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## ***New Life Theological Journal (NLTJ)***

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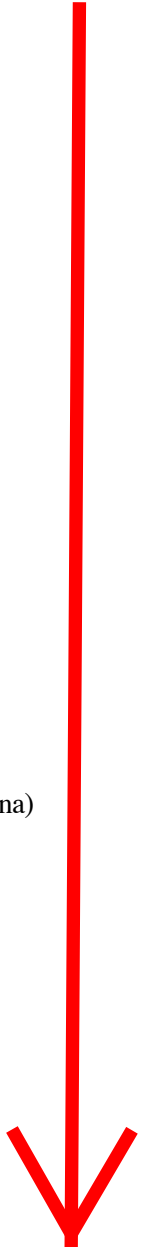
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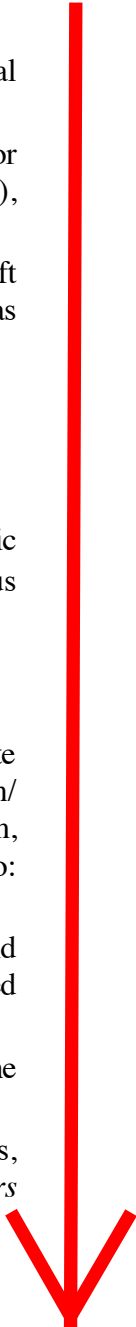
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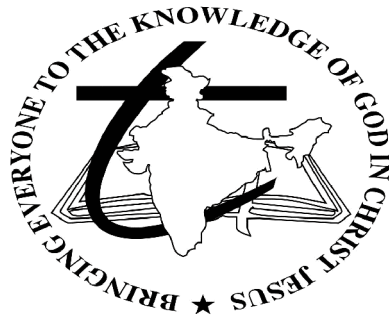
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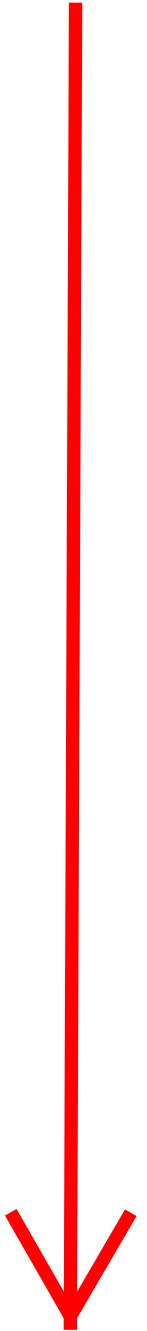
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## **Reconfiguring Theological Education in India**

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### **Preliminary Remarks**

Some time ago, I was invited to read a paper on the theme, mentioned as the title of this article, at the newly formed university, Sam Higginbottom University of Agriculture, Technology and Sciences (SHUATS)<sup>1</sup> at its campus in Naini, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh. I was aware that an important, and historical, event had taken place in the history of theological education in Indian context, with the formation of this University, recognition of its distinct Christian character, and potentiality to offer degrees in Theology through establishing a faculty of Theology at the University. I appreciate the tireless efforts of Most Rev. Dr. Rajendra B. Lal, the Vice-Chancellor, and his colleagues, to make it a reality. I am conscious that this sets a precedence for the formation of other universities<sup>2</sup>, with the similar provision for the study of Christian theology, or addition of such through amendment, in the existing Acts of other universities in India

Next year is the bicentenary of the founding of Serampore College. I was trying my best, during my tenure as the Registrar of the Senate of Serampore College (2004-13), to prepare the needed physical and academic infrastructure so as to approach the Government of Bengal to restore the complete university status to the College during the time of celebrations in 2018.<sup>3</sup> I regret that this is not being attempted, thus missing a golden opportunity once again as it was in 1968 during ter-jubilee celebrations. I, though, rejoice that a new opportunity is now embark upon by the establishment of this University to take some bold and innovative steps for the vitalization of theological education in India.<sup>4</sup>

In the context of the theme of this paper, I would like to present a few directions that can be contemplated in SHUATS, or in universities established with similar provisions under their Acts, the directions that were meant to be taken by Serampore College as it began its journey two hundred years ago. A re-visitation of some of the forgotten, and time-tested, principles of (Theological) education, enunciated by William Carey, Joshua Marshman and William Ward, may help us to plan for the future programmes of the Faculty of Theology. I believe that the Carey's model is still very relevant for providing theological education in the multi-faith context of secular education in university campuses in India

