

REPORT OF THE PEER TEAM
On Institutional Accreditation of
RAJARSHI SHAHU COLLEGE,
Latur, Maharashtra

SECTION 1 : INTRODUCTION

Rajarshi Shahu College, Latur, Maharashtra, affiliated to Swami Ramanand Teerth Marathwada University, Nanded, firmly believes in what Rigveda had expounded so many centuries ago.

“Aa no bhadrah kratwo yantu vishwato”,

i.e. *“let noble thoughts come to us from all sides”*. So they were open to constructive and relevant suggestions based on their self-study report submitted to NAAC for accreditation. The NAAC constituted the Peer Team to validate the report submitted by the institution, comprising of the following members : Dr. Y. Saraswathy Rao, Former Vice-Chancellor, Sri Krishnadevaraya University as Chairman and Dr. B. Sampathkumar, Principal & Secretary, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, Prof. Christy Bennett, Principal, The Standard Fireworks Rajarathnam College for Women, Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu as Members. The Peer Team visit is co-ordinated by Mr. Ganesh Hegde, Academic Professional, NAAC. The Peer Team visited Rajarshi Shahu College between 16th – 18th January, 2003.

The college was established in 1970 with Arts & Commerce Faculties and in the next academic year the Science Faculty was introduced. This college is run by the Shiv Chhatrapati Shikshan Sanstha, which was established in

1968, with the main objectives of *pursuit of excellence in education*, focusing on overall personality development of the students, while imbibing ethical values in them. The college is named after the progressive ruler of Kolhapur, Rajarshi Shahu, whose idealism influences the members of the Sanstha. The college has shifted various locations and had gone through several travails before attaining the present imposing structure in the heart of Latur in 1976-77. Like the college emblem - **THE PHOENIX** – it rose from the ashes by the dint of a team’s dogged determination, grit, vision and sweat of brow, to achieve the coveted slot of being one of the best in the State. The Government of Maharashtra honoured the institution with the "*Ideal Educational Institute of Maharashtra*" award in the year 2000. The University has commended the college by declaring it as the "*Best Examination Centre*".

It is now a multi-faculty degree college offering nearly 39 combinations subjects at UG level and 2 PG programmes. The average student strength which was 168 in 1970, steadily rose to reach the present strength of 2175.

The assessment of the Peer Team in terms of the 7 criteria and overall analysis, along with the commendations and suggestions is presented in the following pages.

SECTION 2 : CRITERION – WISE ANALYSIS

Criterion 1 : Curricular Aspects

In spite of being a semi-urban affiliated college, it is noteworthy to state that besides offering 3 UG (BA, BSc & BCom) & 2 PG Aided programmes, the college also has 2 self-financing programmes (BCS & BCA), 1 MPhil and 3 PhD programmes. The staff members of this college have helped the students by conducting coaching classes for various competitive examinations. There

are 8 students doing MPhil in Geography and 21 students doing PhD in Marathi, Chemistry and Sociology.

The Peer Team appreciates the wide choice of courses offered to the students in combinations of 3 optional subjects each, with 21 combinations in Arts, 15 in Science and 4 in Commerce. UGC vocational course Functional English is offered.

Though the college follows the university syllabi, the curriculum reflects the mission and goals of the college viz., traditional values, self-employment & job-oriented courses and courses with development of scientific temper. Nearly 52% of the programmes are career-oriented, inter-disciplinary in nature and with a college-industry-neighbourhood networking. A notable feature is that the students have an option for second language from 6 languages, viz. Additional English, Marathi, Hindi, Sanskrit, Russian and Pali. This is the only college in the University offering Russian, which is a remarkable and unique feature. The teachers form the pivot of initiation, review and redesign of the programmes by being members of various University bodies. It is heartening to note that the college consciously encourages the teachers to get elected / selected on various such bodies like Board of Studies, Academic Council, Senate, Management Council, etc, to act as leaders in policy decision of higher education and in framing the curricula. Though the college is not autonomous, through several teachers who are representatives on these bodies, messages for constructive changes to benefit the student community are carried out effectively.

It is also worth mentioning that 8 seminars / symposia were organized from 1990 to 2002 for upgradation of knowledge. Lectures are also arranged from time to time to update inter-disciplinary approaches.

