

Report of the Peer Team on
Institutional Accreditation of
PAVANATMA COLLEGE,
Murickassery, Idukki District, Kerala

1. PREAMBLE:

Pavanatma College, Murickassery volunteered to be assessed by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council, Bangalore and submitted the preliminary Self-study report in April, 1999. NAAC constituted a peer team to visit the college and validate the Self-study report. The team members comprised of Dr. M. Madaiah, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Mysore (Chairman), Dr. C. Thangamuthu, Professor and Head of the Department of Economics, Bharathidasan University, Trichy, Tamil Nadu (member). The Peer team visited the college on 28th and 29th of October, 1999. Dr. Latha Pillai, Deputy Advisor, NAAC and Dr. M.S. Shyamasundar, Assistant Advisor, NAAC ably co-ordinated the work of the peer team throughout the visit to this institution of higher learning.

Pavanatma College was established in October 1982 as a pre-degree college and elevated as degree college in 1991. It is affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. It is located in a remote village in Vathikkudy Panchayat of Udumbanchola Taluk in the backward district of Idukki. It is a minority institution managed by the Corporate Educational Agency of the Catholic Diocese of Kothamangalam. The college is catering to the needs of economically and socially weaker sections of the society, especially the first generation of learners in the high ranges of Idukki district. This high hilly ranges comprises of mainly small farmers who are relatively poor, few literates and most of the people living in this region belong to backward classes, scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The institution aims at imparting quality education and allround development of the individual. The college is recognised by the University Grants Commission under 2(f) and 12(b) of the UGC Act of 1956.

Pavanatma College has a serene and vast campus of 35 acres with impressive infrastructure. The college offers 3 Under Graduate Courses viz, B.Com, B.Sc. (Chemistry), B.Sc. (Mathematics-vocational) and one Post Graduate course, M.Com (finance stream). It is a coeducational institution and falls in the financial category of grants – in – aid colleges. The college has a well qualified teaching faculty of 38 including 12 M.Phil degree holders and one with Doctorate degree. There are 32 members in the non-teaching staff including 9 technical staff. The college has an undergraduate student population of 286 and a post graduate student strength of 33. The college has earned a good reputation in the surrounding area through its dedicated service with social commitment to the people around, providing quality education to students.

The Peer team meticulously analysed the Self-Study Report submitted by the college. During the two- day visit to the institution, the team went through all the pertinent documents, visited the departments and facilities – academic, physical and sports. The peer team interacted with the Governing Body, Principal, Faculty, Non-teaching staff, Representatives of Students, Parents and Alumni of the College. Based on the above exercise, the peer team has given its objective assessment in ensuing pages keeping in mind the seven criteria identified by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council.

2. CRITERION-WISE ANALYSIS

Criterion I: Curricular Aspects

As an affiliated college of Mahatma Gandhi University, Pavanatma College follows the curriculum and regulations of the university. The syllabi incorporates multi-disciplinary components and a certain amount of flexibility. The college offers three undergraduate programmes leading to B.Sc (Chemistry), B.Sc. (Mathematics with computer application), B.Com. and one programme leading masters degree in commerce with specialisation in financial management. These courses are offered by the institution keeping in view the interest of the younger generation in higher learning in terms of job opportunities and socio-

economic education changes that are taking place in the country. Value education finds a deserving importance in the academic programme of this institution. This emphasis is inline with the thinking of the UGC and the Planning commission. The college has also well-designed extra-curricular programmes and activities for the all-round development of the students. Project work is part of the M.Com programme. Internal assessment is being introduced from the academic year 1998-99 and continuous evaluation is there through periodical tests, seminars, practicals, field work, project work etc. The curriculum design and transaction focuses on quality teaching as well as the development of multifaceted personality of younger students. The students have enough options available to them in the academic basket at this institution of higher learning for shaping their career. The implementation of the new curriculum (with internal assessment) at different levels has already made a great impact on teaching and the overall development of the student community of this college.

However, the college needs to explore the scope of introducing more new and relevant courses in Science, Information Technology, Social Sciences and Management Sciences for the benefit of students with high degree of flexibility.

Criterion II: Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

The academic programme of Pavanatma college is carried out under annual/semester system. There are adequate, well qualified and experienced teachers in the college. Most of the teachers have undergone orientation / refresher courses. The institution has maintained its good reputation in carrying out the basic ingredients of teaching, learning and evaluation process in a successful manner. Teachers are very enthusiastic and dedicated and the deep rooted work culture is an added feature of this relatively new college of higher learning. These traits are very essential in moulding the career of students. Students' academic performance is being tested periodically through internal assessments and final examinations. Teaching aids are also used to a certain extent to make teaching-learning more effective. Individual attention is given by teachers for the development of students in their academic performance through tutorial system. The college offers bridge / remedial courses outside the class hours for the benefit of slow learners. The results of periodical assessment of students

are informed to the parents regularly. The peer team noticed a commendable performance of the students in the university examinations. Interaction with the representatives of the college reveals that the students are very happy with the teaching and evaluation.

