

**Report of the Peer Team of the  
Institutional Accreditation of the  
Rajagiri College of Social Sciences,  
Kalamasserry-683104, Kerala**

**Section 1: Preamble**

Rajagiri College of Social Sciences was started in 1955, as the Department of Social Work at Sacred Heart College, Thevara. In the year 1980 the department was raised to the status of an independent college affiliated to the University of Kerala. At present the college is affiliated to the Mahatma Gandhi University at Kottayam. The college is owned and managed by the Fathers of the "*Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI)*" a religious organization. The motto of the college "*Study, Service and Achievement*" is realized through a unique process of dialogue where the teachers work as facilitators and animators.

The college offers Post Graduate Degrees in Social Work, in Personnel Management & Industrial Relations and in Business Administration. The college also offers Diploma in Social Services and Ph.D. in Social Work, and Management Studies. To supplement the university programmes the college also offers a Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Applications (PGDCA) and a number of Certificate courses on a wide array of subjects ranging from Popular Theatre to Neuro Linguistic Programming.

The college is located in a semi-urban area on a 21-acre campus. At present there are around 220 students on the campus. The college though a minority institution caters to the educational needs of boys & girls irrespective of religion, creed, caste and community.

The college volunteered to be assessed and accredited, and submitted a self-study report to the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) on January 15, 2000. In response to this request, NAAC constituted a peer team consisting of Prof.P.Ramachandran, formerly Actg. Director & Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Bombay, as Chairman and Dr.G.S.Bidarakoppa, Professor & Head,

Department of Social Work, Karnatak University, Dharwad as Member. Dr.Latha Pillai, Deputy Adviser and Mr.B.S.Ponmudiraj, Academic Professional, NAAC coordinated the visit of the peer team to the institution.

The peer team visited the institution on March 02<sup>nd</sup> and March 03<sup>rd</sup>, 2000. The team interacted with the Principal, Management, Advisory Council, teaching staff, non-teaching staff, Parents, Alumni, Students, Community beneficiaries, Personnel of the Projects and Live-Laboratories. The team also visited the classrooms, office, library, sports facilities, hostels, cafeteria and other infrastructure facilities. The peer team has recorded the data on various facets of institutional functioning and performance and prepared the following report in terms of overall assessment about the institution, which are discussed under the criteria suggested by NAAC.

## **Section 2: Criterion-wise Analysis**

### **Criterion I: Curricular Aspects**

The college is governed by the university rules and regulations in respect of curriculum contents. At any given point of time there is a visible gap between the syllabus as approved by the university and the demands by the ground realities. Under the circumstances the college has two options

- ❖ limiting its academic activities to the fulfillment of the university requirements,
- ❖ identifying and implementing alternate procedures by updating the curriculum and responding to societal developments as they take place. The college has consistently adopted the second option by introducing a number of optional courses, which are made available to students outside the regular curriculum.

The identification of these optional courses has been facilitated through the active interaction between the Advisory Council on the one hand and the Management, the faculty and students on the other. These optional courses have been accepted by all concerned as mandatory. This innovative initiative qualifies as an exceptional commitment of the college management not merely to the students but also to the educational system of Kerala.

A noteworthy feature of the curriculum is that there is a continuous flow of ideas on the content as well as the methodology of imparting the various courses: very specifically it is evident in the Departments of Social Work as well as in the Department of Personnel Management & Industrial Relations and the Department of Business Administration.

The teaching-inputs are based on the initial interaction between the staff of live-laboratories and the teaching staff of the concerned departments.

- Subsequently in the mid-term monitoring process the teacher concerned, the Principal and the students themselves reflect on the course content and methodology. It was reported by all constituencies of the college that the teachers concerned make appreciable, visible changes in the methodology of teaching and the students get feedback of whether or not and in what manner the suggestions are made use of.
- The major commitment of the management to the subsystem is the continuous review and improvement of the teaching-learning process.

Closely related to the above is the practice segment of the curriculum. Here too as with the theory component of the curriculum, the fieldwork experience of the students is meticulously planned at the beginning of each semester by the teaching staff and the live-laboratory staff. Mid-term corrections are based on the reflections of the fieldwork supervisors-be it the live-laboratory staff or the fieldwork agency staff.