Criterion II : Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

It is laudable that the college takes care of the students, the teaching time-frame and human resource and concentrates on faculty improvement and recognition. The students are admitted purely on the basis of merit and reservation policy of the Government of Maharashtra. After the admissions in first year, the standard of the students are assessed at the entry level through quiz and general knowledge tests. Remedial courses, personal counselling, extra classes and special classes are conducted for the educationally disadvantaged students. Personal attention is also given to the slow learners. It is noteworthy that the advanced learners are also encouraged towards further excellence through incentives in the form of cash awards, Merit Cards, extra borrower's tickets in Library, participation in discussions/presentations, etc.

It may be pointed out here that out of 77 teachers, 16 are Ph.D's, 6 are M. Phil's and the rest 55 have PG as the highest qualification. More number of teachers should be encouraged to do M. Phil and Ph. D. Five teachers are benefited from the UGC – FIP scheme and 37 teachers have attended National Level Seminars, while 3 were resource persons. More number of teachers can be encouraged to participate. However, 2 teachers have attended International Seminars. Due recognition, in this regard, is given to the Russian teacher. Nine teachers have attended refresher courses in the last 2 years, and seven seminars / symposia have been conducted in the college. The Peer Team suggests strengthening of these two areas for faculty improvement.

The teachers are evaluated through self – appraisal submitted to the State Government. Evaluation of teachers by the students through questionnaire

from the academic year 2002-2003, is acting as a healthy corrective mechanism in the quality of teaching. 15 teachers have been honoured with "The Best Teacher" award by the Government of Maharashtra, Parent Institution and NGO's. This is a good practice to motivate the teachers.

The college maintains a high degree of discipline through which it fulfills the U.G.C. requirement of 180 working days. The teachers are appointed as per UGC and State Government norms and 100 % of the classes are taken by full-time teachers.

The Team appreciates the framing of a teaching plan by each teacher at the beginning of the academic year, which is monitored by the coordinators / Vice-Principal / Principal. The lecture method is complemented with the use of Audio-visual aids. Field trips and educational tours are undertaken periodically. National linkages with teaching and research institutions have exposed 6 departments to the latest developments in the subjects. However, the teaching-learning process could be enhanced further with greater participation of students in seminars and other external academic activities.

The annual examination pattern is followed in all streams except the BCS & BCA, where the semester pattern is in vogue. Students are evaluated by (i) Unit test, (ii) Terminal Test (iii) Pre-annual examination and (iv) Annual examination. The students are also assigned project work and are exposed to tutorials. Conduct of these tests and monitoring of overall performance of the students is well-appreciated, yet more concentration on the performance of the science students is needed.

The Electronics Department gives training to the students for repairing the electronic equipment which is useful in day to day life. The Microbiology Department has prepared a practical manual for their students. This work is commendable.

Some of the Project Reports have *utility value* and are appreciated by the external agencies, so much so the departments are approached for further consultation on several professional matters. Results of the college in all the courses are impressive. In some of the courses the entire merit list of the university is occupied by the students of this college.

Awareness of evaluation methods by students through the Principal's address & through a detailed prospectus is well noted by the team. A well equipped language laboratory is an asset to the English Department. This helps the students to develop better communication skills. The students are encouraged to display their skills in creative writing through a wall-magazine which is brought out every week. This practice is followed by a number of other departments as an exercise in dissemination of latest information.

The Commerce Department has created a commerce laboratory, which will help the students to gain practical knowledge in banking and other business and industrial sectors. The well equipped Computer Laboratory enables the students to do practicals individually. The networking of this laboratory by a staff member of Computer Science department is noteworthy. The internet facility is available to all students and staff members.

Criterion III : Research ,Consultancy and Extension

The college facilitates research culture by encouraging project work at PG and UG levels. Teachers are also encouraged to undertake research activities by giving study leave and by adjustments in the teaching schedule.

28.5 % of the teachers are engaged in active research, with 7 members recognized as research guides, 3 having applied for recognition. Three departments (Chemistry, Microbiology and Marathi) are recognized as research departments. There are totally 29 M. Phil / Ph. D scholars, 8 full time & 21 part time, with 17 teachers currently working for their Ph. D degrees. There are 4 on-going projects with an outlay of Rs.1,34,000/-.

