7. Student Support Services

Under the Open and Distance Learning System, learner support is of paramount importance. Such support is provided through various services to:

- help learners learn well by providing timely and proper academic support,

- facilitate learners in solving their problems by the study centres/learning centres established by the providing institution,

- coordinate and monitor establishment, working and management of the study centres.

The following Student Support Services are being provided :

- Publicises about NIOS programmes and it's working.

- Establishes study centres by accrediting recognized and reputed academic institutions all over the country, thereby building a network of Accredited Institutions (AIs).

- Enrolls and registers learners through Accredited Institutions of NIOS.

- Supplies self-study print material to learners through the study centres.

- Monitors functioning of the study centres and the Personal Contact Programmes (PCPs) at the study centres.

- Monitors Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA) for continuous assessment of the learners.

- Coordinates with the Regional Centres for timely and effective support to the learners.

- Deals with the problems and grievances of the learners for effective and timely redressal of the learners.

- Supply of "Open Learning" Magazine (half yearly) to supplement the self-learning materials.

7.1 Accreditation of Institutions

NIOS provides planned human support in different ways from the time a learner joins the system till the end of his/her successful completion. To provide this support along with the issue of easy access, NIOS considered utilization of existing available resources to provide better services by accrediting institutions as partners. Such partner institutions are called Accredited Institutions (AIs) and are spread all over the country. These AIs which function as study centres are usually formal schools that are recognized and affiliated to CBSE, ICSCE and State Broads or reputed agencies involved in social and educational activities of disadvantaged and differently abled learners. The AIs assist NIOS in its various functions to reach out and to reach all.

Based on available infrastructure facilities and nature of the existing institutions, the AIs for Academic courses are categorized into three categories. Category-A having very good infrastructure and teaching staff can enroll upto 500 students. Category-B AIs can enroll upto 300 students. Category-C AIs are allowed to enroll only upto 150 students. NIOS has accredited institutions for regional mediums also like Marathi, Telugu, Gujarati and Malayalam.

The types of schools/institutions that have become partners to function as AIs of NIOS include Government schools, Government Aided schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, Navodaya Vidyalayas, Public and Private schools and Schools for children with special need.

Accreditation of the study centres is done after rigorous screening of applications on the basis of prescribed criteria and inspection of the institutions by teams of experts. The Principal/Vice-Principal of the school acts as the Coordinator of the AI functioning as the study centre of NIOS. The core staff and teachers of the AIs work for NIOS programmes at the study centres in addition to their normal duties there.

The Application Form along with norms and procedures for accreditation is available at NIOS website http://www.nios.ac.in or http://www.nos.org The Application Form is also available in a printed booklet form.

As on 31st March 2007, the total number of Accredited Institutes established in different parts of the country to

conduct Academic Courses was 1863, which includes 34 Special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIEDs). In order to maintain quality and standard of the services provided by the AIs, 85 AIs were disaccredited. The state-wise distribution of AIs as on 31.03.2007 is given in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Total State-wise Distribution of AIs and SAIEDs
(as on 31.03.2007)

Name of the State/U.T.	No. of AIs (including Regional Languages AIs)	No. of SAIEDS Sec./Sr.Sec.	Total
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	09	—	09
Andhra Pradesh	91	—	91
APO	3	—	3
Arunchal Pradesh	15	—	15
Assam	13	—	13
Bihar	198	2	200
Chandigarh	9	—	09
Chhattisgarh	12	—	12
Dadra and Nagar Haveli	—	—	—
Daman and Diu	1	—	1
Delhi	196	7	203
Goa	11	—	11
Gujarat	23	—	23
Haryana	187	—	187
Himachal Pradesh	45	—	45
Jammu & Kashmir	21	—	21
Jharkhand	58	2	60
Karnataka	14	3	17
Kerala	34	—	34
Lakshadweep	—	—	—
Madhya Pradesh	63	2	65
Maharashtra	143	1	144
Manipur	45	—	45
Meghalaya	9	—	9
Mizoram	11	—	11
Nagaland	16	—	16
Orissa	25	3	28
Pondicherry	2	—	2
Punjab	61	1	62
Rajasthan	57	—	57
Sikkim	8	—	8
Tamil Nadu	19	3	22
Tripura	2	—	2
Uttar Pradesh	247	3	250
Uttarakhand	88	2	90
West Bengal	66	3	69
Foreign Countries	27	2	29
Total	**1829**	**34**	**1863**

To cater to the regional needs, several AIs were established for programme delivery through regional mediums. These include 62 AIs in Marathi medium, 30 AIs in Telugu medium, 41 AIs in Urdu medium, 15 AIs in Gujarati medium, and 17 AIs in Malayalam medium.

