



## **CRITERION VII INSTITUTIONAL VALUES AND BEST PRACTICES**

### **7.3 - Institutional Distinctiveness**

#### **7.3.1 - Highlight the performance of the institution in an area distinct to its priority and thrust**

##### **7.3.1 Highlight the performance of the institution in an area distinct to its priority and Institutional Distinctiveness**

The College of Social Work has significantly contributed to social work through its academic, fieldwork and extension programmes since its inception. The College has made rapid strides in the field of Social Work education and is adjudged as one of the best colleges of Social Work in the country. The College participated in the NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework). The College was the recipient of Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) to achieve the aims of equity, access and excellence

The College has pursued research on key social work issues through sponsored research projects and promoting collaborative linkages with various social work organisations for Fieldwork, Internship, Research, Networking and Advocacy, Training and Field Action Projects

Imparting knowledge and skills and demonstrating the right attitudes to the students on human and professional social work and ethical practices and principles, responsibilities and norms that need to be followed in personal life and professional career and to act as a responsible global citizen by contributing to the society and human well-being has been the focus of its academic programme.

The College has a well-stated motto, vision, mission, and objective reflected in all its endeavours. The College ensures that it provides safe spaces and opportunities for learning to students from the most marginalised backgrounds through its proactive measures and welfare schemes: Preadmission counselling, affordable fees for the educational programmes offered at the College, Equal Opportunity Cell engagement for supporting students, schemes such as midday meals, laptop banks, interest-free loans, study classes, remedial classes, and proactive policies, travel reimbursement, counselling services.

Responding to disasters has been an important area of engagement for the College. This year the College was involved in the Disaster Relief Work: Appapada Community, Malad Fire Outbreak. A massive fire outbreak happened in Appapada community in Malad East of Mumbai on 16th March. The fire destroyed the homes of more than 1500 families in the area and made them, mostly a migrant population homeless. It was observed that the fire was caused due to the cylinder blasts that happened in one of the houses which led to the fire in the other homes and eventually led to a series of cylinder blasts. Whatever the reason behind the outbreak of the fire, it was clear that more than 1500 families from lower socio-economic backgrounds and mainly migrants were at a loss. Fire destroyed houses and necessary items including documents. A team of 26 students and three staff members were formed by the college. The team spent the initial days understanding the needs in the field. Under staff guidance, students went to the field after class hours and conducted home visits for need assessment. Meetings were conducted daily to take an update from the field and plan accordingly. The college circulated a brochure to mobilise the materials for needy families. Donations of materials such as dry ration, clothes, utensils, sanitary items, and mattresses were collected and distributed. Students also observed the need to interact with the children and a group of students mobilised children and conducted activities with them in the communities and the remaining group continued home visits and distributions. The dry ration was organised by the college team running community kitchens.

Field placements are selected based on their engagement relevant to the vision and mission of the College. Field Placements include government and non-government organizations working with marginalised groups [survivors of gender-based violence, persons with disability, children in conflict with law and need of care and protection, youth groups and elderly], and communities across Mumbai, Thane and Raigad. A related key strategy to situate social work education in ground realities is setting up Field Action Projects (FAPs). FAPs are experimental projects which have played a major role in piloting new services through social work practice by Faculty Members, social work interns and project staff to demonstrate to the public, the need for such services. These projects demonstrate new interventions and possibilities for addressing social issues, test efficiency that could be emulated by others as a response to emerging socio-economic and political contexts, and enable Faculty members to develop academically and remain engaged in field practice. Students are provided opportunities to learn and formulate creative strategic interventions relevant to practice from the standpoint of the marginalised, excluded and exploited sections. The FAPs developed by the College of Social Work articulated the vision of the founders to build an egalitarian society, especially for the marginalised and vulnerable population, integrating in its interventions the core values of human dignity, social justice and equality. The College has always

been keenly aware of the need to provide relevant and effective services to people, especially in those areas where services are inadequate or non-existent. Over the years, therefore, many innovative projects were initiated to address the needs of vulnerable groups such as street children, construction workers, children of commercial sex workers, tribal in remote areas and other similar groups. Currently, the College has three Field Action Projects: Spandan meaning heartbeat, resonates the voice of the Indigenous groups to promote sustainable development for better livelihood and focusing on malnutrition issues at Talsari and Dahanu block of Palghar district, Maharashtra. Pravas is a Field Action Project started by the College of Social Work Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai to reach out to senior citizens residing in urban marginalized communities. The objective of Pravas was to promote health and well-being through preventive, promotive, and curative models of intervention; and conduct various capacity-building workshops for the elderly in the area of self-care, promotion of mobility, and independence.; provide space for the elderly to showcase their skills and talents; develop senior citizens neighbourhood groups of elderly in the smaller pockets of the community and create a safer space in the community for the elderly and also create strong systems of care and support for senior citizens in the community itself. Anubhav Mumbai (AM) was initiated in June 1997 in collaboration with “Anubhav Shiksha Kendra”. The vision of the project is the development of youth as concerned citizens committed to social transformation and the mission of the project is educating youth to be leaders and change agents in society.