Informal consultancy services are offered by 6 departments (Chemistry, Physics, Zoology, Fishery Science, Microbiology and Political Science). It is not remunerative to the college, but is provided as a social obligation and honorary service.

This social indebtedness is demonstrated by the encouragement given to students to participate in extension activities by recognitions like awards from the institution and the University, giving additional borrower's card, certificates, shields, cash, prizes, etc. Many teachers also voluntarily and enthusiastically participate, since it is society-oriented and helps in their self-appraisal. Besides the NSS and NCC activities the Adult Literacy Programme is a notable feature. The college is highly active in social work & social awareness programmes in collaboration with the NGOs & GOs. A village has been adopted through the University, where nearly 8 broad areas of extension activities are carried out.

The Team recognizes the influence of the socially-minded philanthropists at the helm of the Sanstha, which has influenced the strong extension work done by the college. However, being an academic institution primarily, the college also needs to strengthen its research and consultancy wing.

Criterion IV : Infrastructure & Learning Resource

The college is located on about 2 acres of land in a semi-urban area. This modest area houses most of the required facilities, viz., the administrative block, library building, various departments, class-rooms, auditorium, two open air theatres, sports centre, staff-room, DTP unit, guest house, ladies room, girls hostel, Employees Credit Co-operative Society, parking sheds, etc. Boys hostel is on a different site, a little away from the college, where also are located a Botanical Garden as well as a Fish pond as field stations of Botany and Fisheries Departments respectively.

Total computerization of the library is under-way, but presently there is one server with 15 nodes. The average working days of the library are 270 days per annum. 68181 books and 314 journals and periodicals are available in the library. The other facilities available in the library are 213 CD and eight floppies. Dial-up internet facilities, Computers and Reprographic facilities are also available. Library has a book bank facility. An advisory committee oversee's the effective functioning of the library. The Library works from 8.00 a.m. and 11.30 p.m. which is highly commendable.

There are totally 142 computers with 4 separate networks namely computer department, office, library and DTP unit. The college has plan to provide computers to every department and network all of them. Teachers of

computer science and information technology department maintain the computers and accessories.

A play ground for volley ball, kho-kho, basket ball and indoor facilities for table tennis, weight lifting and chess are the sports facilities available in the college. The incentives given to outstanding sports persons are cups / shields / blazers, merit cards and certificates. Additional academic and sports facilities are also provided. The Peer Team visited the proposed new sports complex site on 17 acres land which is about 8 kms away from the college. The college now has to initiate the execution of the master plan.

The college maintains its infrastructure through the maintenance grant received from the State Government and UGC. In addition, funds are collected and maintained in fixed deposits, and the interest is utilised for maintenance. The college has made the following efforts to keep the campus beautiful and pollution free in a participatory manner.

- Students are appointed to clean the premises under the '*Earn and learn*' Scheme.
- Students are educated and encouraged to clean the campus.

The college makes optimum use of the infrastructural facilities and adopts the shift system for the UG and PG classes, by working from 8 am to 5-45 pm. Since it is centrally located, the college encourages the use of the academic facilities and infrastructure by external agencies.

This college is recognised as a study centre for Yeshwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik, Maharashtra.

Criterion V : Student Support & Progression

The admission of the students is done as per the government and university rules. A prospectus details the admission procedure, courses offered, rules and regulations, scholarships offered and other important aspects.

The drop-out rate ranges from 21% (BA) to 35%(Science) UG programmes; and from 22% to 23% in the PG programmes. The pass percentage of the I year students (March 2002 – BA – 92.37%, BSc – 47.17%, BCom – 72.20%) was more impressive than that of the III year students (March 2002 – BA – 77.44%, BSc – 55.27%, BCom – 67.94%). The overall pass percentage for March 2002 was 93.54 (MA Geography) & 77.19 (MA Economics). On the whole, there was a dip in the pass percentage during March 2001, but improved impressively during March 2002. University rank holders from this college have been impressive in the UG and PG programmes, except in the faculty of Science.

More than 12 different scholarships are offered to the students and nearly 377 students have been beneficiaries of the scholarships during the last year. The college believes in the overall development of the students, hence the following facilities are available for the students, viz., indoor and outdoor games, nature club, debate club, different associations, students magazines, essay writing club, audio-visual facilities, cultural programmes, science quiz and group discussions. Feedback from students is collected regularly. Sports, NSS, NCC and cultural activities are aimed at developing discipline, social awareness and talents of the students. Academic and personal counselling of the students is done by the teachers when required. There is no placement cell, but the vocational guidance committee provides guidance on avenues for further studies and employment.