7.1.1 Revision of the Application Processing fee for Accreditation

From April 1st 2006, application processing fee for accreditation has been revised. An amount of Rs. 4000/ and Rs. 1000/ is charged. The processing fee is required to be submitted by an institution/school (at the time of applying for grant of accreditation) in the form of Bank Draft drawn in favour of the Secretary, NIOS payable at New Delhi.

7.1.2 Awareness Pogrammes about NIOS Courses

● NIOS reaches out to a prioritised client group with the involvement of State Education Boards and State Governemnt. In this regard an Advocacy Meeting of Principals of Schools, District Education Officers/NGOs was held in Gujarat in collaboration with the Gujarat Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Board, in order to expand the reach of NIOS in the state. This meeting was held on 31ˢᵗ July, 2006 at School Teachers' Training Institute, GCERT Campus, Sector 12, Gandhinagar. The purpose of the meeting was to:

- appraise the Principals and NGOs of the need of Open Schooling,

- highlight the functions of an AI of NIOS in the state, and

- motivate the Principals to become partners to NIOS for a social cause.

✳ The special emphasis was also given to Bihar State for expansion of NIOS programmes. A meeting with the Additional Director (Education) and Deputy Director (Education) of the Bihar Government with the Regional Head, Patna, was held and Government Schols for functioning as AIs of NIOS were identified. During 2006-07, 144 new AIs were established in Bihar.

7.2 Admission

The year-wise and course-wise enrolment in Academic courses from 1997-98 to 2006-07 is at Annexure-X.

During the year 2006-07, admission to various courses was done through the network of Accredited Institutions, working as Study Centres, all over India and abroad. Like any other year, admission to the academic courses of NIOS was open to one and all in the month of July, 2006 and continued till September 2006. During the year 2006-07, the total number of students admitted in various academic courses through different AIs was 2,90,983.

The NIOS has AIs in the Middle East (Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Kuwait, Sharjah, Bahrain) and Nepal. The aim of having the study centres outside India is to extend educational facilities through the open learning system to non-resident Indians and other nationals settled there.

The State/ Union Territory wise enrolment at Secondary and Senior Secondary level is shown in the Table 7.2 and Region-wise Enrolment in academic courses is shown in the Table 7.3.

Table 7.2 : State/Union Territory-wise Enrolment in Academic Courses 2006-2007

State/ Union Territory	Secondary Enrolment	Sr. Secondary Enrolment	Total Enrolment
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	1063	763	1826
Andhra Pradesh	678	2822	3500
APO	3	30	33
Arunachal Pradesh	2023	871	2894
Assam	1394	1373	2767
Bihar	3455	3948	7403

State/ Union Territory	Secondary Enrolment	Sr. Secondary Enrolment	Total Enrolment
Chandigarh	940	435	1375
Chhatisgarh	765	548	1313
Delhi	37551	35266	72817
Foreign Countries	569	860	1429
Goa	2191	470	2661
Gujarat	610	436	1046
Haryana	27861	124479	52340
Himachal Pradesh	4491	10287	14778
Jammu and Kashmir	423	678	1101
Jharkhand	1697	1084	2781
Karnataka	235	618	853
Kerela	1558	2624	4182
Madhya Pradesh	3892	1552	5444
Maharashtra	9397	3635	13032
Manipur	5494	3970	9464
Meghalaya	1360	31	1391
Mizoram	2261	1090	3351
Nagaland	2473	1049	3522
Orissa	2442	845	3287
Pondicherry	1	4	5
Punjab	7299	1754	9053
Rajasthan	5173	2515	7688
Sikkim	1359	770	2129
Tamil Nadu	255	279	534
Tripura	402	265	667
Uttar Pradesh	14218	13685	27903
Uttarakhand	6408	4981	11389
West Bengal	8992	5479	14471
All India SAIED	1858	696	2554
Total	**160791**	**130192**	**290983**

During the year 2006-07, the Regional Centres admitted the following number of students through study centres in their respective Regions shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3: Regional Centre-wise Enrolment in Academic Courses 2006-07

