

## 2. Overview

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 the functions of (i) a teaching institution, 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 at the Headquarters (Academic, Administration, Evaluation, Student Support Services and Vocational Education), two Divisions (Material Production and Distribution Division and Computer Informatics Division), eleven Regional Centres and 2760 Study Centres located in almost all the States. Highlights of programmes and activities of NIOS during the year 2005-06 are mentioned below.

### **Accreditation of Institutions**

During the year 2004-05, there were 2760 accredited institutions (Study Centres). These include 1782 Accredited Academic Institutions (AIs), 908 Accredited Vocational Institutions (AVIs) and 70 Special Accredited Institutions for Education of the Disadvantaged (SAIEDs). Under the Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme, about 270 organisations had been accredited by 31.3.2006.

### **Enrolment in Academic and Vocational Courses**

During 2005-06, 267,026 students were enrolled in academic courses as compared to 2,38,069 students in 2004-05. Besides these, 22879 students were registered in Vocational Education Courses during 2005-06 vis-a-vis 20,985 students during 2004-05.

The **overall enrolment** at Secondary and Senior Secondary stage during 2005-06 was 2,89,905 as against the enrolment of 2,59,054 during 2004-05.

### **Recognition of NIOS Courses**

As on 31 March, 2006, 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 and Uttaranchal Board and 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 Card, change/addition of subject etc. Two Issues of the interactive half yearly Magazine "Open Learning" were prepared. This magazine is provided to NIOS students free of cost. 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 2005-06, NIOS printed around 52 lakh copies of Secondary and Senior Secondary level study materials. In addition, NIOS printed and supplied study materials for the Students of the Haryana State Open School and 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, 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. Information regarding NIOS programmes is publicized through the quarterly News Bulletin "Open Schooling".

### **Courses of Study**

The NIOS continued offering a wide spectrum 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 270 agencies which are running their study centres for students. During 2005-06, the NIOS accredited 17 such agencies (NGOs, Government organizations and Jan Shikshan Sansthan). 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. Under OBE, 55514 learners have been certified from 2001-02 to 2005-06. Under OBE (NLM) Programme, 79915 learners have been certified.

In order to ensure active participation of State Governments in OBE programme, NIOS has started identifying State Level Nodal Agencies. These have already been identified in Rajasthan, West Bengal and Haryana. NIOS plans to work closely with NLM for promotion of achieving a sustaining continuing Education programme.

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 26 subjects in seven mediums at secondary stage and 25 subjects in three mediums at Senior Secondary stage. The course material in different subjects at Secondary and Senior Secondary level were reviewed from the standpoint of societal concerns, gender bias etc. The course material of the subject "Indian Culture and Heritage" at Secondary level was reviewed exhaustively and revised. Items in different subjects were prepared in the context of launching the On Demand Examination System (ODES) at Senior Secondary stage.

Under the Regional Language programme, NIOS introduced Oriya language

as a new subject at Senior Secondary Level. Revision of Kannada Language Curriculum at Secondary level was in progress. The Curriculum Committees for Tamil, Persian and Gujarati were being constituted. Development of 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 2005-06.

Admission to Vocational Education Courses continued during 2005-06. 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 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.

An International Conference on Vocational Education and Training (VET) was organized by NIOS in collaboration with COL from 8 to 10 February 2006. A time bound action plan to implement the recommendations of the conference is being prepared. NIOS has entered into dialogue with CII for NIOS- Industry partnership, with IMA for para medical courses, and with RCI for introduction of need-based Certificate Courses for developing human resource for physically challenged.

### **Life Enrichment Programmes**

Besides the Academic and Vocational Education courses for various stages of school education, the NIOS continued developmental activities in respect of the Life Enrichment Programmes (LEPs) for varied clientele such as Performing Arts (Music, Dance, Painting), Jan Swasthya (Public Health), Paripurna Mahila (Empowered Women), and Adolescence Education Programme.

### **Media Support to Open Schooling Programme**

During 2005-06, thirteen films were produced for different stages of school

education, and sixteen films were under production. In order to feed the available time slots for telecast of NIOS programmes on "Gyan Darshan" and "DD-1", 104 capsules of the video programmes were produced. During 2005-06, sixty four audio programmes/tutorials for Open Basic Education, Secondary Education and Senior Secondary Education were produced. Twelve Audio Programmes in Bengali language were under production. The Satellite Interaction Terminals (SIT) were stalled in NIOS Studio and in five Regional Centres (Pune, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Chandigarh and Kochi). Two Script Writing Workshops were organized. NIOS continued Telecast and Broadcast of its programmes. 5250 copies of Audio Programmes and 11386 copies of VCDs were sent to the NIOS Study Centres. The learners take benefit of audio and video programmes at their Study Centres.

