

2013/07/02

Planning Commission  
(Voluntary Action Cell)

Sub: **Summary Record of the CSW presentation on 'Understanding the challenges of implementing PM's 15 point program for Minorities - learnings from 10 Minority Concentration Districts' by Rehnuma held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 at Yojana Bhavan.**

The Civil Society Window presentation on 'Understanding the challenge of implementing PM's 15 point program for Minorities - learnings from 10 Minority Concentration Districts' by *Rehnuma* was organized under the Chairpersonship of Dr. Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 at Yojana Bhavan, Planning Commission. Besides Members and officials of the Planning Commission, a number of officers of Ministries/Departments concerned also participated in the interactive discussion. List of participants is enclosed as Annex-I.

Adviser (VAC), while welcoming the participants, at the 49<sup>th</sup> Civil Society Window (CSW), informed about the genesis of the CSW presentation series, which started in 2005 by the initiative of some of the then and present Members of the Planning Commission. The idea of CSW is to provide a platform where civil society representatives working at the grassroots level get a chance to share their experience and inputs with the policy planners. He further informed that the CSW presentation series is not a grievance redressal forum but a platform to get alternate voices from the civil society and to share with them the thinking at the Planning Commission level on development initiatives. The topic of development of minorities as emphasized in the 12<sup>th</sup> FY Plan Document is very relevant in the present context, and we all look forward to listen to the presentation by *Rehnuma*. He asked for a quick round of introduction and then requested the Chairperson for her opening remarks.

Dr. Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission highlighted the need to take care of concerns of minorities for inclusive development and referred to the contents of the 'Chapter on Social Inclusion' of the draft 12<sup>th</sup> FY Plan (Volume III), wherein under the heading 'Challenges for the Empowerment of Minorities' a vision focusing on the development of minorities is provided. Minorities should get their entitlements and for that proper hand-holding is required; otherwise inclusive development would remain on paper. She particularly referred about the following paragraph from the Plan Document, emphasizing the need for facilitators or hand holders in states helping minorities to get their due share from the 15 point program and other schemes for minorities.

“All State Governments will be asked to have a separate well endowed Department for Minorities welfare. MoUs will be signed with States so that they are able to enjoy more flexibility and assume more responsibility and accountability. In the minorities sector, an administrative chain of command should be developed with an empowered officer, who may act as a facilitator between the community, PRIs and across the various departments who will handhold the minorities in the areas of education, area development and economic advancement. Districts should have a separate Minority Welfare or Facilitation Officer, who may be the nodal officer responsible for coordination and Implementation of all schemes relating to the welfare of minorities for the District. A clear chain of command and accountability should be designed right from the level of the nodal officer to the level of chief secretary of the State.”

The Chairperson then invited *Rehnuma* representatives to share research findings of their study in ten Minority Concentration Districts on the subject.

Shri Gagan Sethi, CJI, Ahmedabad informed that the idea of *Rehnuma* - ‘A Facilitation & Entitlement Centre for Vulnerable Groups’, which is a coalition of like-minded CSOs, with NFI as Project Holder and CSJ as the Technical Support Organization; arose because of the realization that there is dearth of data on minorities development. He explained the meaning of *Rehnuma* that is a Friend or Guide or a Handholder. *Rehnuma* is a program for addressing the issue of social and economic empowerment of vulnerable groups, specifically the religious minorities, through strengthening their access to their social & economic entitlements. A pilot program is currently being implemented in ten blocks in Minorities Concentrated Districts (MCDs) in ten states in the country. In his presentation (Annex-II), Shri Sethi emphasized on the need for breaking the shackle of deficit to empower minorities. This can be done by setting up technical support & capacity building centers by the Ministry of Minority Affairs (MoMA) for implementation of the schemes for social & economic empowerment of the minority communities. Shri Sethi pointed out that the concern for the plight of Muslim women particularly widows was observed to be lowest in the priority list. Out of 5173 applications of minorities followed up by *Rehnuma* only 821 claims were found to be settled (18%) He concluded with the comment that it is not purely an economic issue but has psychological and sociological dimensions which need to be addressed for sustainable national development.

Mr. Mastan Biradar, HID Forum, *Rehnuma* partner from Karnataka brought out the grassroots facts regarding implementation of the PM’s 15 Point Program (PP) for Minorities in Gulbarga district. During his presentation (Annex-III), he informed that there is a big gap between the community and the system and there is no information and facilitation about the implementation of the 15 PP. The strategy adopted for awareness generation about the 15 PP by *Rehnuma* was through press-notes, advertising handbills/printouts, using Mosque notice boards, focused group meetings, SHG meetings and opening of counseling

centers, etc. were implemented in collaboration with district and state level government machinery such as department of field publicity. He informed that most of the government officials do not have guidelines for 15 PP and other related circulars. He further pointed out that there was no periodic review of the program at district level. Mr Biradar informed that there was demand for interventions by *Rehnuma* from other communities and neighboring districts.

