

26

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND
EMPOWERMENT
(2006-2007)**

(FOURTEENTH LOK SABHA)

MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

**DEMANDS FOR GRANTS
(2007-2008)**

TWENTY SIXTH REPORT



**LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI**

April, 2007/Vaisakha, 1929 (Saka)

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Presented to Lok Sabha on 28.04.2007

Laid in Rajya Sabha on 3.05.2007



LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
NEW DELHI

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C O N T E N T S

	PAGE
COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE	(ii)
INTRODUCTION	(iii)
CHAPTER I Introductory	1
REPORT	
CHAPTER II Overall analysis of the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the year 2007-2008.	7
CHAPTER III Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF)	14
CHAPTER IV National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC)	23
CHAPTER V Forthcoming Schemes/Programmes	
A. Coaching and Allied Scheme for Minorities	31
B. Merit-cum Means Scholarship for Professional and Technical Courses of Undergraduate and Post-Graduate	33
C. Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities	34
D. Post-Matric Scholarship for Minorities	35
E. Multi-Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities in selected minority concentration districts	35
CHAPTER VI A. The Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities	38
B. The Constitution (One Hundred and Third) Amendment Bill, 2004 and National Commission for Minorities (Repeal) Bill, 2004.	43

ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE I	Minutes of the Twelfth Sitting of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment held on 10 April, 2007	52
ANNEXURE II	Minutes of the Thirteenth Sitting of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment held on 27th April, 2007	

APPENDIX

Statement of Recommendations/ Observations Contained in the Report	
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**STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT
(2006-2007)**

Smt. Sumitra Mahajan - CHAIRPERSON

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Mohd. Shahid Akhlaque
3. Shri Mahaveer Bhagora
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5. Shri Loganathan Ganesan
6. Shri Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain
7. Shri Tek Lal Mahato
8. Dr. Babu Rao Mediyam
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12. Shri Ram Chandra Paswan
13. Shri Rabindar Kumar Rana
14. Shri P.A. Sangma
15. Dr. R. Senthil
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17. Shri Lalit Mohan Suklabaidya
18. Smt. Krishna Tirath
19. Smt. Usha Verma
20. Vacant
21. Vacant

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26. Dr. Radhakant Nayak
27. Shri Abdul Wahab Peevee
28. Shri Dharam Pal Sabharwal
29. Shri Veer Singh
30. Ms. Anusuiya Uikey
31. Shri Nand Kishore Yadav

SECRETARIAT

1. Dr. (Smt.) P.K. Sandhu - Additional Secretary
2. Shri Ashok Sarin - Joint Secretary
3. Shri R.K. Saxena - Director
4. Shri Bhupesh Kumar - Deputy Secretary
5. Shri Yash Pal Sharma - Executive Assistant

INTRODUCTION

I, the Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (2006-2007) having been authorised by the Committee to submit the Report on their behalf, present this Twenty-sixth Report, of the Ministry of Minority Affairs on Demands for Grants, 2007-2008.

2. The Committee considered the Demands for Grants pertaining to the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the current year i.e. 2007-2008 which were laid on the Table of the House on 15th March, 2007. Thereafter, the Committee took evidence of the representatives of the Ministry of Minority Affairs on 10th April, 2007. The Committee considered and finalized the Report at their sitting held on _____

3. The Committee wish to express their thanks to the officers of the Ministry of Minority Affairs for placing before them the detailed written notes on the subject and furnishing the information the Committee desired in connection with the examination of the Demands for Grants and tendering evidence before the Committee.

4. For facility of reference and convenience, the observations and recommendations of the Committee have been printed in thick type in the body of the Report and have also been reproduced in a consolidated form in Appendix to the Report.

NEW DELHI;
27 April, 2007
7 Vaisakha, 1929 (Saka)

SUMITRA MAHAJAN
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTORY

A new Ministry of Minority Affairs was created on 29th January, 2006 to ensure a more focused approach towards issues relating to the minorities and to facilitate the formulation of overall policy and planning, coordination, evaluation and review of the regulatory framework and development programmes for the benefit of the minority communities.

ALLOCATION OF SUBJECTS

1.2 The Ministry of Minority Affairs has a wide charter relating to overall policy, planning, coordination, evaluation and review of the regulatory framework and developmental programmes relating to the minority communities. The list of subjects allocated to the Ministry is given below:-

1. Overall policy, planning, coordination, evaluation and review of the regulatory and developmental programmes of the minority communities.
2. All matters relating to minority communities except matters relating to law and order.
3. Policy initiatives for protection of minorities and their security in consultation with other Central Government Ministries and State Governments.
4. Matters relating to linguistic minorities and of the office of the Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities.
5. Matters relating to the National Commission for Minorities Act.

6. Work relating to the evacuee Wakf properties under the Administration of Evacuee Property Act, 1950 (31 of 1950) (since repealed).
7. Representation of the Anglo-Indian Community.
8. Protection and preservation of non-Muslim shrines in Pakistan and Muslim shrines in India in terms of the Pant-Mirza Agreement of 1955, in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs.
9. Questions relating to the minority communities in neighbouring Countries, in consultation with the Ministry of External Affairs.
10. Charities and Charitable Institutions, Charitable and religious Endowments pertaining to subjects dealt with in the Department.
11. Matters pertaining to the socio-economic, cultural and educational status of minorities; minority organizations, including the Maulana Azad Education Foundation.
12. The Wakf Act, 1995 (43 of 1995) and Central Wakf Council.
13. The Durgah Khawaja Saheb Act, 1955 (36 of 1955).
14. Funding of programmes and projects for the welfare of minorities including the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation.
15. Employment opportunities for minorities in the Central and State public sector undertakings, as also in the private sector.
16. Formulation of measures relating to the protection of minorities and their security in consultation with other concerned Central Ministries and State Governments.

17. National Commission for Socially and Economically Backward Sections among Religious and Linguistic Minorities.
18. All matters relating to the Justice Sachar Committee.
19. Prime Minister's new 15-Point Programme for Minorities.
20. Any other issue pertaining to the minority communities.

1.3 According to the Ministry, the total population of the country, population of Minority Communities and percentage of minority population against total population during the last three census is as under:-

Census Year	Total Population of the country	Population of Minority Communities	Percentage of Minority population against total population
1981	665287849	109475828	16.46%
1991	838583988	143883585	17.16 %
2001	1028610328	189508794	18.42%

1.4 The Government of India vide Notification dated 23rd October, 1993 notified five religious communities viz. Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the NCM Act, 1992. As per 2001 census, these five communities constitute 18.42% of the country's population. The break-up of population of five communities is as follows:

Muslims-	138188240
Christians-	24080016
Sikhs	19215730
Buddhists	7955207
Parsis	69601

ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS ACTS

1.5 The Ministry is responsible for the administration and implementation of the following Acts:

- (i) National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992
- (ii) Wakf Act, 1995
- (iii) Durgah Khawaja Saheb Act, 1955

1.6 The Ministry of Minority Affairs has the following constitutional, statutory, autonomous bodies, corporations/ commissions:-

- National Commission for Minorities, New Delhi
- Central Wakf Council, New Delhi
- Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities, Allahabad
- National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation, New Delhi
- Maulana Azad Education Foundation, New Delhi
- National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities, New Delhi.

1.7 In reply to a question whether the Ministry of Minority Affairs have adequate staff to carry out its functions effectively, the Committee have been informed by the Ministry that the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment transferred the work with a core staff of twenty seven persons of the erstwhile Minorities Division of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to the newly created Ministry of Minority Affairs in March, 2006. Apart from the posts of Secretary, with his personal staff, and three Joint Secretaries, the Ministry of Finance have sanctioned only twenty nine posts against the projected demand of 120 posts. Subsequently, one post of Deputy Secretary and four posts of Senior

Investigators were added by transfer from the Department of Personnel & Training and the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. Apparently, the position of supporting staff is not satisfactory. Stenographic support is inadequate for three Joint Secretaries. As against a requirement of fifteen stenographers, only twelve have been sanctioned and eight have been actually posted. No clerical staff has so far been posted. These posts are required to be filled by the Department of Personnel & Training through the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the cadre controlling authority for these categories, and the Ministry of Minority Affairs is not in position to fill them up directly. There is also a ban on recruitment of Group 'C' employees on contract basis. There is only one Senior Hindi Translator sanctioned for the Ministry and the post is lying vacant. Consequently, officers have to do a lot of clerical work and typing themselves.

1.8 Explaining the problem in this regard the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated during evidence as under:

“Mainly, we have problems in two areas, namely, we have no facilities for Hindi work as yet, and we have no supporting staff in terms of assistants, typist, and stenographers. Therefore, a large amount of our work is being done by our officers themselves. It has been possible for us to manage it thanks to computerization, but the Committee can well appreciate the kind of strain that the officers have to undergo. We have to do a lot of secretarial work on our own apart from doing our work. I hope the things ease out in the next year, but this is a genuine problem, which we face. Otherwise, the Ministry is functional”

1.9 The Demands for Grants asked for by the Ministry of Minority Affairs are given under Demand No.64. The Committee have attempted to scrutinize these demands to the extent possible within the short time available and the

conclusions drawn by the Committee have been highlighted in the succeeding chapters.

