

CHAPTER – 11

Conclusions and Recommendations

11.1 The National Commission for Minorities should be conferred Constitutional status alongwith powers of independent inquiry without any further delay.

11.2 The State Government should associate the State Minorities Commission in the formulation of the plan proposals and schemes meant for minorities. The Commissions should also be given powers to implement , monitor and review all developmental programmes and welfare schemes under PMs New 15 Point Programme intended for minorities.

11.3 The recommendation made last year for a minority sub plan similar to that for SC/ST did not find favour with the Planning Commission. The Commission reiterates its earlier recommendation. The idea of a Sub Plan for minorities should be carried forward and not discarded merely on the ground of failure of SC/ST sub plan as it seeks to remove the sense of policy discrimination and neglect of minorities over the years. Scheme-wise allocation of funds to the extent of 15% envisaged under the PMs' 15 Point Programme must be ensured.

11.4 There is lack of awareness amongst the minority communities about the developmental schemes of the Government and the need for dissemination of information on a wider scale giving full details of the schemes, benefits available, allocation of funds under the various schemes, its utilization and physical and financial achievements, is absolutely essential, to sensitize the minorities towards their developmental goals.. In this regard greater role can be played by NGOs and full support should be given by the Government.

11.5 Conferment of legal status to the PMs 15 Point Programme and adoption of public private initiative perhaps like the Gates Foundation model would enable its effective implementation and achieving the desired results.

11.6 Compensation to riot victims should be uniform and consistent and at the same enhanced level as that for the victims of 1984 riots; Special rehabilitation schemes should be devised to ameliorate the sufferings of the riot victims.

11.7 Madarsa educational system requires restructuring and should be accomplished without hurting the sentiments of the Muslims and should be brought in line with the formal educational structure with more emphasis on skill education.

11.8 The communal disturbances in the country remain unabated and is a cause of grave concern. A feeling is gaining ground amongst members of the minority community that they are being targeted and victimized. The Government must urgently address the fears and apprehensions of the minority community who form a sizeable section of the society. Wherever violent attacks and atrocities are committed against them, the State agencies should ensure observance of due process of law, prompt registration of FIRs against the perpetrators of such crimes, speedy investigation, and trial. Severe punishment, according to law, must also be ensured so that it can act as a deterrent.

11.9 The Commission felt that Act No.24 of 2007 of the Govt. of Andhra Pradesh empowering the State to prohibit propagation of religion in places of worship or prayer other than the religion traditionally preached at such place, is prima facie not in line with the letter and spirit of the constitution related to freedom of religion. There are enough provisions in the IPC to deal with offences committed in places of worship. The Andhra Pradesh Charitable and Hindu religious institutions and Endowments Act 1987 has been amended to establish a Sanathan Dharma Parishad for propagation of Hinduism. The composition of the Parishad includes civil servants as members. Prima facie the Commission felt that it is not in keeping with the secular values of the nation. The Commission urges the Government of Andhra Pradesh to reconsider these Acts and repeal them.

11.10 The law enforcing authorities of the State of Orissa failed miserably in prevention and control of the outbreak of violence against Christians and Church properties in the State which had its beginning in December 2007. The root cause of the violence was attributed to religious conversion and long simmering Kondh-Pana caste conflicts. The Commission recommends the following measures to be taken for the prevention of such

occurrences and to allay the sense of insecurity which runs deep in the Christian community in Orissa :—

- (i) The Government of Orissa should issue a White Paper on the conversion issue to dispel fears and suspicions that have been assiduously raised about the Christian community and the role of its institutions.
- (ii) Rehabilitation package announced by the Orissa Government should be reviewed to provide rehabilitation keeping in view the actual loss suffered by the victims of violence.
- (iii) The strength of the Police force should be augmented and provided with adequate training and equipment.
- (iv) The Government of Orissa should take necessary steps for setting up of a Statutory Minorities Commission for safeguarding the rights of minorities in the State.
- (v) The Government of Orissa should examine the entire issue of classification of people and inclusion/exclusion of disadvantaged groups from official categories of SCs and STs in consultation with the Centre. These lists are of vital importance for various deprived groups as it critically affects their access to reservations in education and Government employment.
- (vi) An atmosphere of peace and tolerance should be created by the Union and State Governments so that the Christians living in the remote areas could enjoy their cultural and other rights granted by the Constitution.
- (vii) Since nearly two third of the population in the violence affected areas of Orissa live below the poverty line, the authorities need to show greater vigilance to prevent outbreak of violence and urgently address issues of social exclusion and structural inequalities.

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