

[Translation in English of “2014-ലെ കേരള സംസ്ഥാന ന്യൂനപക്ഷ കമ്മീഷൻ ആക്ട്” published under the authority of the Governor.]

ACT 5 OF 2014

THE KERLA STATE COMMISSION FOR MINORITIES ACT, 2014*

An Act to constitute a State Commission for the comprehensive educational advancement, welfare, protection and empowerment of Minorities and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Preamble.—WHEREAS, it is expedient to constitute a Commission for the comprehensive educational advancement, welfare, protection and empowerment of Minorities in the State of Kerala and to provide for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

BE it enacted in the Sixty-fifth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) This Act may be called the Kerala State Commission for Minorities Act, 2014.

(2) It shall be deemed to have come into force on the 15th day of May, 2013.

2. Definitions.—In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

(a) “Commission” means the Kerala State Commission for Minorities constituted under Section 3;

(b) “Government” means the Government of Kerala;

* Received the assent of the Governor on the 13th day of February, 2014 and published in the Kerala Gazette Extraordinary No.495 dated 13th February, 2014.

(c) “Member” means a member of the Commission and includes the Chairperson;

(d) “Minority” means a community notified by the Central Government under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992 (Central Act 19 of 1992);

(e) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules made under this Act.

CHAPTER II

3. *Constitution of the Kerala State Commission for Minorities.*—(1) The Government shall, as soon as may be, after the commencement of this Act, by notification in the Gazette, constitute a body to be known as the “Kerala State Commission for Minorities” to exercise the powers and to perform the functions conferred on it under this Act.

(2) The Commission shall consist of the following members, namely:—

(a) a Chairperson belonging to a minority community in the State, having special knowledge in matters relating to the minority and knowledge in law, nominated by the Government;

(b) a member belonging to [a]¹ minority community in the State and having special knowledge in matters relating to minority, nominated by the Government;

(c) a woman belonging to minority community in the State having special knowledge in matters relating to minority and who has proved working excellence in such matters, nominated by the Government.

(3) An officer not below the rank of an Additional Secretary to Government, who shall be the Member Secretary and the Chief Executive

¹Substituted by Act 5 of 2017 (w.e.f. 03-02-2017).

Officer of the Commission and who shall exercise such kind of powers and discharge the functions as the Commission may, by its order, authorise.

4. Term of office and conditions of service of Chairperson and Members.—(1) Each member may continue in office till the completion of three years from the date on which he assumes office.

(2) The Chairperson or member of the Commission may, at any time, by giving intimation to the Government in writing under his hand, resign his office.

(3) The Government shall remove a person from the office of the Chairperson or of a member, if that person,—

(a) becomes an undischarged insolvent; or

(b) has been convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which, in the opinion of the Government, involves moral turpitude; or

(c) becomes of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; or

(d) refuse to work or becomes incapable to work; or

(e) without obtaining prior permission from the Commission, does not attend three consecutive meetings of the Commission; or

(f) in the opinion of the Government, has so abused the official position of Chairperson or Member as to render that person's continuance in office detrimental to the interest of minorities or public interest:

Provided that no person shall be removed under this sub-section unless that person has been given an opportunity of being heard in the matter.

(4) The vacancies occurred under sub-section (2) or otherwise shall be filled by fresh nomination and a person so nominated shall continue in office for the remaining period of the tenure of the person in whose place he is nominated.

(5) The salary and allowances payable to, and the other terms and conditions of service of, the Chairperson and Members shall be such as may be prescribed.

5. *Officers and other employees of the Commission.*—(1) The Government shall provide such officers and other employees as may be required for the efficient performance of the Commission.

(2) The salary and allowance payable to, and the terms and conditions of service of the officers and other employees appointed for the purpose of the Commission shall be such as may be prescribed.

6. *Salary, allowances and administrative expenses to be paid out of grants.*—The salary and allowances payable to the Chairperson and Members, and the administrative expenses, including salary, allowances and pension payable to the officers and other employees referred to in sub-section (1) of section 5, shall be paid out of the grant referred to in sub-section (1) of section 15.

7. *Vacancies etc., not to invalidate proceedings of the Commission.*— No act or proceeding of the Commission shall be invalid on the ground of any defect in the constitution of the Commission or the existence of vacancy in the Commission in any manner.

8. *Procedure to be regulated by the Commission.*—(1) The Commission shall meet whenever necessary at such time and place as the Chairperson thinks fit:

Provided that such meeting shall be held at least once in three months.

(2) The Commission shall have the power to regulate its own procedure.

(3) All orders and decisions of the Commission shall be authenticated by the Member Secretary.

(4) The quorum for the meeting of the Commission shall be two.