1.10 The Ministry of Minority Affairs was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 29th January, 2006 with the objective of ensuring more focused approach towards the issues relating to the development of minorities. The Committee hope that with the creation of the new Ministry the interests of minority community would be taken care of effectively and efficiently. The Ministry should strive to achieve its avowed objectives by ensuring that all the notified minorities get the benefits of the ongoing and new schemes in a focused and time bound manner as it would empower them to participate in the developmental process on equal basis on the terms which are available to the rest of the communities in the Country.

1.11 The Committee note that against the projected demand of 120 posts by the Ministry only 70 posts in different categories have been sanctioned and 51 thereof have been filled so far. Besides, the Ministry have no facility for Hindi work and are having shortage of supporting staff. The Committee desire that the sanctioned posts may be filled up at the earliest to enable the Ministry to carry out its mandate effectively for which the Ministry of Finance should be approached at the earliest at appropriate level. Meanwhile, the available staff may be efficiently utilized for successful implementation of various welfare schemes launched/to be launched by the Ministry.

CHAPTER II

REPORT

Overall analysis of the Demands for Grants of the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the year 2007-2008.

2.1 According to the Ministry of Minority Affairs, budget provision for the year 2007-08 is Rs. 500 crores. A sum of Rs 190 crores has been provided for the ongoing schemes viz., (i) Grants-in-Aids to MAEF, (ii) Coaching & Allied Scheme, (iii) Merit-Cum-means scholarship, (iv) Contribution to equity to NMDFC & (v) Research/studies, monitoring & evaluation including publicity and Rs. 310 crores for the proposed schemes viz., (i) Pre-matric scholarships (ii) Post-matric Scholarships (iii) Multi Sectoral Development Programme in selected minority concentration districts & (iv) Grants-in-Aids to State Channelizing Agencies of NMDFC.

2.2 The Ministry have furnished the following statement showing the scheme-wise Budget Estimates, Revised Estimates, Actual Expenditure (upto 28th March, 2007) and percentage of Expenditure under Plan and Non-Plan schemes

alongwith the Budget Estimate for the financial year, 2007-08:

Plan		(In thousands of Rupees)				
SI NO.	Name of the scheme	Budget Estimates (2006-07)	Revised Estimates (2006-07)	Actual Expenditure Up-to 28 th March)	% of Expenditure	Budget Estimates (2007-08)
1.	National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation	18,29,00*	18,29,00	18,29,00	100.00	70,00,00
2.	Maulana Azad Education Foundation	0	1,00,00,00	1,00,00,00	100.00	50,00,00
3.	Publicity & Media, Research studies, monitoring & evaluation of development (second component is new scheme)	0	1,00,00	1,00,00	100.00	6,00,00
4.	Merit cum means Scholarship	0	10,00,00	Nil	nil	54,00,00
5.	Coaching & Allied Scheme	1,60,00*	1,60,00	41.38	25.62	10,00,00
	New Schemes					
1	Grants in aid to state channelizing Agency(SCA)	-	-	-	-	10,00,00
2.	Multi Sectoral Development programme for minorities in selected minorities concentration districts	-	-	-	-	120,00,00
3	Pre matric scholarship for minorities	-	-	-	-	80,00,00
4.	Post matric scholarship for minorities	-	-	-	-	100,00,00

* Provision for the items existed in the Demand for Grants of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and was technically transferred through Supplementary Grants.

Non -Plan**In thousands of Rupees)**

SI No.	Name of the Scheme	Budget Estimates (2006-07)	Revised Estimates (2006-07)	Actual Expenditure Up-to 28 th March 07)	% of Expenditure	Budget Estimates (2007-08)
1.	Secretariat	2,00,00	3,87,00	3,62,89	93.77	3,91,00
2.	National Commission for Minorities	3,66,50*	3,66,50	2,90,59	79.29	4,40,00
3.	Special Officer for Linguistic Minorities	1,04,00*	1,04,00	1,04,00	100.00	1,43,00
4.	National Commission for Religious and Linguistic Minorities	72,50*	1,99,50	1,94,50	97.49	19,00
5.	Grants-in-Aid to Wakfs	2,06,00*	2,06,00	2,06,00	100.00	2,90,00

2.3 The Ministry of Minority Affairs have furnished the following statement showing the total Budgetary allocations of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Amount allocated to Minority Division of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Actual utilization of funds and percentage of utilization for the

entire duration of the Tenth Five Year Plan as follows:-

Year	Total Budgetary allocations of M/o. SJ&E (Rs. in crore)		Amount allocated to Minority Division of M/o. SJ&E		Actual utilization of funds		% of utilization	
	Plan	Non-Plan	Plan	Non-Plan	Plan	Non-Plan	Plan	Non-Plan
2002-03	1410.00	59.00	39.3	5.24	25.40	4.83	64.63	92.17
2003-04	1410.00	59.56	54.45	5.53	21.21	4.85	38.95	87.70
2004-05	1492.00	65.01	74.65	6.08	74.65	5.43	100.00	89.30
2005-06	1533.70	66.00	55.00	8.09	54.99	7.36	100.00	90.97
2006-07	1750.00	67.60	19.89*	7.49*	120.14	12.18	91.78	96.43
2007-08 **	500.00	12.83	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

* During 2006-07, additional provision was made through supplementary grants as under:-

Plan: - 111.00 Crore.

Non Plan: - 3.14 crore (In addition to Rs. 2.00 crore budget provision for the Ministry of Minority Affairs)

** The figure for 2007-08 indicates budget provision for Ministry of Minority Affairs.

2.4 Regarding requirement of Budget during 11th Plan, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated as under during evidence:-

“For the Eleventh Plan and for the current year, there was a Committee set up by the Planning Commission on empowering the minorities. The Committee gave its recommendations including a large number of schemes for the Eleventh Plan totaling about Rs. 17,000 crore. After reviewing the recommendations of the Committee, the Ministry had proposed to the Planning Commission a sum of about Rs. 11, 700 crore for the Eleventh Plan, and about Rs. 1,100 and odd crore for the Annual Plan. For the Annual Plan, of course, the Planning Commission has not accepted all our recommendations and has only provided Rs. 500 crore. But a number of new schemes have got included which are of value to the minorities. I will just briefly mention them. For the Eleventh Plan, we are still in negotiations. I believe, the Eleventh Plan would be ready by the end of the year. We hope to get reasonable resources for the development of the minorities”.

2.5 When enquired whether the funds were adequate, the Secretary stated: -

“ We have proposed to the Government and to the Planning Commission that our needs are higher and I hope with the support of the Committee we should be able to secure more resources. In the meanwhile, we are busy trying to utilize the resources which we have fully so that nobody is left with the grievance that we have not utilized the resources we have”.

2.6 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that the ‘Working Group’ on ‘Empowerment of the Minorities’ has suggested plans for the overall upliftment of the educationally and economically backward minorities. Key areas identified by them which require focused attention are as under:

- 1 Equitable access to economic opportunities.
2. Equitable access to educational opportunities.
3. Equitable access to Government social welfare schemes and programmes.
4. Sharply focused research plans to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the condition of minorities, particularly Muslims.

2.7 The Committee have been informed that under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment only three schemes relating Welfare of Minorities were under implementation i.e. Maulana Azad Education Foundation, National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation and Coaching and Allied Schemes for Minorities. All the other schemes viz. merit cum means scholarship, Grant-in-Aid to SCAs, Multi-sectoral Development Programme for Minorities in selected minorities concentration districts, Pre-matric scholarship for minorities

and Post-Matric scholarships for Minorities are new schemes which have been formulated after the Ministry came into existence. The same have been included in the Annual Plan and some more would get included when the Five Year Plan is approved.

2.8 The Committee observe from the data made available to them that inadequate funds were allocated to the Ministry during the 10th Five Year Plan (2002-03 to 2006-07) which was at that time under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. For the year 2007- 08, budget provision of only Rs. 500 crores under Plan and Rs. 12.83 crores under Non-Plan has been made whereas the Ministry had asked for about Rs. 1100 crores. Considering the fact that in addition to existing schemes some more new schemes are in the pipeline for implementation for the upliftment of minorities (having 18.42% of population as per 2001 census), the Committee feel that the budgetary allocation for the year 2007-08 needs to be augmented. The Committee desire that the Ministry should keep on pursuing with the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance to allocate more funds in order to ensure that implementation of schemes is not hampered for want of funds. At the same time, Committee would like the Ministry to ensure prudent and judicious utilization of available scarce funds for the various schemes.

2.9 The Committee understand that the 'Working Group on empowerment of the Minorities' has suggested plans for the overall upliftment of the educationally and economically backward minorities. In

this regard some key areas have been identified by them which require focused attention. These areas are ‘Equitable access to economic opportunities’, ‘Equitable access to educational opportunities’, ‘Equitable access to Government social welfare schemes and programmes’ and ‘Sharply focused research plans to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the condition of minorities’, particularly Muslims. The Committee hope that the Ministry would earnestly consider the suggestions made by the Working Group on empowerment of minorities and formulate an action Plan for implementing them in a time bound manner.

