government of India, welfare organizations and by international donors as well as corporate bodies. Besides well-established

NGOs, these Accredited Agencies include Zila Sakshatra Samitis (ZSS), Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), Mahila Samakhyas (MS) and District Institute of Education and Training (DIETs).

During the year 2006–07, the number of Accredited Agencies under OBE programme stood at 280. The state wise list of agencies accredited as on 31 March 2007 is as follows:

Table 3.1 Statewise Accredited Agencies under OBE Programme

Sl. No.	Name of State/UT	No. of Accredited Agencies under OBE
1.	Andhra Pradesh	06
2.	Assam	01
3.	Bihar	14
4.	Jharkhand	11
5.	Gujarat	04
6.	Haryana	27
7.	Himachal Pradesh	01
8.	Jammu and Kashmir	03
9.	Karnataka	12
10.	Kerala	08
11.	Madhya Pradesh	12
12.	Chattisgarh	01
13.	Maharashtra	12
14.	Manipur	01
15.	Orissa	09
16.	Pondicherry	01
17.	Rajasthan	42
18.	Tamil Nadu	40
19.	Uttar Pradesh	36
20.	Uttaranchal	07
21.	West Bengal	06
22.	Chandigarh	02
23.	Delhi	22
24.	Goa	01
25.	Tripura	01
	Total	280

Besides the accredited agencies, the NIOS is looking for partner agencies of the State Governments, which would monitor the OBE programme in the state(s). At present, in Rajasthan and West Bengal, the State Literacy Mission Authority (SLMA) has been

designated as the state nodal agency. Whereas in the state of Tamil Nadu, the Directorate of Non-Formal Education as a functionary of SLMA is monitoring OBE agencies in collaboration with State Resource Centre (SRC).

Table 3.2 Types of Agencies Acting as Accredited Agencies

Sl. No.	Type of Agency	No. of Agencies
1.	Zila Saksharta Samiti	35
2.	Jan Shikshan Sansthan	67
3.	District Institute of Education and Training	20
4.	Madarsa	01
5.	Mahila Samakhya	01
6.	State Resource Centre	04
7.	Govt. Organization	30
8.	Other NGOs	122
	Total	280

(ii) Review of Accreditation of OBE Agencies

The agencies accredited under the OBE programme were reviewed in the light of various concerns including societal concerns. Accordingly, 23 agencies were identified for intensive reinspection. As a result of review, five agencies were disaccredited since they were found to be deficient in infrastructural and other requirements.

(iii) Training and Orientation Programmes

In order to make OBE programme successful and to implement it effectively, NIOS organizes Training and Orientation programmes for the Coordinators of OBE agencies.

During 2006-07 the training and orientation programmes for the coordinators of OBE accredited agencies were organized in Kolkata for Guwahati and Kolkata region. training programme for OBE Coordinators of Tamil Nadu was organized in Chennai. These programmes were highly appreciated by the participants as, as among other things, their

doubts and difficulties were sorted out during the meeting.

(iv) Admission and Enrolment of OBE Learners

The admission to the OBE programme is done by the Accredited Agencies. They admit/ enrol the learners and arrange the teaching learning programmes. A computerised database format was prepared and sent to all OBE accredited agencies for enrolment of OBE learners. NIOS has developed a unique 15-digit Enrolment Number for every learner. The Accredited Agencies have been directed to give enrolment number to each learner. Detailed guidelines were developed by NIOS to make implementation of the programme simpler and effective.

During 2006-07, the number of the learners under OBE programme increased. The total enrolment under OBE Programme as on 31-03-2007 was 34504. The level wise enrolment figures are given at next page:

Table 3.3: Enrolment in OBE during 2006-07

Level A	Level B	Level C	Total
20536	11731	2237	34504

(v) Academic Activities**(a) Curriculum**

NIOS has developed its own curriculum in different subjects for 'A', 'B' and 'C' levels.

The OBE programme is based upon academic freedom of the learner. Openness is reflected in the fact that AAs have the freedom to choose their own books and methods of teaching. The OBE curriculum for A, B and C level has been reviewed and modified in the light of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 developed by NCERT.

