

(CIRCULAR- 08/2025)

(On 12A, FCRA, Charitable Societies, forced conversion etc.)

30/10/2025,

Dear Fathers, Brothers and Sisters,

Thy Kingdom Come!

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

A strategic change in the approach of the Church to the mission has become a dire need. On the one hand there is a silent persecution on Christians and on the other, there is direct attack and targeting of Christian missionaries. Some legislations in the past few years in our country is paved the way for direct or indirect attack on Christianity aiming to obstruct our missionary activities. It is either to restrict our freedom of service to the humanity or to cut down financial resources. In either way it hinders the religious freedom enshrined in the Constitution of India (Cf. # 25-28). In this context we need to pay our attention to the following:

- 1) **Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of children) Act (2015):** The Act imposes a number of restrictions on running boardings. It has become impossible to run them and as a result many have stopped hostels and boardings for children below 18 years. Government started Ashram salas and woo parents to put their children there. Indirectly the government is forcing to close down the private/NGO boardings. As we know running the boardings is an easy way to enter into a social contact with the people. The consequence is that our children lose opportunities for faith formation, character formation and proper education
- 2) **A Registration:** The requirements to renew 12 A registration is now too strict. It looks that the requisites for renewal of 12 A Registration point towards almost impossible to get it renewed. If the renewal is not done, we are forced to give 30 percent tax for every income. In such case normally no donor agency will be interested in extending financial assistance to us. Which means we will have to cut down all our activities, both ecclesial and social. Without such services our social contact will be once again reduced to minimum or nil.
- 3) **FCRA:** Foreign money transfer to our country has become too difficult these days. The government intends to reduce it to the minimum or stop completely. In the past few years

FCRA renewal of many NGO's were canceled. All our activities will be brought down when foreign money flow is reduced or stopped. These days we face great financial constraints after the discontinuation of CNEWA subsidies to our boardings. The net result is very clear. The poor, the marginalized and the down-trodden get less assistance and we know the government aid is only for name sake and that too is not easily available to minorities for various reasons. Naturally this will reduce our social influence.

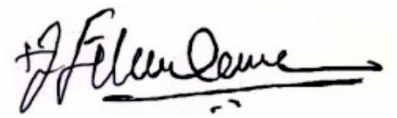
- 4) **Dispensaries:** Due to new stipulations in the functioning of dispensaries there have occurred great crisis in running them even where they are genuinely required. To run a dispensary with qualified doctor, nurse and pharmacist is almost impossible. As a result, many had to close down their dispensaries. Health centres in villages render great service to the people where there are no easy public transportation facilities. A restriction on running of dispensaries is another technique to reduce our service to the people. Needless, to say it brings down our contact with the people and our social influence is cut short to the minimum is its natural consequence. However, some do run the dispensaries at their own risk and I do appreciate it. May God reward them.
- 5) **School permissions:** The new stipulations on school permissions is once again blocking many to come to the field of education ministry. Though, there are few good aspects in the New Education Policy (NEP) there are also many other provisions not that favorable to our education ministry. The government interventions and that of some fanatic religious groups make it too difficult to run schools in a normal way. The unwarranted government stipulations consume lots of time and energy and some get disgusted at such instances. It dissuades few from taking up education ministry.
- 6) **Charity commissioner & Charitable Societies/Trusts:** The change reports of the Societies and Trusts, random inspection of charity commissioner, quinquennial renewal process of Societies/Trusts/FCRA/12 A registration etc. have become herculean tasks. A bulk of our valuable time have to be spent for these works. Many of us are not fully aware of the meticulous requisites of Charity Commission. It is a very complicated task and any lapse or snags can end up in the cancellation of permission. As president of 17 Societies in the diocese I know how many times I had to sign papers, documents, cheques etc. A recent government order requires that 5% of gross income of all Charitable Societies/Trusts is to be remitted to Charity Commission. If we are not meticulously careful on functioning of Societies/Trusts, it will adversely affect our mission as well.

7) Forced Conversion & Atrocities against Christians: Forced conversion has been a perennial allegation against Christian missionaries in India. We know for certain that there are no forced conversions. Indeed, Church teaches against it. But somehow we are targeted. Some may be paving the way for such allegations. The Christians are targeted quite often and the present administration in the country in various levels is either closing their eyes towards it or silently supporting it. Being a minority group and not a vote-bank in our area we are in a helpless situation. No political parties are going to support us. Each party has their own hidden agendas for their political gains. Walking in the path of Christ we have our reservations to support any political party. Somehow we are victimized for no fault of ours.

Conclusion:

In the midst of these vicarious situations we find no permanent and amicable solution to these issues enumerated above. We cannot expect support of any political party. The bureaucrats are biased and people are misled. What new approach we shall adapt is not very clear. One thing is sure that we have to do something to meet with these challenges. As citizens of India we have constitutional rights and as believers in Christ we have a responsible task to witness Christian values. We have to think together and discuss to make a strategy for our mission ahead. We shall resolve to do our best to meet these eventualities and challenges ahead. May God assist us.

Yours devotedly in Christ



† Ephrem Nariculam Bishop,
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