In this context it is worthwhile to bring together the various facets of the curricular aspect. The primary thrust of the college is to ensure that its students maximize their knowledge and skills in their chosen field of professional work while imbibing and internalizing basic values appropriate to harmonious interactive human relations. This is sought to be achieved through a multi-pronged approach viz.:

- Classroom teaching
- Intensive fieldwork experience
- Discussions, seminars and similar inputs, and
- Intensive community based action projects which result in substantial improvement in the quality of life of the beneficiary community. e.g., house

construction for the poor, water supply and sanitation facilities, use of solar energy, income generating schemes, etc.

The fourfold approach is made possible through continuous interactive consultations and decision-making by a team of teachers, live-laboratory staff, students and the community leaders.

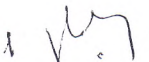
The college has a well defined clear “apparatus” in position to review the goals and objectives. The feedback process has been well integrated into the system. This is evident from the logical connections within the programme and integration of theory and fieldwork. The system of modular curriculum has been well planned and is cumulative.

The active involvement and participation of the Advisory Council and the Management in identifying programmes of training on an ongoing basis has contributed to the dynamic growth of the training programmes. If such inputs are to become the mainstay of curriculum redesigning and quick implementation process it is essential that the college be granted wide ranging freedom to make such modifications as are appropriate.

Interaction with various stakeholders, namely, the potential employers, financiers, funding agencies, teaching staff, students, parents and alumni have iterated that the system of feedback has been fully internalized and put in place by the management.

### **Criterion II: Teaching-learning and Evaluation**

The college follows the well accepted mode of selection procedure for students. Though the management, under appropriate provisions has a “management quota” of 20% of seats, it is commendable to note that the management exercises this right only in respect of those candidates who successfully fulfill the requirements pertaining to the academic achievement and the written examination. This restraint is exercised in order to ensure that the quality of performance of the students does not fall below acceptable levels.



The real strength of the institution lies in the Bridge Courses offered to students prior to the beginning of the Semester. The practice of Remedial Teaching has been well thought out and discussion through input with students confirmed its value. The integration of classroom teaching, fieldwork and live-laboratory is well in place. Thus, there is direct communication and decision-making among the three: supervisors, teachers and live-laboratory personnel.

Academic planning is facilitated through unitization of syllabi and preparation of course plans at the commencement of the academic year and through mid-term monitoring at various levels.

The instructional techniques followed such as seminars, discussions and case presentation have helped maximize the training inputs. The college encourages the use of latest technology like internet and CD ROM to promote a learner-centered approach.

The programmes offered by the college are professional courses of study. The programmes are intended to produce graduates who are "at home" in the practice of their profession. Hence, it is not merely the classroom and theory oriented inputs that are required, but there should be concentrated emphasis on the practice training to ensure that appropriate skills are imbibed. At the same time and equally important students become sensitive to human values. In this context it is commendable that the college has been attempting to bring out this practice oriented assessment in its internal evaluation process. The innovations introduced by the college in the evaluation system may prove to be a trendsetter for other institutions offering similar programmes.

The college has 19 full-time members of the faculty and a number of visiting faculty. The college follows the recruitment policy as per the guidelines of the university and the rules and regulations of the State Government and are able to attract and retain good professional talents.

Teachers are provided with adequate opportunities to upgrade their knowledge in their chosen subjects through a process of deputation to attend professional

conferences/seminars and also partake in training programmes offered by other professional institutions.

### **Criterion III: Research, Consultancy and Extension**

Of the nineteen members of the faculty six have Ph.D. degrees and at present six more are engaged in research. Research activities of the college are pursued through three media – Studies conducted by the Research Institute, Research Projects undertaken by individual members of the faculty and Students Research. Review of the relevant documents and the discussion with the concerned interest groups reveals the following:

- The Research Institute has consistently undertaken projects in collaboration with the members of the faculty and in response to requests from external organizations-international/national/state and local agencies. The problems/issues are action oriented.
- In so far as student research is concerned it is a compulsory requirement and the students complete these assignments under the guidance of the teachers and in consultation with the Research Institute.
- Coming to faculty research, at present there are three projects on hand. The limited involvement of the members of the faculty at this stage is fully appreciated when one keeps in mind their heavy load of teaching and student supervision of fieldwork.

The members of the faculty are also involved in consultancy services. This is evident from the most recent document (Consultancy Registry) brought out by the college.

The involvement of the college in community work is being maximized through its community based involvement in enabling various groups to resolve their primary need/problems. These participatory interventions include building infrastructural facilities and services which enhance the quality of life. The distinguishing feature of these extension programmes is the earnest participation of students from all the three streams of education, all the live-laboratories and the teachers as well as the community in terms of money and labour. Fallout of this is that the students are provided with ample varied exposure immersion experience which is rarely available

to students in a systematic organized manner. At the same time the active presence and the participation of the members of the faculty and the interactive positive cooperation forthcoming from the NGOs in the communities and other bodies yields rich dividends to all the stakeholders involved in the exercise.