However, the mechanism to get feedback from the students for the improvement in teaching-learning process needs to be streamlined. Library and computer facilities need to be strengthened in the college to cater to the growing need of students and teachers. Access to more and up to date information will go a long way in providing a competitive edge to students which is essential in this rapidly changing society.

Criterion III: Research, Consultancy and Extension:

Given the background of limited course options available (just 3 UG and one PG), the research and consultancy potentials of the faculty are naturally constrained. The PG project work provide some scope for field exposure and research training. At the faculty level one teacher has submitted a research project to UGC. About one sixth of the faculty members are doing Ph.D. A good number of teachers are NET qualified. Though the college has been quite recently recognised under UGC 2 (f) and 12 (b) (in 1997), the Faculty Development Programme facility has been availed. The college may provide all encouragement to the faculty members to pursue for research degree, undertake sponsored research projects (minor projects to start with) and also publish research papers. At present, the commerce department has potentials to emerge as a research department.

The involvement of students in various co-curricular and extra-curricular extension activities under the guidance of faculty members is quite evident. The extension programmes include career guidance, NSS, NCC, debate club, women's cell, arts club, nature club, counselling cell and others. NSS deserves appreciation for having availed considerable assistance (Rs.90000) from the Idukki District Panchayat for raising a coconut nursery in the college campus.

Besides curricular activities, the college is showing keen interest in the extension activities to enrich the learning experience of students. The three units of NSS and NCC unit of the college are quite active and have brought many laurels. One of the members of non-teaching staff has been actively involved in educative programmes such as eradication of alcoholism, drug abuses and other social evils which is highly commendable and needs further encouragement.

P.G. students are involved in Project -Work. Introduction of seminars at U.G. level is a welcome sign for the future development of research aptitude. The consultancy services extended by Chemistry and Zoology Departments in a moderate way is noteworthy. The management may extend all co-operation to improve it and make it a full fledged consultancy unit.

Criterion IV: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

The college located in a sprawling land area of 35 acres has wide scope for expansion. There are sufficient number of spacious class rooms. The laboratories are adequate. The buildings are well maintained with a good garden aesthetically developed. As the pre-degree classes are phased out, some class rooms would become vacant. The management may think of using them productively by offering a few more courses with job – orientation. Some short-term vocational courses leading to certificate / diploma at the college level may be thought of. Such skill-oriented short-term programmes would empower the tribal poor in the neighbourhood.

The library has 6287 volumes and about 20 journals. For the limited number of programmes currently offered, the library facility is perhaps adequate. There is a library committee. The annual library budget, however, may have to be enhanced on a regular basis. There is open access facility for the PG students. The library may be added with reprographic facility.

The computer centre known as Pavanatma Computer Academy with 5 terminals caters mainly to the Mathematics Department for offering the subsidiary paper on Computer Science. The computer centre needs to be expanded with internet facility and additional terminals so that all the faculty members and students may gain some working knowledge. The computer academy may also think of offering short-term certificate / diploma programmes for the benefit of college students and also the outside community.

The sports infrastructure with play grounds for various games and a small gymnasium and indoor game facility, may have to be expanded and improved further.

There is no hostel facility in the college. Some 100 girl students are staying in the hostels in the neighbourhood. As a good number of students trek the distance on a difficult terrain, the college may establish a hostel for the benefit of long distance students.

The faculty members and some non-teaching staff have been provided with single occupancy staff quarters. A good number of them reside in the staff quarters. The Principal and Bursar are also staying in the college premises itself. These things lend a residential atmosphere for the faculty and the staff enabling them to devote more time and attention to the college activities. Building of family quarters in the campus for the faculty may reduce the present tendency among them of seeking transfer to the two colleges run by the management located on the plains.

Criterion V: Student Support and Progression

The student support programmes include scholarships and educational concessions from the Government as well as some private philanthropic agencies such as Spices Board, Muslim and Nadar Societies. The facilities for extra-curricular activities such as sports, arts and culture, social work help the development of the total personality of the students.

In all the departments, they maintain a comprehensive student register tracing the academic progression of every student right from his entry to college till he passes out. This is a sound method of monitoring the progress of the students.

The progression of students to higher studies / employment is not assessed through any formal mechanism. A large number of the PG students are from their own college UG students. May be for this infant college, it is too early to speak of the old students in distinguished positions. But there are evidences of their bright students who passed out recently pursuing their professional courses such as CA and others.