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### Carey's model: Theological studies for 'Others'

Historians of theological education world-over are aware that Serampore College has been the only institution in India that has a Royal Charter of incorporation, granted by the King of Denmark, Fredrick the VI in 1827<sup>5</sup> (later, partly abrogated, and partly elaborated by an Act of Bengal Legislative Assembly in 1918<sup>6</sup>), with powers to confer academic degrees in any branch of knowledge, thus, becoming the first institution in Asia with such an empowerment, much before universities were established in this region. Serampore College began well in 1818 with the introduction of comprehensive learning-opportunity to its pupils without any restriction of caste, color or creed, as it announced itself in its prospectus, published in 1819 in London<sup>7</sup>.

SHUATS began its journey as an agricultural institution, achieving distinct accomplishment in the field of agricultural education, recognized as an autonomous, deemed and now university status. It has now expanded beyond agricultural sciences to include other allied sciences, humanities and theology.<sup>8</sup> Unlike Serampore, which has preferred to limit its powers, granted by the Royal Danish Charter of 1827, to confer degrees only in the Faculty of Theology through the enactment of Serampore College Act, 1918<sup>9</sup>, SHUATS has distinctly incorporated a provision for imparted studies in Christian theology and religion and confer degrees<sup>10</sup>. This is an area upon which this University has to take a path-breaking step through configuring its courses with study programmes of other faculties, and developing interacting, fundamental, integrated and inter-disciplining courses.

In the context of university education world over, the right to education is recognized as a fundamental human right, I would not like to over-emphasize the 'without any restriction of caste, color and creed' as it has specifics in the Act<sup>11</sup> that can be helpful in providing studies of other religions in this University which should not be overlooked in the pluralistic context of university set-up. The SHUATS Act places the responsibility upon the University to admit students without any consideration of their race, religion, creed, caste or class, it, at the same time, has provided for preferential treatment to Christian community.<sup>12</sup> The Article, however, does not debar any student from taking a degree course, or a specific course to receive credit, from the Faculty of Theology. This dilemma was also inherent both in the Danish Royal Charter-1827, and Serampore College Act-1918. The Senate of Serampore College resolved the issue by clarifying that its degrees are open to all<sup>13</sup>, but the nomenclatures of the same degree-course, which is meant for ministerial training, will be different for the people of other faiths and no-faith. SHUATS Act, though clear, does have the mandate to promote the study of philosophy and culture of India with the possibility for their incorporation into the courses offered by the people of other faiths

and no-faith in other faculties as well. The possibility of separate departments of various Religions within the Faculty of Theology can be a possibility. Many universities have Department/School of Religions (Oldest being, Visva-Bharati, Banaras, Patiala, Madras, Madurai Kamaraj, Pondicherry to mention a few), with specific chairsoffering courses in particular religion; they can be helpful in planning programmes under the power of the University under Article 9 of SHUATS Act. I am sure, this aspect will also be considered.

In the section, above, I briefly discussed the opportunities that are provided for theological education in secular academic set-up, taking into consideration of emergence of Serampore College and SHUATS. Carey, conscious of his initial failure in his prime motivation for evangelization of India as he dreamt in England, for which he formed the missionary society and volunteered himself to go abroad, and his ten years' experience as the professor of languages at Fort Williams College, Calcutta, concluded that education is the only way to enlighten the minds and spirit of the people among whom he chose to encamp. He was convinced that Eastern literature and Western science will open the possibility for the enlightenment of the East. He offered theological courses to anyone who cared<sup>14</sup>, especially to Christians, and a few chosen Christian students, preparatory courses for the ministry of the Church. The foundation of education laid at his new College on the study of classical languages (Sanskrit, Arabic/Persian, Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, Latin, Chinese), modern Languages (English, regional/native languages), general History, chronology, astronomy, various branches of natural science, Geography, Hindu Shastras, Purana, Buddhist systems, Hindu Laws, nature and management of schools.<sup>15</sup> My intention in mentioning them was to underline the fact that theological education in India can only be relevant, if imparted, as a part of total education at university level. SHUATS may consider this abandoned principle of Cary by the inheritors of his legacy, as it embarks upon the noble path of reconfiguration of theological education.