Regional Centre and the States/UTs Covered		Enrolment	Percentage
Allahabad		39292	13.50%
1.Uttar Pradesh	24903		
2.Uttarakhand	11389		
Bhopal		6757	2.32%
1. Madhya Pradesh	5444		
2. Chhattisgarh	1313		
Chandigarh		78647	27.03%
1. Haryana,	52340		
2. Himachal Pradesh	14778		
3. J&K,	1101		
4. Punjab,	9053		
5. Chandigarh	1375		
Delhi		72817	25.03%
Guwahati		24056	8.28%
1. Assam	2767		
2. Arunachal Pradesh	2894		
3. Manipur	9464		
4. Meghalaya	1391		
5. Mizoram	3351		
6. Nagland	3522		
7. Tripura	667		
Hyderabad		4353	1.49%
1. Andhra Pradesh	3500		
2. Karnataka	853		
Jaipur		8734	3.00%
1. Gujarat	1046		
2. Rajasthan	7688		
Kochi		4721	1.62%
1. Kerala	4182		
2. Tamil Nadu	534		
3. Pondicherry	5		
Kolkata		21713	7.46%
1. Orissa	3287		
2. Sikkim	2129		
3. West Bengal	14471		
4. Andaman & Nicobar	1826		
Patna		10184	3.49%
1. Bihar	7403		
2. Jharkhand	2781		

|			
Pune		15693	5.39%
1. Goa	2661		
2. Maharashtra	13032		
NIOS HQ.		1462	0.52%
1. APO India	33		
2. Foreign Countries	1429		
All India SAIED*	2554	0.87%	
Total		**2,90,983**	**100%**

* Special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged

Region-wise the highest enrolment was in Chandigarh Region (27.03%) followed by Delhi Region (25.03%), Allahabad and the Sub-Centre Dehradun(13.5%).

The year-wise enrolment in Academic Courses since 1997-98 is depicted in Annexure-X.

7.2.1 Academic Courses : Enrolment Trend

The enrolment of students in the Secondary as well as Senior Secondary Courses has been generally increasing since 1996-97. In the year 2006-07 there was an increase of 8.91% in enrolment as compared to the previous year. The year wise enrolment in academic courses is shown graphically as under :
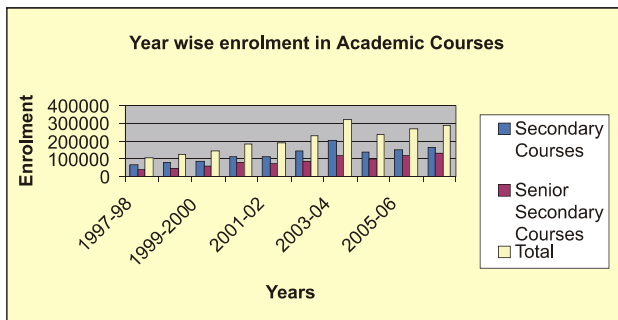
7.2.2 Academic Courses: Student's Profile

During the session 2006-07, the course-wise, medium-wise, category-wise and gender wise profiles of the learners are presented in Tables 7.4 to 7.8

Table 7.4: Number and Percentage of Students Registered in Various Courses during 2006-07

Course	No. of Students	Percentage
Secondary	160791	55.27
Sr. Secondary	130192	44.73
Total	**2,90,983**	**100**

Percentage of Secondary and Sr. Secondary Admission during 2006-07

44.73 55.27

□ Secondary
■ Sr. Secondary
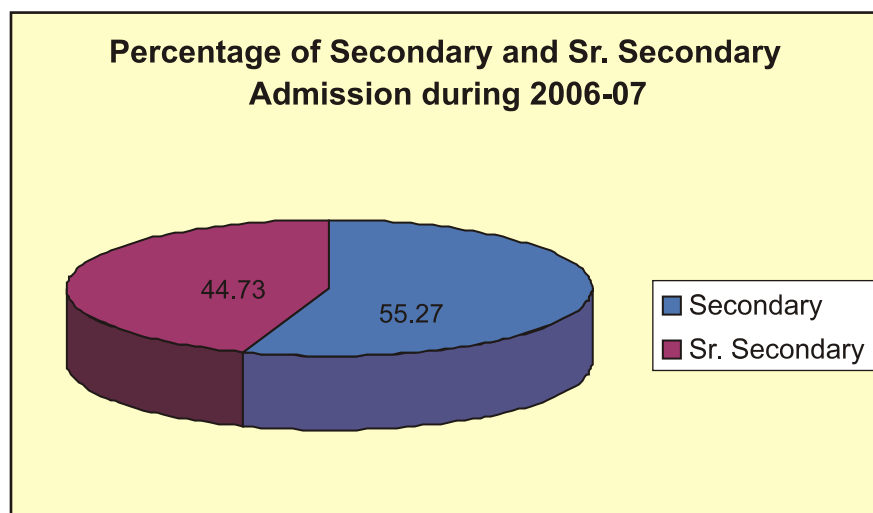
Table 7.5: Regional Medium-wise Distribution of Enrolled Students during 2006-07

