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**Recommendations of Annual Conference of State Minorities Commissions
held on 13-14 March, 2012**

The Annual Conference of State Minorities Commissions was held on 13-14 March, 2012. This year the Conference focused on the theme of 'Police and Minorities' wherein besides the Chairman and Members of the *National and* State Minorities Commission, NGOs, senior police officers (serving/retired) and senior officers of the State Governments dealing with minorities, participated.

2. The Conference was inaugurated by H.E Shri M.K. Narayanan, Hon'ble Governor of West Bengal. The Hon'ble Minister of Minority Affairs and Minister of State for Minority Affairs graced the occasion.

3. A summary of the recommendations of the Conference are as follows:-

POLICE AND MINORITIES

- Politics *and the Police officers themselves* can in some cases be the cause of police ineffectiveness and polarisation of police on ethnic lines. De-politization of the police and accountability of not only the police *also* the political leadership are the means to improve the system. Mechanism of internal and external accountability should be set up. Special schemes to de-communalise and cleansing the system *are* the need of the hour. Exemplary punishment to *the* guilty will be a deterrent.
- Prompt action in registration of FIRs, timely filing of chargesheet and speedy trial are essential to restore the faith of minorities.
- *The complaints filed by the minorities needs to be monitored by higher police authorities.*
- Module for training of police personnel in collaboration with Commissions and stakeholders would help to a large extent in improving the level of understanding of police towards minorities. Training syllabus should contain chapter on minorities and deal with strategies *in protecting* minorities and solving their problems. *The sanctity of secularism in the Indian Constitution and hence in the conduct of every job must be stressed.*
- The Police Complaints Authority needs to be set up in all States and wherever it exists, requires to be strengthened.
- Police personnel at the time of recruitment may come with certain biases. *This should be assessed at the interview stage.* Instilling institutional family and community values, inculcating cultural *and human* values *and a sense of shared heritage* are needed to bridge the gap between police and minorities.

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- *The assessment/ appraisal of every police person should emphasize the least use of violence in controlling/managing crowds or individuals/detainees. Politeness and fairness of behavior with the accused and their families should improve scores in the assessment and these could even win acclaim, if not awards.*

- Independent investigation machinery in NCM headed by a D.G on the same lines as that of NHRC, *needs to be set up.*

- *An enhanced* representation of minorities in police recruitment without compromise on quality of personnel *must be insisted upon.* Education and coaching of minorities with good trainers, coaches and all facilities will enable them to *favourably* compete in recruitment. Recruitment should be fair, merit based and transparent.

- Peace Mohalla Committees *need to be established.* Involve youth and women in these committees who can play a vital role in building a partnership between police and minorities.

- A minority cell in *the State Police Headquarters and in all* police stations in all districts *should be set up. (Exclusive minority police station in districts found to be not practical by V.C)*

- In communally sensitive areas personnel with impeccable integrity and impartiality should be posted. *The best police personnel with attractive emolument* should be posted in training police academies.

- Establish a separate Board for transfer and posting of police personnel *at different levels to maintain professionalism in the Force.*

- Education of police *on the minorities' socio-economic problems* alone can bridge the trust deficit between them and minorities, which has to be taken up in an organized manner.

- Revision of police manuals should be undertaken periodically and operating procedures should be followed strictly.

- *A calendar of festivals through the year in which large assemblies and procession are warranted there should be a pre-emptive alert and clearing and monitoring 20of routes should be done before and during the event.*

- Pro-active and preventive measures by the Chief Secretary and the DGP of a State to pick up signs of communal tension and scotching of rumours is required to avoid any communal flare up.

- Media should play a fair role to curb rumours and show restraint in its reports instead of jumping into conclusions.

- Augment infrastructure facilities in police stations and well equip police personnel with modern weaponry and gadgets.
- Naba Disha Project in Kolkata which had played a positive role in changing the perception of society including children towards police and the police towards disadvantaged sections of the society including minorities could be replicated in other States.
- Good leadership, reaching out to and enlisting the support of the *majority* community can make the force effective.
- Institute *awards* for good police officers and personnel.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Communal Violence Bill be enacted expeditiously to control *anti minority activities including* inflammatory speeches.
- Necessary amendments be made to RTE Act so that minority institutions are facilitated to the extent possible.