### **Serampore Hangover and Theological Education in India**

In order to help us in 'chalking out the new path' of theological education in the context of secular education in India, imparted at university level, I may briefly point-out, within the constraints of time, some of the useful parameters. I am inclined to suspend the term 'reconfiguration' lest it gives us an impression that SHUATS is in the process of rearranging the programme of theological education as developed by Serampore System all through the years.

A caution can be sounded at the fallacy of equating, or mistakenly taken to be synonymous to, theological education with pastoral ministry, or ministerial formation. It is time that such a distinction is explicitly recognized and steps are taken to draw a sharp line. Theological education is to be considered as an academic exercise under-taken at university level, whereas

ministerial formation is a practical extension of this exercise under-taken at seminary level. In the Carey's scheme, such a difference is not clear, and the monastic hold on the understanding of theological education in the western world continued in its eastern mold. In most of the continental European and American universities such a difference is clearly accepted, and theological education is provided to all without any distinction of 'cast, color, creed/religion, sex and sexual orientation', and those who opt for ministry of the church, do so after spending consideration time at denominational seminaries. In India, some of the churches do arrange special training programmes for Serampore graduates passed from colleges other than their own denominational seminaries. At the university level, where theological education is 'open to all persons of whatever race, religion, creed, caste or class', the courses assigned under 'ministry branch' can be left out, and assigned to denominational church seminaries to offer and conduct licentiate courses of their own, for ministerial formation without any reference to the university.

I am inclined to suggest that the courses under the branch of 'Religion, Philosophy and Society' within Serampore system, if taken under the whole package for theological education in India, may also be removed from the totality of programme, and transferred to a new Department /School of Religion. This will enable students from other faculties to opt for courses of their choice and interest. Moreover, there was always a 'small voice' within Serampore, from north-east Indian students, and later from the Dalits as well, that they need not be forced to study 'greater traditions' at the expense of their own, and always resented study of classical languages as a precondition for higher studies. I heard a discontented voice, from some enthusiasts, demanding preferential treatment to the study of Women's Studies, suggesting the complete deletion of the branch of religion from the revised curricula so that courses from that branch can have more space. Serampore has its own compulsions, universities may not have; and they need to provide space to varieties of such enthusiasts. Furthermore, in the present context of pluralist India, I envisage that the teaching of religions at school level will be a reality in India, earlier than the distant future, following the example of the West, and there will be a great demand for teachers in this subject. During my stay in Serampore, two of NACC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council of University Grant Commission) teams, that visited Serampore College, met me and suggested to introduce degrees in Value Education (old Moral Philosophy, Ethics, Moral Science) and Religions at graduate level in cooperation with Arts-Science-Commerce Departments of the College for secular students.

There is a kind of 'B.D fixation' among theological educators in India. BD was introduced as the final theological degree when Serampore was

set-up as a theological university through the efforts of George Howells in 1910. B.D degree, during the nineteenth-twentieth centuries was considered as research degree after BA-MA degree in Theology. Serampore created the same aura around its B.D, making it an ultimate and final degree in theology, in spite of the fact it was a merely a first degree, hence a baccalaureate degree from the perspective of theological studies, and a post-graduate degree, from the perspectives of its pursuance after bachelor's degree from any other faculty than theology. Serampore, however, in spite of inherent contradiction of having a graduate yet post-graduate tag with B.D. degree, successfully continued to insist its value as a post-graduate degree, even after introducing other graduate, post-graduate and doctoral degrees in theology. SHUATS, and universities have the opportunity to correct the notion, and the norm of theological degrees, corresponding to B.A., M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., D. Phil., and degrees for Honoris Causa from erratic and confusing B.Th., BD, M.Div., M.Th., D.Th., and D.D. series.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Proliferation of Courses:**

‘Proliferation of courses’ in theological education is the ultimate hang-over of Serampore system, which needs to be tackled with care and sympathy, sometimes, perhaps, ruthlessly.

