

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MINORITY
EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS (NCMEI)**

Case No. 62 of 2019

In the matter of :-

**St. Joseph's School, Attinkarai, Manavalakurichy, Kalkulam,
District Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu-629252**

..... **Petitioner**

V/s

**Principal Secretary, School Education Department, Government
of Tamil Nadu, Fort St. George, Secretariat, Chennai, Tamil Nadu**

..... **Respondent**

**Present: Mr. Junais P., Advocate for the petitioner
None for the respondent**

ORDER

DATED 02.12.2021

Justice Narendra Kumar Jain, Chairman, NCMEI

1. This application has been received on 08.03.2019 by hand through Mr. Junais P., Advocate of the petitioner institution for grant of Minority Status Certificate (in short 'MSC') to St. Joseph's School, Attinkarai, Manavalakurichy, Kalkulam, District Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu-629252.
2. Learned counsel for the petitioner filed an affidavit of Fr. S. Joseph Bernard Rosario, Chairman, Stephen Charitable Trust and the authorized representative of the applicant institution i.e. St. Joseph's School, Attinkarai, Manavalakurichy, Kalkulam, District Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu-629252 in support of the averments made in the petition and also to prove that the beneficiaries of the petitioner institution are members of the Christian minority community.
3. Learned counsel for the petitioner has filed notarized copy of Unique ID No. : TN/2018/0182305 of the petitioner's trust as given by the Niti Aayog Portal NGO Darpan, copy of application dated 15.11.2018 sent to State Competent Authority i.e. Principal Secretary, School Education Department, Government of Tamil Nadu for grant of No Objection Certificate (in short 'NOC') alongwith postal receipt and its

tracking report, notarized copy of Trust Deed dated 11.11.1994, notarized copy of Amended Trust Deed dated 20.08.2009, 21.05.2010, 12.02.2011 and 24.08.2016, notarized copy of Affiliation Order No. CBSE/Aff/SS-00018-2021/2020-21 dated 04.06.2020 issued by Joint Secretary, CBSE for the period from 01.04.2020 to 31.03.2023 to the unaided petitioner institution for Secondary and Senior Secondary School Examination and resolution of the General Body of the Trust to authorize Fr. S. Joseph Bernard Rosario, Chairman, Stephen Charitable Trust for obtaining MSC from this Commission.

4. As per the information supplied by the petitioner institution with regard to student strength, it is mentioned that out of the total 1788 students, 1437 students are from the Christian minority community, 45 are from the Muslim minority community and 306 are Hindus. It is relevant to mention here that out of total 81 teachers, 68 are from Christian Minority community. Hon'ble Apex Court, various High Courts as well as this Commission in case of Buckley Primary School, Cuttack, Orissa Vs. Government of Orissa (order passed by the Commission in Case No. 1320 of 2009 dated 6.7.2010) have categorically held that the percentage of admission of students from notified minority community in a minority educational institution is not an indicia for determining the minority status of such institution.
5. It is stated in the petition that on dated 15.11.2018, the petitioner institution has applied to the State Competent Authority for grant of NOC which was received by the State Competent Authority on 28.11.2018 and the said application is still pending before the State Competent Authority. The State Competent Authority has not granted NOC in favour of the petitioner institution till now and also not rejected the said application and not communicated the same to the petitioner. After 90 days from the receipt of the application for grant of NOC, the petitioner has filed this application for grant of MSC to this Commission straightway as per the provisions of Section 10 and 11(f)

of National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (in short 'NCMEI') Act, 2004.

