

Original

**Report of the Peer Team on
Institutional Accreditation of
St.Joseph's College (Autonomous)
Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu**

Section-1: Introduction

St.Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli, Tamil Nadu voluntarily came forward to undergo the process of assessment and accreditation by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore. Accordingly they submitted a very detailed self study report for the purpose to NAAC which then constituted a Peer Team to visit the institution with the following members: Dr.A.N.P.Ummerkutty, Former Vice-Chancellor, Calicut Univerisity (Chairman), Dr.A.S.Janardhan, Dept. of Geology, Mysore University (Member) and Dr.Sr.K.Anthony Mary, Principal, St.Ann's College for Women, Hyderabad (Member). The Peer Team visited the St.Joseph's College on 14th to 16th Feb. 2000.

Established more than one and a half century ago (to be exact in 1844 in the coastal town of Nagapattinam & shifted to Tiruchirappalli in 1883) St.Joseph's College (Autonomous) is not only one of the oldest but also one of the most vibrant higher education centres in the State of Tamil Nadu. The college has recognized that transition is the most enduring aspect of human life in general and of higher education in particular. It has, therefore, endeavoured to catch up with the changing needs of the surrounding community. At present it has a student strength of more than 4500 and it offers 18 UG, 18 PG, 10 M.Phil., 12 Ph.D., 2 PG Diploma, 9 Computer related Certificate Courses and 8 other Training Certificate courses. In addition, it also runs an Evening College with several U.G. & P.G. courses and a few evening programmes. It is interesting to note that though the Day college is exclusively meant for male students, Evening programmes admit girl students as well. All the Evening Courses are conducted on Self-financing basis. Formerly affiliated to the then Madras University, the St.Joseph's College (Autonomous) is an affiliate of the Bharathidasan University from 1982 when the latter was established. The college made considerable progress in course diversification, curricular updating, Examination system etc. after becoming Autonomous in 1978.



The college has accepted that self assessment is fundamental to any improvement and growth of individuals as well as of institutions and they have admitted that the self-study report prepared by them has been an eye-opener for the management, the faculty, the staff, the students and others. In their own words, it 'has been a self discovery'. The Peer Team records its appreciation of this open attitude which has indeed generated a lot of enthusiasm among the faculty and staff, conducive to greater all-round growth in the coming years.

Before arriving in the campus the Peer Team studied the detailed Self-Study Report provided by the college. It is prepared in seven volumes and presented in very attractive and convenient form. During the visit attention was focused in getting a real 'feel' of this centenarian institution and in validating the information furnished. The Team visited all the academic & administrative units of the college, interacted extensively with its various constituents and scrutinized all the relevant documents.

Discussions were held with the Management Committee, the Principal, the Secretary, the Rector, the faculty, the students, the alumni, parents and others. Based on a careful analysis of the self-study report submitted by the institution, on the basis of the visits and discussions the Peer Team had on the campus and guided by the well-defined criteria formulated by the NAAC, the Peer Team assessed the quality of education that is being imparted in the St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli. The Team has pleasure in submitting the present report of assessment in terms of the criteria-wise approach and the over-all analysis with necessary commendations and suggestions for further growth & development of the college.

Section-2: Criterionwise Analysis

Criterion-I: Curricular Aspects

The College offers the following degree programs: five in Arts; one in Commerce; and seven in Sciences. Apart from the above conventional courses, three vocational UGC-sponsored courses, one on Industrial Chemistry by the Chemistry department another on Tourism by the History department and a third one on Communicative English by the English Department seem to be popular among the students.

In the Post-graduate level, the college offers courses in 15 subjects - 6 in Arts and 9 in Sciences. The Botany department boasts of a well-known Herbarium and has links with

another at Kodaikanal. The department also lays emphasis on the collection of Herbs and propagates the importance of Herbal medicines. With the revival of interest in Ayurvedic medicine, this gains utmost importance. This department has also laid emphasis on afforestation using not the normal quick growing Eucalyptus type flora but on re-introducing the natural pre-existing, local flora.

