



**SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF ACADEMIC COMMUNITY:  
A CASE STUDY FROM KERALA**

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**Abstract:** *Free Drug Cell working in the Government Hospital, Ernakulum is initiated and operated by the Department of Social Work, Rajagiri college of Social Sciences, Ernakulum, Kerala. More than one lakh people are benefitting from this cell every year. The author was the coordinator of this departmental activity. This paper explains the operations and objectives of the free drug cell. This paper may act as baseline document for similar initiatives across globe, especially in developing and undeveloped countries.*

**Keywords:** *social, work, education, extension, academia*

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“No one has yet realized the wealth of sympathy, the kindness and generosity hidden in the soul of a child. The effort of every true education should be to unlock that treasure.”

Emma Goldman

## **INTRODUCTION:**

The free drug cell is started by the Social Work Students Association of Rajagiri College of Social Sciences (SWARAJ). The project was launched at the General Hospital after the students found hundreds of poor patients suffering in pain unable to afford the costly medicines. Their further enquiry in this subject led them to the awareness that huge quantities of sample drugs were lying unused in various hospitals in the district. Students collected these samples from doctors and got permission from the general hospital authorities to start a distribution center within the hospital premises. They started to distribute medicine to needy people. This humble initiative is now known as Rajagiri Free Drug Cell. Mahatma Gandhi says all children should grow up as citizens in a new social order, based on Co-operative work and with the understanding of their rights, responsibilities and obligations in such a society. These students are trying to practice. The rest of the paper explains the operations in detail.

## **RAJAGIRI- A LIVING EXAMPLE OF SOCIAL COMMITMENT OF ACADEMIC COMMUNITY**

Rajagiri College of Social Sciences together with its sister educational institutions, owes its existence to the CMI (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate) fathers, founded in 19th century by Blessed Chavara Kuriakose. The CMIs with their indefatigable industry, and indescribable foresight ventured into Social Work and Management Education by establishing Rajagiri College of Social Sciences in 1955. Since then they have been bold and creative enough to recast the college, in line with the times through international partnerships, taking up new areas, and by investing for facilities and skills to relentlessly maintain the level of excellence. Apart from MSW (Master of Social Work) programme the college offers PGDAHS (Post Graduate Diploma in Administration of Human Services,) BSW (Bachelor in Social Work) and Ph.D.

The college expanded its horizon by taking up social work projects by establishing different Live Labs, pioneering research by establishing an independent Research Institute, and by offering professional training to social work personnel through special purpose Training



Centres. Today the activities of the live labs, training centres and research institute lend a lot of opportunities for the interns from abroad in professional enrichment and participation.

- **Community Aid & Sponsorship Programme (CASP)** is involved in Child Sponsorship, Child Rights Issues, Community Development and Community Health Projects, Training and Consultancy.
- **Adoption Coordinating Agency (ACA)** is involved in promoting Indian Adoptions by coordinating and supporting the adoption activities of all licensed placement agencies in Kerala state.
- **Rajagiri Family Counseling Centre (FCC)** works to strengthen the social fabric of the locality by preventing families from breaking up and promoting harmony in the family.
- **Rajagiri Legal Aid Cell** involves in activities including free legal aid, literacy classes and legal awareness seminars.
- **Childline** provides 24-hour free phone emergency and outreach service for children in difficult circumstances.
- **Aditya- The Solar Shop** promotes the use of solar devices through sales and service.
- **Centre for Women's Studies and Development** helps in promotion, development and dissemination of knowledge, related to the evolution of women's role in the society.
- **Indian Council of Social Welfare (ICSW )**- Kerala State is involved in the scrutiny of inter country adoptions and guardianship applications.
- **RajagiriOutREACH** (Rajagiri Educational Alternative and Community Health) Service Society (ROSS) is the umbrella organisation of RCDS (Rajagiri Community Development Scheme) CHCRE (Centre for Health Care Research and Education) and FDC (Free Drug Cell).
- **Entrepreneurship Development Cell (EDC)** is involved in inculcating entrepreneurial culture among youth and imparting training in entrepreneurship.
- **The Research Institute** carries out independent and sponsored research projects in different areas of social sciences.