CHAPTER - III

MAJOR HEAD: 2225

SUB HEAD : 08

HEAD NO : 08.00.31

Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF)

3.1 The Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) was established in the year 1989 as a voluntary, non-profit making society registered under the Societies' Registration Act, 1860 to formulate and implement educational schemes for the benefit of educationally backward minorities.

3.2 The main objectives of MAEF are to formulate and implement educational schemes and plans for the benefit of the educationally backward minorities in particular and weaker sections in general, to establish residential schools, especially for girls, in order to provide modern education to them and to promote research and encourage other efforts for the benefit of educationally backward minorities.

3.3 According to the Ministry the Foundation is implementing schemes out of the interest earned on its Corpus Fund, which is its only source of income. The Corpus Fund has been provided to the Foundation as part of plan assistance. The Corpus fund, which stood at Rs. 30.01 crores during the Eighth Plan, was augmented by Rs. 40 crores during 1997-98, Rs. 29.99 crores in the year 2005-06 and Rs. 100 crores in the year 2006-07. presently, MAEF has a Corpus Fund of Rs. 200 crores.

3.4 According to the Ministry, since its inception and upto 31st December, 2006, MAEF has sanctioned Rs. 91.81 crores to 702 NGOs throughout the country for construction / expansion of schools/colleges/girls hostels/polytechnics/ITIs and purchase of equipment /machinery/furniture and has distributed scholarships to 6986 girl students amounting to Rs. 6.98 crores.

3.5 The following statement according to the Ministry indicate the BE, RE and actual expenditure incurred under MAEF during the last three years:

(Rs.in crores)

Year	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure
2004-05	1.00	1.00	1.00
2005-06	30.00	30.00	30.00
2006-07	100.00	100.00	100.00
2007-08	50.00		

The Committee desired to know the reasons for decline in BE during 2007-08 as compared to 2006-07. In reply the Ministry have stated that in accordance with the proposal of the Finance Minister made in his Budget Speech (2006-07) to double the Corpus Fund of the Maulana Azad Education Foundation, a provision for Rs.100.00 crores was made in the first supplementary grant for the year 2006-07. The provision in BE 2007-2008 is to be seen in the context of allocation for all the schemes of the Ministry, the provisions made usually for MAEF and the need for MAEF to mobilize funds from voluntary and charitable institutions.

3.6 Explaining the position in this regard the Secretary Ministry of Minority Affairs stated during evidence as under:

“ After the Ministry was formed, we have doubled the corpus in one shot of Rs. 100 crore. Now, when this was being done, one of the feelings in the Government was that as a voluntary organization has been set up, an autonomous body has been set up, apart from taking assistance from the Government, it should be possible for that body to raise resources from charitable institutions who would be willing to assist and participate in the objectives of the foundation. Therefore, Rs. 50 crore has been given as Government assistance this year. We have proposed something like Rs. 500 crore for the Eleventh Plan which has not been finalized, and we hope and expect that the foundation should be able to raise matching resources from private institutions, individuals and charitable organizations. Whether that would happen or not, we will see as time goes by. But if it happens, then Maulana Azad will have adequate funds”.

3.7 In reply to a question, the Committee have been informed by the Ministry that the Sachar Committee has recommended that the Corpus Fund of MAEF needs to be increased to Rs.1000.00 crores. It is planned to increase the Corpus of the Foundation substantially during the course of the Eleventh Five Year Plan. To begin with, the infrastructure of the Foundation is being strengthened so as to enable it to absorb more funds. The following steps have been taken to ensure increased accountability and transparency in the functioning of Maluana Azad Education Foundation.

- (a) The staff structure is being strengthened. For the first time, a Senior Administrative Grade level officer has been posted (on deputation basis) as Secretary to the Foundation.
- (b) The Organization Research Group, an independent agency, has been entrusted with an evaluation study to assess the impact of the

programmes of MAEF and to suggest further course of action required for improvement in its functioning. The report of the study is expected by the end of June 2007.

- (c) Efforts will also be made by MAEF to augment its corpus fund through contributions from voluntary sources.

3.8 At the instance of the Committee the Ministry has furnished the following statement showing funds released by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (State-wise and year-wise) to NGOs during the last three years.

(Amount in Rupees)

Sl. No	States/UTs	Year					
		2004-2005		2005-2006		2006-2007	
		Physical	Financial	Physical	Financial	Physical	Financial
1.	Andhra Pradesh	6	8055000	0	0	2	4500000
2.	Assam	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.	Bihar	1	1350000	3	3000000	2	3000000
4.	Delhi	1	300000	0	0	0	0
5.	Goa	2	2800000	0	0	0	0
6.	Gujarat	7	7400000	3	3000000	6	6000000
7.	Haryana	2	1360000	1	700000	3	1700000
8.	Jammu & Kashmir	4	6000000	0	0	1	3000000
9.	Karnataka	3	6200000	3	4000000	6	8500000
10.	Kerala	4	5970000	6	1200000	2	2700000
11.	Madhya Pradesh	3	4280000	1	1000000	3	4225000
12.	Maharashtra	27	31996500	7	91000000	6	16350000
13.	Manipur	0	0	0	0	0	0
14.	Orissa	3	2730000	0	0	0	0
15.	Rajasthan	5	6750000	0	0	3	6000000
16.	Tamil Nadu	4	3290000	0	0	2	2500000
17.	Uttaranchal	0	0	0	0	0	0
18.	Uttar Pradesh	27	27458000	20	20627280	2	2200000
19.	West Bengal	3	4400000	0	0	0	0

It is seen from the reply furnished by the Ministry that no funds were released by MAEF to Assam, Manipur and Uttaranchal during the last three years. The Committee enquired whether the funds are not disbursed State-wise in proportion to percentage of minority population, the Ministry stated that no State-wise allocation was made so far. The practice has been to consider

applications for grants-in-aid on the basis of those received. The Ministry has explained the position further in this regard as under:

- a) In the case of Assam, applications received were considered by the Foundation; in the case of nine applications recommended by the State Government fresh inspections revealed that none was eligible as these NGOs were not running recognized schools/institutions.
- b) As regards Manipur, though the Foundation had not sanctioned grants to any NGO during last three financial years, it has assisted 5 NGOs with grants-in-aid amounting to Rs. 85.00 lakhs prior to this period.
- c) As regards Uttaranchal, the Foundation has assisted 5 NGOs amounting to Rs. 65.00 lakhs prior to this period.

3.9 The Committee have also been informed by the Ministry that there have been a few instances of misuse of grant-in-aid given to NGOs. Whenever such misuse is brought to the notice of the MAEF, efforts are made to recover the amount released along with interest thereon. Whenever necessary, criminal cases also registered against such NGOs.

3.10 The Committee enquired whether the NGOs who misuse the grants-in-aid are blacklisted, the Ministry stated that the Foundation is in the process of blacklisting one NGO of Mahatashtra.

3.11 On being asked how much amount is to be recovered from NGOs State-wise and steps taken by the Foundation to recover the same, the Committee

have been informed by the Ministry that the Foundation has already recovered the released amount of Rs. 7.50 lakhs from one NGO in Pilibhit (UP) and filed suit for recovery of the interest. The Foundation has to recover grant-in-aid of Rs. 10.10 lakhs released to the following 5 NGOs along with interest.

Sl.No	State	Amount (Rs. in lakhs)	No. of NGOs	Steps for Recovery
1.	Uttar Pradesh	4.85	2	Suit filed
2.	Punjab	3.00	2	Papers sent to Advocate to file suits of recovery
3.	West Bengal	2.25	1	Papers sent to Advocate to file a suit of recovery
	Total	10.10	5	

3.12 The Committee note that Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) was established in 1989 to formulate and implement educational schemes for the benefit of educationally backward minorities. The Foundation implement its schemes out of the interest earned on its corpus fund which has been provided to it by the Government as a part of plan assistance. Upto 2006, the Foundation was allocated meager funds every year and in fact the consolidated figure for 12 years upto 2006 was of Rs. 100 crores. It was during the year 2006-07 that its corpus fund was further augmented by Rs. 100 crores. However, again during 2007-08 only Rs. 50 crores have been allocated to it. The reduction in amount during 2007-08 has been explained by the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs by indicating that the Foundation was expected to raise the resources from Charitable Institutions who would be willing to assist and participate in the objectives of the Foundation. Considering the objectives of the foundation the Committee feel that it would be appropriate that the corpus fund of the foundation is gradually augmented to meet its avowed objectives.

3.13 The Committee note that funds from Maulana Azad Education Foundation are made available to reputed NGOs, throughout the country for construction/expansion of schools/colleges/girl hostels/polytechnics/ITIs and purchase of equipment/machinery/furniture. However, it has been observed that no amount was sanctioned to Assam, Manipur and Uttranchal during the last three years. The Committee are constrained to note that MAEF do not disburse funds State-wise in proportion to the percentage of minority population. The Committee do not agree with the plea advanced by the Ministry that the release of funds depend upon the proposals received from the States. The Committee are of the opinion that unless the funds are made available to the States in proportion to the percentage of minorities, they would be deprived of the benefits of the scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend that State-wise allocation of funds may be made under the MAEF in proportion to the percentage of minorities in respective States and ensure that funds allocated are fully and gainfully utilized by the NGOs.