### **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 2005-06 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 examination 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 2005-06, 4,88,092 candidates appeared in examinations 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 2005-06, NIOS certified 73,471 candidates

for the Secondary Education Examination and 60,683 candidates for the Senior Secondary Education Examination. In Vocational Education Courses, the number of candidates certified during 2005-06 was 13,682.

### **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 a 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 center 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 taking follow up action on the recommendations of the conferences on Promotion of Open Schooling organized during 2004-05 and 2005-06. A National Conference on Cooperation and Collaboration of State Boards of Education and Open Schools in India was jointly organized by NIOS and COBSE on 20 October 2005. Communications were sent to the State Education Secretaries emphasizing the need of upscaling the Open Schooling programmes. A National Conference of State Boards of Education and Open Schools was jointly organized by NIOS and COBSE on 20 October 2005 for deliberations on cooperation and collaboration among them. On 21st October 2005, a Meeting was organized by NIOS with the SOSs for discussion on various issues related to promotion of open schooling. The States of Rajasthan and Tamilnadu have revived the SOSs as per philosophy of ODL system. The State of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh were assisted by NCOS Secretariat for preparation for SOSs.

### **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 2005-06, the NIOS prepared and published two Issues of the OSAC Journal.

- Dr. Anita Priyadarshini, Deputy Director (Academic ), NIOS participated in the Regional Workshop on Lifelong Learning organized by UNESCO-APPEAL, Bangkok from 25 to 29 April at Manila. Among other things, she presented the Country Report and the Report of Research Study on Models of Equivalency Programme sponsored by UNESCO. India, Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand participated in the Regional Workshop.
- Shri V.J. Williams, Director (Vocational ), NIOS attended the Asian Round Table on "Open and Distance Education" for attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) enunciated by the United Nations. The programme was organized by the Open University of Sri Lanka in collaboration with COL from 20 to 22 May 2005. Shri V.J. Williams presented a Paper on the Open Basic Education (OBE ) programme of NIOS (India ) in the context of MDG 2 titled " Achieve Universal Primary Education."
- Mrs. Gopa Biswas, Deputy Director (Academic ), NIOS presented a paper titled " National Institute of Open Schooling India and Technical and Vocational Offering at NIOS" in the International Workshop on Open Schooling organized by the National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka in collaboration with COL on 18 May 2005. Fr. T.V. Kunnunkal, former Chairman, NIOS presented a Paper on "Establishment of the Open School, India". At the end of the Workshop, the President of Sri Lanka, HE Ms. Chandrika B. Kumarathunge launched the Open School, Sri Lanka. After conclusion of the International Workshop, NIOS (India ) provided consultancy to the Open School functionaries. A Report was prepared which provided guidelines and directions and an operational road map for the Open School in Sri Lanka.
- Dr. Sushmita Mitra, Director (Academic and Student Support Services ) presented a paper titled "Awareness and Advocacy using ODL for Literacy and Skill Training : A South Asia Consultative Meeting" held at Dhaka (Bangladesh) from 26 to 28 September 2005. In this COL sponsored programme, participant were from Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, COL and UNESCO.
- Prof. K.R. Chandrasekaran, Director (Academic) NIOS (India) presented a Paper titled "Concept, Evaluation and Application of Open Schooling" of Shri M.C. Pant, Chairman, NIOS (India) for the Kannangara Memorial Lecture organized by the National Institute of Education, Colombo on 17 January 2006.
- NIOS and COL jointly organized an International Conference on "Vocational Education and Training through Open Schooling : Challenges and Future Strategies" from 8 to 10 February, 2006 at

Kovalam Kerala (India). The Conference was attended by nearly 100 delegates from COL, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Bangladesh, New Zealand, Pakistan and India. The Conference made 29 recommendations.

