

CONTRIBUTION OF JESUITS TO HIGHER EDUCATION
IN GOA: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HIGHER
EDUCATION OF THE JESUITS

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I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF HIGHER EDUCATION OF THE JESUITS

Higher education has been synonymous with the Society of Jesus. The founding members of the Society, be it Ignatius or Francis Xavier were all University educated and right from the beginning, when the Society was founded on 27th September 1540, Ignatius stressed on a rigorous academic formation for all those who desired to become Jesuits. This tradition of higher education was seen in the Indian subcontinent right from the time when Francis Xavier landed in Goa on 6th May 1542. On his arrival he was requested to take up the responsibility of forming the youth of the seminary as he himself had adorned a chair at the Paris University.

On 24th April 1541 the Vicar General of Goa, Miguel Vas and Fr. Diogo de Borba started the Confraternity of the Holy faith. The Confraternity was to propagate the catholic faith and to educate the young converts. It was also decided to establish a seminary for the indigenous boys, where they would be instructed in reading, writing, Portuguese and Latin grammar, Christian doctrine and moral theology. The work on the seminary of Holy Faith started on 10th November 1541, adjacent to the Church of Our Lady of Light in

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Old Goa. The confraternity decided then to hand over the administration of the seminary to a religious order as they would be better equipped in the art of character formation of the young¹. The Franciscan order was approached, but they refused.

When the Jesuits were approached, as they were learned men, Francis Xavier accepted the responsibility and wrote to his superior Ignatius to send a responsible person to take charge of the seminary. In 1543 the building was completed and became the College of St. Paul under the Jesuits. In 1544 Fr. Paulo Camerto SJ joined the college and taught Latin grammar to the boys, while in 1545 Fr. Nicolas Lancillotto, a colleague of Francis Xavier, became the rector of the college. From 1547 onwards the college of St. Paul became an exclusive institution of the Jesuits². In fact according to Charles Borges, from 1549 at Governor Jorge Cabral's request the financial and administrative maintenance was also taken over by the Jesuits³. This seminary was the centre of educational activities with the Jesuits at the helm of affairs of formation. Students came from all over, from Ethiopia to Malaysia⁴. Thus, the involvement of the Jesuits in higher learning goes back right to the founding of the order and the arrival of the first Jesuits to India. Though nothing remains of the college of St. Paul's today except its memory and a portico, it has been the predecessor of hundreds of other schools and colleges in India. Though the college of St. Paul might not have really become a Salamanca or a Coimbra but it surely became the mother of over 300 Jesuit schools and colleges spread throughout Asia earning for the Jesuits the sobriquet 'Paulistas'⁵. According to Shukla Ray, in 2003, the Jesuits ran 38 university colleges, 5 institutes of Business Administration and 155 high schools throughout the country, most of them highly reputed⁶. All these colleges such as St. Joseph's, Calicut, 1793 (handed over to the Jesuits in 1883), St. Joseph's Trichy, 1884, St. Xavier's Kolkata, 1860, etc were established subsequent to the college of St. Paul.

¹ Xavier, 2010, p. 208.

² Xavier, 1987, p. 57.

³ Borges, 1994, p. 20.

⁴ Fernandes, 2003, p. 112.

⁵ Cabral, 2009, p. 7.

⁶ Shukla, 2003, pp. 127-128.

2. ATTEMPTS TO SET UP A COLLEGE IN GOA

In 1956 Goa was not a separate Jesuit province but a section of the Portugal Province. Fr. Carlos de Melo, the section superior, who was based at Rachol Seminary in a letter to Fr. Superior General, dated 24/01/1956 wrote: «we have schools in Goa such as Loyola's Margao and St. Britto's Mapusa but we need to begin a college in Goa. The civil and religious authorities are considering opening a college, we should not miss the opportunity»⁷.

For whatever reason this request to open a college in Goa was not met, but in a letter dated 22/01/1962 Fr. Claude Saldanha mentions to the Section Superior, Fr. Carlos de Melo that he had tried to start a college in 1956 under Fr. Goncalves but Fr. Albino had stopped his attempt. In the same letter he proposes starting a Jesuit college now, based on the idea of 2 Indian officers, ex-students of Loyola's Margao. He mentions that already Chowgule's had stolen a march over them and were starting a college soon. He urges the superior to buy around 20 acres land soon and then offers to go to Europe en route to America to collect funds for the college project⁸. This proposal of Fr. Saldanha to start a Jesuit college was soon followed by a circular dated 1/03/1962 by some important Goans, making a strong plea for beginning the University of Goa⁹. An education committee under the chairmanship of Shri B. N. Jha, appointed by the Government of India in April 1962 to review the prevailing education system in Goa proposed the establishment of a University in Goa¹⁰. With the general awakening after the Liberation people were anxious to have institutions of higher learning, especially in Arts and Science for which facilities were not available in the territory. In fact at the time of liberation the *Escola Medica* of Goa with its two courses (the five-year medical course and the three-year course in pharmacy) was the only existing institution of higher education¹¹.

