SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HINDU CIVILIZATION

FACULTY OF ARTS

UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA

22nd to 24th February 2010

Review Team :

Prof. S. Pathmanathan, University of Peradeniya

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CONTENTS

Page

...ity of education within a specific subject or discipline as well as the programmes offered by an academic department. It is focussed on the quality of the student learning experience and student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of undergraduates. The subject review report presents the findings of the subject review assessment of the academic standards achieved and the quality of learning opportunities provided in the Department of Hindu Civilization, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna.

The review team consists of Prof S Padmanathan, University of Peradeniya Prof. Rohana P. Mahaliyanaarachchi, (Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka), Mr K Raguparan, South Eastern University and Prof Mano Sabharatnam, Eastern University. The team visited the Department of Special Needs Education during the period from 22nd to 24th Fabruray 2010.

The review was conducted adhering to the guidelines provided in the *Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities*, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The review was based on the Self Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by the Department of Hindu Civilization and supported by the information provided and gathered during the three-day site visit to the Department of Hindu Civilization, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna.

The following aspects of education/provision were considered under the review assessment:

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review
2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods
3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements
4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback
5. Postgraduate Studies
6. Peer Observation
7. Skills Development
8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Meetings held with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department, members of the academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students,
- Observation of department and other facilities of the faculty (library, Faculty Computer Centre and Lecture Rooms, etc.)
- Observing lectures
- Reviewing documents maintained by the department

Each of the eight aspects was judged as –Goodø, –Satisfactoryø or –Unsatisfactoryø paying attention to the strengths, good practices and weaknesses found in each area. An overall judgment was given as –Confidenceø, –Limited Confidenceø or –No Confidenceø after taking into consideration the judgments given to each of the eight aspects.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY AND THE DEPARTMENT

The Jaffna University was started in 1974 in Tirunalveli by using the premises of Parameshvari College. The Department of Hindu Civilization was organized for the first time in Sri Lankan history in the faculty of humanities from the inception of the Jaffna campus of the University of Sri Lanka.

The Department of Hindu Civilization incorporates in the two disciplines.

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Prof. K Kailasanatha Kurukkal was the first Professor and Head of the Department of Hindu Civilization. Then Prof P Gopalakrishna Iyer became the Head of the Department followed by Mrs N Selvanayagam. Again Prof P Gopalakrishna Iyer took over the headship from 1992 until he became the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. Then Dr (Ms) K Ramanathan became the HOD followed by Ms N Selvanayagam. The current HOD is Dr M Vethanathan.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

Programmes offered by the Department
The Faculty of Arts offes a BA general degree program with three year duration and BA honours degree program with duration of four years based on Semester/ Course Unit system. The Department of Hindu Civilization offers course unis in compliance with policies adopted by the Faculty. The Department offers courses in Hindu Civilization and Hindu Philosophy. Both the Department and the Faculty follows the GPA system.

Learning Outcome of the Degree Programme
1. Impart a sound knowledge and understanding in Hindu Civilization and Hindu Philosophy and its application to develop cultured life and personal skills and preserve the traditional heritage in Hindu culture.
2. To assess the present trend of Hindu Civilization at the regional and global levels.
3. To develop skills and experience related to Yoga and Dhyana to enhance the spiritual talents

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1 Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Among the universities of Sri Lanka, the University of Jaffna is the only one which has a Department of Hindu Civilization. In fact, there is no other such department at any other university in the whole of South Asia. It is therefore of paramount importance that this department should acquire and exhibit the characteristics of a centre of excellence. This department has existed for a period of 36 years, since the inception of the University and at present it is conducting two separate degree programmes: Hindu Civilization and Hindu Philosophy.

Hindu Civilization
The design of the curriculum and courses are of the utmost importance in the development of the department as an academic institution of repute. It seems that there is a steep decline in the number of students registered for the courses provided by this department Perhaps the curriculum and courses seem to be one of the decisive factors responsible for the decline in student numbers. The comprehensive and multidisciplinary character of Hindu Civilization and the contemporary academic and social relevance of the disciplines should be the prime considerations in designing the curricula and courses of the disciplines concerned.

...uced into the curriculum, the scope of the syllabi as a ...orientation. There is repetition, as for instance in AHC ...2 and AHCC 32043.

In the case of AHCC 22043-Origin and Development of Hinduism in North India up to Epic period, there is a lack of precision. There is no epic period in the History of Hindu Civilization. One could perhaps speak of such a period in relation to Sanskrit literature.

