

# REPORT OF THE PEER TEAM ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION OF MARIS STELLA COLLEGE VIJAYAWADA, ANDHRA PRADESH

## SECTION 1: PREAMBLE

Maris Stella College of Vijayawada, in the district of Krishna of Andhra Pradesh, was established in 1962 by the Institute of the Franciscan Sisters of Mary, an international Catholic Christian Organization, to provide higher education for women in a 'Christian atmosphere'. It is recognised as a religious minority college. It is mainly an undergraduate college for women but has two departments with post-graduate courses. It is affiliated to Nagarjuna University and is at a distance of about 16 kilometers from the university campus. The college is recognised by University Grants Commission under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act, from 16<sup>th</sup> July 1962, the very date of its establishment. It has submitted an application for autonomy, which awaits acceptance by Nagarjuna University.

In 1996, the Principal of Maris Stella College, Vijayawada, along with the Correspondent of the college attended a three-day workshop organised by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council at Bangalore, which motivated them to seek accreditation from NAAC. The college submitted the Self-Study Report (SSR) to NAAC in March 1999. The Peer Team formed by NAAC to visit Maris Stella College, Vijayawada, consisted of Dr. P.K.Chaudhuri, Member-Secretary, West Bengal State Council of Higher Education, as Chairman, and Dr. K.Patnaik, Retd. Professor of Physics, Utkal University and Dr. Sarala Krishnamurthy, Reader in English, Bangalore University as members. Dr. Antony Stella, Deputy Adviser, NAAC, and Dr. M.Shyamasundar, Assistant Adviser, NAAC assisted the peer team in carrying out the assessment. The visit lasted three days, from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> September, 1999, during which the peer team visited the academic and administrative building of the college, the library, auditorium, hostel, staff quarters, sports facilities and the campus in general. The team met members of the Governing Body, the Principal, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and their parents and a group

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of ex-students of the college. Feedback and suggestions from all these groups were obtained and recorded by the peer team.

Maris Stella College has Arts, Science and Commerce streams for undergraduate study and a total of eighteen departments, including two post-graduate departments, a Department of Social Work and a department devoted solely to imparting value education. In addition, the students can have the benefit of a number of enrichment courses run by the college. The college makes the best possible use of its infrastructure by advancing the college hours so that the afternoons can be utilised for running enrichment courses.

The enrolment is nearly one thousand one hundred in the undergraduate and seventy in the post-graduate sections. The medium of instruction is English in the post-graduate classes and both English and Telugu in the undergraduate. Most of the students are from Andhra Pradesh. About a tenth are from other states and overseas, among whom there are some girls from Tibetan refugee families. About 20% of the students are accommodated in the hostels. There are various scholarships and stipends available and more than 60% of the students receive some or other kind of financial assistance.

The college has a beautiful and well laid out campus by the National Highway No.5 with plenty of open space and ample greenery. The buildings and the gardens are carefully maintained. The premises, especially the canteen and the hostel are kept clean with meticulous care. The college allows other organizations to use its facilities for holding conferences, competitive examinations etc. at a nominal charge.

The college offers facilities for various sports and recreational activities. There is a sports culture among the students, some of whom reach a high level of achievement, winning national awards.

A striking feature of the college is its activities in social and extension work. Through various programmes like medical and blood donation camps, awareness programmes on environment, AIDS, health and hygiene and imparting training for self-employment, the students and teachers reach out into the world surrounding the college and try to do their best in improving the life of the people.

*M. Ghansini*

The college administration is efficient and sensitive to the needs of students and teachers. Suggestions from students and teachers receive serious consideration. The management makes ample provision in the budget for student support and maintenance of infrastructure. There is a good balance between planned growth and consolidation. The college enjoys a high status among the colleges in Vijayawada and one would not be wrong to expect that the college will have a glorious future.