3.14 The Committee are constrained to note that there have been instances of misuse of grant-in-aid given to NGOs by some States out of the allocation provided by MAEF. The Committee understand that the MAEF have recovered Rs. 7.50 lakhs from one NGO in Pilibhit (U.P.) and filed suit for recovery of interest but Rs. 10.10 lakhs are yet to be recovered from five NGOs. The Committee take a serious view of the mis-utilisation of scarce Government funds by unscrupulous NGOs. Such NGOs need to be dealt with firmly and criminal proceedings should be initiated against

all those found guilty. These NGOs should then be de-barred from getting any grant-in-aid. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should formulate a comprehensive and strict selection criteria for identifying the genuine NGOs.

CHAPTER IV

MAJOR HEAD: 4225, 4552
SUB HEAD: 03, 06
HEAD NO : 06.00.54, 03.00.54

National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMDFC)

4.1 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that the National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation (NMFDC) was incorporated on 30th September, 1994 with the objective of promoting economic activities amongst the backward sections of notified 5 minorities. To achieve its objective, the Corporation provides concessional finance for self-employment activities to eligible beneficiaries, belonging to the minority communities having a family income below double the poverty line. NMDFC has an authorized share capital of Rs. 650 crores out of which, the share of Government of India is Rs. 422.50 crores (65%) and the share of State Governments is Rs. 169 crores (26%) while the remaining Rs. 58.50 crores (9%) is contributed by institutions/individuals having interest in minorities. Government of India has so far contributed Rs. 357.07 crores towards the equity of NMDFC, while Rs. 94.05 crores has been contributed by various State Governments.

4.2 The Ministry have further stated that NMDFC has two channels to reach the ultimate beneficiaries, viz. (i) through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) nominated by the respective State/UT Government and (ii) through non-Governmental organizations (NGOs). Under the SCA window, projects costing up to Rs. 5.00 lakhs for individual beneficiaries are financed. Funds for this purpose are made available to the SCAs at an interest rate of 3% for further

loaning to the beneficiaries at 6%. The Corporation is also implementing schemes of Vocational training & Educational Loan, through the SCAs, for capacity building of the target groups self as well as for wage employment.

4.3 According to the Ministry, under the NGO programme, micro-credit up to Rs. 25,000/- could be given to members of the minority self help groups (SHGs), through the NGOs. Funds for this purpose are made available to the NGOs at 1% interest for further lending at an interest rate of 5% per annum. In addition to lending activity, NMDFC assists the targeted group in training for skill upgradation and marketing assistance.

4.4 The Ministry of Minority Affairs have furnished the following statement showing the BE, RE and Actual Expenditure incurred under the scheme of NMDFC during the last three years.

(Rs. in Crore)

Year	BE	RE	Actual Expenditure
2004-2005	31.00	73.65	73.65
2005-2006	36.00	25.00	25.00
2006-2007	18.29	18.29	10.00 (up to 31.1.2007)
2007-2008	70.00		

Explaining the reasons for enhancing the BE for 2007-08 to Rs.70 crore the Ministry have stated that if NMDFC has to make a perceptible impact, there needs to be a quantum jump in its activities. An Expert Committee has been set up for suggesting an action plan for improving the operational performance of

NMDFC. The Report of the Committee is expected in April, 2007 and its recommendations would have to be implemented during the current financial year. Simultaneously, Government also proposes to strengthen the infrastructure of SCAs. It is expected that these steps will provide a major boost to NMDFC's operational performance. Accordingly, the budget provision had been raised to Rs. 70 Crores for the year 2007-08. It may also be taken note that NMDFC had been able to absorb Rs. 73.65 crores in 2004-05 and BE 2007-08 is less than that. When asked what projects are proposed to be implemented out of this BE funds during 2007-2008, the Committee have been informed by the Ministry that BE funds for 2007-2008 will be used by NMDFC for implementing schemes namely Term Loan, Micro-Financing, Educational loan, Mahila Samridhi Yojana, Vocational Training, Marketing, Cluster Development as well as the new schemes / projects that may be started in pursuance of the recommendations of the Expert Committee.

4.5 The Committee wanted to know about the allocations of funds to States the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs during evidence stated as under:

“Basically, the allocation of funds is decided in a meeting between the SCAs and the NMDFC management. The Ministry also participate in the same. The factors given consideration therein are population of the State, proportion of minorities in that State, the past use of funds, the repayment position of the SCAs, the availability of funds in the year to the NMDFC, etc. The Ministry confessed that their coverage is poor and SCAs are not strong enough to utilize all the money that is available and therefore, as many beneficiaries, as they should have assisted, can not be assisted. The Ministry expressed their view that it would not be fair to expect that NMDFC keep pumping funds in the SCAs which do not improve its performance”.

4.6 On being asked what kind of shortcomings are generally found during inspections in implementation of schemes and what remedial measures taken by the Ministry to overcome these short-comings, the Ministry stated that NMDFC implements its scheme through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs). Inspections by officers have revealed shortcomings like poor selection of beneficiaries, delay in documentation & release of loans, improper follow up for recovery from the beneficiaries etc. These issues have been taken up by NMDFC with the organizations concerned for remedial action. The Ministry proposes to introduce a scheme during 2007-08 to strengthen the State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) to overcome these shortcomings.

4.7 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that due to weak infrastructure of State Channelising Agencies funds released could not be fully utilized by them. Since the weak infrastructure of SCAs has proved to be a major impediment in operational performance of the NMDFC, it has been considered necessary to strengthen the SCAs through an appropriate scheme of grants-in-aid. The Planning Commission has accordingly agreed for an outlay of Rs. 10 crores during 2007-08. The details of the schemes are being worked out.

4.8 The Committee enquired about the main difficulties being faced by the SCAs in implementation of NMDFC's programme and steps taken or proposed to be taken to strengthen the infrastructure of the State Channelising Agencies. The Ministry stated that the main difficulties of State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) are :

- (i) Inadequate field level set up,

- (ii) Lack of professional & trained manpower,
- (iii) Lack of administrative & financial support from the State Government.
- (iv) Most of the SCAs have staff only in the State Head Quarter.

The Ministry has further stated that the need for strengthening the State Channelising Agencies has repeatedly been impressed upon the State Governments. NMDFC, on its own has introduced the scheme of 1% .Additional Interest Margin for supporting the SCAs. Under this scheme NMDFC provides assistance for following activities: -

- (i) Infrastructure related expenses such as purchase of vehicles, computers and other related accessories.
- (ii) Expenses incurred on advertisement and publicity of NMDFC programmes.
- (iii) Consultancy expenses incurred on conducting potentiality surveys, feasibility study report, preparation of project reports,
- (iv) Entrepreneurial development programmes,
- (v) Training for beneficiaries as well as functionaries of the SCA,
- (vi) Assisting artisans and crafts persons in design development and skill development,
- (vii) Organization of exhibitions etc.
- (viii) Manpower related expenditure which directly help in better implementation of NMDFC schemes such as engaging recovery agents, contractual manpower for data entry, software development, follow up with beneficiaries etc

- (ix) Recovery related expenditure on TA/DA, fuel, etc.

4.9 As regard the strengthening of State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) the Secretary Ministry of Minority Affairs stated during evidence as under:

“We have now, as in this Plan, included a scheme, which I have mentioned, regarding strengthening of the State Channelising Agencies. Now, the NMDFC from its meager resources are trying to strengthen them by giving them money. Whenever the money went, the State Channelising Agencies improved. We have now put a sum of Rs. 10 crore in this Plan. We are formulating a scheme for giving support to the State Channelising Agencies for manpower, for vehicle, for computers etc. because what is happening is that even after the State Channelising Agencies have been set up by the States, they keep changing personnel, they do not put people there, they do not give them money. The State Channelising Agencies cannot perform in the air. We are taking part of the responsibility. Of course, to be fair, I must submit that the welfare of the minorities is not only the responsibility of the Central Government. We are prepared to go more than half the way, but I think the States have to put in some effort in seeing to it that the State Channelising Agencies function.”

4.10 The Committee note that the budgetary allocation of National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation has substantially been increased from Rs. 18.29 crores in 2006-07 to Rs. 70 crores in 2007-08 which will be used by the Corporation for implementing schemes namely Term Loan, Micro Financing, Educations Loan, Mahila Samridhi Yojna, Vocational Training, Marketing, Cluster Development as well as new schemes/projects that may be taken up in pursuance of the recommendations of the Expert Committee set up for suggesting the action plan for improving the operational performance of NMDFC. The Government also propose to strengthen the infrastructure of State Channelising Agency. The Committee hope that the increased allocation would provide a major boost to NMDFC's operational performance and desire that NMDFC should fix targets for each scheme, draw an action plan to achieve the targets and utilize the increased allocation prudently so as to cover more beneficiaries.