Though there is a strong and well motivated Parent Teacher Association contributing the development of the college, the alumni which has just started may be strengthened for getting the feed-back and linkages with the old students and also for monitoring student progression in various walks of life.

Criterion VI: Organisation and Management

The college is financially sound as evidenced by the surplus budgets. The main source of income for the college, besides the contributions from PTA and others, is the large pepper plantations cultivated in the college lands of about 35 acres. Most of the income accruing from this and other sources are ploughed back for the development of this college. The management deserves all appreciation for this.

The management, being a corporate one running two other colleges on the plains, has the general practice of posting the fresh and young faculty to this high range college and then, after some years of experience, accommodate them at the low range colleges. Thus, there is a sort of tendency among some of the teachers to be constantly looking for the earliest opportunity to get transferred to the colleges on the plains. This is likely to affect the continuity and academic stability of the campus. Some long-term steps may have to be explored by the management for facilitating and motivating the teachers in this high range college to "settle down" and thereby pave the way for promoting long-term identity with the institution.

The faculty-parent-student relationship is quite good. Every one appreciates the commitment of the management for providing a rare opportunity for higher education in this remote area. The teachers evidently take extra interest in the student performance in the studies and this is reciprocated with a fine gesture of appreciation from the students and parents. There is a strong sense of participation among the faculty/students/parents. The management should be fortunate to enjoy such a wonderful campus atmosphere, almost free from grumbling, leave alone a day's strike so far, notwithstanding some facility constraints in the campus. The management, in due recognition and appreciation of the highly motivated college community, may have to improve several infrastructural facilities (computerisation of the office, departments and library and improvement of sports infrastructure, hostels and family quarters etc.).

The management has plans for starting new programmes of study. As, not many grant-in-aid courses are likely to be sanctioned by the authorities, it is worth exploring the possibilities of offering job oriented short-term courses on the pattern of a "community" college. And this may go a long way in helping manpower development, relevant to the local economy and society.

Criterion VII: Healthy Practices

There are some healthy practices which deserve special mention.

- a campus absolutely free from student unrest and not a single working day lost on account of any strike; though there is a College Student Union, the state wide political vitiation of college campuses, is virtually absent in this remote high range campus;
- right from the inception of the college, regular paper on value education, with class-specific syllabi / examinations and encouragement in the form of classwise proficiency awards;
- the participation of the local community in the development of the college include some 'shramadhan' (physical labour) in construction activities, lending some "emotional" identity with the institution;

- despite difficult and long terrains to be trekked on a daily basis by a good number of students, there is a highly motivated perseverance by them, particularly from the local tribals and first generation learners;
- a virtual absence of 'parallel college culture' quite ubiquitous in the state; remedial classes by the teachers but as the part of their continued and any-time willingness to guide and coach their wards, outside the regular classes.
- Ploughing-back of the revenues accruing from the college plantations; an assured and almost self-sustaining resource-base for the college.
- a voluntary welfare fund for the non-teaching staff established through regular contributions by the staff themselves; members given interest free loans and other assistance during times of emergency.

3. OVERALL ANALYSIS

The peer team, after going through the Self-Study Report and after its two-day visit to various academic and infrastructure facilities is very much impressed by the remarkable progress of Pavanatma College in transacting its vision and goals of advancement of the frontiers of knowledge in the field of higher education. The college has earned a high reputation for imparting quality education to the younger generation in the backward high range region of Idukki district in all the 17 years of its existence. The college has been very lucky to have successive dynamic principals for its unbridled advancement. Teachers shoulder the responsibility of providing appropriate teaching-learning experiences to learners. The evaluation methodology adapted for internal assessment is adequate and is appreciated by students as it is transparent. Infrastructure available in the college needs to be strengthened. The peer team is of the opinion that there is need for hostel facilities on the campus and for construction of staff quarters which would facilitate academic stability and growth.

There is transparency in the organisation and management of the institution. There are quite a large number of scholarships and other financial aids available to cater to the needs of students. Another welcome feature is the discipline of students found on the campus. One can also discern an atmosphere of learning.

Pavanatma college has been rendering yeoman service in the area of higher education since its inception in 1982 in this remote region of Idukki district. Its achievements are remarkable and potentialities are great. It has established a good reputation among its students and the community. The peer team envisages a bright future for this young institution for the cause of higher education in the coming new millennium.

Name and signature for the peer team members

1. Name of the Chairman : **Prof. M. Madaiah**

Signature

M. Madaiah
29.10.99

2. Name of member 1 : **Dr. C. Thangamuthu**

Signature

C. Thangamuthu
29/10/99

I agree with the observations and recommendations made by the peer team in this report.

John
Prof M. J. John

Name & Signature of the Head of the Institution