

Government of India

National Commission for Minorities

Dated: 16.12.2022

PRESS RELEASE

Minority Day which is observed on December 18th every year was celebrated at the National Commission for Minorities on December 16, 2022. The United Nations on December 18, 1992 adopted and broadcast the Statement on the individual's Rights belonging to Religious or Linguistic National or Ethnic Minorities. Minority Rights Day upholds the right to freedom and equal opportunities for the minorities in India and creates awareness about their rights.

Hon'ble Minister of State for Ministry of Minority Affairs, Shri John Barla graced the function as the Chief Guest which was presided over by Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura, Chairman, National Commission for Minorities, Chairman, National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions, Justice NK Jain also graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour. Hon'ble Vice-Chairman of National Commission for Minorities, Shri Kersi Kaikhushroo Deboo, Dhanyakumar Jinnapa Gunde Jain Member, Syed Shahezadi Muslim Member, Rinchen Lhamo Buddhist Member, and senior officials of NCM were also present on the occasion.

The National Commission for Minorities invited various intellectuals from the six minority communities namely - Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zoroastrians. Representing their community, they shared the difficulties faced by the minorities of India, expectations of the minorities from the State, recommendations for the improvements in the schemes and programmes for the minorities.

In his remarks Hon'ble Minister of State for Ministry of Minority Affairs, Shri John Barla noted that there is lack of awareness of the Government schemes for the minorities. He emphasised on the need to generate awareness about the schemes and programmes of the minorities in the areas of education and employment. He

said, "It is necessary to spread knowledge and generate awareness about the Government schemes for the minority communities. Religious leaders of the communities should be roped in for this purpose as they have access to a massive audience." He also emphasized on continuous dialogues between different communities.

Hon'ble Vice-Chairman of National Commission for Minorities, Shri Kersi Kaikhushroo Deboo, who belongs to Parsi community said, "The population of Parsis in India is approximately 57,000, this increases the chances of discrimination against the community. In order to avoid this, the Government of India is working hard."

Highlighting the efforts of the Commission, he added, "It is because of the Commission that the backlog of the pending cases is reducing in a fast paced manner."

Other Hon'ble Members also spoke of the need to work tirelessly for the welfare of the minorities.

The representatives of the Minority communities also spoke on the occasion. While appreciating the initiatives taken by the Commission, they also pointed out some issues pertaining to their communities and requested the Commission to look into them.

Hon'ble Chairman Shri Iqbal Singh Lalpura delivered the vote of thanks. He said "In 1978, India envisaged the idea of setting up a National Commission for Minorities much before the United Nations, where it all started in 1992." He added, "We can work towards the development of minorities by including religious leaders, educationalists and social workers for generating awareness among the members of minority communities." Hon'ble Chairman also discussed other minority issues like Anand Marriage Act and Prime Minister's 15 Points Programme. He also assured that NCM will be meeting the Religious Leaders at their own places on a regular basis and have detailed deliberations. NCM also regularly celebrates religious festivals of all the religions of India.

An interfaith delegation led by Goswami Sushil Maharaj Ji consisting of Members of Bhartiya Sarva Dharam Sansad, consisting of representatives from all religions of India also attended the function.

On this occasion, the Commission reiterated its mandate of working towards the maintenance of peace and communal harmony in the society irrespective of the religious, linguistic and other differences and maintaining the dignity of the minority communities in India by safeguarding their rights.