A few years ago, Serampore embarked upon a massive exercise of curriculum revision, taking first step with B.D revision, and later move on to others. The new curriculum has been envisaged on the assumption that there were proliferation of courses/subjects that have overburdened the students; that regional/doctrinal/sectarian/contextual are often neglected; that there is a need for offering college/denominational specific courses/subjects/concern; that some courses can be incorporated in the contents of a few courses; that basic courses should be taught to all without any exception within Serampore system. Senate, since 1918, did not prescribe more than 8-10 courses per year for BD degree. This principle was kept in mind at the outset of the discussion on new BD curriculum, and it was agreed that the curriculum will not have more than 40 courses under four-year course. If we take a look at the curriculum, we can easily notice that there are altogether 52 courses listed towards main BD study. It may look that we have 12 extra courses than anticipated. In reality, however, we have 22 half courses (that is 11 full) together with 30 courses, giving us a total of 41 courses. It is clear that Senate is not off the target. It is not hard to see that difficulty, if any, lies with the half courses, which have infiltrated into the class-hours of the courses that were meant for the courses that colleges were supposed to offer. The remedy, therefore, lies here, warning to do something, but neglected.

I had some suggestions: reduce the half course, making them full courses. I may just be providing mathematical solution, which, in fact, may

not be acceptable to those who have proposed those courses. It may be helpful if the teachers who are dealing with these courses come forward to help in combining, or suggesting alternate courses in their place. Subject matter/contents of some of the courses, if important and necessary, may be incorporated in already existing courses, thus reducing the total number in the curriculum. Easier said than done. In spite of sincere efforts, I may admit, situation has not improved much. One cannot miss the forced entry of new courses from the emerging fields/branches of studies at BD level, in the process of accommodation of all, so that a door is kept open for a post-graduate degree in the new branches.<sup>17</sup>

### **Proliferation of Degrees in Theology**

One may note that Serampore introduced, in its initial stages, two programmes for theological education at the university level- Licentiate in Theology (L. Th) and Bachelor of Divinity (B.D). I have yet to find the rationale for having such nomenclature (L. Th should logically lead to B.Th., not to B. D), or relationship between the two (L. Th is lower degree, and needs to be upgraded to B.D) has not yet satisfactorily clarified. This has led to the perpetual confusion, and a series of it thereafter. One can logically conclude that L. Th will lead to B.Th., M. Th., and D. Th; but it was not so, instead it created another unique and mysterious series, B.D-series, which became the center/mother of all theological degrees in its later development.<sup>18</sup> In each of its regulation for degree programme, one may find a clause explaining their relation to B.D degree. In Serampore system, B.D degree is considered to be an entry point to each of its degrees.

I feel that the Faculty of Theology in a university should either have degrees in Divinity-series or Theology-series; mixing of both creates unnecessary confusion. Therefore, corresponding doctoral degree may differ from Philosophy (Ph. D-D. Phil) series, and should have a theology/divinity (D.Th/Th.D./D.D) series in nomenclature. One need not to open already settled issue in Philosophy-Theology debate, but to have a pronounced way of emphatic assertion of independent nature of this faculty. In case, the Faculty of Theology is taken to be a part of Humanities, then the general series (B.A; M.A; PhD; D. Phil) is the natural choice.

### **Some Sundry Guidelines/Suggestions**

New situations, contexts and opportunities often expect a few innovative and imaginative steps and methods that needs to be undertaken to face new challenges. Faculty of Theology, being part of a multi-faculty academic programme of a university set-up, is something new in a pluralistic context of India. Ancient western universities considered this faculty as the privilege of friars, monks and priests; and the modern, as a part of evangelical-missiological and sociological necessity. Some universities, such as Birmingham, McMaster, Yale, Winnipeg etc., have much experience in such

ventures, but they all are situated in Western Christian democracies; Asian university naturally has multi-/mono-religious ethos and context, and this context encourages us to revive Carey's model for theological education. Exclusivism of any sort, in such a context, is neither natural nor appropriate, post-Carey Serampore approach (may I say Howellian approach, introduced in Serampore in 1910 and formalized in 1918 as Serampore Act was passed, and the first Senate concurred with him) was blatantly exclusive, and therefore, lost its place in academia among others faculties in our university set-up. Periodic cry of Serampore for its recognition as a university bears witness to its complete isolation. Ideological, secular, multi-religious and pluralistic context of Indian situation provides an opportunity to the newly formed universities, such as SHUATS, for inclusive approach as the best pedagogical and educational attitude.

