

Report of the National Commission for Minorities regarding follow up action and relief measures to be taken in Village Bhajanpura, Distt. Araria, Bihar

A delegation of the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) visited Araria on May 28, 2014 to oversee follow up action in the ongoing dispute between villagers of Bhajanpura and M/S Auro Sundaram. Before the delegation proceeded to Araria, the feeling in the Commission was that time had come to finally settle this long pending matter, more so when most of the ground work had already been done during the last visit of Shri Praveen Davar, Member NCM from 27th February to 1 March, 2014.

2. The delegation comprised of Shri Naseem Ahmad (Chairperson) and Members Shri Tsering Namgyal Shanoo, Shri Praveen Davar and Shri Surjit Chaudhary, Secretary NCM.

3. The NCM team reached the District Headquarter Araria at 4.00 P.M. on May 28th and immediately held a meeting with the State and District level government officials, representatives of political parties, lawyers and residents of village Bhajanpura including families of victims of the firing incident of June 3, 2011. Amongst those who attended the meeting with NCM team were the following:

S/Shri

- (a) Amir Subhani , Principal Secretary (Home)
- (b) Pankaj Kumar -Divisional Commissioner- Purnea
- (c) Parash Nath - DIG, Purnea
- (d) Zakir Hussain Khan, MLA, Araria
- (e) Ajay Kumar Chaudahary - DM, Araria
- (f) Vijay Kumar Verma - SP Araria,
- (g) Deepak Kumar Singh - Managing Director, BIADA
- (h) Shakeel Ahmed -Social Activist
- (i) Ashok Chaudhary, Director-Auro Sundaram
- (j) Representatives of villagers including family members of firing victims

4. At the outset, Chairman NCM explained the objective of the visit and the constraints of the Commission in resolving the issues (because of the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry whose report is awaited) which must be settled without any further delay. The mandate of the Commission was restricted to provision of some relief to the affected families and exploring the possibility of starting the industrial project in dispute. This would be possible only with the cooperation of all the concerned parties. He said that it had come to the Commission's notice that the District Administration and concerned State Govt. officials, in consultation with Shri Praveen Davar, Member NCM, have already done most of the ground work which would greatly facilitate resolving of the above mentioned issues.

5. Principal Secretary (Home), while welcoming the Commission team, expressed the view that the majority of the residents of Bhajanpura village were keen to resolve the matter. He added that a favourable response from all concerned has been made possible by extensive groundwork already done by Shri Praveen Davar, Member NCM, during his earlier visit.

6. The District Magistrate, Araria gave a synopsis of the visit of Shri Praveen Davar on February 27/28, 2014. He said the whole village, except 7/8 mischievous elements, were ready to arrive at an amicable settlement. He also said that the residents of Bhajanpura village will immensely benefit by way of direct /indirect employment in the proposed industry.

7. Sh. Zakir Hussain Khan, MLA, Araria stressed that all efforts should be made to ensure that the factory becomes functional at the earliest as it would provide employment to the villagers. He desired that the Director, Auro Sundaram must also give a commitment for starting a school for the children. He, as also the representatives of the villagers, further pleaded that the criminal cases filed against the villagers should be cancelled / withdrawn.

8. The Chairman, BIADA reported that an alternate cemented road for villagers has been completed with provisions of street lights. Besides providing employment to

9. On behalf of the villagers the following persons gave the assurance that they will whole heartedly support the opening of the factory and extend all possible co-operation for commissioning of the factory and reconstruction of the demolished wall:

- (a) Abid Anwar
- (b) Ghouse Mohd.
- (c) Mohd. Rafiq
- (d) Bare Farooq
- (e) Abdul Ghaffar Ansari

10. Director, Auro Sundaram reiterated his earlier commitment to give Rs.1.75 Lakhs each to the families of those killed in the firing and Rs 35,000^{*} each to those injured. He gave a commitment to provide employment to at least one member of each family of Bhajanpura. He also expressed his readiness to pay compensation as above on June 15, 2014. He also gave assurance for training of villagers of Bhajanpura for upgradation of their skills. He assured help from his side for starting a school after the factory starts functioning.

11. On the demand from the villagers regarding withdrawal of criminal cases against the villagers, Principal Secretary (Home) stated that action on this specific issue would depend on the outcome / report of the Commission of Inquiry. He also stated that apart from filing of F.I.R, nothing further has been resorted to against the villagers regarding the incident of 3rd June, 2011.

12. Mr. Shakeel Ahmad, as well as few others who spoke during the meeting, expressed a note of caution regarding the negative attitude of a handful of villagers.

13. After listening to the views of those present, the Chairman, NCM stated that a negotiated settlement between all parties will be everyone's victory. He fixed June 15 as the date for restart of construction of the factory by restoring the breached wall in the presence of State and District officials. The matter of dealing with the

** as amended (By mistake this amount was initially mentioned as Rs. 30,000, whereas the settlement was for Rs. 35,000 each)*

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anti-social elements who were instigating the villagers against any settlement was left to be tackled by the District Administration and the Police.

14. After the meeting, the NCM team, accompanied by the officials of State Govt. and District Administration, visited the site of the factory in Bhajanpura village and expressed satisfaction with the condition of the alternative road made for the villagers which has also been provided with street lights.

Suggestions/ Recommendations:

As per the decisions taken in the meeting at Araria on May 28, 2014, following actions are required to be taken:

- a) Director, Auro Sundaram to pay compensation as given in para 10 above on June 15, 2014.
- b) The construction of breached wall to commence on the same day under the supervision of the District Administration.
- c) Shri Praveen Davar, Member NCM to visit Araria on June 15, 2014 to monitor the follow up action as per the settlement among the parties.
- d) DM Araria will monitor action of M/S Auro Sundaram regarding giving of employment of at least one person from each family of Bhajanpura, as also making arrangements for training of Bhajanpura villagers for upgradation of their skills. DM Araria will also ensure help from M/S Auro Sundaram for running of a school in Bhajanpura.


(Praveen Davar)
Member


(Naseem Ahmad)
Chairperson


(T.N. Shanoo)
Member


(Surjit Chaudhary)
Secretary