In the syllabi attention is not focused on the development of Hinduism in North India and South India. Certain important items are left out while there is an overemphasis on certain aspects relating to the discipline.

Adequate attention is not paid to the contacts with Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism had co-existed and interacted with them closely. Attention is not focused adequately on issues that have an academic and contemporary social relevance. There are no course units on Sanskrit literature.

Hindu Philosophy (Saiva Siddhanta)

The syllabi are not sufficiently attractive to persuade students to offer the subject. It does not provide avenues for the students to comprehend the origin and development of Saiva Siddhanta in the wider context of developments within Hinduism in a multi cultural society. There are too many papers on Tamil texts. The syllabi are not formulated according to a plan that focuses attention on vital themes. There are also some instances of repetition. The course title *Religious Philosophy of the Tamils* is not appropriately formulated.

There is no provision for the study of Greek thought and elements of Comparative Religion. There are no course units that could be offered by students engaged in the study programmes of both disciplines: Hindu Civilization and Hindu Philosophy.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

It is very pleasing to note that the Departmental Staff though small, only six in number and the HOD are doing a wonderful job in giving their best to the students. In fact the staff is expected to handle two disciplines, Hindu Civilization and Hindu Philosophy (Saiva Siddhanta). These two disciplines though interrelated in many ways are two broad disciplines, and need wide reading and a comprehensive grasp of the subject in order to present it to the students in a language they understand best. This is a very difficult task and from the discussion with the staff one could see that they are struggling to run the two disciplines with the available staff, but they do it to cover the syllabus, hold examinations etc, to complete the 3 ó 4 years of study.

Due to the dedication of the staff student performances are quite satisfactory, but the students must be at the end of the 3-4 years of study be in a position to compete in the job market for it is a competitive world we are living in.

The seminar presented by the 4th year student could have been better with multi media and with other skills necessary for presentation. More training should be given to develop this skill of presentation.

Most of the reading material is in the English Language, hence it is necessary that students and Staff have a good knowledge of this language, in order to make use of the treasure of information available in the English Language, this will make teaching and learning more meaningful.

The assessment in practice is satisfactory, but from now on question papers must be moderated and evaluated by a second Examiner from outside the university, at least for the special degree 3rd and 4th year papers.

teaching mechanism, for instance teaching is still old ...g all the time, there appears to be no two way talking. ... to ask questions, clear their doubts. There appears to be no recall of the previous lecture or a summing up of the day¢s work. If this is carried out teaching will be more effective.

4.3 Quality of Students Including Student Progress and Achievements

The quality of students engaged in the two study programmes is unimpressive. Their knowledge of English is very poor. They have no knowledge of Sanskrit. They seem to be dependent on their teachers for the acquisition of knowledge. They do not seem to have had any interaction with the world of scholars.

Most of the students have gained admission to the University under the provision for special intake. The students who obtain high Grades in Hindu Civilization and Hinduism at the G.C.E. A.L. Examination are not opting to study these subjects at the university and this is a matter for serious consideration by the Department and other authorities at the university.

The students in the classes whom we encountered looked shy and reluctant to speak. But, they were listening patiently and attentively. It was found that the computer literacy of most of the students was limited. They have not developed the capacity for using multi-media.

4.4. Extent and Use of Students Feedback

The Department hasn¢t got any formal feed back by means of questionnaire or any other quantitative approach from the students yet. However the Lecturers of the Department get informal feedback from the students about their individual classes and other areas to be improved.

Feed backs have not been obtained systematically and in adequate measure arrangements have to be made to obtain students feed back in anonymity. Their responses on the quality of the lectures, the performance of the teachers, the contents of the courses and their relevance to contemporary needs have not been obtained through questionnaires. A formal way of getting feedback is necessary launched for the benefit of the students as well as for the lecturers.

The intension of this exercise must be no reason for other than improving the teaching learning environment in the department. This may be conducted through a panel of lecturers in the department. The feedback may be obtained through the questionnaire twice a semester i.e. mid semester and end semester, in order to improve the teaching learning environment while the course is in progress, as well as at the end of the course. There again the responses have to be analysed and brought to the appropriate forums for discussion and necessary improvements.

Having realized the importance of the formal feedback from the students, the Department needs to develop an specific format to obtain students¢ feedback.. The areas expected to be covered by the Department by introducing the common format should be included,
1. Using technology
2. Language use
3. Presentation of lesson
4. Preparation for lectures
5. Class room management

Etc.

