

The Study Group had relied on the figures quoted by the Sachar Committee report in which 23,566 registered Waqf properties in Maharashtra were evaluated at Rs.4185 lakhs , with a total revenue of Rs.443 lakhs. It was estimated that a similar volume of property is still unregistered and consequently there is no increase in the revenue derived from the Waqf properties in Maharashtra. This matter is of paramount importance and hence the Study Group in its present report has devoted a special chapter on Muslim Waqfs. While all interesting details of the subject can be seen in the chapter of Waqfs, the main burden of this area of inquiry can bear repetition. Delay in the notification of all Waqf properties, inefficient and questionable performance of the Mutawallis, more often than not, the venality overtaking the entire plethora of all Waqf activities, lack of revenue entries and documentation of waqf properties, blatant encroachments, usurpation by some elements and organizational weaknesses are some of the major roadblocks causing serious road snarls. It is, however, possible to transcend these formidable barriers with systematic planning and urgent affirmative action. The State Government must support the Waqf Administration by sanctioning posts at district and regional offices and provide grants to the Waqf Board for the payment of salaries and administrative overheads. In the absence of professional and trained personnel, the neglect of Waqf and encroachment on Waqf properties will not abate. The Committee has made an in-depth study of this vexed subject and formulated its findings available in the relevant chapter. An inventory of the entire Waqf properties of Maharashtra is recommended to be made by an independent committee consisting of a close-knit yet performing group.

The state has launched a massive Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyayas, an integral component of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, were reported to have a limited number of Muslim girls particularly in the blocks of Parbani, Jalna and Hingoli. The Study Group received complaints about the existence of vacancies in the municipal and aided schools in Bhiwandi. The percentage of Muslims in the Navodaya Vidyalyayas continues to be low and calls for expeditious action by the educational activists, societies and NGOs with necessary budgetary support. The admission of Muslim students to the vocational courses merits special consideration of the Government. The Sachar Committee has given the figures of Muslim percentage in the IITs and IIMs as 1.7% and 1.3% respectively during 2005 and 2006. Our enquiries have shown that the situation has not changed and according to some reports it has further deteriorated. The percentage of Muslim students in the Medical post graduation courses is reported to be nearly one out of thirty and the admissions regulated through a transparently rigorous common admission test (CAT) continue to be out of reach of the Muslim students as pointed out in the Interim report. It is, therefore, pertinent to reiterate that special coaching and guiding centres with the provision of accommodation and library need to be created in the areas where there is concentration of Muslim population. The Minorities Commission, Maulana Azad Minorities Finance and Development Corporation and other NGOs already working in this field may be encouraged to intensify their present endeavour. A special scheme for setting up functional coaching and guidance centres for the students, women entrepreneurs and people in general, should be formulated for immediate implementation in these areas.

The diversity index as proposed by Sachar committee should be implemented immediately. This would address the deprivation suffered by the Muslims caused by various forms of denial to equity and accessibility in matters of employment, admissions, finding space in the market places to support their trading activities and thereby improving the living and livelihood conditions.

This point has been exhaustively dilated upon in the relevant chapter on Housing. The suggestion that has emerged is that a reasonable percentage may be prescribed for sale to the Muslims ranging from a minimum of 8% to 10% at the time of sanction of the building construction by the concerned authorities. This is required to be closely monitored by the Minorities Development Department, or the State Minorities Commission. The development deficit faced by the Muslims can be remedied if a trustworthy mechanism of monitoring is created.

The entry of FDI and liberalization of imports and exports particularly in the retail marketing has caused dislocation of traditional Muslim weavers, tailors, wood carvers and leather goods manufacturers. The entry of Chinese products into the market has hit the Muslim artisans. Rise in the power tariff and non-availability of raw material have contributed to the unfortunate dislocation of a large number of Muslim women traditionally engaged in embroidery, zari, incense sticks (agarbatti) and chikan work. This problem has got aggravated by the non-existence of social security, toilet and crèche facilities. Much of the work undertaken by the Muslim women is reportedly subcontracted due to lack of financial resources, credit, education and marketing skills. Unfortunately many Muslim concentrated areas are still informally described as red areas or no credit zones. Sachar Committee has proposed creation of special cooperative banks and separate financial institutions for Muslims especially women. The existing cooperative and commercial banks can also be motivated to embark upon a comprehensive plan of providing credit to the Muslims especially women and this will prove effective if the monitoring mechanism proposed in the preceding paragraph is created. The work done by the banks in this neglected area can be quoted in support of these banks and financial institutions in their expansion programmes submitted to the Ministry of Finance and the RBI.

