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“Role of Schemes for Minority Community Welfare in India. With Special Reference to Muslim Community”

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ABSTRACT

National Minority Commission has identified Muslims as minorities along with Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains on the basis of religion. Out of these religious minorities Muslims are the largest ones. In spite of being the largest minority they are lagging behind in education and economic in comparison with other religious minorities. Literacy which is a first step to education is lowest of the Muslim minority and inter-state variation in their literacy rates is also very high. In the light of these contexts, this paper presents a brief discussion of schemes, policies and programs implemented for the development of the minority. Thereafter, the paper tries to explain the functions of schemes in terms of objective, access, participation, retention of Minority students in the states.

Keywords: Minority, education, schemes, educational development, Muslims, India

I. INTRODUCTION

After the independence (1947), initiatives for educational development for minorities were started in India, in late 1970s, which geared up after the National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and its Program of Action (POA), 1992. Both the NPE and POA emphasized the need of special efforts, “to bring the educationally backward minorities (which include Muslims) on par with the rest of the society and to make them participate fully in the national development activities” (GOI, 1992, p. 9). Many long term and short term programs were started in the form of affirmative actions to improve the educational status of minorities like: Prime Minister’s 15 Point Programme for the Welfare of the Minorities (1983), Area Intensive Programme for Educationally Backward Minorities, Modernization

of Madrasa, Maulana Azad Education Foundation Scheme (1989), Free Supply of Books and Stationery and Merit Scholarship, and Pre-examination Coaching scheme for the weaker sections.

Various research studies on Muslim minority conducted after the independence revealed their educational backwardness. But the issue came into lime light after 2001. After the independence, religion wise data were published for first time in the Census 2001 and educational backwardness of Muslim community was an eye opener for policy makers and also for implementers. Thereafter many initiatives were taken in favor of the education of the Muslim minority. These include renewal of Prime Minister’s 15 point programme in 1983 and setting up of Prime Minister’s High level Committee on social, economic, and educational status of the

Muslim community[1,2]. In 2004 the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NEMEI) was set up by an ordinance to advise the Centre and state governments on any matter regarding the education of the Muslim minority, to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. In 2006, National Monitoring Committee for Minority Education (NMCME) was reconstituted with the aim to attend to issues relating to the education of minorities on an ongoing basis. In 2006, the NEMEI's powers were enhanced by creating an exclusive Ministry of Minority Affairs. In addition, the Ministry plays a pivotal role in planning, coordination and development programs for the benefit of the minority communities.

Recommendations contained in the Report of the High Level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India headed by Justice Rajindar Sachar (Retd.)

1. Need for Transparency, Monitoring and Data Availability - Create a National Data Bank (NDB) where all relevant data for various socio-religious categories are maintained.
2. Enhancing the Legal Basis for Providing Equal Opportunities Set up an Equal Opportunity Commission to look into grievances of deprived groups like minorities.
3. Shared Spaces: Need to Enhance Diversity: The idea of providing certain incentives to a 'diversity index' should be explored.
4. Education: a process of evaluating the content of the school text books needs to be initiated to purge them of explicit and implicit content that may impart inappropriate social values, especially religious intolerance. Need to ensure that all children in the age group 0-14 have access to free and high quality education.
5. High quality Government schools should be set up in all areas of Muslim concentration. Exclusive schools for girls should be set up, particularly for the 9-12 standards. This would facilitate higher participation of Muslim girls in school education. In co-education schools more women teachers need to be appointed.
6. Provide primary education in Urdu in areas where Urdu speaking population is concentrated.
7. Mechanisms to link madarsas with higher secondary school board.
8. Recognize degrees from madarsas for eligibility in Defense Services, Civil Services and Banking examinations.
9. Increase employment share of Muslims, particularly where there is great deal of public dealing.
10. Enhancing Participation in Governance: appropriate state level laws can be enacted to ensure minority representation in local bodies
11. Create a nomination procedure to increase participation of minorities in public bodies.
12. Establish a delimitation procedure that does not reserve constituencies with high minority population for SCs.
13. Enhancing Access to Credit and Government Programmes: Provide financial and other support to initiatives built around occupations where Muslims are concentrated and that have growth potential.
14. Improve participation and share of minorities, particularly Muslims, in business of regular commercial banks
15. Improving Employment Opportunities and Conditions

There are number of schemes and scholarships have been launched by central and state govt. for the welfare of minority education, among that few of

them recognized as most applicable schemes in India like Nai Roshni [4], Nai Manzil, Learn and Earn (Seekho or Kamao) - The scheme will guarantee at least 75 percent employment of trained minority youths and out of them 50 percent will be in the organized sector. A minimum of 30 percent seats are reserved for minority girls and women[5], Jiyo Parsi[5], Free coaching and allied scheme, Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme[6], Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme[7], Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme[8], Maulana Azad National Fellowship for Minority Students Scheme[9].