To enhance the quality of the program through teaching and learning process the department needs to conduct Student /Staff Meetings. In addition to that the Head of the Department (HOD) can conduct meetings at the request of the Staff or the students at regular intervals.

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

During the rather long period of its existence this department has engaged in conducting postgraduate courses of different grades that attracted a large number of candidates. The diploma course conducted in the 1970øs and 1980øs was later discontinued.

The department has produced number of doctorates as well as other postgraduates. There are number of graduate students in the department who are studying for MA degree in Saiva Siddhantha. Dr Vethanathan and Dr Ramanathan are supervising postgraduate students.

It is desirable to revive that course after formulating a new set of syllabi in accordance with contemporary needs.

4.6. Peer Observation

There is a strong understanding among the academic members about the importance of having a peer observation as a powerful tool for improving the quality of teaching learning process. It was observed that the overall attitude of the academic staff members in regarding the peer observation is positive. It was revealed that, an attempt has been made recently to develop a mechanism for peer observation in the department. The existing practice with regard to peer observation in the department is at the primary stage and further improvement is needed.

A common format is already available at the department for the peer evaluation purposes. The evaluations done very recently by the lecturers were made available to the review team. It was appreciated for at least introducing such an exercise for the purpose.

It seems that this process could be improved further for the benefit of the students and the teachers. Some, self driven efforts to identify his/her own strengths and weaknesses in teaching also have been carried out by few staff members in the department in this regard.

All final examination question papers are moderated by second examiners and answer scripts are evaluated by two examiners, which are also considered as a good way of peer evaluation.

4.7 Skills Development

Subject specific skills are ingrained in the curriculum, but the staff and even the students develop these skills to some extent but without being aware of it. Attempt should be made to list out these to make so that the students can develop the skills necessary to write tutorials, presentation of seminars, research findings etc.

Training in IT skills, English proficiency is poor, these skills are very essential for communication and presentation of research findings. The use of multimedia and developing skills for this is a must and facilities should be made available without any further delay.

More computers should be made available in the department for student and staff use so that they will have access to internet facilities. A world of information can be obtained through this media. The students must be given the opportunities to develop these skills. IT based web

facilities should be made available to both staff and

opportunities to develop skills necessary for critical and self directed learning. The Staff have within the means available encouraged students to develop skills to make learning more meaningful.

The learning of English must be encouraged to facilitate the ability of students to read and understand the rich source of information in the two disciplines available in the English language. Visits to temples give a better understanding of the subject, and this must be given top priority, now that the situation in the country is back to normal, every effort must be taken to recommence this aspect. of the study programme. Audio video facilities will enrich the teaching activities.

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

Academic guidance and counselling seems available at the faculty level and there are student counsellors appointed representing each department. However none of these Student Counsellors have been given any training what so ever as to how they should perform their duties.

It seems that these student counsellors perform a routine job when the students come to them with problems for redress or for some consolation. Academic guidance and counselling seems rather broader in its context. This seems lacking in the faculty and this may affect the undergraduate academically and socially in performing his/her studies in the university.

The Department has no arrangement of its own to provide academic guidance and counselling for its students. The career guidance unit of the Faculty of Arts provides guidance in a very limited measure. It is inadequate.

To obviate the deficiency, the department should be advised to establish career guidance and counselling unit.

Based on the observations made during the visit by the review team, the eight aspects were judged as follows:

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment Given
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative	Unsatisfactory
Postgraduate Studies	Good
Peer Observation	Satisfactory
Skills Development	Satisfactory
Academic Guidance and Counselling	Unsatisfactory

Review

Strengths/Good Practices
- A quite ambitious programme as far as the strength and capacity of the Department of Hindu Civilization
- The department follow the credit based semester vice teaching method.
- Computer and English language courses are included to the curriculum.
- Committed and enthusiastic staff in the Department

Weaknesses:
- The scope of the syllabi as a whole is limited and traditional in orientation.
- In the syllabi attention is not focused on the development of Hinduism in North India and South India. Certain important items are left out while there is an overemphasis on certain aspects relating to the discipline.
- Adequate attention is not paid to the contacts with Buddhism and Jainism. Hinduism had co-existed and interacted with them closely.
- Attention is not focused adequately on issues that have an academic and contemporary social relevance.
- There are no course units on Sanskrit literature.
- The course title *Religious Philosophy of the Tamils* is not appropriately formulated.
- There is no provision for the study of Greek thought and elements of Comparative Religion.
- There are no course units that could be offered by students engaged in the study programmes of both disciplines: Hindu Civilization and Hindu Philosophy.