A number of new courses has been introduced by the college to meet the changing needs of the society. This includes Biochemistry M.Sc. (by Botany Department), Electronics B.Sc. & M.Sc. (by Physics Department), Social Dynamics, Personnel Management & Industrial Relations by the new Departments of the same respective names etc. Such programmes are fully compatible with goals & objectives of the College.

The introduction of GIS in Computer Science application needs to be specially mentioned. They possess ERDAS and ARC-INFO (costing nearly 15 Lakhs) software. With some other additional software which can be procured from NRSA, Bangalore or from Nagpur they can make GIS as a regular course which includes morphometric analyses. This is being stated here as there is growing need of professionals in this subject. This can also be linked with afforestation, slope analyses, disaster management, in identifying wasteland and suggest remedial measures for proper utilisation etc.

Various courses conducted by the Computer Science Department are particularly notable. This includes M.C.A., B.Sc. & M.Sc. in Computer Science & various Diploma and Certificate Courses. Some of these courses are run in more than one batch, demonstrating their popularity. Most of them are organized on self-financing basis.

5-yearly review in the case of UG & 3-yearly review in the case of PG courses are made. In addition, various channels of feedback are utilized for improving the curricula from time to time.

It is interesting to note that courses like M.A. History and Tamil in Evening College, are extremely popular, even when they are offered on self financing basis.

The flexibility of choosing various combinations by the students is constrained by the absence of horizontal mobility. To overcome this, Credit system may be introduced.



In the P.G. level, the above said aspects like soil testing and afforestation and herbal medicine could be introduced as project /dissertations, as project work is compulsory for both UG and PG courses.

Criterion II: Teaching-learning and Evaluation

Admissions to various courses are based on student's performance in the qualifying examination. However, departments like Computer Science, Chemistry and Biochemistry, Personnel Management and Industrial Relations conduct entrance tests for the post-graduate programs. Other considerations as laid down by the Government like reservation, sports quota and proficiency in fine-arts are taken into consideration. The college gives preference to socially and economically backward students and particularly to those coming from rural areas.

The College teaching process places emphasis on seminars, assignments, self-study, project work, field visit, in-plant training, and work in language labs. Marks are assigned to the above categories. The College imparts training or at least some awareness to students in Computer handling and Internet. Almost all the departments use rather regularly visual aids like UGC films/cassettes, OHP and slide projectors (including LCD projectors).

The College is offering bridge course in English to students from rural areas and Maths to needed students. Remedial courses are offered to poor and socially backward students and first generation students. Some departments have made personal data (CV) sheets of students for counseling purposes. The bright students are not left out, in fact they are encouraged to still higher levels through enrichment courses within or outside the College.

Every student has to take up any two application oriented courses of inter disciplinary nature.

The faculty is appointed on the basis of their academic qualification, class-room communication skills, teaching experience and sharing the vision and the mission of the Institution. The normal procedure of selection through advertisement, constitution of interview board and preparation of a panel is followed.

The Day College has 155 staff members, 54 with Ph.D., 89 with M.Phil. and 12 Postgraduates whereas Evening course and Evening College has a total of 33 teachers.



The faculties keep abreast with recent development in their respective subject areas by attending orientation and refresher courses, national and international seminars, conferences and workshops. Seminars and certificate courses on recent software are conducted exclusively for the staff members.

The college follows a system of continuous internal assessment and semester end examination with equal weightage in the ratio of 50:50. To pass a course in UG a student must secure 40% both in CIA and SE and also in aggregate. A PG student must secure 45% in CIA and SE and a minimum of 50% in aggregate of the two. Passing in CIA is a must to appear for the summative evaluation. However, there is provision to take arrear tests in the following semester. Semester end exams are centralized and fully external. Double valuation method is followed only for PG valuation. There is a provision for revaluation and retotaling for UG students only. There is no provision for improvement in CIA and moderation and adjustment of marks is not followed.

