



NORTH EAST CATHOLIC RESEARCH FORUM
C/O NEIRBC Secretariat, Inspiration Building,
Joypur, Kharguli, Guwahati - 781004 (Assam)
web:www.necarf.org, Email:info@necarf.org

To
The President,
Conference of Catholic Bishops of India

Sub: Request for assistance for NECARF publication initiative

Your Eminence,

The North East Catholic Research Forum (NECARF) would like to extend our greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Forum was founded by like-minded Catholics of the North East of India region, as a Think tank group. Its members consist of Government officers (serving and retired), Professors, Lawyers, Doctors, and other professionals, who are interested in sacrificing their time in the interest of the Catholic Church. Though the Forum is primarily a Lay peoples' initiative, we also have a few priests and nuns as members who are willing to be part of our discussions and discourses.

Being a pro-Ecclesia body, NECARF is duly endorsed by the North East India Regional Bishops' Council (Copy enclosed) and an Ecclesiastical Advisor (Copy enclosed) was appointed for better sharing and coordination. That Advisor appointed in 2021 is now the Archbishop of Imphal Diocese and the Forum continues to coordinate and seek his guidance on various issues (Copy of his first report is enclosed).

Your Eminence, in the recent past, the Catholic Church in the North East has been the prime target of the RSS and other pro-RSS organizations. Tirades against the Church have increased as never before, so much so that some so-called scholarly works of the RSS and also the weekly publication, ORGANIZER, which is the mouthpiece of the Hindutva protagonists, squarely blame the Catholic missionaries for all the problems in the region, including those orchestrated by the Sangh Parivar itself – the recent Manipur mayhem, for instance. You would also recall that in Assam, certain pro-RSS outfits have called for the removal of religious pictures and statues from school campuses, besides insisting that priests and nuns stop wearing cassocks and habits in educational institutions.

In the light of these trending narratives and increasing onslaught on the Catholic Church by the RSS and its affiliates, the considered view of NECARF is to counter all forms of baseless targeting through scholarly works – a book with contributions from different writers covering different aspects of Christian efforts in peace making and nation building, particularly in the North east region, so that other Indians come to know the truth and do not get misled by such mischievous propaganda. We feel it wouldn't be just a scholarly endeavour but a step and timely respond to the need of time.

Rationale behind the NECARF Publication Initiative

The North East region of India has been a significant area of focus for the Catholic Church, which has played a significant role in the social, educational, and economic development of its



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diverse communities. However, there is a concerted effort to project the Catholic Church in a poor light through false allegations. In one book released in 2022, “Conflict Resolution the RSS Way,” the Church is accused of even encouraging people to remain loyal to enemy countries of India. The publication initiative seeks to address and counteract this misinformation by documenting and disseminating well-researched, authentic accounts of the Catholic Church’s contributions to peace and nation-building in the North East. It aims to achieve the following:

1. Preserve Historical Truth:

By providing a factual and comprehensive account of the Catholic Church’s positive impact, we aim to preserve the historical truth and ensure that future generations are aware of the Church’s role in the region’s development.

2. Present factually correct and credible accounts:

Highlight some of the notable contributions of the Catholic Church in the field of education, health care, social empowerment, improvement in language and literature of local people, particularly tribals and underprivileged.

3. Promote Inter-faith Harmony:

Featuring narratives from individuals of various religious backgrounds who have benefited from Catholic education and social services, the book will promote understanding and harmony among different faith communities. It will showcase the inclusive nature of Catholic missions and their commitment to serving all, regardless of religious affiliation.

4. Educational Resource:

Placing the publication in major university libraries across India will serve as an invaluable educational resource, providing scholars, students, and the general public with credible information on the Church’s contributions. This can foster a more informed and balanced perspective.

5. Strengthen the Church’s Position:

By presenting well-documented evidence of the Church’s contributions, the book will strengthen the Church’s position against baseless accusations and misinformation. It will serve as a powerful tool to counter negative propaganda and highlight the Church’s commitment to social justice, education, and peace.

