

Minutes of State level Review of Assam State held by National Commission for Scheduled Castes at Guwahati on 28-29 May, 2015
Meeting - 1.

(a) Meeting with general public, representatives of Scheduled Caste Service

Associations and NGOs :

Venue : Conference Hall, State Guest House, Guwahati, Assam

Date : 28.5.2015

Time : 2.30 p.m.

This meeting was held to have an idea of problems of Scheduled Castes in the State. Dr. P.L. Punia, Hon'ble Chairman, Dr. Raj Kumar Verka, Hon'ble Vice-Chairman, Shri Raju Parmar & Smt. P.M. Kamamma, Hon'ble Members along with Dr. Vinod Agarwal, Secretary, NCSC were present.

About 150+ petitioners/representatives of associations were present in the meeting and many of them submitted written petitions and orally explained their grievances. The prominent points of grievances raised are given below:-

On Caste certificate issues :

- Huge backlog that are existing in the State Government services at all categories are to be cleared.
- Reservation in promotion must be introduced.
- Employee's salary by the Assam State Development Corporation for SCs must be borne besides providing funds for other administrative expenditures as done in case of OBC Corporation and ST Corporation.
- In TET exam. though 9384 number of candidates qualified including SC candidates in 2014, but none of them given appointment offer so far.
- No SC Member is there in the State Public Service Commission.
- Misuse of SCSP funds for other schemes must be stopped.
- SC artesian may be provided financial help.
- Allotment of land to landless SCs and persons losing lands due to expansion of rivers.
- The existing system for issuing SC Caste Certificate may be discontinued and the same may be issued based on Census Report of 1971.

Meeting - 2.

(b) Meeting with MLAs/MPs/Ex-MLAs/Ex- MPs etc. :

Venue : Conference Hall, State Guest House, Guwahati, Assam

Date : 28.5.2015

Time : 3.30 p.m.

Problems of Scheduled Castes were also collected from people's representatives such as MLAs/ MPs/Ex-MLAs/Ex- MPs etc. A list of such representatives who participated in the meeting is enclosed at **Annexure - II**. Most of the people representatives expressed their resentment over existing system of issuance of Caste Certificate in the State. They also alleged discrimination of SCs in many State Government programmes and inappropriate implementation of schemes under SCSP allocations and expenditures.

Meeting - 3.

(c) State level Review of Chattisgarh Government :

Venue : Conference Hall, State Guest House, Guwahati, Assam

Date : 29.5.2015

Time : 10.30 a.m.

Shri Raju Parmar & Smt. P.M. Kamamma, Hon'ble Members presided the meeting where Dr. Vinod Agarwal, Secretary, National Commission for Scheduled Castes was present.

Prior to the meeting, Commission collected information from the State Government through specific questionnaire and information collected were taken on record. The Commission enlisted key issues emerged out from the filled-in questionnaire and along with the points emerged out from the discussion held on previous day i.e. on 28.5.2015 during discussion with the NGOs, Service Safeguard Associations and Public Representatives from the State of Assam belong to Scheduled Castes.

The State Government was represented by the Hon'ble Minister of WPT & BC Welfare Department, Sri Basanta Kr. Das. Chief Secretary to the Government, Principal Secretary (Scheduled Castes Welfare) DGP, Home Secretary and other Additional Chief secretaries, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, Commissioners and Directors of various departments took part in the meeting. A list of participants is enclosed at **Annexure III**.

Commissioner (SC Welfare) presented a power point presentation. He stated that the department is striving hard to upgrade education, income generating schemes in support of socio-economic activities etc. Chief Secretary informed that all schemes do have proportionate quota for SCs.

Thereafter, a detail discussion held and the major actionable points which emerged out of discussions were as under:

1. Hon'ble Members at this point informed that as per statements provided by the State, the SCSP Plan Allocation is merely 1.8% against 7.2% and when it comes to exclusive schemes, the percentage share goes to as low as only 0.39% in 2013 which is not acceptable. The instance of diversions of funds to non-specific SC benefit oriented schemes are also glaring like (1) Grants to Non-Government Educational Institute, (2) Grants for Cultural Activities, (3) Education Tours, (4) Stipend for Craftsman Training and the like. Hon'ble Members emphasized that SCSP scheme should be exclusively benefitting Scheduled Castes and flow to SCSP in Assam State budget should be in tune with population percentage; and this has to be rectified. Secretary, NCSC stated that the States like Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu however, is spending 15% of their budget allocations on SC specific schemes. The Assam Government may study the mechanism developed by these States and emulate the same if feel appropriate for the State of Assam.
2. The Commission regretted that for good schemes which benefits educated Scheduled Castes youth like financial incentive to meritorious students cleared all India / State level competitive examinations for instance UPSC, IIT, JEE, CAT, AIPMT, APS (Prelim.), etc. the State Government has informed that they have no fund to sustain such good schemes. Chief Secretary agreed to review this lapse.
3. Discussing the target of beneficiaries under pre-matric and post-matric schemes for children of *safaikaramcharis*, the Commission observed has the targets have not been achieved. On the contrary, the State Government has reported increased number of scholarship cases while the financial statement suggests that the allocations have been decreased over a period of time. The Chief Secretary assured that the matter would be reviewed.
4. The Commission has observed that the literacy percentage of SCs is in lower side (- 5.44%) comparing overall literacy percentage in the State (Male - 5.65% and Female - 5.24%).
5. As far as admission of SC students in professional colleges are concern, it has been stated that the State should enter with an agreement with professional colleges / technical institutes to admit SC students on "0" payment basis first.

- Later on the State should made payment to such professional colleges / technical institutes directly without bothering SC students to arrange the hefty fees first and then secure admission.
6. The Commission also took note of the fact that the out of 46 numbers of hostels in the State, 36 hostels reported to be non-functional. Commissioner, WPT & BC Welfare informed that this could be a typographical error and the correct status will be informed in due course of time. Shri Raju Parmar, Hon'ble Member suggested that the State may approach Public Sector Undertakings to construct hostels and CSR fund.
 7. From the information that was provided by the State Government, it was noted that the State Government charge 8% interest from the borrowers including SC borrower against taking loans under Janata Housing Scheme, Indira Awas Yojna etc.. The Commission took a serious view on this and desired that the same should be pegged at 3-4% instead as it is done in other States. Chief Secretary assured that a view in the matter will be taken soon and decision will be intimated to the Commission.
 8. The Commission has also observed that the Rules of Reservation is not followed in case of promotion. The Commission opined that such practice in the State of Assam is against the model Rules framed by the DoPT and followed by other States. The SCs working in State Government services has legitimate right to get benefit of reservations at appropriate levels which the State has denied so far.
 9. The Commission has further observed existence of good number of backlog vacancies which the State to clear in a time frame manner.
 10. The Commission took a serious note of the fact that the meetings of Vigilance & Monitoring Committees at both State and District levels are not held regularly. The Commission observed that there is no place for atonement due to the reason that the State has lower number of cases on caste based atrocities. Hon'ble Members informed that as holding of State level and District level meetings are statutory requirements, the State need to fulfill that. The State Government however, was appreciated for low record of atrocity cases against SCs in the State.

11. The Commission also informed the State Officers that a large number of false caste certificate holders are existing in the State who are eating up fruits of reservation in jobs, educational institutions etc. The system that is existing in the State for the matter of issuance of Caste Certificate is also against the Central Rules that are in place. The Commission urged State to change the system with regards to issuance of SC certificate, be more vigilant in the matter and also ensure stricter punishment to those who found to be holding false caste certificates in the State to prevent other false caste certificate seekers.
12. The Commission also urged the State Government to have an honest survey in the matter of existence of Manual Scavengers in the State and ensure complete elimination of manual scavenging practices in the State wherever that is in practice till now.
13. It was brought to the notice of the Commission that the no budget allocation has been made to the Assam State Development Corporation for SCs has been during the year 2015-16 where as their counter parts namely Assam State Development Corporation for OBCs and Assam State Development Corporation for STs have allotted budgets for the same financial year to the tune of ₹300.00 lakh and ₹ 900.00 lakh respectively. The Commission therefore, desired to know from the Government whether the State has any plan to winding up the Assam State Development Corporation for SCs in future. Hon'ble Minister however, assured that salary issue of the employees working in SC Corporation will be looked into.
14. Finally, the Commission urged the State Government to install a statue of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Guwahati City and in District Headquarters to commemorate 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar.

The meeting ended with Vote of Thanks delivered by the Chief Secretary, Government of Assam.