Medium	No. of Students	
	Secondary	Sr. Secondary
Telugu	411	
Urdu	993	324
Marathi	1669	-
Malayalam	808	-
Gujarati	224	-
Total	**4105**	**324**

Out of 4105 students who opted for regional mediums at Secondary level, 993 students offered Urdu Medium, 411 students offered Telugu medium, 1669 students offered Marathi medium, 224 students offered Gujarati medium ,808 students offered Malayalam Medium and 324 students offered Urdu at Sr. Secondary level.

Table 7.6 : Category-wise Enrolment during 2006-07

S. No.	Category	Enrolment	Percentage
1	General	231334	79.50%
2	Scheduled Castes	36599	12.58%
3	Scheduled Tribes	21029	7.23%
4	Ex-Servicemen	434	0.15%
5	Handicapped	1587	0.55%
	Total	**2,90,983**	**100**

Category wise Enrolment (2006 - 07)

- 0.55%
- 0.15%
- 7.23%
- 12.58%
- 79.50%

Legend: General, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Ex-Servicemen, Handicapped
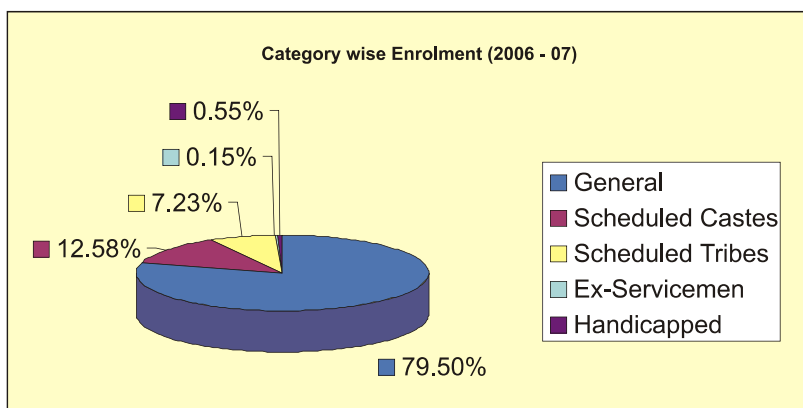
Table 7.6 indicates that out of 2,90,983 students enrolled for academic courses at NIOS, 2,31,334 belonged to General category, 36,599 belonged to SC category, 21029 belonged to ST category, 434 students were Ex-servicemen and 1587 students were Handicapped.

As shown in the Table 7.7 above 68.66% male candidates and 31.34% female candidates were enrolled in different academic courses during 2006-07.

Of the total students enrolled, 3.73% students were in the age group of 10-14. The maximum number of students (73.97%) were in the group of 15-20. 14.79% stuents were in the age group of 21-25. The students above 25 years of age were 7.51%.

Table 7.7 Gender wise Enrolment during 2006-07

	Secondary	Sr. Secondary	Total	Percentage
Boys	108566	91222	199788	68.66%
Girls	52225	38970	91195	31.34%
Total	**160791**	**130192**	**290983**	**100%**

Percentage of Male and Female Learners during 2006-07

Female / Male

31.34%

68.66%
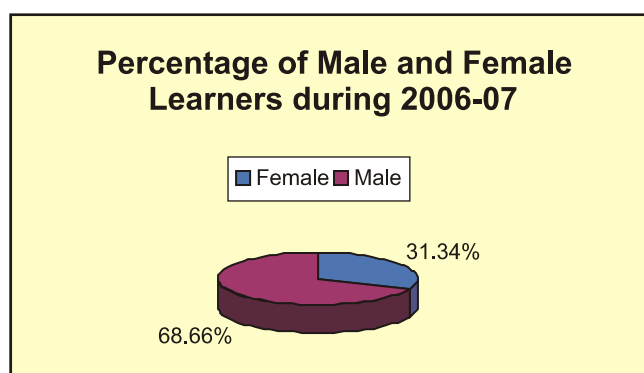
Table 7.8 Age wise distribution of students enrolment during 2006-07