4.11 The Committee have been informed that NMDFC implements its scheme through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) and NGOs. During the inspections of SCAs by NMDFC, various shortcomings like poor selection of beneficiaries, delay in documentation and release of loans, improper follow up for recovery from the beneficiaries etc. have come to the notice. The Committee feel that unless these shortcomings are removed, the schemes of the NMDFC will not be effectively implemented and it will not give a boost to the economic activities of the minorities

living below the poverty line. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should take necessary steps to analyse the reasons for these shortcomings noticed during inspections so that the suitable remedial steps could be taken.

4.12 The Committee find that State Channelising Agencies are the main links between the beneficiaries and the Corporation. These agencies have been conferred with the responsibility to identify the beneficiaries, seek sanctions, receive funds and ultimately disburse the funds to the beneficiaries. The Committee, however, regret to point out that some State Channelising Agencies are not utilizing the full amount disbursed to them. The coverage of the intended minority beneficiaries is also much below the desired average and the SCAs are not strong enough in respect of infrastructure and staffing etc. and, therefore, are not able to use the funds made available to them for the desired purpose. Consequently many beneficiaries have been deprived of the intended benefits of the scheme. Since the SCAs are the main links between the beneficiary and the Corporation and their objective is to make funds available for upliftment of the poor minority beneficiaries, the Committee desire that the work structure of the State Channelising Agencies and their manner of functioning needs to be looked into afresh. Feasibility may be examined to allow the State Channelising Agencies to create their own infrastructure, recruit their own staff and for deputing some officials of the SCAs in districts to carry out the designated task effectively and efficiently.

CHAPTER V

FORTHCOMING SCHEMES/PROGRAMMES

MAJOR HEAD: 2225, 2552, 3601, 3602

SUB HEAD : 04, 02, 01

HEAD NO : 04.01.31, 04.02.31, 02.00.31, 01.00.31

A. Coaching and Allied Scheme for Minorities

5.1 According to the Ministry, the objective of the scheme is to assist candidates of economically weaker sections belonging to minority communities by providing them opportunities for enhancing their knowledge, skills and capabilities for employment in Government/private sector through competitive examinations, and for admission in reputed institutions in technical and professional courses at under-graduate and post-graduate levels and remedial coaching in such institutions to complete their courses successfully.

5.2 The Ministry have explained that this is an ongoing scheme transferred from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. There is a budgetary provision of Rs. 1.60 crores for the year 2006-2007. Out of this Rs. 1.60 crore, Rs. 0.62 crore was allocated for State Governments/UTs. However, this fund could not be utilized as no proposal was received from them. Out of the remaining allocation of Rs. 0.98 crore 42.22 % expenditure was incurred after the budget of this scheme was separated from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and placed at the disposal of the Ministry of Minority Affairs.

5.3 In this connection the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated during evidence:

“In coaching also the size of minority share was very limited. Last year in the scheme for coaching the share of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment was Rs. 8 crore and minority share was Rs. 1.60 crore. We have this year in our plan already got Rs. 10 crore for minority. So, it is nearly an eight-fold increase in what we are intending to provide to minority for coaching.”

5.4 The Committee desired to know the number of minority beneficiaries covered during the last three years (State-wise and year-wise) under this scheme. The Ministry have stated that the grant-in-aid under the Coaching and allied scheme for minorities has been released by the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the first time during the year 2006-07. The State-wise number of minority students covered is given below:-

Delhi-	242
Rajasthan-	722
Manipur-	80
Jammu and Kashmir-	240

5.5 The Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs added during evidence as under:

“We had some problems of data. All the data did not come to us from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.”

B. Merit-cum Means Scholarship for Professional and Technical Courses of Undergraduate and Post-Graduate

5.6 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that the Finance Minister had announced in his budget speech 2006-07 that 20, 000 merit cum-means scholarships would be awarded to students belonging to minority community every year. Under “Merit-cum-means based scholarships for professional and technical courses of undergraduate & postgraduate” the proposed outlay for 2006-07 was Rs. 30.00 crores and the allocation approved by the Planning Commission for 2006-07 was Rs. 10.00 crores. The BE for 2007-08 is Rs. 54 crores. However, the scheme is yet to be approved by the full Planning Commission.

5.7 The Ministry have further informed that the scheme was formulated by the Ministry and circulated for inter-ministerial consultations. After receipt of comments, which took quite some time, the scheme was submitted to the Expenditure Finance Committee of the Ministry of Finance, which considered and recommended it. However, being a new scheme not included in the Annual Plan 2006-07, the Ministry was advised by the Finance Ministry that the approval of the full Planning Commission would be necessary. This has been pursued with the Planning Commission since December,2006, but approval has still not been received. The matter was discussed in a meeting of the Committee of Secretaries and this Ministry has now been authorized to approach the Cabinet and seek ex-post facto approval of the Planning Commission.

5.8 During evidence, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated:

“The scheme which was announced last year and which unfortunately we have not been able to operationalize as yet is the Merit-cum-Means Scholarship for 20,000 students belonging to the minority community for technical and professional education. As far as the Ministry is concerned, we have done whatever we could do and we have the approval of the Expenditure Finance Committee in December last year. We even got money in Supplementary Grants, a sum of Rs. 10 crore. But the rules required an approval of the Planning Commission. I am sorry to report to the Committee that despite our best efforts, we have not been able to secure this as yet. Hence, we have not been able to go to the Cabinet. We have taken this matter to the Cabinet Secretariat and we have now been authorized by the Cabinet Secretary to go to the Cabinet without waiting for Planning Commission’s approval. We propose to go to the Cabinet in the next week. But it has been unfortunate that we have not been able to launch this scheme. Had the Planning Commission given us the approval or its views, we should have been able to launch it last year. It is ready, approved by the Finance Ministry, and it should be possible to do soon.

C. Pre-Matric Scholarship for Minorities.

5.9 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that there is a budget provision of Rs. 80 crores in 2007-08 and 80000 children will be benefited and able to complete their education upto secondary level.

5.10 When asked about the measures taken to launch the above scheme in the first quarter of 2007-08, the Ministry stated that the scheme has been formulated and already circulated, for inter-Ministerial consultation and the same will be announced as soon as approvals are received.

D. Post-Matric Scholarship for Minorities.

5.11 The Ministry have informed that there is a budget provision of Rs.100 crores in 2007-08 and 75000 students will be able to pursue technical and vocational courses upto class XIIth and pursue higher studies upto post-graduation level in general courses.

5.12 It has further been informed that the scheme has been formulated and already circulated, after FA's approval for inter-Ministerial consultation. On being asked about the steps taken to ensure that the allocations made for the scheme would be fully utilized, the Ministry stated that the scheme will be announced as soon as approvals are received.

E. Multi-Sectoral Development Programme for Minorities in selected minority concentration districts

5.13 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that a budget provision of Rs.120 crores has been made for the above programme in 2007-08. The Ministry is in the process of identifying backward minority concentration districts. After identifying the districts, multi-sectoral development programme will be formulated for development of these districts.

5.14 The Committee note that the objective of the Coaching and Allied scheme for minorities is to assist economically weaker sections of candidates belonging to minority communities by providing them opportunities for enhancing their knowledge, skills and capabilities for employment in Government/private sector through competitive examinations, and for admission in reputed institutions in technical and professional courses at under-graduate and post-graduate levels and remedial coaching in such institutions to complete their courses successfully. This is an ongoing scheme transferred from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Committee, however, regret to point out that the data in respect of number of minority beneficiaries covered during the previous years is not available with the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The reason put forth by the Ministry is that details for the previous years were sought from the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and will be forwarded as soon as they are received. The Committee are not convinced by this argument of the Ministry. It is clearly evident that the schemes are launched and their performance is not monitored at any level. Without the resultant data, the efficacy or otherwise of the implementation of any scheme cannot be gauged. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry of Minority Affairs should vigorously pursue with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for obtaining the data in respect of number of minority beneficiaries covered under the scheme during the previous years so that the impact of the scheme could be assessed and remedial action taken in case of any

deficiency. The progress achieved in this regard may be communicated to the Committee.

5.15 The Committee note that the Finance Minister had announced in his budget speech 2006-07 that 20, 000 merit cum-means scholarships would be awarded to students belonging to minority community every year. The Committee find that under the scheme proposed outlay for 2006-07 was Rs. 30.00 crores and the allocation approved by the Planning Commission for 2006-2007 was Rs. 10.00 crores and the BE for 2007-08 is Rs. 54 crores. However, the scheme is yet to receive the approval from Planning Commission. The Committee desire that the Ministry should take up the matter with the Planning Commission to obtain approval of the scheme at the earliest so that the funds earmarked during 2006-07 and 2007-08 could be utilized and the benefit of the scheme accrue to the needy persons.