The N.C.C. in the college is very active and has been participating in several programmes like All India Trekking Expeditions, National Integration Camps and Republic Parades at New Delhi. The college has achieved several distinctions and prestigious awards. It is praiseworthy to note that the college conducts a mega event 'CADAFETE' an Inter Collegiate NCC festival.

The college has a team of talented students in its prestigious Fine Arts team securing on several occasions University Trophy.

The College has a self-appraisal program to get the feedback from students at different levels.

The college has established connections with I.I.Sc., Ford Foundation, NRSA, DBT, ICHHR and ICMSR.

Criterion III: Research, Consultancy and Extension

The College has built up a good research tradition from the time of its recognition as an autonomous body. The Botany department stands out in research activities as can be seen from the several publications and significant funding to ongoing projects to the tune of Rs.40 lakhs by different agencies; and Rs.24 lakhs already sanctioned. If one adds on projects which are submitted and which are likely to be funded the gross amount is by any standards



quite huge. Further, the Botany has already completed projects worth Rs. 5 lakhs. The thrust is on biodiversity, programmes of the well known Rapinat Herbarium and rehabilitation of forests or afforestation. Other departments like Chemistry, Physics, Economics and language departments have also been granted research projects. Departments like Social Dynamics, Statistics/Computer Science and Maths are now joining the list in real earnest. These only reinforce the fact that the staff have a well developed research culture.

However, the participation of the staff members in National and International seminars does not reflect the size of the funding, this aspect has to be looked into. The publications in refereed international and national journals are also scanty, the exception is that of the Botany department. This probably reflects the long standing interest of the staff (including those who have retired).

We wish that the staff of the Chemistry and Botany place emphasis on soil testing/ water quality assessment and application of remote sensing in a serious manner. The consultancy aspect is being given stress by the UGC presently; a culture of consultancy and charging fees for the same takes time to develop. The administration should give serious thought to this issue. We are aware of the fact that this is an autonomous college and there is heavy load of teaching. Yet a great deal of consultancy seems possible with the strong research basis already built up. Further, the College has acquired shortly 18 acres of land nearby and develop this area into a wholly research oriented campus. With such sound research orientation, consultancy at at least in limited areas, deserves serious consideration.

The College is offering immense philanthropic services called 'SHEPHERD' by the students in the form of field work in 66 villages adopted by the college. Some of the activities to mention are non-formal education, value education, gender justice, environmental awareness, eradication of child labour, Human rights and health awareness. College also extends its services in promotion of youth and woman organizations.

Criterion IV: Infrastructure & Learning Resources

The College is a well established one with a long history. Naturally, over the years the College has acquired a large area ~ 57 acres with buildings many of which are imposing and more than 100 years old. There are several recent constructions as well. There are also plans to have new buildings to accommodate some new departments like Computer Centre.



The class rooms and the different laboratories are comparatively spacious and well maintained. Physics and Chemistry departments have acquired some latest equipment. There is a good workshop facility which takes care of all the College needs. In short, the College has in all fairness a good infrastructure in terms of space, buildings and hostels.

The Library is extremely well maintained with built in facilities wherein the students can access the book search through computers. A good photocopying facility also exists. The Internet facilities are really up to date attached to VSNL with 64 Kbytes!

Special mention has to be made here regarding the Computer facilities which boasts of 235 computers.

The Hostels are well maintained and are hygienic. The authorities do seem to have definite control over the students and have taken great interest in co-curricular activities.

The College has good play ground facilities; 19 acres have been allotted to various sports activities. Various teams do well in competitive sports winning several trophies at State and National levels. Numerous boys have earned jobs through their performance in sports.

Criterion V: Student support and Progression

The Institution is a prestigious one of Tiruchirapalli with parents wanting to send their wards to the College.