The alumni association was started in August 2002. Earlier the alumni had donated for the 'earn and learn' scheme. Some alumni hold prominent positions. About 69 students have passed various competitive exams during the last 5 years (GRE – 20, GATE – 2; UGC – CSIR (NET) – 1, IIM – 1 and CET for MBA – 45). The alumni has promised in the course of interaction with the Peer Team, that they are working out ways and means of helping the college in its developmental plan.

Criterion VI : Organisation and Management

The college functions as per the norms of the University, State Government and policies of the management. The college has a democratic way of functioning with the Principal, Faculty co-coordinators & Heads of Departments coordinating the internal functioning. The Local Management Committee (LMC) monitors and co-ordinates the activities of the college. The college has an in-built mechanism to check the work efficiency of the non-teaching staff. There is an internal financial audit mechanism. An academic calendar given by the University is followed by the college.

The accounts department is fully computerized. All the non-teaching staff were given computer training. The budget for various developmental activities is quite good. However, expenditure on seminars and conferences, study tours, journals, science apparatus, library books and their preservation could be integrated into the budget.

The various welfare schemes of the college are staff welfare fund, regular and emergency loan from welfare fund; LIC, medical reimbursement; and consumer durables loan through the co-operative credit society. Attempts are being made to make the Co-operative Credit Society self-sufficient.

The college deputed some of the teachers to visit famous educational institutions in Maharashtra in order to motivate them to have an insight into the current developments in higher education area.

Forty one (41) students work under the *Earn and Learn*' scheme in the boys' and ladies' hostel, cycle stand, office, construction work, cleaning of the campus and extension activities. It is worth noting that 2 students under this scheme run classes for slum dwellers on academics, health and hygiene.

Criterion VII : Healthy Practices

Besides the aided programmes, the Peer Committee appreciates the extent of transparency of administration. The evaluation of the Principal by the teaching and non-teaching staff with a structured questionnaire is worth mentioning. The college also runs two self-financing courses like BCA and BCS. Coaching classes for '*competitive examinations*' are also conducted. Value-based education is imparted through NSS, NCC, departmental associations, foundation course and guest lectures. The college arranges personality development camp, debate competitions, sports facility, cultural activities and group discussion for all-round development. The college brings in community orientation and civic responsibilities in their students through various activities of the NSS and NCC. Extra classes on Functional English are conducted for students coming from the vernacular medium. Despite the college being co-educational institution the problems of eve teasing and ragging of women students does not seem to exist.

The college has linkages with National bodies like NCL, IIT-Mumbai, North Maharashtra University, Jalgaon, Shivaji University and IUCAA; and International bodies like Pushkin Institute of Russia.

The college has a mechanism for internal quality checks and periodic assessment and monitoring of the performance of the students, teachers, Principal and college as a whole. The college is sensitized to the latest managerial concepts such as strategic planning, team-work, decision-making and computerization, through various committees and participation of teachers in the decision-making process.

The college bagged the following awards:

- Ideal Educational Institute award by the State Government – 2000.
- Best Examination Centre Award from the University.
- Best Magazine Award by the University – 2001-2002

The National / State / Regional awards received during the last 5 years are

- Shri V. B. Pawar (Major in NCC) received the *Life Time Achievement Award* from the State Defense Minister – 26th January 1995.
- Shri M. V. Bawage (Accountant) received the *National level award in the field of Social work* by the Youth and Welfare Minister, GOI.
- Shri R. L. Kavle (Principal) received an award from *Lion's Club*, Latur.
- Shri M. R. Patil (NSS Programme Officer) received the '*Best Programme Officer*' award from the University – 2002.