#### **Criterion IV: Infrastructure and Learning Resources**

The physical master plan of the college is well designed and adequate provision has been made to tap the appropriate sources to fund it. This master plan may need to be redesigned to reflect the anticipated growth, intake of students in the different programmes and the time dimension and so on. Meanwhile, the college has done well to move towards optimization of the use of its infrastructure facilities.

The college has a fully computerized library with internet facility. The college has introduced this system even before a couple of “better established” libraries in the professional applied social sciences field. The book bank facility for the students is a commendable service and priority could be given to students who are in the remedial coaching classes. The college has committees to oversee the effective and efficient operations of the library. Generally efforts should be made to ensure that bank books do not end up being the only books that the students read, as else it would reduce the whole teaching-learning process in to prescribed text-book reading-examination system.

The computer center has been well planned and supervised with an outside agency doing the maintenance. The center is equipped with state-of-art technology. The overall ambience in the computer center and the library is user friendly.

The sports facilities are quite adequate but it is also true that students do take advantage of the facilities. The learning resources of the college is a fact, that it can be genuinely proud of. To mention a few: an auditorium with a seating capacity of 200 persons, an open air auditorium, seminar halls and conference rooms, language and psychometric laboratories, hostels for men and women, guest house, day care center and a cafeteria.

### **Criterion V: Student Support and Progression**

The various dimensions related to this aspect are well organized and implemented. The feedback is oriented towards the revision/upgradation of the academic aspect. This could imply that the academics of college-teaching, course contents, methodology of teaching, etc. are extremely satisfactory. It is the peripheral infrastructural elements that now need attention. All the administrative requirements vis-à-vis placements, guidance, dissemination of information, academic calendar, feedback from students and others are well in place. The college is doing all that it can to provide/facilitate students through scholarships, counselling, placement and so on in their progression. There is no doubt that the college has provided ample scope for students to participate in co-curricular activities and they take full advantage of the opportunities offered to them to develop capacities and capabilities in their chosen areas.

As regards the role of alumni one can not doubt the fact that as individuals and as the alumni association they play a pivotal role in identifying training programmes, field placements, tapping financial resources and playing a crucial advisory role to the management.

### **Criterion VI: Organisation and Management**

The college is governed by the Provincial Council, the Board of Management and the College Council. As and when necessary various committees are constituted by the Provincial Council for specific purposes. The college has set in place appropriate structures and procedures for the efficient functioning of the managerial system. Thus, proper functionaries have been listed and they have the requisite powers and responsibilities to conduct their affairs. The appraisal system is fair and appropriate. Non-teaching staff are provided in-service training. The interactions confirmed a climate of participative decision-making.

The staffing policy is determined by the State Government/University Rules. The management has also augmented the teaching staff and non-teaching strength. Information about each staff member is obtained from different sources and these are collected to get the total assessment of the staff member. Subsequently the Principal



meets each staff member to appraise him/her about the evaluation and to guide them as necessary to improve the quality of their work. The college has in place a well defined internal quality assurance system.

The management has instituted welfare schemes for the staff. These are the loan facilities for the purchase of vehicles and/or house purchase/construction. The maximum loan that an employee can avail of is 40,000/- at a low interest rate of 6%.

An internal financial audit system is in place and the audit report is reviewed by the heads of concerned departments with the Principal of the college. In so far as the staff are concerned no formal grievance redressal procedure has been adopted. Individual staff members are free to approach the heads of the departments for discussion and resolution of any problem that they may be facing. If the head of the department concludes that the resolution is beyond his/her capacity, he/she would advise the concerned staff member to approach the Principal for redressal of the problem. The staff members are also permitted to directly interact with the Principal.

#### **Criterion VII: Healthy Practices**

The college has been adopting healthy practices to help live up to its vision and mission. To enumerate a few:

- ✓ The rural camp in the first semester for students for all programmes from all departments to instill in them social sensitivity.
- ✓ Integration of add-on courses to bridge the gap between the prescribed syllabus and ground realities.
- ✓ The admission process consisting of an aptitude test, group discussion and personal interview to ensure a minimum quality in in-take.
- ✓ The college- industry interaction at various levels: guest lectures, placements, conferences, fieldwork, etc.
- ✓ Various associations, clubs, committees for overall personality development of students.
- ✓ The staff council in which all the faculty of the college are all members in the decision making body of the college.
- ✓ MOUs with three foreign universities for twinning, faculty exchange, etc.