Some Muslim women have reported non-availability of loans under the OBC and BPL category. Many representations in this regard have been received by the Study Group in Sholapur, Bhiwandi, Malegaon and Aurangabad. This problem was considered very closely by the Study Group and all members felt that the enlargement of the OBC category is fraught with the examination of claims and counter claims and the process will be time consuming. A separate committee can examine the issues involved and make appropriate recommendations to the government. The Study Group has, however, unanimously come to the conclusion that in view of the negligible presence of Muslims in the government and semi-government employment vis-à-vis their population of 10.3 million against the total state population of 96.9 million (Census of India 2001), the Muslims should have a reservation of 10% or at least 8% in the employment and admissions to all educational institutions including the professional courses.

The problems faced by the textile industry all over the state of Maharashtra as represented by several delegations from Aurangabad, Malegaon and Bhiwandi relate to the availability of raw material, upgradation of skills, electricity tariff and availability of land for further expansion. There is also a very pressing demand for the establishment of an Institute of Textile which could take on the form of a University in due course. This subject pertains to a very large number of weavers, power loom owners and those engaged on marketing of yarn and fabric. A committee consisting of experts is recommended to further examine this matter for making appropriate suggestions.

A delegation of some senior Mumbaikars called on the Study Group and apprised the members of the imaginative work of Adamji Peerbhoy in laying a railway track from Karjat to Matheran and suggested that Karjat or Matheran railway station may be named after Adamji Peerbhoy. This being a pioneering work undertaken in a very selfless manner can be given recognition in giving Karjat or Matheran railway station the name of "Adamji Peerbhoy Railway Station". Apart from perpetuating the memory of a brilliant philanthropist, it would encourage the civil society to take to public service.

The Study Group has received a number of senior citizens and well informed people who pleaded vociferously for the handing over of the Ismail Yusuf College to the Muslims of Maharashtra as the college was established out of the donation of Sir Mohammad Yusuf for the promotion of oriental languages. Originally 120 acres of land was purchased out of the donation. But after the construction of the Western Express Highway the endowment of land has got reduced to around 65 acres. In deference to the wishes of the donor and the view taken by the Muslims in Maharashtra it would be appropriate if an Institute of oriental languages is created over a part of the existing Ismail Yusuf College and its management is handed over to one of the oldest and largest conglomerate of Muslim institutions called Anjuman-e-Islam or alternatively a Committee of Management consisting of the members of 5 oldest Muslim educational institutions and 5 prominent Muslims from amongst the doctors, lawyers, educationists and senior citizens can be constituted by the government. It has been represented by the Muslims of Maharashtra that the Haj House constructed by them in central Bombay with their voluntary donation may be handed over to them for being run as a public institution. The first management committee can be nominated by the state government, which can draft the rules of management and creation of the Muslim institution for which the project was commissioned. This would enable the Muslims to have the legitimate satisfaction of running their public institution.

The Study Group members have taken great pains in meeting at different places for want of infrastructural facilities in the formulation of this Report on the educational, social and economic backwardness of the Muslims in Maharashtra and also to explore remedial measures that can be taken by the government in removing the backwardness of the Muslims and putting them on equal footing with their compatriots. The Study Group places on record its deep sense of gratitude to the Late Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, who met the Study Group a number of times and impressed upon its members to examine the problems facing the Muslims and suggest appropriate remedial action. We are deeply beholden to Shri Prithviraj Chavan and Shri Arif Naseem Khan but for whose concern for the Muslims, this report would not have seen the light of the day. Dr.(Mrs.) T.F. Thekkekara, I.A.S., Additional Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra was the prime mover in this sensitive project and remained available to us at all odd hours. Our gratitude to Dr. (Mrs.) T.F. Thekkekara would remain unrequited, if we do not place on record that her solicitude for the famished and uncared for is worthy of emulation by all persons engaged in administration and development. Her indefatigable devotion to ameliorating the lot of those ravaged by the implacable forces of time rekindled our enthusiasm to conclude our findings. Above all we are deeply beholden to the Government of Maharashtra, the Honorable Chief Minister, the Minister for Minorities and the Chief Secretary for their timely interventions in our odyssey;