Fr. Saldanha's proposal was taken seriously by the Section Superior, Fr. Carlos de Melo, who wrote a letter dated 7/02/1962 to all the Provincials of India. In the letter he says his work as spiritual

⁷ 505/001, Goa Province Archives.

⁸ 505/003, Goa Province Archives.

⁹ 505/002, Goa Province Archives.

¹⁰ Varde, 1977, p. 117.

¹¹ Varde, 1977, p. 114.

father at Rachol Seminary prevented him from approaching them personally. No less than 3 bodies were trying to set up a college in Goa by June 1962. Many of their friends were urging them to start a Jesuit college for their catholic students. While conceding that the small Goa Jesuit Section, which as a separate unit was just 7 years old, was hardly equipped for the task, he was confident that even without men and money, they would be able to start a college by June with the help of the generosity of the Provincials. He made 2 specific requests: «1) Let me know what amount you would be prepared to advance to us by way of loan, at moderate interest, or free of interest. 2) Lend me for around 4-5 years the services of any of your Fathers with the necessary qualifications and preferably also some experience of teaching in a college»¹².

In response to this letter Fr. Carlos de Melo got letters from the provincials of Bombay, Gujarat, Patna, Madurai and Darjeeling supporting the idea but unable to help with personnel or money. The letters from Kerala and Belgaum-Pune Provincials were not supportive of the idea, they felt it was still premature as Goa was just getting merged in the Indian union and the urgent need at that moment was to start a college in Delhi. At the same time as Fr. De Melo tried to mobilize support in the form of funds and personnel from the various Jesuit province in India, in Goa he tried to gather support for the project of building a college both from the Jesuits and the public. 3 Jesuit meetings were held on Jan 26, Feb 17 & Feb 27 1962. Besides 3 public meetings were held on Feb 22, 23 & 25 at Mapusa, Panjim and Margao. What emerged from these meetings was there was no doubt about the need for a college but the venue was debated, many possible centres were suggested with its pros and cons, also the issue could not be taken forward since the permission of the General was yet to come¹³.

The permission or rather lack of it from the General came soon and it was a real disappointment for the Jesuits of the Goa section. In a letter to the Section Superior, Fr. Carlos de Melo, dated 24/02/1962, the VG of the Society called for patience. He mentioned that Fr. General was not in favour of a college at present. A

¹² 505/005, Goa Province Archives.

¹³ Minutes of the meetings by Peter Mendonca SJ, dated 6/03/1962, 505/ 18, Goa Province Archives.

negative reply had been sent to Fr. Balaguer regarding starting a college in Delhi¹⁴. In another letter sent just 3 days after the VG's letter, to the Section Superior, Fr. Carlos de Melo, dated 27/02/1962, the Bombay Provincial, Fr. Aixala wrote that Fr. Jerome D'Souza, the Assistant to the general, had written to him to say that the General was very displeased that the plan for a college in Goa should have been taken for granted and public pronouncements made on it before he was consulted. Fr. General did not believe that they should hurry at all about this¹⁵.

This rather negative reply from the General to the proposal of the Jesuits in Goa to start a college in post-1961 Goa completely derailed the project and it got shelved permanently. In fact the VG of the Society in a letter to Fr. Carlos de Melo, dated 14/05/1962, commended him for humbly accepting the decision of Fr. General regarding the college¹⁶. While the initiative of the Jesuits in Goa to start a college was nipped in the bud by the denial of permission from the higher authorities in Rome, there were no such problems with private initiatives. Dhempe College of Arts and Science, started at Panaji by the Goa Education Society and Smt. Parvatibai Chowgule College of Arts and Science, started at Margao by the Chowgule Education Society were opened in June 1962, while in 1963 St. Xavier's College was started by the Diocesan Society of Education at Bastora, Bardez and subsequently transferred to Mapusa¹⁷.

3. XCHR, ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Reasons for the founding of Xavier Centre

From the various oral and written sources, including the letters found in the Goa Province Archives it appears that there were several reasons for the founding of the Xavier Centre. One key reason was the improving of the relations between India and Portugal and the renewed interest in Indo-Portuguese cultural exchanges and in Indo-Portuguese historical studies. With the thawing of relations between India and Portugal, Portuguese organizations were inter-

¹⁴ 505/ 12, Goa Province Archives.

