

# NATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY – Concept Note

**PART 2**



North East Christian University

## Preamble

Universities constitute a reality of decisive importance. The future of mankind depends largely on cultural, scientific and technical development; and it is built up in centres of culture, knowledge and research as represented by true universities. The university is an autonomous institution at the heart of societies and it produces, examines, appraises and hands down culture by research and teaching. It is "an academic community which in a rigorous and critical fashion, assists in the protection and advancement of human dignity and of a cultural heritage through research, teaching and various services offered to the local, national and international communities". Universities together with other institutions of higher education have always been privileged places for the development of knowledge and formation and have played a fundamental role in preparing leaders for the society. It remains all the more true in the 21st century.

## University System in India

Government of India has exhibited its commitment to quality higher education in the establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC) by an Act of Parliament in 1956 to coordinate, determine and maintain standards of teaching, examination and research in the field of University and Higher Education. In India the States and the Union together serve an estimated 105 lakh (10.5 million) students through around 350 Universities. Yet the task ahead is challenging, as the figure of 10.5 million is a little over 1 percent of India's total population.

While the Central Government is responsible for major policy relating to higher education in the country, education is on the 'Concurrent list' subject to Entry 66 in the Union List of the Constitution. This gives exclusive Legislative Power to the Central Government for the co-ordination and determination of standards in Institutions of higher education or research, and scientific and technical institutions. The Central Government provides grants to the UGC and establishes central universities in the country. The Central Government is also responsible for declaration of outstanding educational institutions as 'Deemed to be Universities' on the recommendation of the UGC. 'Deemed Universities' are colleges that have excelled over the years in both academics and administration.

Currently there are twenty Central Universities in the country, but not a single one in Goa. Among other outstanding institutions of higher learning in India are the central institutions like Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), National Institutes of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), Indian Institutes of Science (IISc) etc. There are 13 such Institutions of national importance and 85 Research Institutes in India.

State Governments are responsible for the establishment of State Universities and colleges, and provide plan grants for their development and non-plan grants for their maintenance. There are over 215 State Universities in India.

The coordination of all these various institutions, and cooperation between the Union and States in the field of education is overseen by the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE).

The major objectives for higher education in the country as set by 'The National Policy of Education 1986' (as amended in 1992) are to: "equip young students with adequate knowledge, skills and to inculcate among them ap-

propriate value system to enable their full participation in the emerging and changed social, economic and cultural environment".

While UGC is responsible for the overall maintenance of standards and release of grants from the Union Government, there are professional councils responsible for recognition of courses and for promotion of professional institutions. Some of these statutory bodies are:

- All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE)
- Distance Education Council (DCE)
- Indian Council for Agriculture Research (ICAR)
- Bar Council of India (BCI)
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE)
- Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI)
- Medical Council of India (MCI)
- Pharmacy Council of India (PCI)
- Indian Nursing Council (INC)
- Dental Council of India (DCI)
- Central Council of Homeopathy (CCH)
- Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM)

Universities in India belong to various categories: with a single faculty, or multi-faculties; teaching or affiliating, or teaching cum affiliating; single campus or multiple campus. Most of the Universities are affiliating universities that prescribe the courses of study, hold examinations and award degrees for the students in their affiliated colleges.

**There are three principle levels of qualifications within the higher education system in the country:**

1. Bachelor/Undergraduate level (Done after ten plus two years of school education the Bachelor programmes vary from three years in most cases to five and a half years in the case of Medicine).
2. Master's/Post-graduate level (Usually done in two years. Admission to Engineer-

ing, Technology and Medicine require respective Graduate Aptitude Tests)

3. Doctoral level (including Pre-doctoral level known as Master of Philosophy – M.Phil)

## Proposal for National Christian University

We feel there is need to address some current needs in the education sector as identified by the Government of India

- Meet the challenges of globalization and internationalization in higher education.
- Take care of the special needs of the weaker sections and marginalized groups of society;
- Promote excellence in research in frontier areas of knowledge;
- Create synergies through networking and the use of information technology;
- Increase vocationalisation of higher education;
- Bring about a convergence of formal and non-formal education sectors;
- Raise the enrolment of the 18-23 age group in higher education; and,
- Encourage relevance of the curriculum.

These are also goals that will bring about a profound transformation in education to make it an effective promoter of sustainable human development. We aim to make higher education more relevant by improving its quality, stressing on research and development, providing outreach activities in business and community, using new information and communication technologies, and fostering international cooperation.

We propose a Central University, called as the National Christian University run by the Christian minority in the country. It is proposed that it be situated in Goa, a state on the west Coast of India that has a long Christian tradition, a sizeable Christian minority population, and is the only State without a Central University. The university will serve students

from across the country and from abroad.