6. Engage a wider Audience:

With plans for a digital presence, including an e-book and a dedicated website, the initiative aims to engage a broader audience beyond traditional print media. This can amplify the reach and impact of the book, engaging people from different parts of the world.

To make this publication truly impactful, we plan to include:



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- 1. Personal Narratives:** First-hand accounts from individuals across different religious affiliations who have benefited from Catholic education and social services, highlighting the inclusive and transformative impact of Catholic missions.
- 2. Historical Context:** A detailed examination of the historical role of Catholic missions in the North East, providing a broader perspective on their long-standing contributions to society.
- 3. Case Studies:** Specific examples of successful initiatives by Catholic missions in areas such as healthcare, education, and social justice, showcasing their efforts in promoting holistic development.
- 4. Vision and Objectives:** Clearly outline the vision and objectives of the book, aiming to facilitate understanding, promote peace, and highlight the constructive role of Catholic missions in the region.
- 5. Impact on Community:** Detail the positive impacts of Catholic missions on various communities, including education, healthcare, social justice, and economic development, with concrete examples and data.
- 6. Diverse Voices:** Emphasize the inclusion of diverse voices in the book, showcasing the broad and inclusive nature of the Catholic Church's contributions.
- 7. Inter-faith Collaboration:** Highlight instances of inter-faith collaboration facilitated by Catholic missions, demonstrating the Church's role in promoting harmony and cooperation among different religious communities.
- 8. Future Aspirations:** Discuss how the book can serve as a foundation for future projects aimed at continuing and expanding the Church's positive impact in the region.
- 9. Support from Key Figures:** Mention any endorsements or support from notable figures, both within and outside the Catholic community.
- 10. Strategic Distribution:** Outline a strategic plan for distributing the book to maximize its reach and impact, including partnerships with educational institutions, NGOs, and government bodies.
- 11. Digital Presence:** Include plans for a digital presence, such as an e-book version and a dedicated website or social media campaign to promote the book and engage a wider audience.
- 12. Call to Action:** End with a call to action, encouraging readers to support the mission of the Catholic Church in the North East through various means, such as donations, volunteering, or advocacy.



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Status of the Project:

The Forum has identified contributors and discussed their respective areas for the research work. So far, 12 authors (Catholic 4, Other Christian community 3, Hindu 3, and Muslim 2), had in principle agreed to be part of this initiative.

The Budget Estimated

1. Honorarium to contributing scholars as secretarial expenses: Rs. 15,000 x 12 = Rs. 180,000/- (One lakh eighty thousand)
2. Publishing related charges (Cover design, ISBN code, copyright application etc.) Rs. 100,000/- (Rupees one lakh)
3. Printing charges for 1000 books @ Rs. 400 = Rs. 400,000 (Rupees four lakhs only)

Grand total of estimated expenditure = Rs. 6,80,000/-

(Rupees six lakhs and sixty thousand only)

We may mention that NECARF is still in its nascent stage, and it is a self-financing organisation, with activity related expenditure being borne through members' contribution. The proposed project however is beyond our means; therefore, we seek the kind assistance of CCBI in the form of a Research Fund.

We are hopeful that esteemed Conference of Catholic Bishops of India would consider the request favourably. For any clarification, the CCBI's is kindly requested to revert to us at editor@necarf.org or convener@necarf.org, or call the undersigned directly on 9650425522. Should our cooperation fructify, NECARF will most willingly share updates of progress of the project from time to time.

With warm greetings, and on behalf of NECARF,

(John S. Shilshi)
Chief Editor, NECARF

Dated: August 9, 2024

Copy to:

1. His Grace John Moolachira, Archbishop of Guwahati, and Chairman, NEIRBC – for kind information
2. His Lordship James Thoppil, Bishop of Kohima, and Secretary, NEIRBC - for kind information
3. His Grace Linus Neli, Archbishop of Imphal, and Advisor, NECARF – for kind information



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