## **TRAINING DIVISION**

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- **NSS TOC (National Service Scheme Training and Orientation Centre)** caters the training needs of NSS functionaries of Universities and Directorates in the State of Kerala.
- **MLTC (Middle Level Training Centre)** trains the supervisors of the Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) projects in the state.
- **AWTC (Anganwadi Training Centre)** imparts training to Anganwadi Workers and Helpers of ICDS Projects.

### **SWARAJ**

Social Work students Association or Rajagiri (SWARAJ) the student association of school of social work conducts regular programmes spreading awareness, taking up community projects and several service initiatives to help students get exposure, attitude and experience in their professional fields. Every Tuesday afternoon is set apart for SWARAJ activities.

### **RAJAGIRI FREE DRUG CELL PROJECT**

Rajagiri Free Drug Cell is a project launched in 1995 by the Department of Social Work, Rajagiri College of Social Sciences. Kalamassery. This humble initiative came from the students association of the Department- Social Work Students Association of Rajagiri (SWARAJ). The field work exposure of Social Work Students at various government hospitals came as an inspiration to launch the project. During the fieldwork the students shockingly found that while scores of poor patients are writhing in pain, as they cannot afford costly medicine, heaps of sample drugs are lying unused in various hospitals. This free drug cell project aims to create a working arrangement to divert the surplus sample medicines and other available drug sources to the poor patients in these hospitals. The distribution of drugs which forms an essential service was meant to be only a starting point. It is our long cherished dream to provide every possible services to the poor patients at the Government General Hospital Emakulam. It is meant to grow and branch out in other areas like- health education of the community through campaigns, finding sponsorships for hospital's general welfare, rehabilitation services for the patients, campaigns for blood donation and eye donation, counseling, care of the by-standers etc.



## **VISION OF THE PROJECT**

To build up a service system which would adequately compliment the work of the medical professionals, by teaming up with them in providing holistic health care services to the poor and the needy patients of Ernakulam Government General Hospital

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE PROJECT**

- Provide free medicines to the needy patients.
- Provide counseling services and render proper psychological support to the needy.
- Prepare psycho-social evaluation and assessment of the patients.
- Create awareness among more people about the services of the free drug cell.
- Network with different Departments of the Hospital as well as other external agencies.
- Provide Services and support to Health Care providers.
- Establish a Department of social work in the Hospital.

## **ACTIVITIES**

- Distribution of drugs.
- Distribution of clothes
- Counselling.
- Case Work
- Group Work.
- Rehabilitation
- Referral services.
- Campaigns on various health issues.
- Emergency services like arrangements for blood, vehicle, assistance etc.
- Care of the terminally ill.
- Training programmes for the medical and Para medical staff
- Field Work training for the Social Work students

## **CHILD /ADOLESCENT GUIDANCE CENTRE**

Child /Adolescent Guidance Centre is an expansion of the Free Drug Cell Project at Ernakulam General Hospital. The necessity for the project was recognized by the Social Work students while initiating campaigns against the ill effects of Pan Masala in various



schools of Ernakulam District. They found that around 24.5 % of the students below 16 years of age are addicted to drugs. And thus with the initiative of the students, this centre started its functioning from April 7th 2005.

### **OBJECTIVES OF CHILD /ADOLESCENT GUIDANCE CENTRE**

- Assist the children to adjust with the inevitable changes (Physical, emotional, psychological) in their developmental span.
- Do Specific interventions for children with learning disabilities
- Execute therapeutic interventions in children with substance abuse
- Help the children with mental disabilities
- Enhance and promote rehabilitation of children with problems
- Referral services.
- Supplement the parents with knowledge and practical tips for the behavior development of children.

### **CONCLUSION**

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.” Quoted here is the Martin Luther King’s view on education. Social work department of Rajagiri incorporate this principle into their DNA

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