Universities like SHUATS have opportunity to follow UGC pattern of curriculum structures; as it is being followed, at present, in academic programmes of universities in India. Degrees in Theology at B.A, BA (Hons), M.A, M.Phil., and Ph.D., levels should have to be as par with that of other faculties. Four to five courses/papers per semester should suffice the study-load, under the guidance of a tutor, of the student. Many universities have Schools/Department of Languages, and they offer classical languages along with modern languages of the world as certificate/diploma/advanced programmes; Faculty of Theology may join that school and offer Biblical languages through that School, giving students an opportunity to receive an additional certificate/diploma/advanced diplomas along with their degree in Theology. Students can also enhance their knowledge of other languages as well. These courses can run concurrently, or separately, as per the existing plans of the university.

Students, seeking admission in the Faculty of Theology, may be classified into two categories: those who would commit themselves to take up the pastoral/priestly ministry of the (denominational) Church, and those who would not take up any priestly function, but engage in some kind of independent ministry. **I envisage that ministerial/priestly formation will be left to the respective churches/denominations to provide in their seminaries, and the faculty of Theology of a university shall remain committed only to theological education without any sectarian/denominational bias.** Serampore could never separate these two distinctive functions, and failed itself as a genuine university engaged in theological education. Seventy percent of its graduates unnecessarily waste their time, energy and resources in taking up courses, as they do not enter into the priestly ministry of the church, and, as such, ministerial subjects may not be of any use in their professional life.

In our discussion, above, we have noted that, in the process of introducing new courses and branches, a massive devaluation in the quality of B.D., studies in Serampore system was undertaken. The nucleus of B.D., degree had to absorb almost all new courses and branches within itself, as it was considered the mother of all theological studies, and no branch was given independent and autonomous status, some of them even forced to have an appearance of theological-relatedness just to be accepted within theological curricula. This could only be achieved at the expense of drastic reductions in the content of many courses, and even outright exclusion of some essential ones. This trend needs to be arrested, and a process could be initiated by chalking out different degree/certificate/diploma/advanced diploma programmes, as well as incorporating them in the proposed new degree programmes for theological education. This may solve the problem of providing spaces to the new emerging studies and concerns in theology without disturbing the classical foundation and structure of theological education. One need not enhance the burden of a student in the Faculty of Theology, but provide them further opportunity to earn additional qualifications through external/extension/distance learning/continuing education/e-learning processes, and helping their alma mater to raise additional financial resources through these programmes.

It is understood, that universities with provision for Faculty of Theology, have special considerations for Christian minority students<sup>19</sup>, and, as such, has special responsibilities towards their welfare and wellbeing by providing them spiritual succor and moral foundations. Special courses should have to be devised and offer them as credit courses within stipulations of their requirements under university rules. Offering concurrent Certificate/Diploma may be considered as a way of attracting students from other faculties to Theology Faculty if it does not interfere with their studies in their chosen faculties.

Reconfiguring also involves the realignment of theological schools/colleges/institutions/research centres in India which, hitherto, have association/affiliation only with Serampore, or another accrediting bodies. The new universities are being created by an Act of State Legislative Assemblies, which have their jurisdiction within that state; by implication, they can affiliate any Christian minority institutions within that state, of course, with the prior approval of the Government of that State.<sup>20</sup> This has opened a way to educational institutions, including theological, within these states to affiliate themselves to new state universities, dissociating themselves with Serampore and other accrediting associations. State Universities cannot affiliate colleges/institutions situated in other states, they, however, can establish centres/campuses with the concurrence of concerned Government.<sup>21</sup> There is a possibility that existing theological

colleges/institutions, outside Uttar Pradesh, may opt to become one of the academic centre/campus, /offshore campus of these State Universities.

Sometimes question is asked whether theological degrees granted by secular universities, such as SHUATS and NECU, will be recognized by Serampore. This question is now irrelevant as such universities are duly established by the laws of the land, and all universities within the Indian states are legally bound to accept degrees granted by each and every university so established, not only in India, but elsewhere in the world. Serampore has sometimes been inconsistent in the past, accepting even non-university degrees, granted by accrediting associations, for teaching and higher education which is legally questionable. It is, however, for the purpose of ordained ministry, every church has freedom to accept or not to accept theological degree of any university, or training programmes of a particular centre.