The Institution has been consistent in achieving good to excellent results, a pass percentage of 75% at the U.G. level for the Day courses and 63% for the Evening college. The P.G. pass percentage is ~ 83% (overall including the Day and Evening courses). The drop out rate in P.G. courses is only 9% and in the U.G. level it is around 11%.

The financial aid is provided to the students in the form of scholarships from the Central and State Governments and Endowment scholarships from Institutional/ Management sources.

Several workshops and seminars are organized by the Institution for academic and career opportunities. The Employment Guidance Cell established and functioning since 1993 assists the unemployed graduates for placement. The career guidance and entrepreneurship committees of the College arrange seminars and offer sound ideas on self employment



schemes. The college placement cell arranges Campus interviews for the final year students and invites Industries and SSI/companies to visit the Campus. This aspect should be further strengthened.

A counseling center is organized by the college. There are 25 members headed by an active Director. There are counseling rooms even in the hostels.

The Alumni association has a separate office within the College Campus. The association is very much functional in the sense it has its own constitution, members and office bearers. Annual general body meeting is regularly held. The Alumni has distinguished personnel represented by outstanding scientists, eminent professors, former Vice-Chancellors and IAS and IPS officers.

Criterion VI: Organisation and Management

The organizational structure consists of the Governing Body, Academic Council, Board of Studies and Finance Committee. They ensure proper and efficient management of academic, financial and administrative affairs of the college. In addition, for the overall development of the college sixteen committees are constituted.

The Governing Body fixes the fee and other charges, approves plan for instituting new programmes, lays down procedure for selection and recruitment of teaching and non-teaching staff and service conditions.

The Academic Council scrutinizes, modifies and approves the proposals of the Boards of Studies with regard to the courses of study, syllabi, evaluation methods and procedures.

The Board of Studies comprises the University Representatives and External Experts. This committee prepares syllabi for various courses of study, coordinates research, teaching, extension and other academic activities in the Department.

The Finance Committee is an advisory body to the Governing Body which discusses proposals relating to fee structure, special expenditure, annual budget estimates and U.G.C. autonomy annual grant.



The additional committees are College Council, Planning and Evaluation committee, Appeal and Grievances Committee, Examination Committee, Awards Committee, Admission Committee, Library Committee, Student's Welfare and Extra Curricular Activities Committee, Research Committee, Curriculum Development Committee, Students' Council, Sports and Games Committee, Fine Arts Committee, Career Guidance and Entrepreneurship Committee and Placement Cell. These committees meet periodically to analyse the working of the institution and provide suggestions for improvement in the working of the College.

The Principal monitors the day-to-day administration of the college, plans and executes all academic programmes through internal co-ordination with all the committees. A meeting of the administrators is held periodically to co-ordinate and improve the functioning of the organizational structure. The Standing Committee of the Governing Body meets for matters of urgency. The common programmes/examination schedule are discussed and finalized by the college council and academic calendar is finalized for the whole college. 50% of the students admissions are reserved for the students of the minority community and the 50% admission is made in accordance with the Government norms.

The staff appointment is in accordance with the private colleges Regulations Act (Minority College) and is fully exempted from the reservation policy of the Government. Confidential reports are maintained and examined by the authorities at the appropriate time for promotion and career advancement. Staff coordinators are encouraged to participate in special training programmes organized by the college and other agencies.

Criterion-VII: Healthy Practices

Special mention must be made of the following features of the college:

- The Career oriented courses being introduced into the curriculum with in-plant training field cum study trips and practical work give the students better exposure and increases job opportunities. The vocational thrust given to each course is also yet another step in the right direction.
- Undergraduate and Postgraduate programmes are offered as self-financing courses in the evening college.
- The Rapinat Herbarium with its massive collection of flora, journals and publications, future prospects and linkage with funding agencies is quite impressive. The Anglade Institute of Natural History which is now functioning as the Environment Centre at Kodaikanal is of international repute.

