

Meeting of the National Commission for Minorities with Hon'ble Minister for Minority Affairs

The National Commission for Minorities including its Chairman, Vice Chairman, Member (SI), Member (VS) and Member (KND) met Hon'ble Minister for Minority Affairs (MMA) on 15.11.2012 at 11:00 A.M. Secretary, NCM was also present. The meeting was also attended by Secretary, MOMA. Shri Y.P. Singh, Joint Secretary and Shri Solomon, Joint Secretary later joined the meeting.

In his introductory remarks MMA, while appreciating the importance of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) as a statutory organisation the recommendations of which should be implemented, also indicated that the Action Taken Reports on the Annual Reports should not be treated as routine but should be taken seriously. He was in favour of frequent interaction between the Ministry and NCM and mentioned that numbers of petitions are being received by MoMA which can be better addressed by the NCM, which is empowered under the Act to deal with grievances relating to minorities. MMA also pointed out that the issue of giving NCM a constitutional status would also be pursued with the Hon'ble Prime Minister, including empowering it with investigative powers as vested with the NHRC.

The Chairman then raised issues which had been noted as points for discussion with the Hon'ble Minister. A copy of the same is placed at Annexure 'A'.

- On the issue of 15 Point Programme, Chairman mentioned that there does not appear to be any single body for appropriate monitoring of the 15 Point Programme. The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation who are monitoring various projects of the Government including the 15 Point Programme do not monitor

from the angle of minorities. Further, the NCM receives much feedback from various stakeholders on issues concerning the 15 Point Programme which they are not able to respond to effectively for lack of information/data. Secretary, MOMA indicated that monitoring is being done by the Committee of Secretaries. Chairman, however, indicated that at the grounds level concurrent monitoring by NCM can be effective in filling in a needed gap in monitoring. The Hon'ble Minister was also of the view that NGOs can also be involved in the implementation and monitoring of 15 Point Programme and the Ministry would take up NCM's suggestions.

- Chairman brought out that NCM had taken up the case of extension of the NCM Act to Jammu & Kashmir. He also mentioned that since the NCM is for minorities, it should cover any religious group which is in a minority in a State. The Hon'ble Minister agreed that there are a number of groups which could be in a minority, for example, the Baha'is. Hence, the case of widening of the scope of the NCM would be considered and recommended.
- Chairman mentioned that the setting up of a State Minorities Commission in Jammu & Kashmir had been taken up with the State Law Minister Jenab Lal Mohammed Sagar.
- On the problems being faced by the Parsis particularly, their inability to get admission in prestigious Parsi educational institutions, MMA requested Member (KND) to take up this issue. Secretary, MOMA indicated that Ministry had already supported the issue of fertility clinics for Parsis.
- The other issues raised were proposed CBDT Bill and the issue of utilisation of Hajj subsidy. Consequent to the ruling of the Apex

Court in the matter of Hajj subsidy, Chairman explained the view of NCM and recommendation made in this regard for utilisation of the funds for Orphanages. MMA agreed that he had always been against subsidy for Hajj, which is also now part of the Order of the Supreme Court, and the money so spent could be better utilised as already demonstrated by the government of Malaysia.

- Chairman listed some outstanding administrative issues, including the statutory requirement of the NCM Act 1992 that NCM is a Grant organisation, whereas it is at present being treated as a budget organisation, and the need for finalisation of the Recruitment Rules for Group 'A' and 'B' at the earliest, as NCM is facing lot of administrative issues due to non-finalisation of the same with some posts languishing unfilled up for a long period. He also raised the issue of co-terminus staff and mentioned that the Commission has been having co-terminus staff almost since inception. Chairman also pointed out that the Commission had invited the concerned JS in the Ministry to discuss the issue, but this did not fructify. He requested the MMA that the issues kindly be resolved at the earliest. Secretary, MOMA indicated that he will look into both finalisation of RRs and the issue of co-terminus staff for earliest resolution.