6. After service of registered notice dated 18.04.2019, 22.01.2020 and 21.09.2021, respondent has sent reply dated 29.05.2019 by post which was received by the Commission on 07.06.2019. In the reply filed by the respondent i.e. Director of School Education submitted that petitioner institution has filed application for grant of MSC. Minority Status is being granted by the State Government as per the guidelines stipulated in GO Ms No. 648 Education, Science and Technology Department dated 03.08.1994, G.O. Ms No. 270 Higher Education (J1) Department dated 17.06.1998 and the revised guidelines given in G.O. Ms No. 375 School Education (X1) Department dated 12.10.98 and GO Ms No. 214 School Education (X2) Department dated 03.11.2008 to the recognized Government Aided and Unaided Educational Institutions under the Control of the Director of School Education and as per G.O. Ms. No. 144 School Education (GE) Department dated 18.09.2014 amendment have been issued by the Government by delegating the powers to Director of School Education for the issuance of Certificate of Recognition to Schools affiliated Boards other than that of Tamil Nadu. It is stated in their reply that as per the above amendment, if the petitioner school submit the recognition proposals through proper channel to Directorate of School Education and after obtaining Certificate of Recognition, the request of the petitioner will be considered as per the G.O. Ms No. 375 School Education (X1) Department dated 12.10.98. In these circumstances, it is prayed that the Commission may be pleased to dismiss the petition as devoid of merit and thus render justice.
7. Learned Counsel for the petitioner filed subsequent pleadings and contended that petitioner is denying all the meritless and frivolous averments made by the respondent in their counter affidavit as the contents therein are wrong, malafide, baseless and contrary to truth. With malafide intention respondent has suppressed many material

facts in their reply to drag the proceedings of this Commission. The petitioner institution is established and administered by the Christian minority community under the registered Trust and institution is managed by the Christian minority community, the Trust desired to get its declaration as a minority educational institution, in order to avail the rights and privileges guaranteed under Article 30(1) of the Constitution of India. As per the mandate of Hon'ble Commission, the petitioner institution approached the respondent Competent Authority on dated 15.11.2018 to grant NOC under Section 10 of the NCMEI Act, 2004 and to seek MSC from this Commission. The said application is still pending with the competent authority of the State of Tamil Nadu. Petitioner has waited for more than 90 days to get any response from the respondent, but the competent authority did not grant the NOC under section 10 of the NCMEI Act, 2004, nor rejected the said application within the statutory period of 90 days. Therefore, after the completion of 90 days, petitioner institution on dated 08.03.2019 filed application for grant of MSC in favour of petitioner institution.

8. All the averments made in counter affidavit filed by the respondent are pertaining to the rules and guidelines laid down by the Govt. of Tamil Nadu to grant MSC and not for grant of NOC under section 10 of the NCMEI Act, 2004 and the present objections raised by the respondent is not maintainable as per the NCMEI Act, 2004.
9. Petitioner has further submitted that they fulfill all the indicia prescribed by this Commission for grant of MSC as the petitioner institution is established and administered by the Christian minority community and primarily for the benefits of Christian minority community and prayed that the counter affidavit filed by the respondent being devoid of any merits, disallowed, and petition filed by the petitioner for grant of MSC may be allowed and accordingly grant MSC to the petitioner institution.
10. Heard the Learned Counsel for the petitioner, perused the pleading of the petitioner institution, the documents filed by the petitioner and

affidavit of Fr. S. Joseph Bernard Rosario, Chairman, Stephen Charitable Trust.

11. The petitioner institution has applied for grant of minority status certificate on the ground that the same has been established primarily for the benefit of the members of the Christian minority community and is being administered by the Stephen Charitable Trust which is managed and run by the members of the Christian minority community. The aforesaid averments made in the petition find ample corroboration from the documentary evidence produced on behalf of the petitioner institution and the affidavit of Fr. S. Joseph Bernard Rosario, Chairman, Stephen Charitable Trust.
12. The respondent has not replied properly to the application submitted by the petitioner institution. Respondent has also failed to appreciate the provisions of NCMEI Act, 2004 especially under section 10 of the said Act and filed reply wrongly before this Commission. The Petitioner has not applied for grant of MSC before the State Competent Authority. Petitioner has applied for grant of NOC under section 10 of the NCMEI Act, 2004 before the State competent authority. So the guidelines of the Government of Tamil Nadu have is not applied to the present petitioner institution. In the facts and circumstances of the present case the stand taken by the respondent is not tenable in the eye of law and deserves to be ignored.
13. The petitioner institution has fulfilled all the criteria for grant of MSC. The Competent Authority has failed to consider their application for grant of NOC. To obtain minority status certificate is a constitutional right of minority educational institution. The petitioner institution is established and administered by the members of the Christian minority community. The reply filed by the respondent is clearly against the verdict of Hon'ble Apex Court in the matter of SISTERS OF ST. JOSEPH OF CLUNY V/S THE STATE OF WEST BENGAL & ORS (Civil Appeal No. 3945/2018, Judgement dated 18/04/2018), which reads as follows :-