- Many Endowments have been instituted for organising lectures and awards every year.
- The CNRS (Centre for Natural Resources Studies) with its inter disciplinary approach to botany, remote sensing & geographical information systems is doing good work. Lot of collaborative work and research is done in the field of biodiversity, monitoring with national centres like CES, NRSA & IIRS.
- Faculty members have been sent to various foreign Universities and to various research centres all over the country. The innumerable Departmental and Staff publications, the faculty improvement programmes and the number of refresher courses they have attended from time to time is an indication of how progressive the entire team is. The number of awards received by the Professors of various Departments is a testimony of their potential and merit.
- Consistently good leadership right from its inception to this day has helped them reach many a milestone.
- The evolution of the out reach programme SHEPHERD (Sciences and Humanities for People's Development) and adopting 66 villages is creditable. Their ASTRA (Application of Science and Technology in Rural Areas) is also innovative. Including this project as Part-IV of the curriculum makes it feasible and viable.
- The admission policy to give priority to the physically handicapped, socially and economically backward students who cannot afford to pay is also significant. Their magnanimous gesture of providing noon-meal to the poor students for the last 10 years should be appreciated.
- The Cauvery – A Living Museum recreating the experience with its past glory and present reality – an empirical study and a live celebration is a novel idea.
- A feather to their cap is their illustrious Alumni, and their continued association with them.

Section 3: Overall Analysis

With very humble beginning more than one and a half century ago, the St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli, today is bustling with teaching & research activities with more than 3000 students and nearly 1/10th that number of faculty and staff in a sprawling, cool green campus of 57 acres in the busy metropolis of Tiruchirappalli. The campus is well planned and neatly maintained. The various academic Departments, other supporting facilities, sports facilities and other modern additions like the Computer Centre seem to vie with each other in catching the attention of the visitors. The Peer Team was pleased to note



that the authorities have taken great pains, over a period of several decades, in building up the institution in a balanced way. Recently they have acquired an additional plot of 18 acres in the suburb of Tiruchirappalli to develop it into a full-fledged research campus where all research activities will be shifted in due course. Hopefully this could be a unique venture in the country for a college to undertake.

Though a grandmother institution, the St. Joseph's College has not developed any "wrinkles on her face" (in the words of the Self-Study report). This is indeed a model for Indian higher education scenario, as the older should also be the better in higher education activities. The Peer Team notes with pleasure that the St. Joseph's College (Autonomous) proves this point beyond doubt.

The college has several laudable features which are separately listed as commendations. The Peer Team also wishes to offer a few suggestion for a speedier and smoother growth of the institution. The suggestions are listed separately.

Commendation

- The college has adequate & separate blocks of buildings for almost all the academic departments, well-furnished class rooms and laboratories. Spacious halls and auditoria for holding all types of functions, a good library, an excellent computer centre, highly satisfactory sports facilities, comfortable hostels, canteen, leisure time activity centres, Museum, Workshops etc. all carefully planned and located in a single campus and aesthetically maintained to create and sustain a conducive academic atmosphere.
- With a college Rector, Secretary, six Vice Principals, two Deans, and other designated officers, the communication channels between the Principal and the rest of the academic community is efficient, fast and friction-free. The arrangement has certainly added to the well-being of the institution.
- After becoming Autonomous significant achievements have been made in course diversification, curricular modernization, intensification and multiplication of research activities and in innovative efforts in supportive activities.
- Introduced UGC sponsored vocational programme in Communicative English, Industrial Chemistry & Tourism & Travel management.
- A wide range of application-oriented subjects have been designed, two of them being incorporated as compulsory papers in Part III of degree courses.

