



Don Bosco Engineering College Fatorda, Goa

On the lines of national minority universities, this proposed university could shape the lives of hundreds and thousands of students on the basis of a shared culture. Dr. Zakir Hussain, when supporting the establishment of Jamia Millia Islamia university had said, "The movement of Jamia Millia Islamia is a struggle for education and cultural renaissance. It will prepare a blueprint for Indian Muslims which may focus on Islam but simultaneously

evolve a national culture for common Indian. It will lay the foundation of the thinking that true religious education will promote patriotism and national integration among Indian Muslims, who will be proud to take part in the future progress of India, which will play its part in the comity of nations for peace and development." The institution today holds the torch of illumination giving shape to ideas and fostering innovation.



Luizinho Faleiro raising the issue of Christian University in Rajya Sabha

Efforts when I was Rajya Sabha MP and thereafter

I was and still am very serious about a National Christian University. In a desire to know whether there was the possibility of setting up a Christian University in India, I had raised a question in the Rajya Sabha seeking to know whether there was any such recommendation from the National Commission for Minorities in its Annual Report 2016-17 and also whether there was any proposal to set up Christian University in Goa? In reply, the Ministry of Minority Affairs intimated that there was no such recommendation by the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) and also no proposal for setting up of Goa Christian University in Goa pending at the Ministry of Education. The reply, however, went on to say that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has, inter-alia recommended moving towards a higher education system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with more higher education institutes across India that would offer medium of instructions or programme in local/Indian Languages and that the NEP also recommends increased access, equity, and inclusion through a range of measures.

The latter portion of the reply further serves to justify the proposal of setting up of a National Christian University in India. Such a university would be a great boost to the aims of the NEP and serve to give reality to the vision of the policy makers.

After I resigned from the Rajya Sabha I took this further and in a letter moved a proposal before the Government of India on setting up a National Christian University in Goa and the reply that I received from them, dated August 11, 2022, gives me much hope as it states that the matter is under consideration. In view of this reply, it is now for the umbrella organisations of the minority educational institutions in Goa to take it forward, so as to make a National Christian University a reality in Goa. On my part, if necessary, we can conduct a signature campaign requesting the Central Government to accede to this request.

Ethos of the Goa Christian University

As I visualise it, a Goa Christian University will be based on the enduring legacy of Christian Goan Nationalism. Here, it is important to highlight the role of Dr Francisco Luis Gomes a linguist, thinker, master of several European and Indian languages, doctor, writer, orator, economist, social activist, physician-surgeon, politician, who was born in Navelim, Goa in 1829 and went on to represent Goa in the Portuguese Parliament.

Dr Gomes was a proud Indian, even when Goa was reeling under the Portuguese colonial yoke and was yet to be integrated with Mother India politically, and the latter had yet to gain independence from colonial rule. His most famous speech, made in Europe brought to the fore his nationalism. He stated: "I was born in India, once the cradle of philosophy, poetry and history, but now (under the British yoke). I belong to that race which created the Mahabharata and invented the game of chess, the two conceptions of the intellect that bear something of the Eternal and the Infinite. But this nation which formulated its legal codes in poetry and fashioned its politics in a game, is no longer alive. It survives, imprisoned in its own country, exhausted by its own fertility and eclipsed in the very splendour of its glory. This bird, fluttering against the irons of its cage, has lost its own feathers, on the wings of which it once soared above the Himalayas. Weeping over the freedom of which it has been despoiled and the light that has fled, this nightingale has forgotten



Dr Francisco Luis Gomes

its song, the strains of which once echoed in the heavens... I ask for India freedom and light...."

This was the first Indian voice to demand freedom for India, much before the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, that was later labelled as the first War of Indian independence. That voice of revolt and the persistent demand for liberality and freedom, which was the thrust of Dr. Gomes' characteristic, appears in almost all his variegated writings, whether in the matter of freedom of the press or of trade or any other action aimed at development of human and natural resources, giving primacy to the people and involving them in all development that mattered. It infused in them a rare vital dynamism that shook the despotism of authority.

The Goa Christian University will embody this ethos and assimilate the thoughts of all Goan Nationalist thinkers who fought for uniting Goa with the motherland India.

Conclusion

In relation to a University, there has been hostile discrimination against the State of Goa and the Christian Community. Goa doesn't have a central university, the Christian community in India doesn't have its own university, and this is the discrimination. A National Christian University in Goa would right both the wrongs - one of Goa not having a central university and two of the Christian community in India not having a university of their own. Goa, as has been discussed above is the most suitable location for a Christian university.

If we are to make Goa a Centre of Excellence and a hub for quality higher education, and this is the thinking of the Knowledge Commission that had been set up in

2005, we have to give the young minds a different exposure and I believe that a Central University will be the best vehicle to get this done. As I see it, denying Goa a Central University and a Christian University is a hostile discrimination towards the State and Christians. There is no reason not to set up such a university as it fits within the New Education Policy of the government.

Seeking a complete overhaul of the higher education system, Section 9.3(a) of the National Education Policy, seeks to move 'towards a higher educational system consisting of large, multidisciplinary universities and colleges, with at least one in or near every district, and with more higher educational institutions (HEIs) across India that offer medium of instruction or programmes in local/Indian languages'. This is exactly what I have been proposing through the Christian University. Further in Section 10.3, the NEP 2020 states that a 'university will mean a multidisciplinary institution of higher learning that offers undergraduate and graduate programmes, with high quality teaching, research, and community engagement. The definition of university will thus allow a spectrum of institutions that range from those that place equal emphasis on teaching and research i.e., Research-intensive Universities, those that place greater emphasis on teaching but still conduct significant research i.e. Teaching-intensive Universities.' The proposal for the Christian University does take into account all these and is perfect for Goa.

It is my desire to see such a university set up in Goa, and I will continue my efforts in working with the Centre on the establishment of a National Christian University in Goa.

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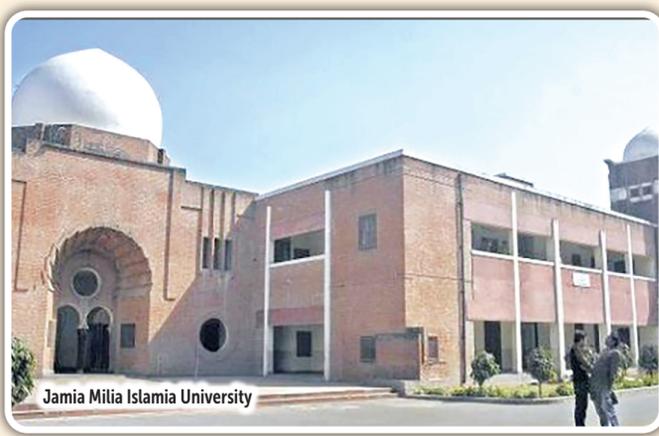
Padre Conceicao College Nuvem

Similarly, I advocate that the National Christian University in Goa, to be established in consultation with and the support of the Archdiocese of Goa and fully funded by the Centre, would try to aim for the educational and cultural renaissance of Golden Goa which was the envy of the European powers in

the not so distant past. It would try to evolve a national culture and enhance the patriotism and nationalism present in Christian Goans. Finally it would prepare the Goan Christians for future challenges and make them masters of the future.



Rosary College Navelim



Jamia Millia Islamia University