



“Development with Dignity Must be the Agenda of our Nation”: Vice President

10TH Annual Lecture of National Commission for Minorities

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The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that ‘Development with Dignity’ must be the agenda of our nation and bringing a bill in Parliament will not change many things unless we have political will and administrative skill. Delivering the 10th Annual Lecture of National Commission for Minorities (NCM) on the theme - ‘Minorities in Nation Building’, here today, the Vice President said that the notion of pluralism, inclusion and peaceful co-existence have to be the cornerstones of our governance. He further said that the Minority Commission is mandated to suggest and devise appropriate measures for the socio-economic development of minorities. “The Commission has the underlying principle of inclusive growth ensuring that the benefits of political democracy reach those who are likely to be left out”, he added.

The Vice President said that it is the principle of ‘Antyodaya’, the empowerment of the weakest, the farthest and the smallest. He further said that India is built on the four important pillars given by our Constitution – Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. He added that the strength of these pillars determines the strength of the superstructure, the grand India, we are building. “The role of minority groups in nation-building has been phenomenal and they could do this because they gave predominance to their identity as Indians”, he stated.

“Once we keep the national interests at the top of our development agenda, the other factors become less important”, the Vice President pointed out. He further said that equal opportunity must be given for everyone to learn, earn and grow into active citizens is crucial and we must grow into a learning society as well. “Irrespective of caste, creed, region, religion and language, we are Indians first,” he added.

The Vice President said that one must introspect and identify divisive, destructive, demeaning tendencies and aberrations. He further said that we must also collectively overcome them with grit and determination. “Internal tensions are counterproductive and we must channel our rich human resources to productive ends, towards nation building”, he stated.

Shri Naidu said that our country is richer because of the contribution made by various groups to art and architecture, music and dance. “Our heritage, dotted with temples, mosques, churches, viharas, stupas, gurudwaras and monasteries, is a fascinating tapestry of human excellence”, he said.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of Minority Affairs, Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi pointed out that during the last three years, the Government has made every effort to ensure that the ‘light of development’ reaches out to the last person on the lowest rung of the society. He added that over the last three years, the representation of Muslim community in Central government has increased from 4.5 per cent to 9.8 per cent. Shri Naqvi said that the Government has laid special emphasis on the empowerment of women belonging to the minority communities.

In his welcome speech, Chairman, National Commission for Minorities, Shri Syed Ghayorul Hasan Rizvi said that the Government has given recognition to six communities – Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Buddhist, Jain and Parsi as minority community. Shri Rizvi said that the Government is committed to take the minority communities from appeasement to empowerment. He added that according to the 2011 census, the total number of minority communities stood at 23 crore, 4 lakh. Secretary, NCM, Shri J.R.K Rao delivered the vote of thanks. Vice-Chairman of NCM, Shri George Kurien was also present on the occasion.

National Commission for Minorities has been organizing the Annual Lecture on various issues related to the minorities, since the year 2008. Some representatives from the six minority communities, officers and staff of NCM and some foreign delegates were among those present on the occasion.

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