The learners have a learning package of their choice comprising academic and vocational subjects. Four subjects are offered at Level A, and five subjects are offered at Levels B and C.

(b) Material Development: Academic and Vocational Courses

While NIOS sets a minimum standard through the curriculum, the curriculum transaction is carried out by the accredited agencies themselves. The exemplar material for OBE 'C' level has been developed and printed and the material for 'A' and 'B' levels are under development. While some agencies choose to use NCERT/SCERT books, others use the books of the State Education Departments. Some Agencies have developed their own books. Some Agencies seek resource support from NIOS to develop their books.

(vi) Examination Process

In order to strengthen the OBE examination process, NIOS has developed detailed guidelines for conduct of examinations. These guidelines contain instructions about question paper setting, seating plan, invigilation and result preparation.

To ensure proper and fair conduct of OBE

examinations, NIOS sent inspection teams to various OBE agencies to monitor and observe the examination centers. The Regional Directors of NIOS also visited OBE examination centres.

Further in order to streamline the processing of examination result, a computerised format for the OBE Result was prepared by NIOS. This format along with the programme software was made available to all the accredited agencies for uniformity. The format, available on the NIOS website in English and Hindi, can be downloaded by the accredited agencies.

(vii) Certification

NIOS provides joint certificates as per the result data sent by Accredited Agencies. Before printing of certificates, five percent answer books, question papers in each subject, attendance sheets as well as result data were evaluated at NIOS Headquarter in four workshops of subject experts to ensure validity of the evaluation pursued by the agencies. During April 2006 to March 2007, 73131 OBE learners were Certified.

Table 3.4 Number of Learners Certified Under OBE Programme

Level	A	B	C	Total
No. of learners	65497	4546	3088	73131

(viii) Networking with States and Government Agencies

In order to ensure participation of the State Governments in the OBE programme, NIOS had decided that a state level Nodal Agency would be identified in each State and the programme would be run in collaboration with the concerned agency. The Government of Rajasthan identified the State Literacy Mission Authority as the Nodal Agency with the district level agency being the Zila Saksharta Samiti. In West Bengal, the State Government through the Department of Mass Education identified the State Literacy Mission Authority as the Nodal Agency for running the OBE programme.

(ix) Future Thrust

The NIOS plans to work closely with the National Literacy Mission for the promotion of a sustainable Continuing Education programme. The OBE as an equivalency programme would be strengthened and SLMAs and other NLM supported bodies would be involved in the OBE programme. The NIOS would provide academic and technical support for implementation of the programme.

3.2 Secondary and Senior Secondary Education

For the secondary education course, NIOS offers a choice of fourteen languages and other subjects like Mathematics, Science, Social Science, Typewriting, etc. The secondary certificate of NIOS is equivalent to class X of formal school. As far as medium is concerned, in addition to Hindi, English and Urdu the secondary course is offered in four regional languages, namely, Marathi, Telugu, Gujarati and Malayalam.

The Senior Secondary course/programme is designed for those who have passed the secondary or equivalent examination and would like to continue their education to senior secondary certificate through open schooling. This programme is offered in English, Hindi and Urdu mediums. At senior secondary level, the subjects offered are Hindi, English, Urdu, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Political Science, Economics, Accountancy, Home Science, Psychology, Sociology, etc.

3.2.1 Revision of Course Materials

During the year 2006-07, revision of course materials in different subjects at Senior Secondary level was in progress. A number of lessons were reviewed, edited, proof read and were at finalization stage in English version. In some subjects translation work in Hindi and Urdu was also initiated.

Curriculum Framework for Open Schooling in India

In the sixth meeting of the Academic Council, it was decided to constitute the core group for framing of Curriculum Framework for Open Schooling in India. A core group was constituted in 2006 and six chapters were identified and allocated to the members of core group for writing. A sub committee was constituted

to review and finalize the draft Curriculum Framework. The core group met seven times and sub committee met three times and prepared the draft of the curriculum framework.

