

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINORITY AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3161
ANSWERED ON:14.12.2006
SPECIAL ASSISTANCE TO BUDDHIST PILGRIMS
Rijju Shri Kiren

Will the Minister of MINORITY AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether in the population census for the minorities, the Buddhist population is shown much lesser than the actual figures.
- (b) if so, the facts thereof;
- (c) the special steps taken by the Government to help the Buddhists in the country;
- (d) whether the Government is contemplating to provide special assistance to the Buddhist pilgrims for visiting the sacred Buddhist locations; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS (A.R. ANTULAY)

- (a) & (b): In census 1991 the Buddhists population was 63,87,500 and it is 79,55,207 in census 2001.
- (c): The Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities provides for enhanced opportunities for education, equitable share in income and employment, improving the conditions of living of minorities and ensuring communal harmony. Wherever possible, 15% of the targets and outlays are earmarked for minorities. Besides, National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation provides term loans, micro financing and educational loans to minority on concessional rates. Maulana Azad Education Foundation has educational schemes for minorities. Buddhists are one of the minorities notified under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 and benefits of welfare schemes for minorities are also available to them.
- (d): No, Sir.
- (e): Does not arise.