- 'SHEPHERD', the extension wing of the college is well-organized and forms mandatory activity under Part IV of all UG courses. This seems to have strengthened the relations between the college and the surrounding village communities.
- A research culture has been strongly built up. Several Departments have done well, having produced several Ph.D.s during the last few years and currently having a good number of full-time & part-time research scholars. The Department of Botany & Chemistry deserve special mention in this connection.
- The activities of a well-organized Alumni Association are notable. They conduct several training courses (leading to certificates), give financial assistance to some students & help the college in many other ways such as running a placement cell.
- Many major & minor research projects have been undertaken with the help of leading funding agencies of the Government of India, State Government and voluntary agencies. Research projects worth more than Rupees two crores have been completed since 1970.
- That the Computer Centre is put to optimal use with as many as 9 Certificate Courses for different levels of learners is laudable.
- The Internet Browsing Centre opens up an unlimited window of knowledge to the teachers & students of the college.
- The central workshop and the one attached to the Physics Department are indeed worthy additions, catering to a variety of daily needs of minor repairs, maintenance & upkeep of buildings, structures, equipment etc. of this large institution.
- The Audio-Visual Centre providing access to LCD Projector, Video Camera, VCR, Tape Recorder, OHP is of great benefit to the students.
- Conduct of remedial courses in Mathematics, Commerce etc. in addition to these English is useful to students weak in these subjects.
- The college has built up a very good publication wing which has brought out several books. Regular publication of journals by Tamil, English & Economics Departments is also commendable.
- The Team noted with great appreciation that the fee charged for the self-financing courses are far below the levels approved by the State Government both for the free seats as well as for the payment seats. This is highly commendable.

Suggestion for further growth & development

- Formation of Curricular Development Cell is laudable. However, it will be better to constantly probe further possibilities in course diversification, curricular updating and in



interdisciplinary approaches. The CDC can function better & more effectively on the basis of such in-house investigative probes & continuous reports.

- Though the college has built up a sound basis for research, no organised consultancy service worth mentioning is taken up so far. In fact, consultancy is now treated as part of extension. It is advisable to constitute a full-fledged consultancy cell with the Principal as the Chairman & extend the service to the needy agencies on payment basis. The know how offered will then be valued more seriously. Only consultancy can provide genuine linkage with industry and trade.
- Absence of credit system and choice-based options prevent horizontal mobility to the students. It would be a welcome step if early steps are taken to introduce choice-based credit system at the degree level.
- Conduct of bridge/remedial courses 30 hour duration for freshers is a useful service. But it may be considered by the authorities whether it would be more effective in the duration is spread to 4 to 6 weeks instead of packing it to a single initial week as is done now.
- Foundation course as an essential element of Part IV is a welcome arrangement. But it would be advisable to constantly review the contents of the course.
- Biochemistry is presently run by Botany Department & Electronics by Physics Department. Since both are full-fledged sciences in their own rights, separate identity may be considered. The issue deserves immediate attention of the authorities.
- The GIS programme can be further strengthened by tie-up with NRSA, Bharathidasan University and French Institute, Pondicherry. Employment opportunities for GIS trained computer personnel are bright.
- Siddha medicine/Herbal based medicine should also be focussed on.

The Peer Team extends all good wishes to St. Joseph's College (Autonomous), Tiruchirappalli in their pursuit of excellence in the field of higher education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Peer Team wish to record it thanks to Dr.A.Gnanam, Chairman, NAAC for giving the members an opportunity in the assessment work of a leading Autonomous College in the State of Tamil Nadu. The Team also expresses its appreciation of the sincere help & support received from Dr.Antony Stella, the Deputy Advisor, NAAC in the preparation of the report. Rev.Dr.John Britto,S.J. the Principal of the college extended complete cooperation to the Team during their work in the campus and the members express propose thanks for this. They



also thanks Prof.R.Selvaraj, the Coordinator from the college and other members of the faculty & staff for the many cordialities extended them during their work.

Name and Signature of the Peer Team

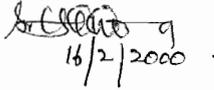
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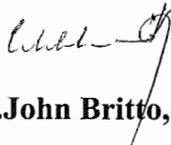
2. Dr.A.S.Janardhan



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I have gone through the report. I agree with the major evaluation undertaken by the NAAC Peer Team


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