The review team is of the view that the aspect of Curriculum Design, Content and Review would be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.

2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths/Good Practices
- The size of the group of the students in specialisation is manageable
- Committed, enthusiastic and well qualified lecturers in the department
- Having a well organised and equipped library with a set of personnel with appropriate positive attitudes
- Understanding the significance of having appropriate assessment methods
- It is very pleasing to note that the Departmental Staff though small, only six in number and the HOD are doing a wonderful job in giving their best to the students.

Weaknesses:
- Not having proper tutorial classes for the students
- Practical approaches are lacking in the process of teaching and learning.
- Less number of students registered for the courses
- Less facilities in the lecture rooms
- Studentsø English knowledge is poor.

...ect of Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods is

3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Strengths /Good Practices
- Undergraduates' commitment and their proactive approach towards a targeted growth
- Student enthusiasm their patients and commitment to get the teaching learning environment improved
- Better understanding among the lecturers about the difficulties undergraduates are confronting

Weaknesses:
- Inadequate funds to meet the priority requirements of the university
- Lack of priority plans and non consultative development plans implemented at the faculty level
- Students have no knowledge of Sanskrit which is essential in learning of Hindu civilization and Hindu philosophy.
- The students who obtain high Grades in Hindu Civilization and Hinduism at the G.C.E. A.L. Examination are not opting to study these subjects at the university and this is a matter for serious consideration by the Department and other authorities at the university.

Considering the above facts, the aspect of the Quality of Students, Student Progress and Achievements could be judged as 'GOOD'.

4. Extent of Use of Student Feedback

Strengths /Good Practices
- Informal feedback from the students has been obtained by the academic staff
- Qualitative feedback is also obtained from students informally.

Weaknesses:
- Least concern shown towards this exercise.
- No records available to prove formal feedback from the students.

Considering the above facts the aspect of the extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative could be judged as 'UNSATISFACTORY'.

5. Postgraduate Studies

Strengths /Good Practices
- The department has commenced MA in Saiva Siddhantha.
- Department has involved in postgraduate education directly over the past twenty years.

Weaknesses:
- As far as research activities are concerned limited actions have been taken.

Considering the above facts the aspect of the Postgraduate Studies could be judged as 'GOOD'.

- Understanding the importance and significance of a peer observation system
- There is a close rapport among the academic staff members in the department.
- Having a system of moderating the question papers by a senior academic and marking answer scripts being done by a second examiner at a senior level

Weaknesses:
- Lack of senior level staff such as professors to guide junior staff.

Considering the above facts the aspect of the Peer Observation could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.

7. Skills Development

Strengths/Good Practices
- Subject specific skills are ingrained in the curriculum.
- The Department through its courses and field studies encourage students to develop their creative skills.

Weaknesses
- Training in IT skills, English proficiency is poor, these skills are very essential for communication and presentation of research findings.
- The use of multimedia and developing skills for this is a must and facilities should be made available without any further delay.
- There is no regular program included into the curriculum in developing skills of the students necessary for critical and self directed learning.

Considering the above facts the aspect of the Skills Development could be judged as 'SATISFACTORY'.

8. Academic Guidance and Counselling

Strengths/Good Practices
- Understanding the requirement for having student counsellors

Weaknesses
- Uncertainty among student counsellors about their role
- Less experience and not at all a training given to these Student counsellors
- Least prominence given to student counselling and guidance
- No student Councillors appointed for the department

Considering the above facts the aspect of the Academic Guidance and Counselling could be judged as 'UNSATISFACTORY.'

re year cycle to incorporate new disciplines which are high in demand and relevant.

2. Get the involvements of various stakeholders including present undergraduates, passed out graduates , postgraduate students, and experts from other universities .

3. Establish a curricula review committee at the faculty, representing members from each department to ensure high quality degree programmes being designed and offered continuously.

4. Establish a quality assurance cell at the faculty level to ensure high quality of each degree programme being offered by the faculty.

5. Structure the degree programme in a way to cultivate knowledge, skills and competencies gradually identifying the sequence of subjects to be offered at each level of the degree programme.

6. Overall Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO) of degree programmes must be very clear and should be informed the students. The course outlines should be improved by including a course description, learning outcomes for each course, comprehensive description of evaluation methods, breakdown of the total time among individual topics, reading list under each topic, and relationship of learning outcome of each course with the overall learning out come of the degree programme.

7. Collaborate with the ELTU in designing curricula for English courses offered by the department and make arrangements to improve English language skills among weaker students.