A new era has dawn on the horizon of theological education in Indian context that has opened up a new vista, different from so far dominated Serampore and other accrediting associations. All eyes are now upon these new Universities, such as SHUATS and NECU, with much expectation and anticipation. It is the time, and an opportunity, that they prove themselves. At the same time, I consider it an opportunity for all Christians educators to re-vision theological education in the pluralist context of Indian academia and establish some forum where all can join in collaboration in united programmes.

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## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> This independent and autonomous university came into existence as an Act 35 of 2016, passed by the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly, and assented by the Governor on December 27, 2016. Generally known as Allahabad Agricultural Institute (est. 1910), and later, as a deemed university in 2000, under the University Grant Commission Act. In 2009, it rechristened itself with the new name which is prefixed to its identity now. For further details, visit: <http://shuats.edu.in>
- <sup>2</sup> Through the Serampore College Act, I came to know about the University Act of 1904. I have yet to see a copy of it, but I am aware that this Act prohibits Indian universities to establish Faculty of Theology under their academic programmes. I do not know if this Act is repealed, or this article of prohibition was repealed, and Indian universities are now granted authority to establish Faculty of Theology as academic discipline. Prior to this provision which is especially mentioned and granted to SHUATS, no such provision was mentioned in any university Act in India, except Serampore. While writing this article, I was informed that a university, North-East Christian University (NECU) has

been established in Dimapur, Nagaland under the sponsorship of CBCNEI (Council of Baptist Churches in Northeast India, Guwahati). This university too has the power of granting degrees in Theology.

- <sup>3</sup> It is interesting to note that the Senate of Serampore College (University) which is purely theological Senate, and affiliated colleges, they too are Theological, often demand that the Serampore College should approach the Central/State Government for the recognition of Serampore College as a Theological University; they do not seem to have any interest in the other half (i.e. Arts-Science-Commerce) departments) of the College. Once, however, the proposal for Theological University is accepted, Serampore will lose its privilege to be a proper university, and becomes a 'sectarian' university. Incidentally the International Association of Universities, a body under UNESCO (IAU/ UNESCO) does not offer membership to religious and defense universities, thus, declining membership to Serampore. It is also unfortunate that Serampore did not seek membership of UGC when it was formed in 1956, thus depriving itself to be part of university fraternity in India. Unfortunately, neither the Charter nor the Serampore College Act uses the word 'university' though both empower the College to grant degrees; so, do the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), London School of Economics (LSE), Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), etc., without any problem. I have not been able to understand this fixation of Theological Senate to the idea of 'Theological' University. George Howells, on the floor of the Legislative Assembly, rejected this idea, and asserted that if this proposal, of being only theological university without power to grant degrees in other faculties in future, is accepted, he will withdraw the request for the Act. In our discussion with the officials of the HRD Ministry, it was suggested that we should approach the State Government to correct their list of Universities in Bengal, in their records and on their website, and add Serampore College also as a duly enacted university, whose Act they have published in their Gazette and law books. My former colleagues in Serampore, and later Minister for Higher Education in Left-front government, did suggest for the autonomous status for ASC Department, a long-standing desire of the ASC Department. Any request for amendment, at this stage, to declare Serampore College as 'theological university, will contravene the established motive of the Founders, and the sincere commitment of George Howells in the Legislative Assembly, that will be determinantal, and Serampore will lose, rather than gain, anything.
- <sup>4</sup> Serampore too can take some bold steps in vitalizing itself as a potentially full-fledged university. Serampore has redeemed itself, long ago, from its commitment in establishing basic education system in India, and basic theological one too. It should now move into newer dimension of education, both secular and theological, that are not offered by other, of few, universities. ASC department of the College is Calcutta University-centric, and would not be weaned away, it should be left to its present sponsors-Government of Bengal, and new employment-centric courses and faculties should be concentrated upon in the bold vision statement of the full-fledged Serampore College University. Council of Serampore College may take steps to consult national bodies, Christian institutions, Church associations and World Christian forums, to chalk out its course of action as the College enters into third century of its existence in serving educational needs of the people of India.

