

## Tour Report of Vice Chairperson, NCM to Karnataka

\*\*\*\*\*

The NCM conducted visitation in Shimoga and Hassan Districts of Karnataka State in the aftermath of communal incidents that took place on 1/3/2010. After thorough enquiry the following recommendations were made to the Govt. of Karnataka.

### Complaints:

#### Muslims

- a) Innocent youths were picked up, arrested and sent to jails located at different places in the State;
- b) There was demand for bribe; and parents who were rich enough could bribe their children out from the clutches of the police;
- c) 85% of the damaged shops and houses belonged to Muslims;
- d) Unwarranted police firing was done ;
- e) Some of the arrested youths were going to miss their exams if they were not released.

#### Hindus

- a) The same news item was seen and read by other Muslims all over Karnataka State but only Muslim youths at Shimoga and Hassan took up the issue to street and organized protest rallies and caused communal disturbances;
- b) Muslim youths were not controlled by their elders.
- c) Muslim youths did not listen to the advice of the police leading to the communal clash; they should have just given their protest memorandum to the authorities and be notified.
- d) There were divisions among Muslims particularly in Shimoga town where there are 3-4 factions;
- e) Muslims used public address system fitted at the Mosque through which emergency call to come out to defend the community and protect the mosque was made which was stopped only when the police cut the wire.

The following recommendations were given to the State Govt.

- a) Sensitization of police personnel who are managing intelligence wing of the department from top to bottom is urgently called for so as to develop sense and ability to identify trouble making news items in daily newspapers, TV talks and public speeches of political leaders as well as communally sensitive organizational heads.

- b) In the instant cases the Superintendent of Police and other ranks who were manning Police administration did not notice in advance the news item that led to the occurrence of the incidents. This is a serious matter. If they were vigilant and watchful which they were expected to be so, they could have sensed possibility of trouble coming up and take timely precautionary measures. If they were alert which they were not, they could have arrested the trouble makers in time and prevented the entire incidents. In the case of Shimoga, if the Superintendent of Police himself had handled the situation from the beginning itself, not by his subordinates who failed to deliver necessary impact and convincing advice to the Muslim youths the matter would have been altogether different. The Superintendent of Police coming to the scene of trouble after losing precious 8-9 hours resulting, naturally, in the unfortunat loss of properties and life is unpardonable.
- c) In such a situation if the Deputy Commissioner cum District Magistrate or the Superintendent of Police himself had telephoned the editor of the Kannada Prabha newspaper in the presence of those who handed over the protest memorandum and demanded apology to be published in the next day's edition of the paper; the agitators would have felt satisfied and went home.
- d) In response to the request of the Muslim parents, the Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police were advised to take necessary action to get those arrested youths who have their exams coming released on bail so that they will not miss their exams.
- e) The Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police were advised to form a Team consisting of appropriate rank officers both from Police and Revenue to make factual assessment of losses so as to give the right amount of monetary compensation to the victims.
- f) They were also advised to remove Muslim flag and Hindu flag which were hoisted very close to each other at Shimoga town which can ignite communal tension in the area at any moment as such hoisting of religious flags in a confronting manner are not normally done elsewhere in the State or in the country.
- g) The Superintendent of Police was advised to update the District Communal Goonda List so that proven anti-social elements who indulged in the agitations and in the lootings are added to the list.

- h) Both of the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police were advised to subject youth of both the communities to social and communal harmony education.

**Recommendations:**

- a) The Home Department in Karnataka Government may organize specific training program to improve the level of alertness of the police force in the state which calls for much higher level.
- b) Sense of alertness and sensitivity to troubles which is the need of the day should be instilled in the State police force.
- c) Written instructions should be given to all District Police heads to involve themselves personally and directly in the initial stage when peace and tranquility of the community are at stake without leaving the matters to junior officers.

**The following Action Taken Report (ATR) has been received from the Govt. of Karnataka.**

**HASSAN:-** A total of 46 criminal cases are registered pertaining to communal violence on 1-3-2010 in Hassan city. Among 46 cases reported the government has been requested in 41 cases to accord permission for filing the charge sheets in the court under section 153A IPC.

