

Salient features of the Prime Minister's New 15 Programme for the Welfare of Minorities

1. Objectives :

The programme aims at

- (a) Enhancing opportunities for education.
- (b) Ensuring an equitable share for minorities in economic activities and employment, through existing and new schemes, enhanced credit support for self-employment, and recruitment to State and Central Government jobs.
- (c) Improvement in their living conditions by ensuring an appropriate share for minorities in infrastructure development schemes.
- (d) Prevention and control of communal disharmony and violence.

2. Methodology :

- (a) The target group of this programme will be the eligible sections among the minorities notified under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992, viz, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (parsi).
- (b) In order to ensure that the benefits of the schemes included in the programme reach the minorities the programme envisages location of a certain proportion of projects in minority concentration areas. It also provides that, wherever possible, upto 15% of targets and outlays under various schemes included in the programme be earmarked for minorities.
- (c) In States where one of the minority communities notified under Section 2(c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act is, in fact, in majority, the earmarking of physical/financial targets under different schemes will be only for the other notified minorities and the percentage of earmarking can be adjusted suitably to account for this.

3. Monitoring

The implementation of the programme will be monitored rigorously. It will be monitored at the Central level by the Committee of Secretaries, which will report to the Union Cabinet once every six months. An appropriate mechanism will have to be worked out by each State and Union Territory for prompt reporting and close monitoring at the State and district levels.

PRIME MINISTER'S NEW 15-POINT PROGRAMME FOR THE WELFARE OF MINORITIES

(A) Enhancing opportunities for Education

1) Equitable availability of ICDS Services

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme is aimed at holistic development of children and pregnant/lactating mothers from disadvantaged sections, by providing services through Anganwadi Centres such as supplementary nutrition, Immunization, health checkup, referred services, pre-school and non-formal education. A certain percentage of the ICDS projects and Anganwadi Centres will be located in blocks/villages with a substantial population of minority communities to ensure that the benefits of this scheme are equitably available to such communities also.

2) Improving access to School Education

Under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme, and other similar Government schemes, it will be ensured that a certain percentage of such schools are located in villages/localities having a substantial population of minority communities.

3) Greater resources of teaching Urdu

Central assistance will be provided for recruitment and posting of Urdu language teachers in primary and upper primary schools that serve a population in which at least one-fourth belong to that language group.

4) Modernising Madarsa Education

The Central Plan Scheme of Area intensive and Madarsa Modernisation Programme provides basic education at infrastructure in areas of concentration of educationally backward minorities and resources for the modernisation of Madarsa education. Keeping in view the importance of addressing this need, this programme will be substantially strengthened and implemented effectively.

5) Scholarships for meritorious students from minority communities

Schemes for pre-matric and post-matric scholarships for students from

minority communities will be formulated and implemented.

6) Improving educational infrastructure through the Maulana Azad Education Foundation

The Government shall provide all possible assistance to Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) to strengthen and enable it to expand its activities more effectively.

(B) Equitable Share in Economic Activities and Employment.

7) Self-Employment for the poor

- a) The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY), the primary self-employment programme for rural areas, has the objective of bringing assisted poor rural families above the poverty line by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and Governmental subsidy. A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under the SGSY will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line in rural areas.
- b) The Swarnjayanti Shahari Rojgar Yojana (SSRY) consists of two major components namely, the Urban Self-Employment Programme (USEP) and the Urban Wage Employment Programme (UWEP). A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under USEP and UWEP will be earmarked to benefit people below the poverty line from the minority communities.
- c) The Aampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is aimed at providing additional wage employment in rural areas alongside the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure. Since the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) has been launched in 200 districts, and SGRY has been merged with NREGP in these districts, in the remaining districts, a certain percentage of the allocation under SGRY will be earmarked for beneficiaries belonging to the minority communities living below the poverty line till these districts are taken up under NREGP. Simultaneously, a certain percentage of the allocation will be earmarked for the creation of infrastructure in such villages, which have a substantial population of minorities.

8) Upgradation of skills through technical training

A very large proportion of the population of minority communities is engaged

in low-level technical work or earns its living as handicraftsmen. Provision of technical training to such people would upgrade their skills and earning capability. Therefore, a certain proportion of all new ITIs will be located in areas predominantly inhabited by minority communities and a proportion of existing ITIs to be upgraded to 'Centres of Excellence' will be selected on the same basis.

9) Enhanced credit support for economic activities

- a) The National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) was set up in 1994 with the objective of promoting economic development activities among the minority communities. The Government is committed to strengthen the NMDFC by providing it greater equity support to enable it to fully achieve its objectives.
- b) Bank Credit is essential for creation and sustenance of self-employment initiatives. A target of 40% of net bank credit for priority sector lending has been fixed for domestic banks. The priority sector includes, inter alia, agricultural loans, loans to small scale industries and small business, loans to retail trade professional and self-employed persons, education loans, housing loans and micro-credit. It will be ensured that an appropriate percentage of the priority sector lending in all categories is targeted for the minority communities.

10) Recruitment to State and Central Services

- a) In the recruitment of police personnel, State Governments will be advised to give special consideration to minorities. For this purpose, the composition of selection committees should be representative.
- b) The Central Government will take similar action in the recruitment of personnel to the Central police forces.
- c) Large scale employment opportunities are provided by the Railways, nationalised banks and public sector enterprises. In these cases also, the concerned departments will ensure that special consideration is given to recruitment from minority communities.
- d) An exclusive scheme will be launched for candidates belonging to minority communities to provide coaching in government institutions as well as private coaching institutes with credibility.

C) Improving the conditions of living minorities

11) Equitable share in rural housing scheme

The Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) provides financial assistance for shelter to the rural poor living below the poverty line. A certain percentage of the physical and financial targets under IAY will be earmarked for poor beneficiaries from minority communities living in rural areas.

12) Improvement in condition of slums inhabited by minority communities

Under the schemes of Integrated Housing & Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) and Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), the Central Government provides assistance to States/UTs for the development of urban slums through provision of physical amenities and basic services. It would be ensured that the benefits of these programmes flow equitably to members of the minority communities and to cities/slums, predominantly inhabited by minority communities.

D) Prevention & control of communal riots

13) Prevention of communal incidents

In areas, which have been identified as communally sensitive and riot prone, district and police officials of the highest known efficiency, impartiality and secular record must be posted. In such areas and even elsewhere, the prevention of communal tension should be one of the primary duties of the District Magistrate and Superintendent of Police. Their performance in this regard should be an important factor in determining their promotion prospects.

14) Prosecution for communal offences

Severe action should be taken against all those who incite communal tension or take part in violence. Special court or courts specifically earmarked to try communal offences should be set up so that offenders are brought to book speedily.

15) Rehabilitation of victims of communal riots

Victims of communal riots should be given immediate relief and provided prompt and adequate financial assistance for their rehabilitation.