Ms. Shaveta Sharma, *Rehnuma* shared details about the MIS developed by *Rehnuma* to track status of entitlement claims of minorities. She also informed about observations from Bhopal, where awareness about 15 PP was negligible. Although people were aware about the flagship development programs but observed to have only some idea about pre/post-matric scholarships for minorities.

Ms Belinda Bennet, Christian Aid based on her work in 90 districts under PACs program in 90 districts suggested that facilitation has given positive results for empowerment of poor and vulnerable groups.

Shri Amitabh Behar, NFI, highlighted the following points for further follow up: Mass communications strategy for awareness generations needs to be developed, shackle of deficit to be reduced, extra thrust required in MCDs to push demands, systematic issues questions to be resolved, moving from dole mentality towards entitlements approach and how to bring in private investments, may be from CSR resources, to take these issues forward. He said that a follow up note would be sent by *Rehnuma* in due course.

Joint Secretary, M/o HRD suggested that systems are weakened or strengthen over time and stressed the need for activating the existing systems and structures rather than demanding or creating new systems to achieve the desired results. She agreed with the findings of *Rehnuma* that awareness campaigns need to be strengthened and in that civil society participation is necessary.

Director, M/o Minority Affairs requested *Rehnuma* to work in collaboration with MoMA and informed that already facilitators would be selected in 710 Minority Concentrated Blocks, as the focus is now shifting from district centric approach to block level approach. He suggested that district and state government machinery has to be taken along to push the programs for minorities. Adviser (Minorities), Planning Commission endorsed the information provided by Director, MoMA.

Prof. Abhijit Sen, Member, Planning Commission asked the *Rehnuma* team to take note of the fact that (a) getting people to be aware and motivated for their entitlements and (b) applications taking longer time in government departments while being processed are two different things and need to be studied accordingly. He suggested the team to find out if there were any patterns in the type of benefits for which minorities are applying. Prof. Sen further observed that

both *Rehnuma* and NFI are networks and such coalitions work with different partners in different areas and generally do not restrict to a particular area or a community, therefore, they should address this issue accordingly. They have also to decide whether to focus on issues or a particular community and while dealing with state / district level entry points, whether to partner with people working on health, education, livelihoods etc. or on minorities. *Rehnuma* have to also look for other better alternate strategies/methodologies to achieve their objectives. Prof. Sen assured that Planning Commission can bring Ministries and States together on a particular issue as is being done under the CSW series, from time to time.

Chairperson assured the participants that she will take up this agenda of empowerment of minorities, particularly of the need to take care of neglected minority widows, at appropriate forums and look forward for future inputs from *Rehnuma* on the subject.

Adviser (VAC) provided formal vote of thanks to the Members, Planning Commission for their guidance and to all the participants for their valuable contributions.

Meeting ended with a vote of thanks to the Chair.

**List of participants at CSW Presentation held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2013**

**Dr. Syeda Hameed**  
Member, Planning Commission

In Chair

**Prof. Abhijit Sen**  
Member, Planning Commission

Ms. Veena Ish  
Joint Secretary, M/o HRD

Shri Dheeraj Kumar  
Director, M/o Minority Affairs

Dr. Maninder Kaur Dwivedi  
Director, M/o HRD

Shri Avinash Kr. Mishra  
Dy. Secretary, M/o HUPA

Shri Mahendra Singh  
Dy. Secretary, M/o Health & Family Welfare

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Shri Gagan Sethi  
Centre for Social Justice (CSJ)

Shri Amitabh Behar  
National Foundation of India (NFI)

Ms. Smita Mitra  
Prog. Associate, UN Women

Ms. Ramya Subrahmanian  
Social Policy Specialist, UNICEF

Shri Haritha Sarma  
HID Forum, Bangalore

Mr. Mastan Biradar  
HID Forum, Gulbarga

Ms. Belinda Bennet  
Christian Aid

Shri Subrata De  
Christian Aid

Ms. Monica Banerjee & Shri M K Lal Gualnam  
NFI

Mr. Saleeq Ahmad  
Humanity First

Ms. Shaveta Sharma  
Rehnuma Team, CSJ

Ms. Azima Girach  
Rehnuma Team, CSJ

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Shri Arnbrish Kumar  
Adviser (Minorities)

Ms. Sudha P Rao  
Adviser (WCD)

Shri E. Dasarathan  
Adviser (MHA Cell)

Dr. Lalit Kumar  
Adviser (VAC & YA)

Ms. Anita Tipra  
Dy. Secretary (VAC & YA)

Ms. Roohi Siddiqui  
Dy. Adviser (Minorities)

Shri R. C. Meena  
Dy. Adviser (VAC)

Shri S. Agrawal  
SRO (Minorities)

Shri Mantosh Kumar  
YP (VAC)

Shri Alok Kumar  
Programmer (VAC)