- <sup>5</sup> For the Charter of Incorporation of the Serampore College, and Bengal Act No. IV of 1818 and The Serampore College Act, 1918, see *The Story of Serampore And Its College*, published by the Council of Serampore College, Fourth Edition-2005, pp.165ff.
- <sup>6</sup> The Danish Royal Charter-1827 created a three-member self-perpetuating Council, and bestowed all academic, administrative and executive power of the College to it. It is the Council which has the inherent power to confer degrees and honors, and not the College which is only a teaching department of the University under the control of the Council. All academic administrative and executive power of the Council was taken away, and were delegated to a newly created body, Senate by the Serampore College Act of 1918, and the Council became the executive administrator of the College its teaching departments, and conferring degrees at the recommendation of the Senate.
- <sup>7</sup> *College for the Instruction of Asiatic Christian and Other Youth, in Eastern Literature and European Science in Eastern Literature and European Science*, London, 1819 (elsewhere quoted as *Prospectus-1819*)
- <sup>8</sup> See the Objects of the University: Article 7...(ii) Further the promotion teaching and research, particularly in Agriculture, Technology and Sciences, Human Health, Religious and Moral education through Christian Theology and Higher Education Disciplines relevant to holistic development of the Society;
- <sup>9</sup> See Serampore College Act, 1918, Article 13. Granting of Degrees: If, at any time, the Council shall intend to grant degrees in any branch or branches of knowledge and science other than theology such degrees shall be confined to students who shall have received regular instruction at the Serampore College; and before the Council proceeds to grant such degrees, it shall satisfy the state Government as to the adequacy-
- (1) Of the establishment and equipment of the College;
  - (2) Of the academic standard to be maintained; and
  - (3) Of the financial provision made thereafter:
- Provided that the said Government, on ceasing to be satisfied, may withdraw their approval of the granting of such degrees.

One must note that the Serampore College Act-1918 is not a University Act; Serampore College was not made a University by this Act, Serampore college is a University by its Charter, granted by His Danish Majesty, King Frederick the Sixth, in 1827. The provisions of the Charter are protected by the international treaties, passed on from the Danish Government to the East India Company, British and Indian Governments. The Act is restrictive in nature, on the one hand, and expansive, on the other. Through this Act, the in-campus university became affiliating university. Legally, its jurisdiction is not clear, more so after 1947, and it is continuing to have affiliation of colleges/institutions in other states than Bengal, and in neighboring countries. There are number of legal issues related to the College, Senate, Council and affiliated colleges, which are not attended to for a long time, and if they are left unattended for long, the repeal of its Act may be a real threat. One such issue is autonomy which has been granted to a college, while refused to others, without having any provision for it in the Act. The principle involved is that a delegated power, given to the Senate, cannot be further delegated without special legal provision for it.

- <sup>10</sup> See Article 9. The University shall have the following powers...: (iv) To promote educational and cultural advancement of Christians in India, and to provide for the study of Christianity, to give instruction in Christian theology and religion and to impart moral and spiritual training.
- (v) to grant, subject to such conditions as the University may determine, diplomas or certificates to, and confer degrees or other academic distinctions on the basis of examinations, evaluation or other method of testing, on persons, and to withdraw any such diplomas, certificates, degrees or other academic for good and sufficient cause;
- <sup>11</sup> See Article 9... (iii) to promote the study of the philosophy of India. The same is implied through an objective in Article 7
- <sup>12</sup> See Article 8. (1) The University shall be open to all persons of whatever race, religion, creed, caste, or class subject to the provisions in sub-clause (2) of this section.
- (2) Nothing in this section shall prevent the University from making any special provision/reservations for the administration, appointments, and admission of students, or persons belonging to Christian Minority Community which cannot exceed 50 per cent.
- <sup>13</sup> Cf. Resolution VI of Senate/1928, p. 533.
- <sup>14</sup> One should not fail to note the following in the Section I: Specific Objectives of the College for Asiatic Christians and other Youth, in his first prospection published in 1819; sub-section 8: ...no Student shall be constrained to attend any Lecture, to which he shall feel the least objection on a religious account, and nothing shall be enjoined as the condition of pursuing any branch of knowledge, which in any way infringes on the cast or religion of any youth who may be sent there.
- <sup>15</sup> See Prospectus-1819, pp. 6-11.
- <sup>16</sup> Classic example of such confusion is so-called up-gradation of a licentiate degree, L. Th., to a Baccalaureate degree, B.Th., by Serampore. By such an upgradation, Serampore created a superior-inferior, lower-higher divide of two bachelor's degree holders in theology to the embarrassment, and degradation, of many ministers in the church. We may note that it was Calcutta University which opened the gate for recognition of Serampore degrees by Indian universities as it recognized L. Th., equivalent to its intermediate and B.D. to B.A. (pass). B.Th., granted by Roman Catholic universities is a graduate degree, and Serampore recognizes it equivalent to B.D. degree. Christian Study Department of Madras University admits such graduates for M.A. degree in that subject. Many Serampore B.Th., degree holders took advantage of this confusion and graduated with M.A. degree in Christian Studies from Madras University. Incidentally, it is the Madras University which consistently denied recognition to B.D. degree since 1920s.
- <sup>17</sup> Three year B.D., degree-programme was introduced in 1910, with six basic branches- Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Church History, Religions and Pastoralia. By the end of the century, five more branches were added; Christian Ethics, Communications, Women's Studies, Social Analysis and Missiology, with course burden of more than 50 courses, and an additional year of studies. There are additional branches of specialization within main

