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Seminar on '21st Century's Socio-Economic Challenges' held at Kanpur

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Muslims exhorted not to remain negligent, act as a Millat and not as individuals

By **Pervez Bari**

Kanpur: If Muslims remain negligent as the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17), which envisages inclusive growth of all, unfolds and they continue to remain in the same mode while the 13th Plan (2017-22) also comes and goes then they would be pushed down to the rock bottom of the social structure. From there it would take Muslims innumerable years to retrieve and extricate themselves to place them higher up in a respectable position in the social order.

The 21st Century has brought new problems, ideas, icons & civilizational aspects, a qualitative change from the previous century for which people, particularly the Muslims, are least prepared. Rapid educational development in the form of technology is becoming the real power of the States. The States are withdrawing from welfare services, education etc. Those spaces have to be filled by the groups coming from civil societies. The absence of the State from civil amenities affects the poor most.



The 11th Plan was the turning point when for the first time when Muslim minorities were addressed after Justice Sachchar Committee Report's implementation started. The 11th Plan (2007-2012) for the first time made a concerted effort to reverse some of the trends that plagued the minorities in general and Muslims in particular. These positive policy instruments showed desirable results in a short period of time and raised the expectation of the various communities across the board. The 12th Plan (2012-17) proposals have been completed and submitted by various committees constituted for 12th FYP. It is hoped that 12th Plan will be better than the 11th Plan.

The above observations were made by Maulana Mohammad Fazlur Rahim Mujaddidi, chairman of SEE, (Strive for Eminence and Empowerment), while delivering the key-note address in a seminar on "21st Century's Socio-Economic Challenges" organised here on Sunday (September 30th) in the industrial city of Kanpur. It was a rare sight seeing a Muslim cleric, a Madarsa education product, speaking on Indian economics with authority while making a Power Point presentation to drive home his point of view with facts and figures with utmost ease.

At the fag end of the seminar four resolutions were presented by Mr. S. M. Hilal of Foundation of Civil Liberties, which were unanimously adopted by voice votes. The resolutions were: (i) There should be no reduction in the funds to be allocated for the Minorities welfare as recommended in the 12th Plan; (ii) The procedure and the philosophy recommended by working committees should be added in the 12th Plan; (iii) All recommendations made in the Justice Sachchar Committee Report, including the establishment of Assessment & Monitoring Authority for Minorities welfare schemes, should be implemented in to-to and (iv) The Justice Rangnath Mishra Commission Report should be

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accepted by the Government of India like the Justice Sachchar Committee Report.

Salman Khurshid, Union Minister of Law & Minority Affairs, presided over the seminar in the absence of Hazrat Maulana Syed Mohammad Rabey Hasani Nadwi, Rector Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulema & president All India Muslim Personal Law Board, who could not grace the function due to ill health.

Sri Prakash Jaiswal, Union Coal Minister, was the chief guest at the programme. Mr. Zaheeruddin Ali Khan, Managing Editor of Hyderabad's Siasat, Urdu daily newspaper, Mr. Mohammad Azam Khan, Entrepreneur of Hyderabad, Mr. Akhtar Husain Akhtar, Dr. Jameel Ahmad and Dr. Suhaib Ahsan of Kanpur were guests of honour on the occasion. Many important dignitaries, academicians, social activists, NGOs and delegates from all over India participated in the programme. Ms Samra Sultana made a Power Point presentation on Elementary Education.

The seminar was organized under the aegis of SEE and was held at Ragendra Swaroop auditorium in the Civil Lines locality of Kanpur. At the outset Qari Mohammad Ilahi recited verses from the Holy Quran. Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Khan, Director, Crescent Academy, Delhi, who conducted the programme with aplomb, at the start made introductory remarks about the seminar.



Continuing Maulana Fazlur Rahim in his 55-minute long address said: "Roti, Kapra aur Makaam" the basic dreams of the 20th Century, have been replaced by Quality Education, Health & Economic participation. India is the fastest growing economy of the world after China. During the year 2011-12, GDP growth rate was 6.5 per cent adding approx. Rs.50,00,000/- crores to the exchequer. This rapid growth in India is likely to slow down after 2020. Those having an eye upon the economic matters are familiar with the variance in the growth rate of an economy. According to expert economists it is not a steady phenomenon, but has a trend of inconsistency in it. When infrastructural critical gaps are outsized, it has a propensity to increase, and with the filling of these gaps, it tends to slow down. It is anticipated that in our country these spaces will be filled up after 2020.

As a consequence, he said, the government will accordingly expend lesser amount in social sphere, and eventually it will be moved in the private hands. This trend is to some extent is manifested in the 12th Plan. Briefly it can be said that in 12th and 13th Plans there will be huge expenditure in the educational and health like sectors, which is not likely to be further replicated.

In a such a scenario the Maulana exhorted Muslims to remain alert and make it a political demand/agenda and ask their members of Parliament (MP), members of legislative assemblies and Corporators about their welfare. They should act as a Millat and not as individual/group/Bradaries. They should look at the deliveries and not commitments made by the people's representatives or government of the day, he added.

He pointed out that in comparison to other marginalised communities the allocated budget for the minorities was insufficient and too scanty. The budget for the year 2010-11, amount assigned per head for the minorities was Rs.138/-, while for SC and ST it was Rs.1228/- and Rs.1450/- respectively. Therefore, the budget allotted for Minority should be enhanced to at least 10 times of the present level, he emphasised.