CHAPTER VI

A. THE PRIME MINISTER'S NEW 15-POINT PROGRAMME FOR THE WELFARE OF MINORITIES

6.1 The Committee have been informed by the Ministry that the 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities was launched in May, 1983. It was commonly known as the "Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of Minorities". The President of India, in his address to the Joint session of Parliament on 25th February, 2005 announced that the Government would recast the 15-Point Programme for the welfare of Minorities with a view to incorporate programme specific interventions. The Prime Minister, in his address to the nation on the occasion of Independence Day on 15th August, 2005, announced, inter alia: "We will also revise and revamp the 15-Point Programme for Minorities. The new 15 Point Programme will have definite goals which are to be achieved in a specific time frame".

6.2 The Ministry further stated that in pursuance of the above commitments, the Prime Minister's New 15-Point Programme for the Welfare of minorities was announced in June, 2006. The objectives of the programme are (a) Enhancing opportunities for education (b) Ensuring on equitable share for Minorities in economic activities and employment through existing and new schemes, enhanced credit support for self-employment and recruitment to State and Central Government jobs (c) Improving the conditions of living of minorities by ensuring on appropriate share for them in infrastructure development schemes and (d) Prevention and control of communal disharmony and violence.

6.3 According to the Ministry, an important aim of the new programme is to ensure that the benefits of various government schemes for the underprivileged reach the disadvantaged sections of the minority communities. In order to ensure that the benefits of these schemes flow equitably to the Minorities, the new programmes envisages location of a certain proportion of development projects in minority concentration districts. It also provides that wherever possible, 15% of targets and outlays under various schemes should be earmarked for minorities.

6.4 According to the Ministry, as envisaged in the Prime Minister's New Programme for the Welfare of Minorities, earmarking of 15% of physical and financial outlays has been done in respect of most of the schemes, which are amenable to earmarking. The targets have been conveyed to all States/Union Territories by the Ministries/Departments concerned.

6.5 The Ministry also informed that the Names of the Ministries and their programmes included in the 15 Point Programme which were considered amenable to earmarking are as follows:

- (i) Ministry of Women & Child Development - Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) by providing services through Anganwadi Centres.
- (ii) Ministry of Human Resource Development (Department of Elementary Education and Literacy) - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, and other similar Government schemes.

- (iii) Ministry of Rural Development - Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY).
- (iv) Ministry of Housing & Urban Poverty Alleviation - Swaran Jayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana (SJSRY), Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM).
- (v) Ministry of Labour & Employment - New Industrial training Institutes (ITI) and upgradation of existing ITIs.
- (vi) Ministry of Finance (Banking Division) – Priority Sector Lending

6.6 The Committee enquired whether any evaluation was carried out of the previous 15 Point Programme, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs during evidence stated as under:

“No evaluation was done but I think the judgement in Government was that the programme was very limited in scope. There were only three aspects as I have mentioned. The programme did not have monitorable targets and the programme did not have sufficient economic content. The new programme answers all these three issues. It has a very substantive economic content. And the process of earmarking, just to give you an idea, if we look at the 8 schemes where we have already done earmarking last year and where we are proposing to do this year, if the earmarking is done successfully, Rs. 3, 540 crore of funds for different schemes run by different Ministries of Government of India would get directed towards minority. I would submit that our plan programme may not be seen in isolation but should be seen in conjunction with other measures that we are taking.”

6.7 As regards monitoring of the 15 Point Programme, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated during evidence as under :

“As I mentioned in my opening statement, monitoring is the essence of the new programme and there is no programme in the Government of India which is required to be monitored by the Union Cabinet once every six months and after the recommendation of the Committee of Secretaries. Therefore, it is incumbent on every Ministry and on us to monitor, to report, to review and to inform the Cabinet. I think this is the tightest level of monitoring that has been introduced for any programme so far in the Union Government.”

6.8 As regard about the sense of security for the minorities, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs explained as under:

“Regarding the sense of security for minorities, sense of belonging and how does the Ministry look at it. I must submit that it is not that everything about minority we are doing. That is not the way it is being done. The idea as I understand and as the government understands it in the nodal Ministries is that while we do a number of things on our own, it should be possible for the nodal Ministry, which is the Ministry of Minority Affairs, to use its influence and exercise its weight in the conduct of a large number of Ministries in a manner that it benefits the minorities. The law and order and sense of security essentially belongs to the Home Ministry but this Ministry is in constant touch with the Home Ministry. Three items of the 15 point programme impinge directly on the security of minorities. I think the response of the Government has been that we have moved the Communal Harmony Bill in Parliament and the official amendments have also been moved. I believe in May the discussion would be held and it is our understanding in government’s response that if that Bill is passed a large number of issues affect communal harmony including rehabilitation and punishment to errant officers will all be taken care of.”

6.9 Elaborating about the fair representation to minorities, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated as under:

“There is one major issue which the Prime Minister had referred to, which is part of the 15 point programme-fair representation to minorities in Government appointments. Now it is an established

fact that the minorities do not have a proportionate representation in Government. It is also an established fact that the minorities as such do not have reservation. I think what has to be done is that within the existing constitutional framework find out ways and means of improving the representation of minorities in appointments unless there is some further constitutional development. The Department of Personnel and Training with whom we are in constant touch has already issued detailed guidelines as to how the representation is to be improved. We have put them on a very tight monitoring mechanism. I think on the 18th we take up our first meeting with them as to whether selection committee have been made more representative, whether the minorities are getting adequate information, whether they are getting pre-employment training and coaching to make them employable, etc. We hope to see the results. I think the Committee will have to bear with us for an year or two for the results to appear because I do not think employment results will come in a jiffy. The Government is seized of the matter. The programme addresses the issue and we are active on it.”

6.10 The Committee also pointed out about the lack of publicity in the new Ministry of Minority Affairs, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs during evidence stated as under :

“I am also grateful for pointing out that we suffer from lack of publicity. It is true that we use the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. But one development has happened. The Government has six flagship programmes and the Committee might be happy to know that the programmes of the Ministry of Minority Affairs and especially the 15-Point programme has been identified as one of the flagship programmes and we have now been authorized to engage private consultants to advise on appropriate methods of informing public of the programmes and of our activities, of their entitlements and of their benefits. We are in the process of selecting an appropriate consultant. As and when we do so, I hope in the next six months, it should be possible to inform the public in a better manner as to what we are doing and what we are supposed to do. I agree that our publicity up to now has not been great partly because of our own shyness and partly because of our own inefficiency and partly because we will busy making programmes before we start talking about them”.

B. The Constitution (One Hundred and Third) Amendment Bill, 2004 and National Commission for Minorities (Repeal) Bill, 2004.

Need to confer Constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities.

6.11. The Ministry have stated that the National Common Minimum Programme inter-alia states “The Government will examine the question of providing constitutional status to the Minorities Commission.” The Address of the Hon’ble President of India to the Parliament on 7th June, 2004 inter-alia also provided “the Government will examine the question of providing constitutional status to the Minorities Commission.”

6.12. In pursuance of the National Common Minimum Programme and the President’s Address to confer constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities, the Government of India have introduced the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Bill, 2004 in Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004 to insert an Article 340 A after Article 340 (Article 340 provides for appointment of a Commission to investigate the conditions of backward classes). It is felt that the constitutional provision would inspire greater confidence amongst minorities and the Commission would be more effective in safeguarding their interests.

6.13. The proposed Article 340 A provides for a seven member Commission consisting of a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and five Members. It further provides that at least five Members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst Minorities. The Commission shall inter-alia evaluate the progress of

development of minorities, monitor the working of safeguards, make recommendations for effective implementation of safeguards to the Central Government and State Governments and look into specific complaints. The Commission while performing certain functions shall have powers of a civil court trying a suit. No change is proposed in composition, functions and powers, secretariat staff, etc. of the existing Commission.

6.14 There will be no financial implication as the terms and conditions of the proposed Commission will be the same as exist for the present Commission.

6.15. The Government of India has also introduced the National Commission for Minorities (Repeal) Bill, 2004 in Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004. The Bill envisages dissolution of the existing Commission set up under Section 3 of the NCM Act, 1992. On dissolution of the Commission, the Members including Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson and Members of the Commission shall vacate their offices. No compensation for pre-mature termination of the office is envisaged. It is envisaged to utilize the services of the Secretary and other officers and employees of the existing National Commission for Minorities for the proposed Commission. An amount of Rs. 303 lakhs has been provided for the National Commission for Minorities for the year 2004-05 (Non-Plan). The Repeal Bill will be effective after the Constitutional (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Bill, 2004 is enacted and come into force.

6.16 On the above mentioned Bill the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs stated during evidence as under:

“The Standing Committee had examined the Constitution (Amendment) Bill which has been introduced by the Government in

Lok Sabha in 2004. We hope to be able to move the official amendments in Parliament as soon as the House reconvenes. The main reason why it has taken time is that the recommendation No. 5 of the Standing Committee was a very valuable recommendation, in a sense that the Committee advised the Government to look at the entirety of the Bill in the light of the judicial pronouncements made by the hon. Supreme Court in two major landmark judgments – T.M.A. Pai v State of Karnataka and Bal Patil v Union of India. We have examined the implications of these judgments. It has taken time because we are revamping the Bill substantially to accommodate the judicial pronouncements made in these two judgments. After inter-ministerial consultation, we have reached a consensus as to how this has to be done. The topicality of this exercise, I suppose, is evident from the fact that we just had a recent judgment from the Allahabad High Court. All of these issues, we hope, should be resolved once the official amendments can be moved in May this year”.