On 3-3-2010 a peace committee meeting of all community leaders was held under the leadership of Inspector General of Police, Southern Range, Mysore and Deputy Commissioner of Hassan, at the office of the Superintendent of Police, Hassan district.

In the communal violence, 78 accused persons were arrested in various criminal cases and later on were released on Court bail. Out of these persons two students namely P. Mahadevaswamy s/o Puttaswamy, 19 years and Fayaz Ahmed s/o Rafiq Ahmed were accused for their involvement in different cases. These students requested the police to allow them to appear for their exams. The Hon'ble court granted them bail and hence they could write their exams. After the investigation these students were found not to have involved in any case and their names have been deleted from the charge sheet.

List of Communal goondas and rowdies is being maintained. In the background of the recent communal incident, communal goondas and rowdies list has been updated. All the sub-ordinate officers have been instructed to check their activities to prevent them from indulging in such illegal activities in future. A

keen watch is being maintained over the activities and movements on suspected persons.

35 Mohalla (ward) committees involving Hindus, Muslims, Christians have been constituted in Hassan city. Mohalla meetings are being conducted by the police officers frequently in the communally affected areas in the presence of elderly community leaders and youths. They have been taken into confidence and advised suitably to co-operate with the police, promote communal harmony and encourage peaceful living. Apart from this, the police officers are also regularly visiting communally sensitive places and monitoring the situation. Beat constables are also being deputed at sensitive areas to gather information about the activities of communal minded persons.

**SHIMOGA:-** The police personnel engaged in collection of intelligence at various levels i.e from police station level to district special branch have already been sensitized regarding intelligence collection related to communal incidents. The men engaged for collection of intelligence have been selected by assessing their capacity and ability for collecting intelligence. Even during and after the particular communal incident, the superintendent of Police personally interacted with SB staff and assessed intelligence reports furnished by them. As per kind directions of the National Commission for Minorities, the sensitization of police personnel will be further augmented in the future so as to ensure prompter and effective police action during communal incidents.

On 28-02-2010, Muslim leaders had agreed to maintain peace in Shimoga before the police. In addition all precautionary measures were taken within the available force. The article under title "Pardha hai Pardha" which was published in Kannada Prabha daily newspaper dated: 28-02-10 was not only limited to Shimoga but circulated throughout the State. Soon after publication of this article senior police officers in Bangalore had taken all necessary legal action in connection with the Kannada Prabha daily. This matter was informed to the Muslim leaders who gathered at Wakf Board office. The subsequent communal incident took place only due to sudden provocation by the erring miscreants who had gathered in Shimoga. Since Holi festival was also being celebrated on 28-02-2010 & 01-03-2010, all the police men/officers in Shimoga city were engaged in bandobust duties. After the conclusion of Holi bandobust on 01-03-2010 afternoon, while the men and officers were returning to their respective police stations for their regular duties, some miscreants took undue advantage ignoring the advise of their leaders, started gathering unlawfully and started the communal violence.

The losses which occurred during the communal incidents have been assessed properly by the Revenue department and compensation amount of Rs. 18,53,250/- has already been paid to both Hindu and Muslim victims. Payment of remaining compensation amount to the victims is in progress in the office of the Deputy Commissioner & District Magistrate, Shimoga.

After the incident, the Deputy Commissioner and District Magistrate has been requested to direct the concerned Municipal authorities to remove the Muslim and Hindu community flags hoisted close to each other in Shimoga city to prevent further ignition of communal tensions. The flags have been removed subsequently.

The list of revised communal goondas in Shimoga district is under preparation. Close and constant watch is kept on their activities. In all police stations several peace committee and mohalla committee meetings have been held after the communal incident. Superintendent of Police also attended such meetings personally and advised the members of both communities to maintain peace.

All precautionary measures have been taken to maintain communal harmony.

Besides this, after the communal incident the entire Peace Committee list has been revised and leaders from all communities have been included in the committee.

As per kind directions of the National Commission for Minorities, all precautionary measures are being taken to ensure that such incidents do not recur and peace and communal harmony are maintained in the district.

\*\*\*\*\*