## SECTION 2: CRITERION-WISE ANALYSIS

### Criterion I: Curricular Aspects

Maris Stella College, affiliated to Nagarjuna University, has been purely an undergraduate college till 1992, when it started some post-graduate courses. It was established in order to create an opportunity of higher education for women in the district of Krishna and is the first women's college to be established there. Its aim has been to produce women who would prove themselves to be intelligent, responsible and truly educated citizens of India. It has at present eleven programme options in B.A., B.Sc., and B.Com. Apart from the core subjects of English, Indian Heritage and Culture, Science and Civilization, and a second language which can be Telugu, Sanskrit or Hindi, there are five subject combinations offered in B.A., four in B.Sc., and two in B.Com. The vocational subjects of Tourism & Travel Management and Tax Procedures & Practices are among the subjects offered to arts and commerce students respectively. The B.Sc. students can opt for any one of the self-financed subjects of Computer Science and Electronics, which have been introduced since 1990.

The college runs post-graduate courses in English and Economics, also on self-financing basis. In a similar manner, the college has introduced a Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA) programme from this year (1999). All the above programmes are run on a yearly time-frame (not the semester/trimester system) as prevalent under the Nagarjuna University system. In addition, the college offers enrichment courses in Spoken English, Music etc. for the benefit of its own students as well as for others.

As an affiliated college, Maris Stella College has to function within its limitations. It has submitted an application seeking autonomous status, which is under consideration by Nagarjuna University. But within its bounds, the college does make an attempt to update and improve its courses by sending suggestions to the University. It has succeeded in

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introducing two vocational subjects with UGC assistance, the need-based subjects of Computer Science and Electronics, two post-graduate courses and the BCA programme by raising resources and without external aid, collecting enough fees from the students. It is planning to introduce a new B.Com. (Computers) course as a similar self-financing course. Thus, the college has to a large extent, been able to make progress inspite of the constraints inherent in the system of affiliation. However, quite understandably, the college cannot make any changes in the academic time-frame, introduce a modular structure of curricula and offer flexibility in the choice of subjects or modules. Nor can it formulate interdisciplinary courses of study at the undergraduate or post-graduate degree level.

The college has been careful in choosing subjects and courses with a career orientation. There have been instances when topics have been discontinued by the University due to loss of their relevance in relation to career options. It has not, however, strayed away from its goal of inculcating a sense of social responsibility in its students. It has made Value Education a compulsory subject for all students and has been offering Social Work not only as a subject in its theory and description but as an aspect of education to be practised in real life.

Teachers of the college participate regularly in educational conferences, refresher courses, meetings of Boards of Studies of other colleges and have opportunity of interacting with academic peers. They also have contact with employers in certain fields, as a result of their efforts to organise hands-on-training of students of vocational subjects. The college receives feedback information regarding their courses of study through these interactions in an informal manner.

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

Maris Stella College, as an institution established by Religious Minorities, gives preference to Christian students in admission. It observes the quota as stipulated by the State Government. The remaining seats are filled on the basis of percentage of marks obtained in public examinations. There is no admission test. Assessments are conducted after admission but there is no system of rejection of students on the basis of these tests. There are provisions of remedial coaching for academically weaker students. On the other hand, the advanced learners are encouraged to maintain and improve academic standards with proficiency prizes and certificates. They are also motivated to participate in different competitions and are called upon to help the academically weak class mates.

*M. Ghantoni*

The teachers have a workload of 18-20 periods a week. They draw up monthwise teaching schedules and the progress of teaching is monitored at monthly review meetings. The Principal ensures completion of the syllabuses with extra classes if necessary and sends the completion report to Government authorities. There are very few part-time teachers and most of the classes are taken by full-timers. In addition to the conventional method of teaching, the college uses seminars and group discussions by students to assist the learning process. It has overhead projectors, video cassettes and other teaching aids like maps and charts to be used by teachers. The teachers and some students also prepare some teaching aids like charts and models. There is however no workshop in the college to assist teachers in such activity.

The number of teaching days is adequate for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years of undergraduate degree courses but falls short of the requirement of 180 days in the first year since the admission process takes up some of the time.

Evaluation of the students is almost a continuous process. Apart from the annual term-end examination, there are monthly tests and short answer tests conducted during normal classes to ensure regularity of study by the students.