6.17 The Committee note that the 15 Point Programme of 1983 has been revamped and a new programme namely the Prime Minister’s new 15 Point Programme has been formulated. While the earlier programme only dealt with aspects of recruitment, communal harmony and security, the new programme is stated to have schemes which directly aim at improving the economic activities, educational levels and living conditions of minorities. The new 15 Point Programme envisages earmarking of 15% of the physical targets and financial outlays, out of the allocation, for the schemes which are amenable to earmarking. The names of the Ministries which are considered amenable to earmarking are Ministries of Women & Child Development; Human Resources Development (Department of Elementary Education and Literacy); Rural Development; Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation; Labour and Employment and Finance. The Committee hope that this new programme would be implemented soon in a time bound manner.

6.18 The Committee would like to point out that “The Constitution One Hundred and Third (Amendment) Bill, 2004” was introduced by the Government in Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004 and was referred to Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment for examination and report. The Bill intended to confer constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities with the purpose to inspire greater confidence amongst minorities and to enable the Commission to implement the safeguards provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the State legislatures. The Committee had examined the Bill and the

Report thereon containing its considered views was presented to the Parliament on 21.2.2006. The Committee, however, understand that this Bill is still pending with the Government as according to them the judicial pronouncements made by Hon'ble Supreme Court regarding giving minority status to certain communities is still under consideration. The Committee hope that urgent steps would be taken to bring the amended Bill to Parliament.

6.19 A number of suggestions, as detailed below need to be implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in consultation and coordination with other concerned Ministries/Departments/Agencies for focused attention towards various issues relating to the minorities and to facilitate the formulation of overall policy and planning for their benefit.

- (i) The budgetary allocation for the Department should be adequately enhanced so as to address the requirement of the existing as well as the new programmes/schemes.
- (ii) Action plan may be drawn up for implementation of the Prime Minister's new 15 point programme in a time bound manner. Periodic evaluation of the 15 point programme may be done in order to assess the shortcomings, lacunae and the impact of the programme with a view to taking suitable remedial steps.
- (iii) Different States have different communities as minorities and there are sub groups within the minorities. Their interests need to be considered sympathetically in a focused manner while formulating new schemes.

- (iv) **The Ministry has to conceptualise and programmatise the scheme in such a way that it helps to create confidence in the minorities.**
- (v) **The activities and programmes of the Ministry should be given wide publicity in a specialized and focused manner so as to create awareness amongst the minorities about such activities or programmes.**
- (vi) **The monitoring mechanism needs to be strengthened so as to have proper coordination with State level Minority Commissions which are more or less a replica of the Central Commission for minorities.**
- (vii) **The Ministry should frame and forward the set of guidelines to the States advising them about the manner of formation and functioning of State level Minority Commissions.**

**NEW DELHI;
27 April, 2007
7 Vaisakha, 1929 (Saka)**

**SUMITRA MAHAJAN
Chairperson,
Standing Committee on
Social Justice and
Empowerment**

**MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH SITTING OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON
TUESDAY, 10th APRIL, 2007.**

The Committee met from 1100 hrs. to 1245 hrs. in Committee Room 'E'
Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

Smt. Sumitra Mahajan - CHAIRPERSON

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Mahaveer Bhagora
3. Dr Babu Rao Mediyam
4. Shri Kailash Meghwal
5. Shri Jual Oram
6. Shri Rabindar Kumar Rana

**MEMBERS
RAJYA SABHA**

7. Shri Urkhao Gwra Brahma
8. Shri Silvius Condpan
9. Dr. Narayan Singh Manaklao
10. Dr. Radhakant Nayak
11. Shri Dharam Pal Sabharwal
12. Ms. Anusuiya Uikey
13. Shri Nand Kishore Yadav

SECRETARIAT

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Dr.(Smt.) P.K. Sandhu | - | Additional Secretary |
| 2 | Shri Ashok Sarin | - | Joint Secretary |
| 3. | Shri R.K. Saxena | - | Director |
| 4. | Shri Bhupesh Kumar | - | Deputy Secretary |

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS

1. Shri M.N. Prasad Secretary
2. Shri Mrutunjay Sahoo Joint Secretary & Finance Adviser,
3. Shri Ameising Luikham Joint Secretary,
4. Shri Pradeep Sen Joint Secretary,
5. Shri Sujit Datta Joint Secretary,
6. Shri R.N. Shastri Managing Director, (NMDFC)
7. Shri Asif Iqbal Secretary (MAEF)
8. Dr. M.R. Haque, Secretary (CWC)
9. Shri A. Banerji Joint Secretary (NMC)
10. Shri Suresh A. Keswani, Commissioner for Linguistic Minorities

At the outset, the Chairperson welcomed the Members and representatives of the Ministry of Minority Affairs to the sitting of the Committee. The Chairperson then stated that the meeting had been convened to discuss the Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Minority Affairs. At the instance of the Chairperson, the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs briefly narrated the details of various schemes/programmes undertaken by the Ministry and intimated the physical and financial targets achieved in that connection. The representatives of the Ministry then explained to the various queries put forth by the Members to the extent possible. The Chairperson directed them to furnish expeditiously the replies to those points which could not be replied in the meeting.

The verbatim record of the proceedings has been kept.

The Committee then adjourned.

**MINUTES OF THE THIRTEENTH SITTING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT HELD ON 27TH APRIL, 2007.**

The Committee met from 15.00 hrs. to 1550 hrs. in Committee Room 'B',
Parliament House Annexe, New Delhi.

PRESENT

1. **Smt. Sumitra Mahajan** - **Chairperson**

**MEMBERS
LOK SABHA**

2. Shri Mahaveer Bhagora
3. Shri Eknath M. Gaikwad
4. Shri Kailash Meghwal
5. Shri Rabindar Kumar Rana
6. Dr. R. Senthil
7. Smt. Pratibha Singh

RAJYA SABHA

8. Shri Urkhao Gwra Brahma
9. Shri Silvius Condpan
10. Dr. Narayan Singh Manaklao
11. Dr. Radhakant Nayak
12. Ms. Anusuiya Uikey

SECRETARIAT

1. Shri R.K. Saxena - Director
2. Shri Bhupesh Kumar - Deputy Secretary

2. At the outset, Hon'ble Chairperson welcomed the Members to the sitting of the Committee and apprised them that the sitting has been convened to consider and adopt the following Draft Reports of the Committee:

- (i) Twenty- third Report on Action taken by the Government on the observations/recommendations contained in the Sixteenth Report on Demands For Grants (2006-07) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- (ii) Twenty-fourth Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment
- (iii) Twenty-fifth Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- (iv) Twenty sixth Report on Demands for Grants (2007-08) of the Ministry of Minority Affairs

3. Thereafter, the Committee considered and adopted the aforesaid Reports of the Committee with minor modifications/amendments.

4. The Committee authorized the Chairperson to finalise these draft Reports and present the same to Parliament on their behalf.

The Committee then adjourned.

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS/OBSERVATIONS

S.No.	Para No.	Recommendation/Observations
1	2	3
1.	1.10	The Ministry of Minority Affairs was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on 29 th January, 2006 with the objective of ensuring more focused approach towards the issues relating to the development of minorities. The Committee hope that with the creation of the new Ministry the interests of minority community would be taken care of effectively and efficiently. The Ministry should strive to achieve its avowed objectives by ensuring that all the notified minorities get the benefits of the ongoing and new schemes in a focused and time bound manner as it would empower them to participate in the developmental process on equal basis on the terms which are available to the rest of the communities in the Country.
2.	1.11	The Committee note that against the projected demand of 120 posts by the Ministry only 70 posts in different categories have been sanctioned and 51 thereof have been filled so far. Besides, the Ministry have no facility for Hindi work and are having shortage of supporting staff. The Committee desire that the sanctioned posts may be filled up at the earliest to enable the Ministry to carry out its mandate effectively for which the Ministry of Finance should be approached at the earliest at appropriate level. Meanwhile, the available staff may be efficiently utilized for successful implementation of various welfare schemes launched/to be launched by the Ministry.
3.	2.8	The Committee observe from the data made available to them that inadequate funds were allocated to the Ministry during the 10 th Five Year Plan (2002-03 to 2006-07) which was at that time under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. For the year 2007- 08, budget provision of only Rs. 500 crores under Plan and Rs. 12.83 crores under Non-Plan has been made whereas the Ministry had asked for about Rs. 1100 crores. Considering the fact that in addition to existing schemes some more new schemes are in the pipeline for implementation for the upliftment of minorities (having 18.42% of population as per 2001 census), the Committee feel that the budgetary allocation for the year 2007-08 needs to be augmented.

The Committee desire that the Ministry should keep on pursuing with the Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance to allocate more funds in order to ensure that implementation of schemes is not hampered for want of funds. At the same time, Committee would like the Ministry to ensure prudent and judicious utilization of available scarce funds for the various schemes.

