

National Minorities Rights Day



Minorities Rights Day in India is celebrated annually on December 18. This day serves as a reminder of our commitment to protecting the rights of religious, ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities in the country.

Let's delve into the significance of this day and the rights enshrined for minorities:

1. Theme and Significance:

The theme for this year's observance is "All in 4 Minority Rights".

It aims to raise awareness about the rights of minority groups without any discrimination based on caste, race, religion, ethnicity, or other characteristics.

By its original definition, a minority group comprises people who are less numerous than major groups within those classifications.

India's history includes the creation of Muslim, Anglo-Indian, Christian, and other minority populations due to invasions and movements.

These minority communities contribute to India's rich cultural fabric.

2. Rights of Minorities Under the Indian Constitution:

Article 14: Ensures people's right to 'equality before the law' and 'equal protection of laws'.

Article 15 (1) & (2): Prohibits discrimination against citizens based on religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth.

Article 16 (1) & (2): Guarantees citizens' equality of opportunity in employment or appointment to any office under the State.

Article 25 (1): Upholds people's freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion (subject to public order and morality).

Article 28: Ensures freedom to attend religious instruction or worship in educational institutions.

Article 30 (1): Grants religious and linguistic minorities the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice.

Article 30 (2): Protects minority-managed educational institutions from discrimination in receiving aid from the State.

On this day, let us reaffirm our commitment to fostering religious harmony, respect, and deeper understanding among all minority communities in India.

3. Here are some creative ideas for celebrating Minorities Rights Day in schools:

Cultural Showcase:

Organize a cultural event where students from different minority backgrounds can showcase their traditions, music, dance, and art.

Encourage students to dress in traditional attire and share stories about their heritage.

Set up booths with displays of artifacts, food, and historical information related to various minority communities.

Guest Speakers and Workshops:

Invite guest speakers who can talk about the importance of diversity, inclusion, and minority rights.

Conduct workshops on empathy, understanding, and breaking stereotypes.

Engage students in discussions about the challenges faced by minority groups and how they can be allies.

Film Screenings and Documentaries:

Screen documentaries or short films that highlight the struggles and achievements of minority communities.

Follow up with discussions or reflection sessions to deepen understanding.

Art and Essay Competitions:

Hold art competitions where students create pieces inspired by themes of diversity, equality, and unity.

Organize essay writing contests on topics related to minority rights, tolerance, and acceptance.

Interactive Quizzes and Trivia:

Create fun quizzes or trivia games related to famous personalities from minority backgrounds, historical events, and cultural facts.

Use this as an opportunity to educate students about lesser-known aspects of minority history.

Storytelling Sessions:

Invite elders or community members to share personal stories about their experiences as minorities.

Encourage students to listen actively and ask questions.

Poster Campaigns:

Design and display posters around the school promoting messages of unity, respect, and equal rights.

Encourage students to create visually impactful posters that celebrate diversity.

Remember, the goal is not only to celebrate but also to foster understanding, empathy, and a sense of belonging among all students.

4. Here are some minority rights that are essential for promoting equality, justice, and inclusivity:

1. Non-Discrimination:

- Every individual, regardless of their background, should be protected from discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or any other characteristic.

2. Right to Culture and Language:

- Minorities have the right to preserve and promote their cultural heritage, language, and traditions.

3. Political Participation:

- Minorities should have equal opportunities to participate in political processes, including voting, representation, and decision-making.

4. Access to Education and Employment:

- Equal access to quality education and employment opportunities ensures that minorities can thrive and contribute to society.

5. Religious Freedom:

- The right to practice one's religion freely without fear of persecution or discrimination.

6. Land and Property Rights:

- Minorities should have secure rights to land and property, preventing forced evictions or dispossession.

7. Healthcare and Social Services:

- Access to healthcare, social services, and welfare programs should be equitable for all, regardless of minority status.

8. Protection from Hate Crimes and Violence:

- Laws should protect minorities from hate crimes, violence, and harassment.

9. Right to Identity and Self-Expression:

- Minorities have the right to express their identity, including cultural, linguistic, and religious aspects.

10. Participation in Decision-Making Processes:

- Inclusion of minority voices in policy-making and governance is crucial for a just society.