8. Offer IT related courses write throughout the degree programme to develop relevant skills.

9. Offer teaching methodology course for all the members of the department with a view to learn different teaching methods such as the student-cantered teaching

10. Make students aware at the beginning of each course, how and when continuous assessment (CA) is scheduled to be done rather than conducting them on an ad-hoc basis.

11. CA methods need to be further improved by making them precise and should be related to measure the learning outcome of each course

12. Tutorials are necessary conducted for each course of study

13. Maintain student database to get to know the progress made by students during their course of studies and also their employability after the graduation.

14. Introduce a formal mechanism at the department to handle feedback information obtained from students and discuss with relevant lecturers with a view to improve their weaknesses.

15. Promote subject associations allowing students to involve in more activities such as Journal publication, organizing guest lectures, workshops etc.

16. The Department should be provided with well equipped class rooms for carrying out effective teaching,   The recreational and other facilities should be provided.

17. Create a research culture within the department by encouraging academics to do research in their specialty areas.

18. Provide training on ─academic counsellingø for academic counsellors in the department.

19. Provide training on ─alternative approaches to research methodologiesø

20. Develop strong links between the department academic counsellors, Senior Student Counsellor of the university with an aim of redressing studentsø problems.

21. The present young staff members should be encouraged to continue studies leading to PhD in in the particular discipline.

...led established as soon as possible to get the support to ...abilities. Alumni database need to be developed within

23. The Senior Staff who are fluent in the English language may assist the lecturer in charge of each module to prepare and give hand outs in simple English which will gradually pave the path for the students to read references in English.

24. The students must be encouraged to talk to the staff and among themselves in English.

25. Tutorials form an important part of the teaching programme, and this is followed and students appear to benefit by it. The number of tutorials for each discipline must be fixed according to the lecture hours and this should be uniform.

26. Library assignments may be given to encourage students to gather information and enrich their knowledge, which will enable him/her to compete for a job in the open market.

27. The Self Evaluation Report refers to visits to places of worship and that they could not take the students due to the war situation in the North, now that things have come back to normal they should reactivate this programme. Taking students out of the peninsula will enable the students to broaden their horizon.

28. The fourth Year students are expected to carry out a research project, make a presentation and submit their findings in the form of a report.

29. It will be a good idea to extend this to the final year General Degree students as well.

30. New Courses such as Hindu Culture and Cultural Tourism, Museumlogy in Hindu culture, Influence of Hindu civilisation in modern development, etc, that are attractive to students can be introduced.

Annex 1. PROGRAMME FOR THE REVIEW VISIT

Day 01 (22/02/2010)
08.30 ó 09.00 Reviewerøs Private Meeting
09.00 ó 09.30 Finalizing the Agenda for the Visit with Tea
09.30ô 10.30 Meeting with Vice Chancellor
10.30 ó 11.30 Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
11.30 ó 12.30 Discussion with the Department
12.30 ó 01.30 Lunch
01.30 ó 02.00 Observing Departmental Facilities
02.00 ó 03.15 Observing other Facilities *(Canteen, Library, Computer Lab, ELTU,)*
03.15 ó 03.30 Tea
03.30 ó 04.30 Meeting with Department Academic Staff with Tea
04.30 - 05.30 Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 02 (23/02/2010)
09.00 ó 09.30 Observing Teaching ó Lecture
09.30 ó 10.00 Meeting with Non-Academic Staff
10.00 ó 10.30 Observing Teaching
10.30 ó 12.00 Observing Departmental Documents with Tea
12.00 ó 12.30 Observing Teaching - Lecture BBA 3101, LT3)
12.30 ó 01.30 Lunch
01.30 ó 02.30 Meeting with students
02.30 ó 03.00 Tea
03.00 ó 03.30 Meeting with passed out Students
03.30 ó 04.00 Meeting with postgraduate Students
04.00 ó 04.30 Meeting with students counsellors and Director carrier guidance
04.30 ó 05.00 Reviewersø Meeting

Day 03 (14/08/2009)
09.00 ó 09.30 Observing documents
09.30 ó 10.00 Meeting with academic staff
10.00 ó 10.30 Tea
10.30 ó 11.00 Reviewers Private discussion
11.00 ó 12.00 Meeting with Head and staff for Reporting
12.00- 01.00 Lunch

TED

- Dean of the Faculty
- Head of the Department
- Academic staff of the Department
- Non academic staff of the Department
- Student counsellors
- Undergraduate Students
- Postgraduate students
- Passed out students
- Librarian