¹⁵ 505/ 15, Goa Province Archives.

¹⁶ 505/ 13, Goa Province Archives.

¹⁷ Varde, 1977, p. 115.

ested in starting Indo-Portuguese cultural and historical centres in India. In fact, Dr. Teotonio R. de Souza, one of the key movers and shakers behind the XCHR project, and who became the second and the longest serving director of XCHR, in a letter to Fr. Romauld D'Souza (Goa-Poona Provincial), dated 23/11/1976, reported that news of the imminent possibility of a Centre for Indo-Portuguese Studies in Goa being set up by the Portuguese quickened the process of Fr. J. C. Afonso taking up this project of starting such a Centre¹⁸.

During the 450 years of Portuguese rule in Goa, the history that was written by the Jesuits, at that time the Society of Jesus was exclusively for Europeans, was deeply enmeshed with and apologetic towards the Portuguese colonial rulers in Goa. The liberation of Goa in 1961 and the post-liberation needs and aspirations of the Goan people to rewrite history from the native perspective, free from the colonial bias, was another reason for the emergence of XCHR.

The other main impetus was the plans of starting a University in Goa and so the need for the Jesuits to have a base for work in the future Goa University. Also since the Goa province did not have any institution of higher learning, its contribution to the development of the intellectual life and of higher education in the relatively young and fledging union territory of Goa was minimal. These reasons for the setting up of a Centre for Indo-Portuguese history are well summarized in this letter of Fr. Romauld D'Souza (Goa-Poona Provincial) to Fr. John Correia Afonso, dated 3/01/1977. While reiterating his full support for a branch of Heras Institute in Goa he gives the following reasons: «The Society must have in Goa some centre of higher learning or research in order to make its contribution to the intellectual life of the state. It must also have some entry into the proposed Goa University... A historical research institute would be the most natural thing to have, considering that the Goa University is supposed to take history as a field of specialization and also on account of the easy availability of historical research material in Goa. If a Centre of Indo-Portuguese history is to be established in India, the most natural place for it is Goa...»¹⁹

In a note, dated 21/11/1976 on a proposed Centre for Indo-Portuguese history at the Heras Institute, St. Xavier's College, Bom-

¹⁸ 510/004, Goa Province Archives.

¹⁹ 510/005, Goa Province Archives.

bay with a branch in Goa, J. C. Afonso gives the following motivation for the project:

From the apostolic point of view, the Centre would

- a. do research in an area important for our missionary history;
- b. give us a base for work in the future Goa University²⁰.

3.2 Evolution of the nature and aim of the Centre

While there was unanimity about starting a centre for Indo-Portuguese history in Goa, there was a gradual evolution of the nature and aim of the institute. Initially the idea was to start a Goa branch of the Heras Institute of Indian history and culture, St. Xavier's College, Bombay, which would specialize in Indo-Portuguese history. This idea which was prevalent at the start of the deliberations in 1976 is found in the following letter:

R. D'Souza (Goa-Poona Provincial) in a letter to J. C. Afonso, dated 1/07/1976, assures him full support, both moral and financial, for the branch of Heras Institute in Goa. «I am ready to pay the bill for the branch in Goa and even to find a suitable house. Such an institution will enhance the image of the Society in this region»²¹.

The organization and structure of this branch of the Heras Institute was clearly spelt out in a proposal by J. C. Afonso in a note dated 21/11/1976:

The aim of the Centre will be a special section or activity of the Heras Institute devoted to research on the Portugues in India –their empire and influence, their historical records... Organization: The official headquarters of the Centre will be at the Heras Insitute, Bombay & the director of the Institute will also be in charge of the Centre which will not be a separate legal entity. The Centre will also have a branch in Goa with a library and facilities for research scholars²².

But very soon the Jesuits in Goa were not satisfied with this model of a centre being dependent on another institute. They did not want just a branch of Heras Institute but an independent centre, which would only be associated with Heras. In a letter to R.

²⁰ 510/003, Goa Province Archives.

²¹ 510/001, Goa Province Archives.

²² 510/003, Goa Province Archives.

D'Souza dated 26/01/1977, T. de Souza supports the link with Heras Institute in order for the new Centre to be taken into confidence by the forthcoming Goa University. But he also mentions that as far as funds and men are concerned the Centre may be able to be independent from Heras²³. His view is endorsed and more explicitly spelt out by R. D'Souza in his reply to him, dated 10/02/1977:

What J. C. Afonso wants for Goa seems to be a branch of the set up in Bombay and not a research centre with a certain respectability of its own. I wouldn't be satisfied with that ... We need a research institute of our own in Goa, associated with the Heras Institute of Bombay... it cannot be just a branch of the Heras Institute²⁴.

