

## Tour Report

### Visit to Dehradun (Uttarakhand) by Hon'ble Member Smt. Spalzes Angmo on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009 to 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2009.

I went on a three days tour to Uttarakhand to monitor the programmes for the welfare of the minorities. I was received at station by the Liaison Officer Ms. Anjali, Tehsildar and Social Welfare Officer and escorted to Hotel Madhuban. The Secretary, State Minority Commission welcomed me at the hotel. The next day, I proceeded to Mussorie along with Smt. Anusuya Rawat, Secretary, State Minority Commission, Mr. Otani, Member and Tehsildar. We were received at the Tibetan Homes Foundation by its Director, Mr. Tashi Phuntsok and Tehsildar. After a brief interactive session with the staff of THF in which they gave me detailed information about the programme goals and visions of their old age homes and schools.

#### **I Meeting at Mussorie**

At around 11.00 A.M. the meeting with the representatives of the Minority Communities belonging to Buddhists, Muslims, Christians took place. Smt. Anusuya Rawat, Secretary, State Minority Commission, Mr. Otani, Member and Tehsildar were also present.

The major grievance of Khampa Buddhist Community who were represented in large number mostly by women was their fear of losing their ethnic identity. Mostly traders by profession they were scattered all over U.P. and adjoining areas after the creation of Uttarakhand State two years back, many faced problems in obtaining scheduled tribe certificates, which they had been getting earlier, since the revenue records of 50 years was laid down as a parameter which they were not able to produce after the bifurcation of the state. This has led to their fear of losing their ethnic religious identity as Gyagar Khampa, who as traders had settled in the Hills of Himachal Pradesh, U.P. They have demanded a special land to be allotted to them, so that they could all settle in one contiguous area by which their cultural and religious identity in homogeneity would be preserved. In the absence of any land holdings, these people had to sell their goods on the footpath and pavements. In and around Mussorie there were approx. 45000 Khampa family members were living. Representatives of Muslim and Christian Community

complained about the lack of awareness of schemes meant for them. Special mention was made regarding non-availability of shops for the minorities. The Nagar Palika needs to be sensitised in this direction. Minority loans need to be made more accessible and role of banks minimised and BPL Schemes to be streamlined.

## **II. Meeting at Vikas Bhawan, Dehra Dun:**

The Meeting with Secretary, and members of State Minority Commission alongwith district officials and representatives of welfare group, total numbering to 40, took place at Dehra Dun. The Minority Corporation along with the Wakf Development Board established in 2005 (Nigam) brought forth a booklet in which details of all the Schemes were outlined and these were discussed at length. The Minority Corporation could sanction Schemes up to a limit of 500.00 Lakh. And till now an amount of Rs. 264.90 Lakh was released under various Schemes.

- a) One of the main objective of the Minority Corporation was to give loans to families below poverty line for an amount of Rs. 40,000/- in rural areas and in towns by an amount of Rs. 55,000/-, so that they could raise their standard of living and become part of the mainstream.
- b) Term loans were given to the tune of Rs. 5.00 lakh, out of which 85% was funded by Centre 10% by bank and remaining 5% by the individual.
- c) Educational loans were being given at 3% interest rate for an amount of Rs. 50,000/- annually and for an amount of Rs. 2, 50,000/- for 5 years periods. Employment (Swar rojgar yojana) Scheme and many other schemes are there.
- d) **Grievances:** Grievances of all the minority community belonging to Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians were mostly similar and can be summarized as put forward by Sikh Member Mr. Gurdeep Singh, Mr. Akani Kher, Muslim Member and Mr. S.L. Kohli Christian Member.
  1. Process of availing of loans slow or cumbersome.
  2. Loans for higher education very rigid and slow.
  3. The 3 year balance sheet required in the procurement of loans, a major hurdle.
  4. The requirement of 25% balance income to be in the nature of Fixed Deposit.

5. Lack of Personnel in the Minority Affairs Cells
6. Lack of awareness of Schemes – delay in getting income certificate.
7. Lack of Buddhist Minority Schools due to non-availability of land.
8. The Christian Community had been only 2 graveyards since 1947, which are completely full and now no graveyard available for them.
9. Pastors should get license, so that marriage has legal validity.

### **III. Meeting at Dakpathar Circuit House, Vikas Nagar, Uttarakhand:**

In Vikas Nagar Tehsil, Muslims constitute majority of the minority community population. Major grievance is in procuring Caste and Minority Certificate for which land record of 50 years is needed. This is major problem for people with no land. They are unable to avail of many other benefits due to this. Also there are around 3000 Muslims originally belonging to Kargil who speak the Bhoti language. They are demanding ST status in order to preserve their ethnic identity. There is lack of education especially among the women.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. For procurement of any certificate for Scheduled Tribe / Scheduled Caste Minority, revenue records since 1950 is required which comes as a major obstacle in availing of any schemes because of lack of any certificate. Thus purpose behind the various schemes meant for the welfare and upliftment of the minorities receives a serious setback as people are not able to benefit from these schemes due to the conditions laid down. Thus, this needs to be properly reviewed and revised both at the centre and state level.
2. Many of schemes under Prime Minister's 15 Point programmes are not being implemented properly. There is total lack of awareness of these schemes at both the District and the grass root level. Many of these schemes just existed on paper and hence a complete streamlining of the Schemes need to be done by the State Government.
3. The loans disbursed by the Minority Finance Corporation need effective implementation. Many applicants have still not been sanctioned the loans under the various schemes.

4. The Gyagar Khampa community need to be allocated land by which they could live contiguously and preserve their ethnic identity, tradition and culture, which is rapidly on the decline due to their community being scattered all over. The State must aid them in order to raise their standard of living and to raise their status from footpath sellers to proper merchandise traders as trade was the only factor for which they originally came to this country in 1950 and thereafter settled here. Their trademark and identity needs to be protected, for the coming generation.
5. Strong need on part of State Government to introduce the teaching of Bhoti language in schools in the Buddhist dominated areas of Mussorie, Garhwal and Utrakashi.
6. Though there is a State Minority Commission consisting of Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims and Christians members yet it is nonfunctional. The Members should take periodic tours to the areas and look into the problems faced by the minorities. They did not seem aware of many of the Schemes and welfare programmes. The Secretary and the Members need to be given proper emoluments and facilities in order that they may be able to carry out their duties effectively.
7. There is need for educational institutions primarily for girls of minority community at every level - village, district, State.
8. Land should be allotted to the Christian Community for graveyard.
9. A department to be set up to deal exclusively with the Urdu language. Proposal of 42 teachers for Urdu language sent to the Centre, since there is a shortage of them which needs to be sanctioned at the earliest.

**(Spalzes Angmo)**