### Section 3: Overall Analysis

The peer team is of the considered opinion that the nature and level of the curriculum goes far beyond the conduct of a typical college and even that of the professional college. The commitment of the college to offer value-based curriculum and above all the intense participatory process is of a highly commendable nature. What is implied in this is that the college is thus able to fulfill one of the primary objectives of the educational system. It is the role of the educational institutions to fulfill the social responsibility.

The vision, mission and the goals of the college are operationally aimed to be achieved through the imparting of specialized knowledge and skills of the students and helping them to imbibe and internalize positive values, which would enhance the harmonious interactive human relationships. The process through which the above is being realized can be summarized as the interaction between the theoretical inputs and the fieldwork practices and active participation in community extension services. Thus, the college has brought into place a methodology for fulfilling its social responsibility in general and the neighbourhood communities in particular. This is a distinguishing feature of the college and hence needs to be fully supported.

From a practical point of view the factor that hampers the full realization of the above is a restraint on the college to update/upgrade its syllabus to respond to the current needs of the society.

The syllabi need to be approved by the University before these can be incorporated in the college curriculum. Hence, maximizing the freedom of the college to move forward at an accelerated pace towards the achievements of its goals.

The college derives its strength from the mechanisms it has evolved to bring about cohesiveness in its otherwise heterogeneous group of students. These include the effective use of Bridge/Remedial Courses and individual Teacher-Student Counselling.

*END*

As regards research and publication while the strength of the college lies in the fact that it has a well established Research Institute and a well qualified and an enthusiastic academic staff, the limitation lies in the fact that the members of the faculty are preoccupied with the teaching-learning extension dimension of activities. As a result rich and valuable experiences of teachers do not get documented and fed into the mainstream of professional knowledge.

The college should earnestly consider setting up of experience reflection workshop for the members of the faculty wherein the teachers would be required on regular basis to present the experiences on various facets of the profession and jointly reflect and debate on these experiences to draw out the essence which could be fed into the training programmes and also documented for wider distribution. This would in turn encourage the publication dimension of the college.

The third distinguishing feature of the college is the abundant provision of infrastructure services to facilitate the learning process of the students. Of particular emphasis in this context would be the liberal access to computers and particularly of internet services. A visible outcome of this has been the qualitative improvement in the preparation and presentation of the student's assignments. Coupled with this the use of modern technology in the library has also enhanced student learning.

Further a major source of strength to the college is the live-laboratories. These laboratories act as intermediaries between the college(students and teachers) and the communities/target groups. At the same time the live-laboratories actively get involved in enabling the communities in identifying the needs and resolving the issues. For this purpose it is able to draw quite heavily on the resources of the college. This includes the extensive use of the reputation of the college as a community related problem solving agency and particularly its credibility as a transparent pro-grass-root oriented institution.

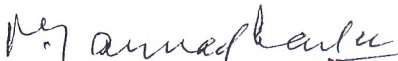
The college can boast of multiple stakeholders whose primary concern is to enhance the quality of the input process and output of the college. For example socially committed industrial organizations, the large array of alumni, the members of the Advisory Council meet with the Management Body of the college to critically review

the changing scenario in society and particularly the needs of the potential employers. Having made such a critical analysis they identify alternate measures to be introduced in the student training programmes to enable them to meet and effectively respond to the emerging situations. Finally, these same stakeholders monitor the implementation of the recommendations and even identify and contribute resources in an appropriate manner.

To reiterate what has been stated earlier the college should be enabled to achieve maximum freedom to pursue its training programmes. Operationally, this could imply that the college has the potential to be “Autonomous” and even become a “Deemed to be University”.

We express our gratitude to the management, the Principal and the staff for their kind hospitality. We wish the institution all success in its future endeavours to develop as a model institution of higher learning in the country.

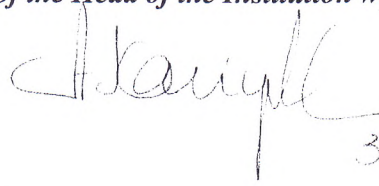
***Names & Signatures of the Peer Team Members***

  
Prof. P. Ramachandran(Chairman) 3/3/2000

  
Prof. Bidarakoppa(Member) 3/3/2000

I agree and accept the report

***Name & Signature of the Head of the Institution with Office Seal***

  
3/3/2000



DR. (FR.) ANTONY KARIYIL, CMI  
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