R. D'Souza justifies this association of the Goa centre with the Heras Institute when he writes this letter to J. C. Afonso, dated 3/01/1977; «since the Heras Institute has a good standing in the academic circles, particularly with the Bombay University, the centre of Indo-Portuguese history in Goa should be linked with the Heras Institute»²⁵. Clearly there was a shift in the understanding of the nature of the proposed Centre.

At the same time in that initial planning period between 1976-77, there seemed to be a consensus that the area of research of the future Centre would be Indo-Portuguese history. All the three main stakeholders in the initial planning of the Centre, viz. J. C. Afonso, R. D'souza & T. de Souza wanted a Centre specializing in Indo-Portuguese history. In fact when J. C. Afonso in a letter to the Bombay Provincial, dated 5/03/1977 complains that R. D'Souza has changed his mind from a Centre of Indo-Portuguese history in Goa to «a Historical Research Institute, which will study among other things, the Indo-Portuguese period»²⁶, R. D'Souza in his reply dated 8/03/1977 makes it clear that the main aim of the Institute of Historical Research in Goa is to study Indo-Portuguese history.

R. D'Souza in another letter dated 10/02/1977 goes to the extent of urging T. de Souza to convince the Gulbenkian Foundation that the most suitable centre for research in Indo-Portuguese history

²³ 510/006, Goa Province Archives.

²⁴ 510/007, Goa Province Archives.

²⁵ 510/005, Goa Province Archives.

²⁶ 510/12, Goa Province Archives.

is Goa and not Bombay because there was news that Gulbenkian might support starting such a centre in Bombay²⁷. Two letters from Gulbenkian foundation to the Goa-Poona Provincial, R. D'souza, dated 03/05/1977 and 01/07/1977 expressed their keen interest in collaborating in the project of setting up an Indo-Portuguese Centre in Goa and offering financial support in terms of assistance to researchers for visiting Portugal to consult the local archives and offer of scholarships, books and publications. The only point of contention was whether this centre should be only historical in nature or of a wider cultural nature, which is what Gulbenkian and the Ambassador of Portugal, Liuz Gaspar da Silva wanted.

At the same time the report of the Commission constituted to study XCHR in 2000 suggests that the area of research of the new centre was supposed to be Missionary history and specifically Jesuit history. Fr. Pedro Aruppe who was the Superior General of the Society of Jesus in the 1970s wanted some Indian Jesuits to work on the Monumenta Indica in Rome, the history of the missions in India. R. D'Souza, who was provincial of the Goa-Poona province, proposed to Aruppe that instead of sending Jesuits to Rome to work on that project, Jesuits could start a history research centre in India and invite Jesuits from various provinces to work there. He volunteered to start such a centre in Goa and his proposal was accepted by Aruppe.

By the end of 1977 after many letter and meetings between the three main persons involved in the XCHR project, viz. Afonso, R. D'souza & T. de Souza, the idea of setting up a centre for Indo-Portuguese history in Goa got crystallized. This idea was then brought up by T. de Souza in the form of a postulate in the Goa-Poona Province Congregation held at Xavier Training College, Belgaum, 1978. The idea was to test the support of the other Jesuits for such a project. Of course there was the risk of the postulate being rejected and that would have set back the project by several years, if not completely stopped it. In the third session of the Congregation, on 05/03/1978, the postulate that was presented by T. de Souza was amended and accepted by an overwhelming majority to be sent to Fr. General (44 votes in favour, while 4 abstained). The amended postulate read like this: «It is asked of Fr. General to encourage the

²⁷ 510/007, Goa Province Archives.

establishment in Goa of an historical research centre, which could later on grow into an Institute with the collaboration of the Heras Institute, Bombay, and which could also provide facilities for a house of Jesuit writers»²⁸.

