

Tour Report

Visit to Kerala by Smt. Spalzes Angmo, Hon'ble Member from 15th - 19th December, 2011.

I undertook a tour to Kerala from 15th - 19th December, 2011 to review the progress of the implementation of the 15 Point Programme meant for the minorities. I arrived at Trivandrum on the 15th December; 2011 and was escorted to the State Guest House.

Meeting with the Law Secretary and other State Officials in Thiruvananthapuram.

A meeting was held with the Law Secretary (GAD) and other senior state officials on 16th December, 2011 in Trivandrum along with the Director of the newly formed department for minority welfare since the minority population in Kerala amounted almost 45-46% and it was imperative that there be a separate department dealing with the welfare of minorities. After my earlier visit to Kerala, the commission had duly recommended for a separate department.

The scholarship schemes were running quite well; in fact Kerala boasted of having an additional scholarship of 420 from 2009 to 2011 after continued interaction with Ministry of Minority Affairs; a benefit which no other state has claimed so far. There is a special scholarship scheme meant purely for Muslim girls started in 2008-09. It is funded by the state government. This scheme clearly aims to empower the Muslim girl child and reflective of Kerala's status as being the most literate state in India, a feature it can certainly boast of. From 2010-11 even Christian girls were covered under this scheme 20% being reserved for them. There were 5 coaching centre's for the Muslim youth.

Meeting with Minority Representatives at Thiruvananthapuram

A large number of representatives from the Muslim and Christian community met me and placed forth their representations and grievances.

Meeting in Alleppy

A meeting was held in Alleppy on 17th of December with the District Magistrate and other senior officials along with representatives of both the dominant minority groups of Muslim and Christians. The Muslim representatives demanded that a state Minorities commission be set up, though the state had already taken the initial first step of forming a separate department for minority welfare this year. Another plea brought forth was that many innocent youth were falsely implicated in various cases.

The Christians demanded that a commission be set up to look into the socio economic conditions of the people living below poverty line in their community on similar lines to the justice Sachar Commission.

The fishermen community, who were mainly poor Christians; were badly affected in the tsunami that struck in 2004 and still till today some complained of not possessing the basic facility of shelter/ pucca houses. The District Magistrate promised to look into the matter.

Meeting in Kochi

The meeting in Kochi on 19th December was attended by the Mr. P.I. Shaik Pareeth, District Magistrate and other District officials and representatives of the Muslim and Christian communities. There was a strong demand for granting constitutional status for the National Commission for Minorities at the Centre. Another important demand from the Muslim community was the increase in pay for the teachers in the Madrasas. They also stressed on the implementation of the Sachar Committee Report

Wayanad was the only district which has been identified as Minority concentrated District and therefore the community felt that more areas should be identified as Minority concentrated districts in order that welfare programmes could reach a larger section of the minority communities.

Recommendations:-

1. Setting up of a State Minorities Commission
2. Establishment of Higher educational and technical institutions in the coastal areas for the welfare of the fishermen community who mostly belong to the catholic Christian Community
3. Implementation of the recommendation of the Sachar Commission.
4. Minority concentrated areas like Mallapuram could also be identified as Minority Concentration District (M.C.D).
5. Strengthening the newly formed Minority welfare Directorate by creation and inclusion of additional staff.

(Spalzes Angmo)
Member
21.12.2011