Maulana Fazlur Rahim said for Muslims Primary education is not a challenge but Higher education is. In Primary education Muslims' graph is highest while in Higher education from Secondary level onwards it is the lowest. He said the educational deficit of Muslims can be controlled only by immediately providing scholarships to all eligible students. In fact, the higher the education level, the higher is the drop-out rate. Therefore, the scholarship priorities should be set from top to bottom and not from bottom to top. However, in the 11th Five Year Plan Pre-matric Scholarship is being given more attention in terms of allocation compared to Merit-cum-Means Scholarship in the 12th Plan.

He said as such broadly two demands viz. (a) to make the Scholarships "Demand-Driven" and (b) to simplify the procedure were made by the Working Group as well as Steering Committees. Both these demands have been accepted by the Union Ministry of Minority Affairs, (MMA), & the Planning Commission of India and proposed in the 12th Plan. The recommendations made are 1,118 lakh Pre-matric Scholarships amounting to Rs. 12,267 crore; 119 lakh Post-matric Scholarships amounting to Rs. 13,038 crores and 5.9 lakh Merit-cum-Means Scholarships amounting to Rs. 2,353 crores.

The erudite Maulana revealed that for the first time in history a new chapter has been added in Elementary Education with Right to Education and Muslim children. The States will have to constitute Working Group for implementation. He said for free and compulsory education of equitable quality on the children of India there will be shift from Sarva Shiksha Abhyas, (SSA), to Right to Education, (RTE), in the 12th Plan. By the middle of the 12th Plan a new modality of

implementation of RTE would be ready to replace the SSA, he added.

Salman Khurshid in his presidential address said that Muslims are second to none as they have excelled in every field nationally and internationally in the past. Muslims laid down their lives in India's freedom struggle which cannot be matched by any other community. However, with the passage of time Muslims became complacent and have slid down the social order to be at the last rung of the ladder.

Mr. Khurshid urged Muslims to help themselves by adoring with jewel of education and positive thinking to claw back and be abreast with other communities in all walks of life. Only the gem of knowledge and education can turn the tide in their favour, he added.

He lauded Maulana Fazlur Rahim Mujaddidi as a visionary with a mission and acknowledged that whatever he has conveyed through his keynote address, he could not state as a Union Cabinet minister due to constraints which he, however, did not spell out.

Speaking on the occasion Mr. Prakash Jaiswal admitted quite frankly that after hearing Maulana Fazlur Rahim's keynote address his perception about the problems of Muslims has changed. He felt dumb-struck at the analysis and the statistics displayed by the Maulana in his key-note address wherein he pin-pointed under what heads and how much the Muslims need funds to extricate themselves from the morass of illiteracy and poverty.

Eulogizing Maulana Fazlur Rahim, Mr. Jaiswal said these statistics of the Five Year Plans are usually understood by the bureaucrats alone and the political clan and even ministers like him are blissfully ignorant about it. It is amazing that Maulana Mohammad Fazlur Rahim Mujaddidi, a product of Madarsa education, has excelled by systematically analysing with facts and figures the problems afflicting the Muslim community. He admitted that he has been in the dark about the intricacies of the 11th Plan and what it has achieved. Similarly, what is envisaged in the 12th Plan also, he does not know.

Overwhelmed, he candidly said that without the progress and development of 20 percent Muslims India cannot become a Super power in the 21st Century. Otherwise it would remain only a pipe dream, he added. He profusely assured to get implement whatever has been said in the seminar by the government and himself.

Mr. Jaiswal, who represents Kanpur Lok Sabha constituency, announced on the occasion that from today from his MPLADS, (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme), he would allot 25 percent more to Muslims in their development works.

Zaheeruddin Ali Khan threw light in detail on the socio-economics conditions of Muslims prevailing in India. He urged Muslims to stop begging forthwith and realise their importance. He made a Power Point presentation on the Waqf land scandal in Andhra Pradesh and the activities of Siasat Group in the social sector.

Mohammad Azam Khan also made a Power Point presentation urging the removal of the hurdles in the minority scholarship applications of the 11th Plan in the upcoming 12th Five Year Plan. He emphasised the need n minority scholarship scheme to ssimplify the procedure, remove the requirement to submit income certificate every year and make it 5 years and reimburse the tuition fee in the student account.

S. M. Hilal said due to the weaknesses in the delivery mechanism the 12th Plan may also suffer the same fate as that of the 11th Plan. So, the Muslims and other weaker sections must try to understand the delivery mechanism and keep tab on the welfare schemes meant for them, he added. Akhtar Husain Akhtar, Dr. Jameel Ahmad and Dr. Suhaib Ahsan also spoke on the occasion.

Meanwhile, Salman Khurshid released a book entitled "The Minorities and the 12th Five Year Plan" by Maulana Mohammad Fazlur Rahim Mujaddidi on the occasion.

It may be stated here that Dr. Rita Bahuguna Joshi, ex-president of Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee, (UPCC); Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, I.P.S. (ex-V.C. Agra University); and Zafar Ali Naqvi, Member of Parliament, who were also invited to be guests of honour on the occasion gave a miss and failed to participate in the seminar.

It may be mentioned here that the seminar was webcast live, while the ETV Urdu also telecast the programme live.

[Pervez Bari is a senior Journalist based at Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. He is associated with IndianMuslimObserver.com as Bureau Chief (Madhya Pradesh). He can be contacted at pervezbari@eth.net]

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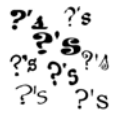


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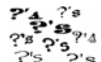
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