Teachers are recruited by the college by notifying the employment exchange and advertising in newspapers, the selection committee being formed by the Governing Body. However, the college prefers candidates who have been their own students as is apparent from the fact that five of the six teachers recently recruited are from this college. The college has the liberty of appointing temporary teachers, as per norms who are paid from the college funds. Teachers of all self-financing courses belong to this category. Some of the regular permanent teachers get UGC scales of pay and the new (1996) scales of pay are going to be implemented for them. The others, however, are on the State Government scales of pay. There is thus a disparity in the salaries drawn by teachers within the same institution. The teachers often attend refresher courses, seminars and conferences and have constant contact with the academic world outside the institution. The college itself has conducted a large number of seminars and workshops on various topics. There is a system of annual appraisal of the academic activity as well as self-appraisal of the individual teachers. Students' feedback has been obtained on the teaching and other aspects of the functioning of the college. More than 95% of the students have

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described the teaching as either 'good' or 'excellent'. Some faculty members have received teaching awards and cash prizes as incentives.

The college has ample scope of establishing linkages with academic institutions both within and outside the country, since a large number of such institutions are run by the parent Christian Society. However, no such effective linkage has yet been established.

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

The peer team noted that the college has encouraged its faculty to take up research. There are fifteen members of the staff with research qualifications and another thirty are involved in part-time research activities. Many teachers are engaged in guiding and participating in project-work at the undergraduate level in the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (J.P.I.C. ) scheme. The projects that are taken up are focussed, need-based and relevant to the subjects which are taught at the undergraduate level. Thus the students are given research orientation at this level. One of the members of the staff has contributed several articles to journals and has recently published a book.

The college shows evidence of offering consultancy at the local and state level. However, the peer team felt that because of its prestige and location, the college could undertake consultancy services in commercial and other sectors. These linkages will be of mutual benefit and students will stand to gain from such exposure.

The extension activities of the college include AIDS awareness camps, health camps, literacy programmes for slum children and school drop-outs, and various other programmes under the J.P.I.C. scheme. The students of this college have participated in the Janmabhoomi programmes initiated by the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. The college has taken up a training project in tailoring for unemployed women from lower income groups in and around Vijayawada. A full-time staff member co-ordinates extension services of the college. Several resource persons are invited to motivate and enlist students for these activities. In order to generate funds to conduct extension activities, benefit shows have been organized by the college.

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

The college has about twenty acres of land with an aesthetically planned landscape, buildings and play grounds. The college has added to the existing infrastructure by

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building the P.G. block, the administrative building, the canteen and the library building. Infrastructure of the college is put to maximum use by adjusting the timings of the regular courses. The college works from 8.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. and in the afternoon the class rooms are used for enrichment and remedial courses. The class rooms and the auditorium are also put to use for conducting examinations like Banking exams etc. There is a public address system and intercom for effective communication. Also, there is an open air stage with a seating capacity of six thousand and above. The library is housed in an independent building and has two large reading rooms. The college has also established inter-library links with British Library, Hyderabad and United States Information Services, Chennai from where they are able to get books, as well as audio and video cassettes for use in the class room. The library also has reprography facilities. The college has excellent facilities with basketball courts, a large play ground and tennis court for sports. A Physical Directress has been appointed for the sole purpose of overseeing the sports activities in the college. The college has produced several champions in sports and games, particularly in athletic events, basketball and handball. Students from the college have participated in national and international level sports. The college encourages sports through incentives offered to sports persons.

The college has a central computer facility equipped with twenty-five computers. A linkage with NIIT has been established to enable students from the college to take up NIIT course at a subsidised rate. There is a botanical garden in which are grown nearly 500 different species of plants such as medicinal plants, ornamental plants and others.

The hostel building is a huge complex in which nearly four hundred students from different streams can be accommodated. The hostel students have a T.V. room and a large auditorium to conduct their own activity. The mess, kitchen and canteen are well equipped and neat. There are two solar heaters which supply hot water to the kitchens. There is a cattle shed. There is an infirmary and sick room attached to the hostel with a doctor on call. For any serious ailments, the students are taken to St. Ann's hospital nearby.