- A five member Chinese delegation visited India on 24 August 2005 and interacted with NIOS faculty about the Open Schooling system.
- Prof. K.R.Chandrasekaran, Director (Academic), NIOS made a presentation on various steps taken by NIOS for integration of Disaster Management in the Curriculum in a two day workshop organized by UNESCO on 12-13 September 2005 to discuss the strategies on Education for National Disaster Preparedness in Asia - Pacific in the context of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).
- A COL sponsored project on "Identifying the Training Needs of Teachers of the Study Centres of NIOS" was conducted.
- A two-day Conference on Digital Learning was organized by the Centre for Science, Development and Media Studies (CSDMS) from 18 to 19 October 2005. The theme of the conference was "ICT and Education: Challenges and Practices". A presentation about "On Demand Examination System" made by NIOS was highly appreciated as it is a step toward flexible and fearless examination system.
- In the World Bank's Fourth Meeting of the Advisory Group on Universalisation of Secondary Education in India, Prof. K.R. Chandrasekaran, Director (Academic), NIOS emphasised the need for promotion of open schooling.
- Dr. (Mrs.) Sushmita Mitra, Director (Academic), NIOS availed the Research Residency at the International Research Foundation for Open Learning (IRFOC), Cambridge from 7 to 18 March 2005.
- Shri V.J. Williams, Director (Evaluation), NIOS visited Nepal from 21 to 23 July 2005 to inspect schools for accreditation by NIOS at the Study Centres.
- Dr. Mamta Srivastava, Assistant Director and Dr. RSP Singh, Assistant Director, NIOS visited New Zealand for 15 days under the COL sponsored Study Visit to the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.
- The British Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair with his wife Mrs. Cherie Blair, visited on 7 September 2005 the Salaam Balak Trust, New Delhi. It is an Open Basic Education (OBE) Programme Centre of NIOS.



## **Research Studies and Surveys**

The Scheme of Grant-in-Aid for Research Project in Open Schooling (GRPOS) was approved by the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) and the Academic Council. Two external research projects were processed in the RAC Meeting. Priority Areas for Research in Open Schooling have been identified.

## **Human Resource Development**

The NIOS has set up an International Centre for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS) with partial financial assistance from COL and UNESCO. A Brochure on the Programmes and Activities of ICTOS was widely circulated in India and abroad. The International Agencies like UNESCO and COL have been requested to sponsor candidates for the Certificate and Diploma Courses offered by NIOS. Four Training Modules were reviewed and reprinted. The Brochure on ICTOS was reprinted. Other Publications brought out are (i) Assignments for Certification Course in Open Schooling and (ii) Evaluation Techniques in Open Schooling.

NIOS organized orientation programmes for participants from various countries on open schooling. The Report of the Institute of Educators from Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria, Pakistan and Sri Lanka organised by NIOS from 11 to 22 September 2005 was under print.

## **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

The Computer Division of NIOS maintained data base about admission, examination and certification. The admission data of 2, 67,000 was processed. Pre-exam processing of data of 488092 students and processing of their result was done. A dedicated lease line for Internet Access is in operation. Official E-mail ID of NIOS officers was generated and configured on the NIOS Website. A separate link "Ask Your Teacher" has been provided on NIOS website to facilitate students. The study materials of the Secondary Education Courses have been placed on the website. As per Right to Information Act, the requisite information was placed under the Link RTI Act on the Home Page of NIOS. The E-Group Muktashala of NIOS is an Electronic Forum for discussion and sharing the information among the Registered Users who can be NIOS Learners, Coordinators and Academic Facilitators. It also works as a Bulletin Board.

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 14,721 books, 11,500 loose issues of journals and 688 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 205-06, 337 books and 19 CDs were added in NIOS Library. Under the service E-Press Clippings and New Additions Service, News clipping and lists of new books and journals were sent to the NIOS officers in different constituents.

### **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 2005. Various competitions for promotion of Hindi were organized. These included (i) Official Language Competition, (ii) Computer Based Hindi Knowledge Competition, (iii) Poetry Competition, (iv) Debate Competition, (v) Quiz Competition, and (vi) One Act Play Competition. During the year 2005-06, several important decisions for overall use of Hindi were taken. Several materials were translated in Hindi. The NIOS News Bulletin and NIOS Magazine for students were printed bilingually (Hindi and English in same volume). NIOS purchased bilingual computers only and Hindi software was installed in all computers in various constituents of NIOS. Several documents like Annual Report, Prospectus, Annual Accounts, and circulars etc., were translated into Hindi. Some programmes related to incentives for promotion of Hindi were initiated and facilitation material was distributed.