## The Rationale for the Proposed University

The proposal comes as a response to the felt educational needs of the Christian minority population. Here are some of the salient features of the Christian minority population that calls for increased involvement and commitment in the area of quality higher education, especially education that is geared to employment generation that can serve the objective of providing locally relevant job-oriented courses to the youth of the country which will provide them with a means of livelihood and progress.

- a) Probity in public life and professional ethics – a matter of concern: Corruption, at all levels, has become endemic to the country. The proposed university will, from inception, place great emphasis on the teaching of ethics, human and religious values. A course encompassing such values will be an integral part of every graduate programme and a study of ethics will be built into every field of study. We also hope to make the University a centre of debate and discussion on this social malaise affecting the country.

- b) Access to higher education for the poor and the marginalized – a question of equity and access: Many of the minority Christian youth come from economically-poorer sections of society, and do not readily get admission into institutions of higher learning. This lacuna could be addressed in some way by the National Christian University, through affiliated colleges and other groups of the Christian Churches that are already contributing much in the field of education through their large networks of schools and colleges geared to the underprivileged.

- c) Lack of facilities for higher studies in emerging and frontier areas of knowledge: Some of these fields are: environmental studies, social work & rural management, sustainable development, professional ethics, counselling & psychology, various avenues for study and employment in the service sector etc. The proposed university intends to target some of these areas in addition to the professional courses envisaged.

- d) The challenges of globalization and internationalization: The impact of globalisation is felt increasingly in the country and will be more so in the years to come. A National Christian University would be in a unique position to give a boost to international exchange and collaboration in university education through collaborations with other Christian universities abroad.

- e) Research with social relevance: From inception the proposed university will be a research cum teaching institute. It proposes to do research particularly in the fields of culture, youth, and education.

- f) Exodus of young Indians: Over the last few decades, the country has witnessed a sizable increase in literacy rates and in the number of students graduating out of schools and colleges. Increase in the number of institutions offering quality higher education has not kept pace with such developments, leading to the phenomenon of an enormous exodus of students to pro-

fessional colleges and universities in other parts of the world, draining the country of its best students and straining its financial resources. Setting up a good university, geared to professional courses, could help to stem that tide as well as provide these opportunities to the students of this region here itself at an affordable cost.

- g) Popularisation of e-learning and use of information technology: The proposed university intends to harness the latest technological advances in the field of information technology to popularise e-learning in the region, thus making education available to the far corners of this vast country and often inaccessible regions.

- h) An impetus to teacher education: The proposed university will focus on Teacher Education as a privileged area of interest in order to accelerate the pace of education and development in the region. The university intends to revamp the curriculum of its affiliated institutions to make them more relevant to current needs and more responsive to the rapidly changing face of education.

## The Vision of a National Christian University

Drawing its inspiration from the educational philosophy of stalwarts of Christianity, the National Christian University will be committed to an integral and personalized education of the young that will mould its students into intellectually competent, morally upright, socially committed, and spiritually inspired citizens at the service of India and the world of today and tomorrow.

**Characterized by a preferential option for young people, especially for those coming from the lower strata of society, it will**

- Maintain close attention to building a moral conscience based on values, with special emphasis on a culture of solidarity and peace, through a model of sustainable human development, of equality and reciprocity in relationships, and of respect for human life in its highest dignity;
- Promote dialogue among different cultures and religions, between culture-science-technology and a faith capable of enlightening reality and life;
- Contribute to the development of a knowledge - based society, endeavouring to develop its staff and students into a new generation of leaders who possess a love for truth, the critical intelligence to pursue it, and the eloquence to articulate it; and,
- Give special attention to the field of education, the formation of educators, the field of technology and work, and the world of communication.

## Objectives To achieve these goals, it will

- Establish academic departments, centres, faculties and institutions of excellence to train professionals of high competence and commitment.
  - Affiliate colleges and set up university centres for interactive, distance, online and other modes of learning in a networked system of learning centres using modern information and communication technologies.
  - Focus on employment oriented courses emphasising not merely technical competence but self-reliance, wisdom and social responsibility.
  - Promote and undertake research, pure and applied, bearing upon education, the needs of the region, and human development.
  - Guide Research, teaching, study and cultural services to know better the situation of youth, especially the most disadvantaged, and bring about their positive transformation.
  - Develop innovative concepts and programmes in higher education that are flexible and responsive to changes in society.
  - Collaborate with educational and health-care institutions, government and voluntary organizations to offer various academic programmes.
  - Be open to and seek students and staff from throughout the region, the nation and the world, while maintaining its preferential commitment to the educational needs of the citizens of Assam and the North Eastern States;
  - Assist its graduates in their career planning and placement.
- Based on the above, a National Christian University will serve the country and the community and be an enabler in nation building.



Aligarh Muslim University