3.2.2 New Courses at Senior Secondary Level

NIOS follows the cafeteria approach and offers a number of subjects at senior secondary level so that the learners may have the freedom to choose subjects according to their interest. NIOS keeps adding subjects on offer so that learners have more and more options. During 2006-07, development of course material in new courses like Fashion Studies, Mass Communication, Functional Hindi, Environmental Science and Sanskrit at senior secondary level was initiated and material development was in progress.

3.2.3 Development of Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA)

As a measure of continuous assessment of learners, Tutor Marked Assignments are developed in all subjects both in Hindi and English mediums. During the year 2006-07, TMAs were developed in Hindi and English mediums in different subjects at secondary and senior secondary level for use by NIOS learners.

3.2.4 Marking Schemes

NIOS usually prepares three sets of question papers for evaluation. To reduce subjectivity, marking schemes are developed and standardized in different subjects at secondary and senior secondary level. During 2006-07 meetings for standardization of marking schemes in different subjects at secondary and senior secondary level were organized for April 2006 and October 2006 Examinations.

3.2.5 National Science Popularization Programme

In order to popularize science and scientific temper among the NIOS staff and learners, the National Science Day is organized every year in the last week of February. The National Science Day 2007 was celebrated in Study Centres and at the Headquarter of NIOS.

3.2.6 Regional Language Programmes

The objective of the regional language programmes is to reach the unreached through vernacular in those states where there is no State Open School. Under

this programme, NIOS offers regional languages as subjects in Assamese, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Kannada, Tamil, etc. The learning materials are revised and updated periodically. TMAs in regional languages are also developed. Under the Regional Language programme, NIOS conducted the following programmes and activities during the year 2006-07.

- Arabic as a new subject was introduced
- Persian language at secondary level initiated and material development was in the process.
- Tamil at secondary level Curriculum Committee was finalized for language and material development was in the process.
- In the subject of Kannada at secondary level, lesson writing of the revised course was completed.
- Tutor marked assignments in regional languages (Assamese, Bengal, Gujarati, Kannad, Marathi, Malayalam, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi etc.) were developed.
- For the regional mediums, the following activities were completed:
- Gujarati: DTP work was in progress in different subjects at secondary level in Gujarati medium.
- The translation work in Oriya medium in the subjects of Science, Social Science, Mathematics, Business Studies, Psychology and Home Science was in progress.

3.2.7 Promotion of Education of Minorities

To reach out to the minority communities of the society, Arabic as a new subject was introduced at Secondary level. During 2006-07, Persian at Secondary level was initiated and material development was in progress. The Secondary Courses are offered not only in Hindi and English but also in Urdu medium. The Senior Secondary courses are offered in Hindi, English and Urdu medium, NIOS is offering Urdu as a subject at Secondary and Senior Secondary level.

3.2.8 Meeting of the Academic Council

The Academic Council considers and approves the programmes of all the constituents of the NIOS. The seventh meeting of the Academic Council was held on 25st August 2006. The programmes approved by the

Departmental Advisory Board (DABs) of the different departments were further considered and decisions taken about the activities to be taken up in 2006-07.

3.2.9 Meeting of Departmental Advisory Board (DAB) of Academic Department

The first meeting of the DAB of the Academic Department was held on 30th December 2005. The second meeting of the Departmental Advisory Board (DAB) of the Academic Department was held on 14th March 2007. The activities that had been taken up in the year 2006-2007 were reported and the proposed activities for the year 2007-2008 were discussed at length in the meeting.

3.2.10 Open Learning -A Half Yearly Magazine of NIOS

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) has been bringing out a half yearly magazine titled ‘Open learning’ which is generally meant for its newly enrolled students. The ‘open learning’ magazine includes articles in Hindi and English which creates awareness of the Cultural Heritage in the country, socio-economic environment prevalent, advancements in Science and Technology and other fields etc. Articles on Science, Health, Career Planning, Population Education, Gender issues etc. are also published.