SECTION 3 : OVERALL ANALYSIS

Rajarshi Shahu College, though in a semi-urban area, and only 32 years old, has evolved to be an institution to reckon with, in the Marathwada region. This is demonstrated by the awards received by the college and the teachers. This is mainly due to the able guidance of the Management, without interference in the day-to-day administration of the college. Like the

Management, the visionary Principals also ensured quality in the college by appointments of teaching and non-teaching staff purely on merit. The progressive thinking of these trail blazers have also enlightened the teachers that the teachers are for the students. The survival of the teachers is dependent on the progress of the students. Hence, the teachers have realized that it is in their interests that they work hard for the student community. This could explain, why, at a time when other colleges in the Marathwada region face shortage of students, this college has more than it can accommodate.

Recognition of teachers, non-teaching staff and students is the main thrust of the Management and college authorities. Several awards are instituted in this regard, such as (i) Shahu Shree award for student (ii) Shahu Ratna and Shahu Bhushan award for employees and (iii) Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar for Senior Management Members. These act as incentives to draw the best out of all the stake-holders.

Yet another appreciable feature is the emphasis on simplicity, unity and value based education. This is manifested by the adoption of uniform worn by all students as a symbol of unity and simplicity. Similarly, the extension work done by the college needs to be commended. To mention an important one is the college being a nerve center of the *Maharashtra Andhashraddha Nirmulan Samiti*, (NGO), a people's movement for the creation of exploitation- free society opposed to mental slavery, wherein, scientific temper rather than religion is the main aspect. People's participation is the crux of this movement and it is not funded by the Government/ Semi-Government / Foreign agencies. The social obligation of the Sanstha and college is also demonstrated here.

The manner in which the college is able to generate funds for various purposes is also appreciated. The support given to poor students especially through the 'earn and learn' scheme and the free boys' hostel is also appreciated.

All this and much more has resulted in the rapid growth of the college, with an impressive student strength of more than 2000, 77 teachers, and 21 academic departments. However, the college needs to diversify its courses, bringing in more application-oriented ones into its fold, taking care that they are geo-cultural in nature. For this the Peer Team suggests that the college applies for autonomy to benefit from the academic freedom it will get. This will also enable the college to pursue more research & consultancy work. It will also help the college generate more funds and to commence certificate, diploma and advanced diploma courses. The expertise of the teachers could also be better utilized. The college should also increase the number of publications by the teachers.

COMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Peer Team also wishes to offer the following suggestions for further growth and development of the institution.

- ◆ Separate research committee may be constituted to plan, coordinate and monitor research activities of the institution as a whole.
- ◆ Establishment of Health Centre.
- ◆ A canteen may be provided.
- ◆ Student cooperative store is needed.
- ◆ Water purifier may be provided for drinking water arrangement.
- ◆ Recruitment of Women teaching and non-teaching staff, to be taken up on priority basis.

- ◆ Up grading the U.G. department into P.G. and research department can be examined, since some of the departments have potential for upward growth.
- ◆ A placement cell may be created.
- ◆ It is recommended to have women members in the Management Committee to maintain the gender balance.
- ◆ Yoga, Karate, Gymnasium centres may be developed on priority basis.
- ◆ Guidance and Counselling centre may be created.
- ◆ Spoken English Course may be conducted for all.
- ◆ A staff member may be identified as coordinator to tap funds from various funding agencies like UGC, CSIR, DBT, DST etc.
- ◆ Management should interact more frequently with alumni and include some alumni in the management committee.

It is noteworthy to mention here that this college is the only college in S. R. T. Marathwada University, Nanded offering Russian as a second language with 117 students on its roll and more than 50%, University merit holders are from this college, among 115 affiliated colleges. The college not only inculcates knowledge but also stresses on the personality development of the students and thus strives to reach their motto '**Pursuit of excellence**'. The system adopted by the college is recognised as a role model by the community and State Govt. and has come to be known popularly as **Shahu Pattern / Latur Pattern**.

The Peer Team would like to acknowledge the sincere efforts put forth by the college to keep the Lamp of Knowledge constantly burning and to hold aloft the Light of Creative Wisdom and Culture. No wonder, the fragrance of its

fame has been spreading in all directions in the region. May it spread still further. The effort of the Management, Principal, Teaching and Non-teaching staff is appreciated. The students who are beneficiaries are also to be complimented.

Prof. Y.Sarswathy Rao (Chairperson) Sd/-

Prof.B.Sampathkumar (Member) Sd/-

Prof.Christy Bennett (Member) Sd/-

Sd/-

Prof. R. L. Kavle

Principal

Date : 18th January, 2003

Place : Latur

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