While the peer team felt that the infrastructure and the learning resources of the college were good, it is necessary for the college to have an instrumentation centre and workshop to meet the growing needs of students in the present day scenario. Internet facility may be provided at the Computer centre and other places so as to give the staff and students easy access for internet browsing.

*Jh. Ghansini*

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

The institution has nurtured an atmosphere which is conducive to intellectual growth and all round development of its students. The students of this college have been awarded several University ranks over the years. They are encouraged to participate in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities conducted by the college such as teachers' day, freshers day, inter collegiate competitions and others.

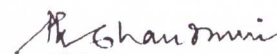
In the field of sports, the college has won a number of trophies and prizes in the inter-university sports competitions, regional, national and international competitions such as athletics, basketball, handball etc. Sports persons are given several incentives such as fee waiver, tracksuit, free meals with special diet and others.

There is a student feedback mechanism instituted by the college which helps in sorting out not only their academic problems, but also their grievances. The college has been successful in obtaining a number of scholarships awarded by the government, welfare department and other agencies. Nearly seven hundred students benefit from these scholarships. The Alumni Association plays an active role in student progression by providing to charities and book bank maintained by the college.

The National Cadet Corps and the National Service Scheme in the college need a special mention because of their achievements. The NCC cadets of the college have been selected to participate in the Republic Day Celebration. Further, two cadets have also been awarded Duke of Edinburgh gold medal for Andhra Pradesh. There is an NCC officer of the rank of second lieutenant who represents the district in the camps. Some of the students of the college have achieved distinction and are highly placed in society. The alumnae of the college consists of civil servants, commercial pilots, doctors, educators and other professionals. However, the college needs to maintain records of its student's profile and progression. Also, the college could start a formal placement service after developing appropriate linkages with industries.

### **Criterion VI: Organisation & Management**

The college is managed by a Governing Body(GB) consisting of twelve members with the Correspondent as the chairperson. The Principal is the ex-officio Secretary and two of the teachers are elected as their representatives. The responsibility of appointment of teachers and other employees, launching new programmes, developmental activities etc,





is vested with the G.B. The peer team has gone through the proceedings of the G.B. from 19<sup>th</sup> September 1987 till date. Selection Committee for teachers consisting of the Correspondent, Principal, Vice-Principal, concerned HOD and one subject expert recommends the panel of names in order of merit to the G.B. for approval. Various committees are formed to look after the curricular and co-curricular activities, games and sports, discipline etc. by the staff council consisting of teachers along with the Principal in the beginning of the academic session.

The college, in keeping with its objective of imparting higher education to women students has instituted a good number of scholarships and other forms of financial assistances for deserving and needy students by raising funds from government's grant, through management/Alumni Association. Employees including those serving in the hostel are beneficiaries of college welfare funds and bank loans on the recommendation of the college. Since it is a private aided institution, the audit is carried out regularly by the concerned department of the State Government. However, the funds generated through self-financing programmes are audited by Chartered Accountants. The financial status as observed from the budget is very satisfactory and there is surplus amount which is kept as fixed deposits.

The college has already started BCA programme from the current academic session and proposes to start B.Com. programme with Computer education from the next session under the self financing scheme. Grievance redressal, if required at all, is presently carried out through amicable settlement with the help and co-operation of staff and students. Difficult situations are referred to G.B. for final decision. It is hoped that a formal democratically constituted body will be formed soon to discharge this responsibility.

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

The college has already introduced self-financing courses at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels. It has also introduced need-based courses under the vocational stream prescribed and funded by the UGC. The college is a member of the All India Association of Christian Education (AIACHE) through which it participates in national and international conventions/seminars on different problems of higher education.