5. How can I support for minority rights

1. Educate Yourself and Others:

- Learn about the challenges faced by minority communities, their history, and their rights. Educate others to raise awareness.

2. Advocate and Raise Your Voice:

- Speak up against discrimination and prejudice. Use social media, participate in discussions, and advocate for equal rights.

3. Promote Inclusivity:

- Encourage diversity in workplaces, schools, and communities. Support policies that promote inclusivity and representation.

4. Support Minority-Owned Businesses:

- Buy products and services from minority-owned businesses. Economic empowerment is essential for minority communities.

5. Volunteer and Engage:

- Volunteer with organizations working for minority rights. Attend events, workshops, and seminars to stay informed.

6. Vote Wisely:

- Choose leaders who prioritize minority rights. Vote for policies that promote equality and social justice.

7. Challenge Stereotypes:

- Question stereotypes and biases. Promote positive narratives about minority cultures and contributions.

8. Be an Ally:

- Stand in solidarity with minority communities. Listen, learn, and actively support their causes.

9. Support Legal Initiatives:

- Advocate for stronger anti-discrimination laws and policies. Support legal battles for minority rights.

10. Cultivate Empathy and Compassion:

- Understand the experiences of minorities. Show empathy and compassion in your interactions.

6. Organizations in India that work towards promoting minority rights:

1. National Commission for Minorities (NCM):

- The NCM is a statutory body established by the Government of India to safeguard the constitutional rights of minorities. It monitors their socio-economic and educational development and addresses grievances.

2. Minority Educational Institutions (MEIs):

- These institutions, such as Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI), play a crucial role in providing quality education to minority communities.

3. All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB):

- AIMPLB represents the interests of Muslims in India and works on legal matters related to personal laws, education, and social welfare.

4. National Confederation for Human Rights Organizations (NCHRO):

- NCHRO advocates for human rights, including minority rights. It focuses on issues like communal harmony, religious freedom, and social justice.

5. Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS):

- CSSS promotes secularism, communal harmony, and minority rights through research, education, and advocacy.

6. United Christian Forum (UCF):

- UCF works for the rights of Christians in India, addressing issues related to religious freedom, education, and social welfare.

7. Sikh Human Rights Group (SHRG):

- SHRG raises awareness about the rights of Sikhs and works to prevent discrimination and violence against the Sikh community.

7. National Commission for Minorities NCM

i. The National Commission for Minorities invited various intellectuals from the six minority

communities namely - Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jain and Zoroastrians.

ii. The representatives of each community shared the difficulties faced by the minorities of India, expectations of the minorities from the State, and recommendations for improvements in the schemes and programmes for the minorities.

iii. During the event, the commission reiterated its mandate to work towards the maintenance of peace and communal harmony in the society irrespective of religious, linguistic and other differences and to maintain the dignity of the minority communities in India by safeguarding their rights.

iv. Other minority issues like Anand Marriage Act and Prime Minister's 15-Point Programme were discussed during the event.

Functions of NMC

i. National Commission for Minorities (NCM) was established by the Government of India (Gol) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.

ii. Initially, Gol notified 5 religious communities, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities. As of January 2014, Jains were notified as another minority community.

iii. The functions of the NCM include,

- Evaluation of the progress of the development of minorities under the Union and States.
- Monitoring of the working of the safeguards for minorities provided in the Constitution and laws.
- Making recommendations for the effective implementation of safeguards for the protection of the interests of minorities.
- Looking into specific complaints regarding deprivation of rights and safeguards of minorities and taking up such matters with the appropriate authorities.
- Suggesting appropriate measures in respect of any minority to be undertaken by the central or state government.

SUM UP

- Minority Rights Day is observed on December 18.
- Minorities Rights Day is celebrated by the National Commission for Minorities in India.
- United Nations on 18 December 1992 adopted and broadcast the Statement on the individual's Rights belonging to religious or Linguistic National or Ethnic Minorities.
- On 29 January 2006, the Ministry of Minority Affairs was carved out of the Ministry of Social Justice & Environment to ensure a focused approach towards notified minority communities namely Muslim, Christian, Buddhist, Sikhs, Parsis, and Jain.
- Minorities in India constitute about 19% of the total population.
- The Union Government established the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.



Published by: The National UN Volunteers-India