NAME AND FUNCTION OF SCHEMES

Government has taken following initiatives for the welfare and upliftment of the minority communities:-

- USTAAD:- The Scheme aims at upgrading Skills and Training in preservation of traditional Ancestral Arts/Crafts of minorities.
- Hamari Darohar:- The Scheme aims to preserve rich heritage of minority communities in context of Indian culture.
- Khwaza Garib Nawaz Senior Secondary School will be established at Ajmer by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) to give a fillip to minority education.
- Nai Manzil: A bridge course to bridge the academic and skill development gaps of the deeni Madrasa pass outs with their mainstream counterparts.
- Strengthening of State Wakf Boards: The scheme envisages providing assistance for meeting the training and administrative cost of State Wakf Boards, removal of encroachment from Waqf Properties and also strengthening of Zonal/Regional offices of Waqf Boards.

The government has taken the following steps to ensure that these benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

- The Scholarship Schemes have been restructured to allow for greater transparency and accountability during processing and sanction.
- To help evaluation of flow of benefits, segregated data for the different minority communities is being sought from all Ministries. The states/UTs have also been requested to provide better and timely feedback.
- The scholarship schemes are reviewed regularly through interaction with the State Governments at regular intervals and field visits by the Ministry officials.
- The Online Scholarship Management System (OSMS) earlier introduced for the Merit-cum-Means scholarship scheme has now been extended to Post Matric scholarship scheme.

1. Nai Roshni

The scheme is envisaged to reach out to women through nongovernmental organizations who will be provided with financial support for conducting leadership development trainings so that women are empowered and emboldened to move out of the confines of home and community and assume leadership roles and assert their rights collectively or individually.

2. Scholarship Schemes

Students belonging to notified minority communities studying in India only and fulfilling the Scheme guidelines are eligible to apply for these scholarships.

(1)Pre-matric Scholarship Scheme for Minorities (for Class I to X) (2)Post-matric scholarship Scheme for Minorities (for Class XI to Ph.D.) (3)Merit-cum-Means Scholarship Scheme (For Professional and Technical courses) (4) Begam Hajrat Mahal National

Scholarship for Meritorious Girls belonging to Minorities-Implemented by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) (for minority girls studying in Class XIth and XIIth Standard).

3. Free Coaching & Allied Scheme (for Competitive Examinations of Professional Courses and Government jobs)

- The scheme aims to empower the minority communities by assisting the economically weaker sections of students among them through coaching institutions for enhancing their skills and capabilities to make them employable in industries, services and business sectors in addition to the government sector. It has built-in resilience to adapt to the market dynamics on a continuous basis so that the target groups are not deprived of the professional acumen demanded by the changing/emerging market needs and opportunities for employment at domestic as well as international levels.

Objectives

The objectives of the scheme are to assist students belonging to minority communities by way of special coaching for the following:-

1. Qualifying examinations for admission in technical/professional courses such as engineering, law, medical, management, information technology etc and language/aptitude examinations for seeking admission in foreign universities.
2. Competitive examinations for recruitment to Group 'A', 'B', 'C and 'D' services and other equivalent posts under the Central and State governments including police/security forces, public sector undertakings, Railways, banks, insurance companies as well as autonomous bodies; and

3. Coaching for jobs in the private sector such as in airlines, shipping, information technology (IT), business process outsourcing (BPO) and other IT enabled services, hospitality, tours and travels, maritime, food processing, retail, sales & marketing, bio-technology and other job oriented courses as per the emerging trend of employment.
4. Remedial coaching at undergraduate and post graduate level to improve the academic knowledge and enable the student to catch up with the rest of the class and complete the course successfully.