Being a minority (Catholic) institution it has established some healthy practices beyond the curricular frame work prescribed by the University. The college has introduced a

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compulsory course on value education of one hour duration per week for all students irrespective of their faiths. This course covers self awareness, personality development, duties towards God, family, neighbour, self, country, society etc. This will help the students to develop their personalities as a whole human being with a spirit of dedication to duty and as a free citizen. Secondly, it has started some activities under Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). Around two hundred students and thirty staff members have already enrolled voluntarily in this scheme. They have taken up several issues such as Women Empowerment, Female Leadership, Promotion of Clean Environment, Self-help, helping street children and domestic workers, prevention of school dropouts etc with the assistance of the Municipal Corporation, Church of Vijayawada and some NGOs.

A teacher was honoured with the Best Teacher Award in 1996 by Andhra Pradesh Government from among all the lecturers of colleges and universities.

### SECTION 3: OVERALL ANALYSIS

The peer team has gone through the self-study report and visited the college with all its facilities and interacted with all the departments and authorities. After this exercise, the peer team is in a position to make the following observations regarding Maris Stella College:

1. The college is doing valuable work in imparting quality education to women students not only of Andhra Pradesh but also of other parts of the country. There is ample evidence that the college has been empowering its students to reach high standards of achievement in various walks of life.
2. The college conducts value education classes for all students. A large number of students and staff participate in the 'Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation' programme. There is a subject of 'Social Work' and extensive NSS activities undertaken by the students. Through all these, the college is achieving its goal of promoting a sense of social responsibility as envisaged in their mission statement.
3. Within the constraints of an affiliated institution, the college has been able to introduce two vocational subjects and several need-based courses at the undergraduate level for the benefit of its students. Further, the college has diversified into higher level programmes like the post-graduate courses in English Literature and Economics.



4. There is a striking harmony between the management and the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and a high level of confidence reposed on each other. A sense of dedication is apparent among all sections of staff which has a remarkable effect on the overall atmosphere of the college and its reputation . The staff and students participate in decision making on matters of their concern.
5. The college has an impressive campus. It is spacious and bears the signature of meticulous care by the college authorities.
6. Students of the college excel in both curricular and co-curricular activities. They bring honour to their institution by securing several ranks in the university examinations and at the same time win laurels due to their NCC and sports activities.
7. The college has submitted a proposal for grant of autonomy, for which they have attained the desired level of maturity. They should be allowed to function as an autonomous institution so that they can fulfil their aspirations.

While the peer team is appreciative of all the good work done by the college it would like to make some suggestions for its further development. These are:

1. The college has the potential of offering consultancy services and carrying out research in different disciplines as well as developing a pedagogy which has to be utilised to a greater extent.
2. The college should have an instrumentation centre cum workshop, especially in view of the needs of the existing Physics and Electronics departments.
3. All students may be given access, at least to a limited extent, to the computer facilities offered by the college. There should be an internet connection for the use of staff and the students of the college. This will enhance the library facilities and also provide an inexpensive method of communication through the E-mail.
4. Some placement facility should be provided for the benefit of the students.
5. There should be formal mechanism of grievance redressal with representation of all sections of staff and students.
6. Some senior teachers may be invited as guest faculty specifically for the post graduate courses.
7. There should be compulsory physical activity for all students such as yoga, gymnastics and other games.
8. The college can arrange academic and cultural exchange programmes with educational institutions in other states.
9. The library hours to be extended and library to be kept open on public holidays.

*M. Ghoshmi*

The peer team has appreciated both the limitations and future prospects of this institution. It hopes that the college will be able to overcome the limitations and establish itself as a centre of excellence in the field of higher education in the state and perhaps in the country.

**Name and signature of the peer team members**

1. Name of the Chairperson: PRATIP KUMAR CHAUDHURI

Signature: *Pratip Chaudhuri*  
4.9.99.

2. Name of Member 1:

*K. Pataudi*  
Signature: 4.9.99

3. Name of Member 2: SARALA KRISHNAMURTHY

Signature: *Sarala Krishnamurthy*  
04/09/99

*I have gone through the report and I agree with the observations made in this report.*

*Dr. Suddha Prasad*  
PRINCIPAL  
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04/09/99