4. 2.9 The Committee understand that the 'Working Group on empowerment of the Minorities' has suggested plans for the overall upliftment of the educationally and economically backward minorities. In this regard some key areas have been identified by them which require focused attention. These areas are 'Equitable access to economic opportunities', 'Equitable access to educational opportunities', 'Equitable access to Government social welfare schemes and programmes' and 'Sharply focused research plans to collect quantitative and qualitative data on the condition of minorities', particularly Muslims. The Committee hope that the Ministry would earnestly consider the suggestions made by the Working Group on empowerment of minorities and formulate an action Plan for implementing them in a time bound manner.

5. 3.12 The Committee note that Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) was established in 1989 to formulate and implement educational schemes for the benefit of educationally backward minorities. The Foundation implement its schemes out of the interest earned on its corpus fund which has been provided to it by the Government as a part of plan assistance. Upto 2006, the Foundation was allocated meager funds every year and in fact the consolidated figure for 12 years upto 2006 was of Rs. 100 crores. It was during the year 2006-07 that its corpus fund was further augmented by Rs. 100 crores. However, again during 2007-08 only Rs. 50 crores have been allocated to it. The reduction in amount during 2007-08 has been explained by the Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs by indicating that the Foundation was expected to raise the resources from Charitable Institutions who would be willing to assist and participate in the objectives of the Foundation. Considering the objectives of the foundation the Committee feel that it would be appropriate that the corpus fund of the foundation is gradually augmented to meet its avowed objectives.

6. 3.13 The Committee note that funds from Maulana Azad Education Foundation are made available to reputed NGOs, throughout the country for construction/expansion of schools/colleges/girl hostels/polytechnics/ITIs and purchase of equipment/machinery/furniture. However, it has been observed that no amount was sanctioned to Assam, Manipur and Uttranchal during the last three years. The Committee are constrained to note that MAEF do not disburse funds State-wise in proportion to the percentage of minority population. The Committee do not agree with the plea advanced by the Ministry that the release of funds depend upon the proposals received from the States. The Committee are of the opinion that unless the funds are made available to the States in proportion to the percentage of minorities, they would be deprived of the benefits of the scheme. The Committee, therefore, recommend that State-wise allocation of funds may be made under the MAEF in proportion to the percentage of minorities in respective States and ensure that funds allocated are fully and gainfully utilized by the NGOs.
- 7 3.14 The Committee are constrained to note that there have been instances of misuse of grant-in-aid given to NGOs by some States out of the allocation provided by MAEF. The Committee understand that the MAEF have recovered Rs. 7.50 lakhs from one NGO in Pilibhit (U.P.) and filed suit for recovery of interest but Rs. 10.10 lakhs are yet to be recovered from five NGOs. The Committee take a serious view of the mis-utilisation of scarce Government funds by unscrupulous NGOs. Such NGOs need to be dealt with firmly and criminal proceedings should be initiated against all those found guilty. These NGOs should then be de-barred from getting any grant-in-aid. The Committee also recommend that the Ministry should formulate a comprehensive and strict selection criteria for identifying the genuine NGOs.
- 8 4.10 The Committee note that the budgetary allocation of National Minorities Development and Finance Corporation has substantially been increased from Rs. 18.29 crores in 2006-07 to Rs. 70 crores in 2007-08 which will be used by the Corporation for implementing schemes namely Term Loan, Micro Financing, Educations Loan, Mahila Samridhi Yojna, Vocational Training, Marketing, Cluster Development as well as new schemes/projects that may be taken up in pursuance of the recommendations of the Expert Committee set up for suggesting the action plan for improving the operational performance of NMDFC. The

Government also propose to strengthen the infrastructure of State Channelising Agency. The Committee hope that the increased allocation would provide a major boost to NMDFC's operational performance and desire that NMDFC should fix targets for each scheme, draw an action plan to achieve the targets and utilize the increased allocation prudently so as to cover more beneficiaries.

- 9 4.11 The Committee have been informed that NMDFC implements its scheme through State Channelising Agencies (SCAs) and NGOs. During the inspections of SCAs by NMDFC, various shortcomings like poor selection of beneficiaries, delay in documentation and release of loans, improper follow up for recovery from the beneficiaries etc. have come to the notice. The Committee feel that unless these shortcomings are removed, the schemes of the NMDFC will not be effectively implemented and it will not give a boost to the economic activities of the minorities living below the poverty line. The Committee, therefore, recommend that the Ministry should take necessary steps to analyse the reasons for these shortcomings noticed during inspections so that the suitable remedial steps could be taken.
- 10 4.12 The Committee find that State Channelising Agencies are the main links between the beneficiaries and the Corporation. These agencies have been conferred with the responsibility to identify the beneficiaries, seek sanctions, receive funds and ultimately disburse the funds to the beneficiaries. The Committee, however, regret to point out that some State Channelising Agencies are not utilizing the full amount disbursed to them. The coverage of the intended minority beneficiaries is also much below the desired average and the SCAs are not strong enough in respect of infrastructure and staffing etc. and, therefore, are not able to use the funds made available to them for the desired purpose. Consequently many beneficiaries have been deprived of the intended benefits of the scheme. Since the SCAs are the main links between the beneficiary and the Corporation and their objective is to make funds available for upliftment of the poor minority beneficiaries, the Committee desire that the work structure of the State Channelising Agencies and their manner of functioning needs to be looked into afresh. Feasibility may be examined to allow the State Channelising Agencies to create their own infrastructure, recruit their own staff and for deputing some officials of the SCAs in districts to carry out the designated task effectively and efficiently.

- 11 5.14 The Committee note that the objective of the Coaching and Allied scheme for minorities is to assist economically weaker sections of candidates belonging to minority communities by providing them opportunities for enhancing their knowledge, skills and capabilities for employment in Government/private sector through competitive examinations, and for admission in reputed institutions in technical and professional courses at under-graduate and post-graduate levels and remedial coaching in such institutions to complete their courses successfully. This is an ongoing scheme transferred from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Committee, however, regret to point out that the data in respect of number of minority beneficiaries covered during the previous years is not available with the Ministry of Minority Affairs. The reason put forth by the Ministry is that details for the previous years were sought from the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and will be forwarded as soon as they are received. The Committee are not convinced by this argument of the Ministry. It is clearly evident that the schemes are launched and their performance is not monitored at any level. Without the resultant data, the efficacy or otherwise of the implementation of any scheme cannot be gauged. The Committee, therefore, desire that the Ministry of Minority Affairs should vigorously pursue with the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment for obtaining the data in respect of number of minority beneficiaries covered under the scheme during the previous years so that the impact of the scheme could be assessed and remedial action taken in case of any deficiency. The progress achieved in this regard may be communicated to the Committee.
- 12 5.15 The Committee note that the Finance Minister had announced in his budget speech 2006-07 that 20, 000 merit cum-means scholarships would be awarded to students belonging to minority community every year. The Committee find that under the scheme proposed outlay for 2006-07 was Rs. 30.00 crores and the allocation approved by the Planning Commission for 2006-2007 was Rs. 10.00 crores and the BE for 2007-08 is Rs. 54 crores. However, the scheme is yet to receive the approval from Planning Commission. The Committee desire that the Ministry should take up the matter with the Planning Commission to obtain approval of the scheme at the earliest so that the funds earmarked during 2006-07 and 2007-08 could be utilized and the benefit of the scheme accrue to the needy persons.

- 13 6.17 The Committee note that the 15 Point Programme of 1983 has been revamped and a new programme namely the Prime Minister's new 15 Point Programme has been formulated. While the earlier programme only dealt with aspects of recruitment, communal harmony and security, the new programme is stated to have schemes which directly aim at improving the economic activities, educational levels and living conditions of minorities. The new 15 Point Programme envisages earmarking of 15% of the physical targets and financial outlays, out of the allocation, for the schemes which are amenable to earmarking. The names of the Ministries which are considered amenable to earmarking are Ministries of Women & Child Development; Human Resources Development (Department of Elementary Education and Literacy); Rural Development; Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation; Labour and Employment and Finance. The Committee hope that this new programme would be implemented soon in a time bound manner.
- 14 6.18 The Committee would like to point out that "The Constitution One Hundred and Third (Amendment) Bill, 2004" was introduced by the Government in Lok Sabha on 23rd December, 2004 and was referred to Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment for examination and report. The Bill intended to confer constitutional status on the National Commission for Minorities with the purpose to inspire greater confidence amongst minorities and to enable the Commission to implement the safeguards provided in the Constitution and in laws enacted by Parliament and the State legislatures. The Committee had examined the Bill and the Report thereon containing its considered views was presented to the Parliament on 21.2.2006. The Committee, however, understand that this Bill is still pending with the Government as according to them the judicial pronouncements made by Hon'ble Supreme Court regarding giving minority status to certain communities is still under consideration. The Committee hope that urgent steps would be taken to bring the amended Bill to Parliament.

A number of suggestions, as detailed below need to be implemented by the Ministry of Minority Affairs in consultation and coordination with other concerned Ministries/Departments/Agencies for focused attention towards various issues relating to the minorities and to facilitate the formulation of overall policy and planning for their benefit.

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