“However, Section 10(1), which was introduced at the same time as Section 11(f) by the Amendment Act of

2006, carves out one facet of the aforesaid power contained in Section 11(f), namely the grant of a no objection certificate to a minority educational institution at its inception. Thus, any person who desires to establish a minority educational institution after the Amendment Act of 2006 came into force, must apply only to the competent authority for the grant of a no objection certificate for the said purpose. It is a little difficult to subscribe to Shri Hedge's argument that the said powers are concurrent. Harmoniously read, all applications, for the establishment of a minority educational institution after the Amendment Act of 2006 must go only to the competent authority set up under the statute. On the other hand, for the declaration of its status a minority educational institution at any state post establishment, the NCMEI would have the power to decide the question and declare such institution's minority status."

14. As per the provisions of Section 10, Section 12A and Section 12B of the NCMEI Act, 2004, the person who desires to establish minority institution, is to apply to the State Competent Authority for grant of NOC for the said purpose under section 10 of the NCMEI Act, 2004. The Act of 2004 also conferred powers of appeal against the orders of the competent authority of the State to the NCMEI under Section 12A as well as over the authorities that were established by the Central Government or State Government which reject the application for grant of MSC to an educational institution under section 12B of the NCMEI Act, 2004.
15. Looking to the provisions of the NCMEI Act, 2004 and verdict of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this Commission has both jurisdiction original as well as appellate. Any individual institution who desires to establish minority educational institution has two options. Firstly, he can apply before an authority established by the Central Government or any State Government, Union Territory as the case may be for grant of MSC to any educational institution and if above authorities rejects the application for grant of MSC, the aggrieved person may appeal against such order of the authority to this Commission under section 12B of NCMEI Act, 2004. Secondly, under section 10 of NCMEI Act, 2004 whosoever desires to establish an minority educational institution has to apply the Competent

Authority of the State Government for grant of NOC within a period of 90 days from the receipt of the application, if competent authority does not grant NOC or application has been rejected but not communicated to the petitioner it shall be deemed that NOC has been granted and the petitioner can file an application for grant of MSC straightaway to this Commission. Any person aggrieved by the order of refusal to grant NOC by the competent authority may prefer an appeal before this Commission under section 12A of NCMEI Act, 2004.

16. In our considered opinion educational institution can opt one course, either to file an application for grant of MSC before the State Competent Authority or to file an application for grant of NOC. In the present case petitioner has applied for grant of NOC to the State Competent Authority and the said application is still pending as per the contention of the petitioner institution. The petitioner has not filed any application for grant of MSC before the State Competent Authority, so the GO's as mentioned in the reply of the respondent have no relevance in the present case.
17. The Amended Trust Deed and all the documents produced by the petitioner institution clearly reflects that the beneficiaries of the petitioner institution are primarily the members of the Christian minority community. In addition, the said facts also stands proved from the documents and affidavit filed by the petitioner. There is no document on record to rebut the documentary evidence produced on behalf of the petitioner institution.
18. Relying on the said unrebutted evidence produced on behalf of the petitioner, we find and hold that St. Joseph's School, Attinkarai, Manavalakurichy, Kalkulam, District Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu-629252 run by Stephen Charitable Trust is eligible for grant of minority status on religious basis. The evidence also proves that the said educational institution was established with the main objective of sub-serving the interests of the Christian minority community.

19. Consequently, St. Joseph's School, Attinkarai, Manavalakurichy, Kalkulam, District Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu-629252 is declared as a minority educational institution covered under Article 30 of the Constitution of India within the meaning of Section 2(g) of the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions Act, 2004 subject to the condition that the petitioner would file an affidavit or undertaking to the fact that the petitioner institution shall not deny admission of eligible candidate of the Christian minority community subject to the eligibility of the students and availability of the accommodation in the petitioner institution.
20. After compliance of the above order, a minority status certificate be issued accordingly.
21. In view of the above, the present petition is disposed of in accordance with this order.

Signed, pronounced and published on **Thursday, 2nd Day of December, 2021.**

**JUSTICE NARENDRA KUMAR JAIN
CHAIRMAN**

**DR. JASPAL SINGH
MEMBER**

VB