

## **Second State level Conference by National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala**

A State level Conference was organized by National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) in collaboration with the Department of Minority Welfare, Government of Kerala at Thiruvananthapuram on 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2018. The theme of the conference was “Educational Empowerment of Minorities: Challenges and Opportunities”. The main focus of the conference was to sensitize and apprise different stakeholders of educational rights of minorities and constitutional safeguards as enshrined in Constitution of India and to create awareness about NCMEI and its functions related to minority education. The conference also aimed to solve the confusion of the state about minority quota in education through an interactive session among stakeholders and senior government officers.

The conference was attended by Hon’ble Members of Commission Dr. Baltej Singh Mann and Padmashree Dr.Naheed Abidi, Ms Saroj Punhani, Secretary, Shri Sandeep Jain, Deputy Secretary and Ms. Tripta Sharma, Section Officer who discussed on different aspects related to minority empowerment. The conference was inaugurated by Shri K. T. Jaleel, Hon’ble Minister for Local Self-Governments, Welfare of Minorities, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage, Govt. of Kerala. The other dignitaries who were present from the State Government were Dr. Usha Titus IAS, Principal Secretary for Higher Education, Sri Shajahan IAS, Secretary for Minority Welfare, , Sri Dileep Kumar, Additional Secretary for Minority Welfare, Shri P.K. Haneefa, Chairman Kerala State Minority Commission , Dr. A.B Moideen Kutty, Director Minority Welfare Directorate (MWD), Sri Shajahan, Project Officer, MWD, Sri. Fazil, Adm. Officer, MWD and Sri Siyad, Supervisor, MWD .

The programme started with self introduction by all the stakeholders i.e. Minority Educational Institutions and their Managing Trustees and Minority Community Leaders representing minority. After a brief introduction by Sri Shajahan, Secretary for Minority Welfare Kerala, the Hon’ble Minister inaugurated the Conference. While highlighting the achievements of Kerala in the field of education , the Hon’ble Minister said that Kerala is a role model for minority development and empowerment.



Mr. Jaleel, Hon’ble Minister for Local Self-Governments, Welfare of Minorities, Wakf and Haj Pilgrimage, Kerala inaugurating the Conference

Religious minorities in Kerala have been enjoying enviable attainments in all fields of education, employment, culture, art, and health. This is the 'Kerala model' development and Kerala model of minorities' social empowerment and educational progress. He further added that Socio-economic and educational welfare of the minority communities are seriously and effectively undertaken by the government through Ministry of Education and Directorate of Minority Welfare by planning and executing various remarkable projects and schemes such as minority coaching centers, minority cells, scholarships, pension schemes, and others. Most of the institutions which got Minority status numbering 4656 in the country belong to Kerala and out of these most belong to Christian Community. This figure shows how empowered the religious minority communities are in the State. Even before the Right to Education Act, Kerala attained universal enrolment of the children.

He said that the Govt. has decided to set up a Minority Research and Training Institute in this financial year to study the issues and challenges related to minority communities with special focus on their progress and empowerment.

Dr Baltej Singh Mann, Hon'ble Member, NCMEI while welcoming Shri K. T. Jaleel, Hon'ble Minister and other dignitaries, explained the gathering about the functions of NCMEI, which has been created to protect and safeguards the educational rights of the minorities guaranteed under Article 30 of the Constitution of India. Dr. Mann thanked all the delegates who had come from distant places and sparing their valuable time for making the function a great success.



Dr. Mann addressing the gathering at the state level conference

In her address, Dr. Naheed Abidi, Hon'ble Member, NCMEI brought out importance of education particularly modern education citing Vedas and Quran. She recited the mantra "asato mā sadgamaya, tamasomā jyotir gamaya" and also quipped from Sura-al- Bakra from Quran – lead us from darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge (Minhazulmat-e-innur). She further emphasised the introduction of modern pedagogy in Madarsas for overall development of minorities. Introducing functions of NCMEI, she detailed procedure of the Commission in meting out the grievances and complaints pertaining to violation of rights of minorities enshrined in Article 30 of the Constitution.

Ms Saroj Punhani, Secretary, NCMEI presented a power point presentation highlighting the functions and powers of the Commission elaborating various Sections of the NCMEI Act, 2004. She also explained how to apply for a Minority Status Certificate (MSC) or appeal for redressal of any grievances of Minority Educational Institutions against violation of their educational rights assured under Article 30 of the Constitution.

After brief presentations/talks by the members, the conference turned into an open "court" of the Commission. Dr. Naheed Abidi, Hon'ble Member was in the chair. An interactive session with the Minority Institutions and instances of deprivation and violation of their educational rights was held. Clarifications were also given by Shri Baltej Singh Mann, Member, NCMEI relating to problems faced by the Schools from various decisions taken by Kerala Government.

A total of 21 petitions/ complaints were received and disposed of/accepted by the Commission. The participants were very impressed and satisfied with the interventions and decisions of the Commission. The Commission directed some complainants to submit formal petitions/complaints to the Commission in order to hear both the complainants and respondent(s).

Various issues/ problems were raised by various Educational Trust/ societies/colleges/ school authorities like stoppage of grant in aid to schools , non filling up of posts of teaches in aided schools, Non appointment of sufficient non teaching staff to the schools where there is enough strength of students. Appropriate clarifications were given by Dr Mann, Hon'ble Member, NCMEI and also by Dr. A.B Moideen Kutty, Director Minority Welfare Directorate (MWD).

**Brief on the NCMEI Members' Visit at Ernakulum, Kerala**  
**on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018**

The Commission also visited two prominent minority institutions at Kerala, namely MES College, Marampally,



Dr. Naheed Abidi Hon'ble Member of NCMEI presiding over the function at MES College, Marampally

St. Teresas College, Ernakulum. Principal, Members of management



Dr. Mann addressing the teacher/student at . St. Teresas women's College, Ernakulum in the presence of Dr. Thomas Member of Parliament and Dr. Naheed Abidi Member of NCMEI.

committee, students, and the staff of these colleges were present in the programmes.

As a whole, the

programme was a fruitful event as far as stakeholders of minority communities are concerned.