

Minutes of the meeting held in the Commission with the representatives of minority institutions of Delhi on 18th December 2023

Venue –NCMEI

The following members were present:-

1. Prof. (Dr.) Shahid Akhter, Hon'ble Member (in chair), NCMEI
2. Mr. Jaspal Singh, Former Member, NCMEI
3. Mr. Manoj Kumar Kejriwal, Secretary, NCMEI
4. Mr. Jagdish Singh, Deputy Secretary, NCMEI
5. Mr. Jayprakash, Under Secretary, NCMEI
6. Representatives of minority institutions of Delhi

Hon'ble Member (SA) welcomed the representatives of minority institutions of Delhi and stated that today we have all gathered here to celebrate Minority Rights Day. He suggested that this kind of interaction with Commission and minority schools should continue in future also because Commission is the link between Government and minority institutions. Hon'ble Member (SA) highlighted on Minority Rights Day and said that it upholds the right to freedom and equal opportunities for the minorities in India and creates awareness about their rights. He further stated that this Commission was established in the year November 2004 by an Act of Parliament. It has been enacted to safeguard the educational rights of the minorities enshrined in Article 30(1) of the Constitution. The Commission is a quasi judicial body and has been endowed with the powers of a Civil Court for the purpose of discharging its functions under the Act. He emphasized that the Commission plays mainly 3 roles namely, adjudicatory function, advisory function and recommendatory function.

Hon'ble Member (SA) also stated that initially five religious communities, viz., Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) were notified as minority communities by the Union Government. Further vide notification dated 27th January 2014, Jains were also notified as another minority community. On this occasion, he further stated that this is also for providing an opportunity to the Commission to apprise the members of the minority community about their constitutional rights as well as role and responsibilities of the Commission for redressal of their grievances. He also explained about the educational rights of the minorities guaranteed under Article 30 (1) the Constitution of India and explained about Section 10, 11 and 12 of the NCMEI Act. He said as per the judgment of Hon'ble Apex Court in the matter of Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny v/s The State of West Bengal and Ors. (2018) 6 SCC 772, this Commission has both original as well as appellate jurisdiction. He informed about decisions rendered by the Supreme Court in T.M.A. Pai Foundation vs. State of Karnataka (2002) 8 SCC 481. He also intimated that till date 15,000 minority status certificates were granted by the NCMEI to minority educational institutions. He further stated that today is Minority Rights Day and we must pledge to uphold the rights of all minority communities and the beauty and unity of India are found in its diversity, people of diverse religions, cultures, castes, sects, etc. have been living together and we have to end the gap between majority and minority. He stressed on the point that the Government of India has decided in National Education Policy 2020, wherever possible, the medium of instruction until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond, will be the home language/mother tongue/local language/regional language. This is very important aspect to ensure that each student should be aware of his community and the language to which he belongs to. In our Indian constitution, right to Cultural and Educational Rights preserve under articles 29 and 30. Article 30 of Indian constitution further states that all minority communities

(whether religion or linguistic), have the right to start and run educational institutions of their choice.

Mr. Jaspal Singh, former Member, NCMEI expressed his gratitude for inviting him in the meeting. He stated that the minority rights day serves as a reminder of the commitment to protecting the rights of religious, ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities in the country and the meeting is a valuable effort for interacting with the minority educational institutions for hearing the problem being faced by them. He said that we should accept, respect and protect the identity of others. Good dialogue is the key as this country has been a pluralist society for centuries and the Indian people share a living experience of religious tolerance and coexistence. He stated that once in a month dialogue should continue between the Commission and the different minority institutions.

Mr. Manoj Kumar Kejriwal, Secretary, NCMEI, delivered a vote of thanks to all the representatives who have come from different minority institutions of Delhi and sparing their valuable time for making the meeting a great success.