جہان تازہ کی افکار تازہ سے ہے نمود | کہ سنگ و خشت سے ہوتے نہیں جہان پیدا ||

(A new world is awaiting the direction of new ideas
Stereotypes and shibboleths do not take us forward)

The Chairman, Maharashtra Minorities Commission, Shri Mohammad Naseem Siddiqui during his entire tenure and the present Chairman Shri Munaf Hakeem gave us all the support towards finalization of this report. Prof.S.Parsuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences and his colleague Prof. Siva Raju, Dean, School of Development Studies extended unrestrained support in giving a fitting finale to our joint endeavour. We express our appreciation and thanks for the selfless services of Mr. Ujjwal Dadhich, Ms. Ranjini Basu and Mr. Noor Alam Azad of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. We are also grateful to the staff of Maharashtra State Minorities Commission for their support. We place on record our indebtedness to the then Secretary, Minorities Commission, Shri S.E.A.Hashimi who organised our field visits, discussions and meetings with impeccable care. The present Secretary, Shri Venketesh Bhat, has dealt with our problems with precision and alacrity. Shri Amin Patel, Chairman, Maulana Azad Minorities Development and Finance Corporation has apprised us of his concern for the well-being of the minorities and we owe our gratitude to him.

We are thankful to Shri Abu Asim Azmi, MLA, whose workers took us through the blind alleys of Dharavi and Govandi, and we were appalled to see men, women and children huddled up in the dark recesses with human excreta strewn all over, defecating and urinating in the open. There was no water supply at all, a bucket of water was being sold for Rs.4. The people living in these squalid surroundings must be shifted to tolerable habitation points to save them from the scourge of human degradation, but before this can happen, relief measures of extensive sanitation merit immediate implementation. There are many dreadful hovels having similar repellant conditions like Bhiwandi, Malegaon, Mumbra, Byculla, Vadala, Dongri, Kurla, Bandra (East), Sonapur, and Mustafa Bazar. Shir Sami Bubere a veteran journalist and oriental scholar enlightened us in our deliberations on the squalor faced by these unfortunate people and we owe a debit of gratitude to him.

Shri A.A. Syed, Secretary General, Maharashtra UN Association, has pointed out that about 100 BMC Urdu Schools are in a critically dilapidated condition in terms of infrastructure, particularly toilets and privies. The Study Group recommends special liberal grant for the needed up-gradations of all Urdu medium schools in general and BMC schools in particular.

Shri Syed also reported that the effective implementation of the old and new 15-Point-Programme of the Prime Minister is not taking place in the state. Special attention needs to be given to the implementation of all the schemes directed towards the Muslim upliftment. A close monitoring of this programme by the Chief Minister's Office is strongly recommended for the quick and desired results.

Mr. Aziz Ahmad, Chairman, Manav Vikas Manch, took us to the squalid surroundings of Bhindi Bazar, Paydhuni and Mohammad Ali road where sewer lines and upgradation of the existing municipal and private schools need pointed attention. We are deeply beholden to him and his friend Mr. Rafi Ahmed Khan who took us to these uncared for alleys. We are also grateful to a number of other friends who helped us in developing the right perspective on this sensitive issue.

President, Maharashtra State Urdu Sahitya Academy, Mr. Khursheed Ahmad met the Study Group and pleaded for a better status and autonomous functioning of the institution. The Academy is recommended to be given substantial increase in the existing level of grants so that it can organize national level book exhibitions, scholar's meets, children's Urdu programmes and Mushairas. Similar academies in M.P., U.P., West Bengal, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh are decidedly stronger than our Urdu Academy. During the current year an amount of Rs. 1 crore has been announced. It is recommended to be given a non-partisan academically strong face-lift and construction of a new Urdu Bhavan, will make the Maharashtra Urdu Sahitya Academy a shining jewel in the diadem of this beautiful state. The promptitude with which the Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Prithvi Raj Chavan agreed to the proposal of Mr. Justice Markandey Katju of making Urdu and Sanskrit compulsory from 3rd to 7th class bears a tell-tale evidence to his inexorable commitment to the Indian cultural heritage. The proposed Urdu Bhavan can be the nerve centre for teaching Urdu and Sanskrit and hence its construction can brook no procrastination. The construction of a Waqf House will also be reflective of his munificence embracing the entire population of Maharashtra.

With warm regards

Yours sincerely



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Chairman

Members of the Study Group



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