Age	No. of Students	%
10 to 14	10873	3.73%
15 to 20	215233	73.96%
21 to 25	43022	14.79%
Above 25	21855	7.51%
Total	**2,90,983**	**100%**

Age wise distribution of Students enrolled during 2006-07

14.79% 7.51% 3.73%

73.97%

- 10 to 14
- 15 to 20
- 21 to 25
- Above 25
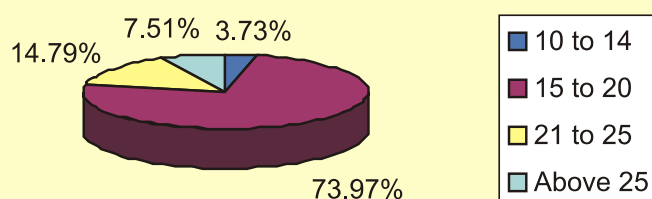
7.3 Personal Contact Programme

The main characteristics of open learning system is to learn with the help of self-instructional material at one's own pace and convenience. NIOS students study at their own using self instructional material. However, while learning they do confront certain problems and need various types of help and guidance. For clarification of their doubts, NIOS conducts 30 Personal Contact Programme (PCPs) for non-science subjects and 35 PCPs for science subjects at the study centre(s) on Saturdays, Sundays/other holidays or at any convenient time during week days.

All the Accredited Institutions were advised to display the schedule of PCP on the Notice Boards meant for NIOS learners. They were also required to send a copy of the PCP schedule to the concerned Regional Centres.

7.4 Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)

NIOS has developed several means and strategies for effective learning by the learners. Tutor Marked Assignment is one such tool which plays a very important role in learning through open and distance learning (ODL) mode of education. Learners are encouraged to submit the assignments at their study centres. These assignments are evaluated and returned to the learners along with comments and suggestions. TMAs help the learner to know his/her progress and attainment level and develop regular study habits. The TMAs prompt learners to attend PCPs at the study centres thereby attempting to make them sincere and disciplined in their studies. These assignments prove useful in designing remedial and diagnostic teaching learning programmes during PCPs.

The Department of Student Support Services at NIOS Headquarters coordinated various issues related to the TMAs with the Study Centers and Regional Centres of NIOS.

7.5 Transfer of Credit (TOC)

NIOS has implemented the Transfer of Credit (TOC) scheme to motivate the ex-students of recognised Boards of School education who could not pass their respective examination by providing credit to a maximum of two subjects as per scheme of studies of NIOS and by providing credit upto four subjects to ex-students of NIOS.

For examining the requests for TOC in the Regional Centres of NIOS, a TOC committee comprising of the Regional Head, one external member and a Section Officer/Executive Officer in each Regional Centre was constituted. This committee verified the marks from original mark sheets and recommended eligible cases to NIOS Headquarter for approval. During the year 2006-07, 23,165 students were granted TOC by NIOS.

7.6 Recognition of the NIOS Courses

The NIOS has been conducting examinations at all India level from the year 1991 under the authority vested in it by the Government of India through a notification. The Council of Boards of Secondary Education (COBSE) and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) have recognized the NIOS courses as equivalent to Secondary and Senior Secondary levels for admission to institutions of higher learning as also for employment through various agencies.

So far 144 Boards/Universities have recognised the NIOS courses. These include 24 Boards from 19 States/Union Territories, 111 Universities from 27 States/ Union Territories, and 9 other certifying institutions from 8 States/ Union Territories. During 2006-07, the remaining state boards were pursued and requested to accord equivalence and recognition to NIOS courses. The State-wise break up about recognition of the NIOS courses is given in Table 7.9.

Table 7.9: **State-wise Break-up of the Boards/Universities/ Other Certifying Institutions recognising NIOS Courses (as on 31.03.2007)**

Name of the State/U.T.	No. of Boards	No. of Universities	Other Institutions	Total Certifying Institutions
Andhra Pradesh	2	8	-	10
Arunchal Pradesh	-	1	-	1
Assam	1	2	-	3
Bihar	-	1	-	1
Jharkhand	1	4	-	5
Delhi	2	7	1	10
Goa	1	1	-	2
Gujarat	-	5	-	5
Haryana	1	5	1	7
Himachal Pradesh	1	2	-	3
Jammu & Kashmir	1	2	-	3
Karnataka	-	7	-	7
Kerala	-	5	-	5
Madhya Pradesh	1	7	1	9
Chhattisgarh	-	1	-	1
Maharashtra	1	8	1	10
Manipur	-	1	-	1
Meghalaya	1	-	-	1
Mizoram	1	-	-	1
Nagaland	1	1	-	2
Orissa	2	2	-	4
Punjab	1	4	-	5
Rajasthan	1	10	2	13
Sikkim	-	1	-	1
Tripura	1	1	-	2
Tamil Nadu	-	10	1	11
Uttar Pradesh	1	8	1	10
Uttarakhand	1	2	-	3
West Bengal	2	5	1	8
Andaman & Nicobar Islands	-	-	-	-
Chandigarh	-	-	-	-
Dadra & Nagar Haveli	-	-	-	-
Daman & Diu	-	-	-	-
Total	**24**	**111**	**9**	**144**

