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Title: Need to include more schemes under Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for welfare of the minorities.

SHRI E.T. MOHAMMAD BASHEER (PONNANI): It is high time to remodel the Prime Minister's 15 Point Programme for welfare of the minorities. Three important bodies have suggested changes in the scope, implementation and monitoring of this programme. The report of the Planning Commission's Steering Committee on Empowerment of the Minorities, the National Advisory Council's (NAC) recommendations for the 12th Five-Year Plan "Towards inclusive development to empower minorities" and the outcome budget of the Ministry of Minority Affairs for the year 2012-13 have spelt out the changes that would be required for effective implementation of the programme.

The 15-Point Programme aims at enhancing opportunities for education, ensuring an equitable share for minorities in economic activities and employment, through existing new schemes, enhanced credit support for self-employment, recruitment to State and Central Government jobs, improving the living condition of minorities etc.

The programme also seeks to ensure that the benefits of various government schemes for the underprivileged reach the disadvantaged sections of the minority communities. This objective is sought to be achieved through earmarking 15% of the targets and outlays under various schemes for the minorities.

The Steering Committee on the Empowerment of Minorities during the 12th Five-Year Plan, for instance, suggests certain key changes for implementation, monitoring and reporting of the 15-Point Programme both at the Central and State levels, based on the recommendations of the NAC report. The NAC and the Steering Committee point out that only a limited number of schemes are included in the 15-Point Programme. They have suggested for expanding the basket to include additional schemes from the Ministries of Small and Medium Industries, Youth Affairs, Agriculture and Rural Development (especially MGNREGA).

In the light of the above facts, I urge upon the Government to take urgent necessary steps in this regard.