4. Seekho aur Kamao (Learn & Earn)

Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India on 23 September 2013 launched a central sector scheme for Skill Development of Minorities

Main Objectives

- To bring down unemployment rate of minorities during 12th Plan period (2012-17).
- To conserve and update traditional skills of minorities and establish their linkages with the market.
- To improve employability of existing workers, school dropouts etc and ensure their placement.
- To generate means of better livelihood for marginalized minorities and bring them in the mainstream.

5. Jiyo Parsi

The Central Sector Scheme for containing population decline of Parsis in India was launched on 23 September 2013 by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India.

Objectives

The main objective of the Jiyo parsi scheme is to reverse the declining trend of Parsi population by

adopting scientific protocol and structured interventions, stabilize the Parsi population and increase the population of Parsis in India.

Main features

- 100 percent funded by Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India.
- Medical interventions under Standard Medical protocols in empanelled hospitals/clinics.
- Confidentiality of the patients to be given utmost importance.

6. Padho Pardesh (for overseas studies at Masters, M.Phil. and Ph.D. Level)

Government of India, Ministry of Minority Affairs has now introduced a new scheme for providing 'interest subsidy' for minority students for overseas studies. This scheme came into force from 2013-14. The loan for overseas studies for specific courses should have been sanctioned by the bank under IBA model scheme. The annual income of the parents should be less than 6 lakhs. If the student is eligible, the Government of India provides full interest subsidy during the moratorium period.

7. Nalanda Scheme

Union Ministry of Minority Affairs has launched the Nalanda Project for Minorities Higher Educational Institutions on 4 March 2014.

Nalanda Project is an innovative Faculty Development Program of Union Ministry of Minority Affairs. The Nalanda Project is being taken up at Aligarh Muslim University, a premier Minority University of world fame. The Aligarh Muslim University is also a Nodal Staff College of University Grant Commission.

About Faculty development program:

- The primary goal of faculty development is to help faculty learn new ways to achieve

excellence and to grow as faculty members. It is an ongoing process of understanding, learning, and growth. Faculty development includes education, collaboration, resources and support.

8.Minority Cyber Gram

The MCG programme seeks to introduce digital literacy skills in identified minority clusters in India through designated Digital Fellows towards knowledge empowerment and entitlement gains of minority focused groups and beneficiaries.

Objectives

- To impart digital literacy and skills among identified minority groups and beneficiaries through designated Digital Fellows (DFs) in identified minority clusters for information and knowledge empowerment and entitlement gains.
- To provide opportunities in information and knowledge networks for local communities.

9.Maulana Azad Sehat scheme

- Under the scheme, Sehat Card will be issued to every student of the Institution financially aided by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF).
- Preventive Health Check-up Camps will be organized by the Institute twice in a year, through government or private hospitals or nursing homes.
- All findings of the preventive health checkups will be entered in the Sehat Card of the student by the doctors.

10.Computerization of Records of State Wakf Boards

Objectives

As recommended by Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf in its 9th Report, the Scheme for "Computerization of records of the State Wakf

Boards" was launched by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India, to streamline record keeping, introduce transparency, and to computerize the various functions & processes of the Waqf Boards and to develop a single web-based centralized software application. In this Scheme, Central financial assistance is given to the State Waqf Boards for setting-up of ICT Infrastructure, Technical Manpower for initial hand-holding period for managing & operating the ICT infrastructure and software applications, imparting training and knowledge transfer to the State Waqf Boards staff for managing & operating the ICT infrastructure and software applications and data management life cycle during and at the end of hand-holding period.

II. CONCLUSION

The paper revealed that over the years the number of institutions and various schemes have increased; still educational progress of Muslims is not satisfactory in terms of literacy rates, enrolment, and retention and in completion of grades. This also highlighted number of government schemes for the educational development of Muslim minority. Minority community has remained slow in taking advantage of government's educational policies and programs. This is largely because of their cultural ethos resulting slow progress in educational field in comparison with other minorities. This makes it clear that the problems of weak educational development of Muslims need to be understood and treated as per the need and in an area specific manner. That is, strategies for Muslims' educational development should not follow the uniform and blanket approach under one umbrella. Making a policy and implementing it as a scheme has the same difference - what a cricket team plans in a dressing room and what it executes on the ground. The government seems well prepared in the dressing

room but when it comes to the ground it falls far from the expectation. There are many schemes if we include both centre and state sponsored programs but despite having so many student-centered schemes, the success rate is not enough.

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