The overwhelming approval by the Province Congregation was the impetus required and after that things moved very fast. Within 20 days after that very important decision by the province Congregation, on 25/03/1978 an agreement was signed by the provincials of Goa-Poona and Bombay encouraging the Heras Institute to assist the Goa-Poona Jesuits to set up the Centre of research in Indo-Portuguese history in Goa²⁹. In this document signed by the 2 provincials and J. C. Afonso, the director of Heras, the point that this centre should become the centre of documentation for the history of the Society of Jesus in India, was included. Fr. General approved this project on 1st May 1978 and it was registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 on 7th July 1978. So officially the XCHR came into existence as a registered society on 7th July 1978. On the occasion of the International Seminar on Indo-Portuguese History held in Goa from 28-30 Nov 1978, organized by the Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture, Bombay, the foundation stone of the Xavier centre of Historical Research was laid at Porvorim in the vicinity of Panjim, Goa on 1st December 1978. At a brief function at Porvorim the archbishop-Patriarch of Goa blessed the foundation stone and the Chairman of the ICHR Dr. A. R. Kulkarni performed the ground-breaking ceremony. The function was attended by the participants of the Seminar as well as the ambassadors of Portugal and Brazil, and a by a good number of Jesuits working in Goa³⁰. But the activities of the new centre were inaugurated only on 4th November 1979 at a temporary premise at Loyola Hall, Miramar (present day Candidate House)³¹. The present spacious premises at Alto Porvorim were inaugurated on 28th January 1983.

The contribution of T. de Souza to the origin and growth of XCHR is immense. His contribution lay in the fact that in a very

²⁸ Minutes of the Goa-Poona Province Congregation, 510/29, Goa Province Archives.

²⁹ 510/32, Goa Province Archives.

³⁰ Circular of Fr. John Correia Afonso, not dated, 510/25, Goa Province Archives.

³¹ Report by the Commission-2000, 510/114, Goa Province Archives.

short time he made XCHR known in the Indian academic circles & especially in the world of history by collaborating with lay historians and institutions, organizing seminars in collaboration with ICHR and other academic bodies and encouraging and mentoring young historians in Goa. In fact soon after the inauguration of the XCHR on 4th November 1979 he organized a seminar on «Problems of Goan Historiography» on 23-24 February, 1980 at the Miramar campus, and made it an annual feature of the Centre. In a letter to Fr. Leslie Almeida, Goa-Poona Provincial, dated 16/10/1981 T. de Souza writes: «I feel proud that I could bring the XCHR from its first stage of planning in 1977 to its present stage within a short period of two and half years after its actual inauguration. A part of my heart will forever remain with it. Most of my success has been possible precisely due to collaboration with lay-historians and institutions»³². Letter of Fr. Romauld D'Souza to Teotonio de Souza, dated 27/02/1980: «my hopes and my trust in you have been largely fulfilled...The most important project should be to make the XCHR a centre of the Society's documentation in India»³³.

Teotonio's meticulous planning in the growth of XCHR is seen by how he undertook a temporary lectureship post in the Department of History, University of Pune, in order to get himself recognized as a research guide. In a letter to Fr. Leslie Almeida, Goa-Poona Provincial, dated 12/3/1981 he wrote: «The XCHR is already about a year and half old, and I consider it important to have it recognized officially (by some University) as Research Centre before the University of Goa comes into existence... The intended recognition will not be possible until I get myself recognized as research guide»³⁴. Though XCHR did not get recognition from Pune University it got recognition from the newly formed Goa University-Goa University recognized XCHR as a 'Post-graduate institute for historical research and for guiding students for research work leading to the degree of Ph.D in history of this University'³⁵. Also Dr. B. Sheik Ali, Vice-Chancellor, Goa University congratulated Dr. Teotonio de Souza in the following words: «Your recognition as a Research guide and also the recognition of your Institute as a Centre

³² Letter ref. no. DIR/147/81, XCHR Archives.

³³ Letter ref. no. AD/23/80, XCHR Archives.

³⁴ Letter ref. no. DIR/35/81, XCHR Archives.

³⁵ Letter ref. no. GU/EC-LIC/7/86/37, dated 04-04-1986, XCHR Archives.

for Ph.D. programmes would go a long way in promoting historical consciousness in Goa³⁶.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The setting up of the XCHR at a very crucial junction in the history of post-colonial Goa reflects the initiative of the Jesuits to read the signs of the times and contribute towards intellectual apostolate and higher education. Though they missed the bus in 1962 and several mining and industrial houses started colleges, the Jesuits were able to contribute to the field of higher education and to the University of Goa through its two research institutions of XCHR and TSKK. Both these institutions are pioneering initiatives in their respective fields of history and Konknni language in Goa and have contributed immensely in those areas. From the above deliberations it emerges that the inability of the Goa province to have a college of its own is not due to a lack of effort on the part of its members but due to a conjunction of several historical reasons such as lack of support from other provinces in terms of finance and personnel and rejection of the proposal by the General. The province policy that emerges is that the Jesuits are committed to furthering higher education and are willing to start new institutions of higher learning but there seems to be less clarity as to the nature, type and structure of these institutions.

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³⁶ Letter ref. no. GU/9/86, dated 11-04-1986, XCHR Archives.

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