branches of studies. I have discussed the mathematical part of the burden to the student elsewhere, but suffice to highlight the problem by mentioning that my batch of BD studies did about 50 courses for three year's B.D. degree in 1972 at an affiliated college, though was required only to pass six comprehensive Senate papers.

- <sup>18</sup> If one has this magical degree, thirteen branches of M.Th., branches are opened to him to pursue. This unique characteristic to B.D. degree later became a battle ground for new emerging branches in theological studies which vigorously fought their case for a space, at the expense, or reduction, of major ones, at each curriculum exercise Senate has undertaken.

The absoluteness of B.D. degree was first tested as Dr. Howells retired and there was a suggestion to honour him for his contribution in establishing Serampore as a modern theological university. An honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) was recommended by the Senate to the Council to be instituted (1926), which was accepted, and he became the first recipient of such an honor. Then, the question of specialization arose, and a new degree, B.D. (Honors) was introduced. With these new development, further specialization was offered by offering D.D. degree by the submission of a thesis. Yet the confusion about the value of B.D. remained intact as B.D. with second class was qualified for registration in D.D, without any corresponding Master's degree. The Divinity series of degrees from graduate to doctoral level (B.D.; B.D. (hons); D.D.) was thus preserved. Confusion came to surface once again when B.D. (Hons) was converted into another new degree, M.Th., in 1948 to begin with a new Theology-series. Now we had M.Th., without corresponding B.Th., degree, and an apparent devaluation of B.D. to B.Th., level, though not explicitly expressed, and the confusion compounded when L.Th., was up-graded with a new degree, B.Th. This has been the general malady of Serampore: it has Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) degree without corresponding B. Min., and M.Min., degrees (M.Min., degree was introduced but later kept in abeyance); Master of Counselling and Psychotherapy was introduced without its bachelor's degree; Missiology is a branch at M.Th., and D.Th., level, but it has no relation with B.Miss., degree. Serampore has not taken serious note of these anomalies and did not take any step, so far, to rationalize its degree programmes in order to eliminate any confusion created so far.

- <sup>19</sup> SHUATS sets a frame work through its Article 8 of its Act. See fn. 10. About 50% of student body may be Christian by faith and association.
- <sup>20</sup> C.f. SHUATS Act: Jurisdiction of the University, Article 4-(1): Save or otherwise provided by or under this Act, the limits of the area within which the University shall exercise its powers, shall be whole of Uttar Pradesh with its headquarters at Allahabad with powers to associate any Christian minority Institution within its jurisdiction with the prior approval of the State Government. In contrast such jurisdiction clause is not added in Serampore College Act.
- <sup>21</sup> C.f. SHUATS Act: Jurisdiction of the University, Article 4-(3): The University may with the prior permission of the State Government establish Academic Centers/Campuses, /offshore campus in order to provide relevant higher/professional education with the concurrence of the concerned Government where it is established.