7.7 Orientation and Training Programmes

7.7.1 Orientation Programme for Coordinators of AIs

As in the past, NIOS organised Orientation Programme for the Coordinators of Study Centers (AIs) during 2006-07 also. This Programme was conducted to highlight policy and procedural changes decided by NIOS in the functioning of study centres. Other areas of concern related to examination, administration and academic matters were also discussed to enable the Co-coordinators to function effectively. Orientation Programmes for the Coordinators of AIs were held Region wise as mentioned below :

7.7.2 Academic Facilitators

In order to supplement the functioning of Regional Centres and to have better interaction with the AIs, the concept of Academic Facilitation was envisaged. Such facilitation is carried out by personnel known as (Academic Facilitators).

During 2006-07, 378 Academic Facilitators (AFs) were appointed all over the country covering 875 AIs. The AFs are retired school/college principals, senior teachers and specialists in the field of education. Region wise the number of Academic Facilitators appointed is given in the Table 7.10.

S.No.	Regional Centre	Date of Meeting
1.	Pune	3rd and 4th July 2006
2.	Chandigarh	10th July 2006
3.	Guwahati	15th July 2006
4.	Jaipur	22nd July 2006
5.	Bhopal	3rd August 2006
6.	Kolkata	8th August 2006
7.	Hyderabad	11th and 12th August 2006
8.	Allahabad	21st August 2006
9.	Delhi	28th August 2006
10.	Kochi	15th November 2006

Table: 7.10 Region-wise Status of Academic Facilitators (AFs)

S.No.	Regional Centre	Total No. of AFs	Total No. of AIs
1.	Allahabad	56	126
2.	Bhopal	11	24
3.	Chandigarh	101	193
4.	Sub Centre Dehradun	14	34
5.	Delhi	74	212
6.	Guwahati	38	67
7.	Jaipur	11	29
8.	Kochi	9	21
9.	Kolkata including Sub Centre Bhubaneswar	29	68
10.	Patna	12	30
11.	Pune	16	49
12.	Hyderabad	7	22
	Total	**378**	**875**

7.8 Planning Meetings

7.8.1 Meeting of the Regional Heads of NIOS

In order to have face to face discussions between Regional Heads and officials at NIOS Headquarters, a meeting of Regional Heads of NIOS was held on 19 December, 2006. All the Heads of Departments, the Regional Heads and other senior officers of NIOS were present in the meeting. The basic objective of the meeting was in-depth discussion on issues for proper planning, monitoring and effective implementation of NIOS programmes.

The important issues and activities of Regional Centers were also discussed in detail. The Regional Heads were given opportunity to share their experience regarding the difficulties faced in functioning of NIOS Regional Centers and the support required from the Headquarters.

7.8.2 Meeting of Departmental Advisory Board (DAB) of Student Support Services

The second meeting of the Advisory Board of the Department of Student Support Services of NIOS was held on 20th December 2006. The DAB comprised of the experts from IGNOU and COBSE and all Regional Heads of NIOS. The main objective of the DAB meeting was to get suggestions for improving the effectiveness of Student Support Services from admission to certification. The activities of SSS Department were reviewed and discussed at length and several suggestions were given. The proposed Plan of Action for the year 2007-08 for SSS Department was placed before the DAB. The programmes were deliberated upon and approved.

7.9 Awards for Aspirants of Geography

NIOS has introduced an annual award in the name of 'Ms. Santosh Rastogi Scholarship for Excellence in Geography' at Senior Secondary level. It is given to those students who gets the highest marks in the subject of Geography. Five awards of Rs. 500/- each is given every year.

In the year 2006-07, the following candidates were awarded this scholarship.

- Durham Nidell Lambert Wendell
- Maknojia Shahin Sultan
- Mukesh Maurya
- Narendra Kumar Patel
- Saurav Ghosh