

# Standing Committee Report Summary

## Implementation of Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme

- The Standing Committee on Social Justice and Empowerment (Chairperson: Mr. Hemanand Biswal) submitted its report on the implementation of the Prime Minister's New 15 Point Programme for the welfare of religious minorities on February 15, 2014.
- The Programme, launched in 2005, seeks to ensure the welfare of religious minorities through: (a) increasing educational and employment opportunities, (b) improving living conditions, and (c) preventing and controlling communal riots.
- Currently, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis and Jains are identified as religious minorities. Jains were notified as a religious minority community in January 2014. Major observations and recommendations of the Committee are:
  - **Increasing educational opportunities:** The Committee recommended that the literacy rate of Muslims be improved, with a special focus on the educational and social development of Muslim women. Measures must be taken to promote Urdu.
  - The number of educational scholarships for minorities must be increased such that every minority student has access to scholarships till the university level. Coaching academies to prepare students from minority communities for competitive examinations must be established.
  - The Ministry of Human Resource Development should collect data on children dropping out of school, and the number of children finally completing school, in addition to the number of children enrolled.
  - The Committee pointed out that while there has been an increase in the allocation of funds for improving the quality of education in madrasas, data on the output from these madrasas has not been collected.
  - **Increasing employment opportunities:** Large and medium scale industries must be developed in notified minority concentration districts by members of minority communities as well as others.
- The Committee noted that the government employed close to 10% of people from minority communities in 2010-11 and public sector undertakings employed approximately 7%. It recommended that both recruit at least 15% of people from minority communities. Data on schemes such as the *Seekho and Kamao* scheme must be collected to determine their impact.
- **Improving living conditions:** The Committee noted that the poverty ratio is highest for Muslims in urban areas at 34%. Additionally, the ratio of workers in the total population (worker population ratio) is much higher for males than for females in all religious groups, especially in urban areas.
- While there has been a decline in unemployment and an increase in the worker population ratio among Muslims, the worker population ratio remains much lower than all India figures.
- The Committee recommended that planning, sanctioning of projects, and allocation of funds be done at the block level and not the district level. A list of persons below the poverty line belonging to minority communities must be prepared.
- Each minority concentration block should have a nodal officer to liaison with various government agencies. The Programme must provide for primary health care to minority communities with special facilities for women and children.
- **Preventing and controlling communal riots:** The Committee noted that 668 incidents of communal violence were reported in the country in 2012 in which 703 persons were killed and 1,506 persons were injured.
- The Committee recommended that an elaborate block-wise programme involving various stakeholders should be evolved to address communalism. This should involve confidence building measures, speedy rehabilitation of riot victims, and mobilisation of human resources and investment. Police forces must be sensitised on communal issues.

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