CHAPTER III

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMISSION

9. *Functions of the Commission.*—The Commission shall perform the following functions, namely:—

(a) to evaluate the progress of the development of minorities in the State;

(b) to enquire and monitor the manner of functioning of various safeguards provided, in the Constitution of India or under any other law or under any order of the Government, for the welfare, protection and empowerment of the minorities in Kerala;

(c) to enquire in to specific complaints about deprivation of social, economic, educational and linguistic rights, safeguards and benefits of the minorities, to bring such matters into the notice of authorities concerned, to suggest remedial measures and to monitor the follow-up actions thereon;

(d) to participate in and give creative suggestions on, the planning programmes for the educational, social and economic development of the minorities;

(e) to make recommendations as to the steps to be taken by the Government for the effective implementation of the measures and safeguards for the educational, social and economic development, welfare and protection of the minorities and to make report to the Government either annually or

at such other time, as the Commission may deem fit and to monitor their timely implementation;

(f) to cause studies to be undertaken into various problems arising out of discrimination towards minorities and recommend measures for their removal;

(g) to conduct studies, research and analysis and to organize seminars, symposium and awareness classes on the issues relating to social, economic and educational advancement of minorities;

(h) to suggest appropriate measures to be adopted by the Government in respect of minority;

(i) to submit report to the Government periodically or specially, on any matter pertaining to minorities, particularly in respect of difficulties being faced by them and their remedial measures;

(j) to discharge such other functions in relation to the protection, welfare, development and advancement of the minorities, as may be prescribed;

(k) to take necessary steps to ensure the representation of minorities proportionate to their population in various employment projects and social development projects;

(l) to ensure the efficient functioning of the law and order system in communal conflict prone areas and to bring lapses to the notice of the Government;

(m) any other matter pertaining to minorities, entrusted by the Government.

10. Supervision of issuing Minority Community Certificate.—If any case of difficulty in the matter of issuing of Minority Community Certificate, in

the manner and form specified by the Government, to persons belonging to Minority Communities residing in the State, comes to the notice of the Commission, the Commission may report the same to the Government and suggest remedial measures.

11. *Laying of Report.*—The State Government shall cause the reports referred to in clause (e) of section 9, to be laid before the Legislative Assembly explaining the action taken or proposed to be taken thereon and also the reasons, if any, for non-acceptance of the recommendations.

12. *Powers of the Commission.*—(1) The Commission, while performing its functions under section 9, shall have all the powers of a Civil Court trying a suit and in particular, in respect of the following matters, namely:

—

(a) summoning and enforcing the attendance of any person from any part of the State and examining him on oath;

(b) requiring the discovery and production of any document;

(c) receiving evidence on affidavits;

(d) demanding any public record or copy there of from any court, office or other institutions;

(e) the examination of witnesses and inspection of records; and

(f) any other matter as may be prescribed.

(2) Subject to the claim that may be raised by any person that he has special powers under any existing law, the Commission shall have the power to require any person to furnish information relating to any matter or subject which in the opinion of the Commission are the basis of, or relevant to, the subject of inquiry and the person so required shall be included within the meaning of sections 176 and 177 of the Indian Penal

code, 1860 (Central Act 45 of 1860) and be deemed to be liable as per law to furnish such information.

(3) If the Commission or any officer not below the rank of Gazetted Officer, who is specially authorised by the Commission in this behalf, has sufficient reason to believe that records connected with the subject under enquiry are likely to be traced, may enter into any building or place at the time as may be prescribed and subject to the provisions of section 100 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974), to the extent they are applicable, seize any such record or take its extracts or copies.

(4) The Commission shall be deemed to be a civil court and where an offence as defined in sections 175, 178, 180 and 228 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Central Act 45 of 1860) is committed in the presence of the Commission, the Commission shall, after recording the statement of the accused and the facts pertaining to the offence as provided in the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974), the same shall be transferred to the Magistrate having jurisdiction to try it and the Magistrate shall proceed to hear the complaint against the accused as if it has been transferred to him under section 346 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974).

(5) All the proceedings before the Commission under section 9 shall, for the purposes of section 196 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Central Act 45 of 1860), be deemed to be the judicial proceedings within the meaning of sections 193 and 228 and for all the purposes of Chapter XXVI and section 195 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (Central Act 2 of 1974), the Commission shall be deemed to be a civil court.

(6) The Commission may, for the purpose of taking evidence in connection with enquiries, utilise the services of any officer of the State Government or investigation agency.

(7) The officer or investigation agency whose services have been utilised under sub-section (6), shall take evidence after making enquiry relating to it and the report thereon shall be submitted to the Commission within the period fixed by the Commission in this behalf.

(8) The Commission shall satisfy itself regarding the correctness of any inferences arrived at in the report or facts in the report submitted under sub-section (7) and for this purpose it may conduct enquiry as it deems fit, including the examination of the person who had taken the evidence or assisted for the same.

13. *Statements given by individuals to the Commission.*—The statement given by an individual about himself at the time of giving evidence before the Commission, shall not be used against the said individual in the proceedings before any civil court or criminal court, except in prosecution proceedings for giving false evidence by such statement:

Provided that such statement shall be,—

(a) given as a reply to a question which is required by the Commission to be answered by that person; or

(b) relevant to the subject matter in which the evidence is taken.

14. *Individuals likely to be affected prejudicially to be heard.*—At any stage of taking evidence, if the Commission,—

(a) is of the opinion that it is necessary to enquire into the conduct of any individual; or

(b) is of the opinion that taking of evidence will prejudicially affect the reputation of any individual;

such person shall be given a reasonable opportunity of being heard, to produce evidence to defend and to conduct *in camera* proceedings if he so requests by an application, in the enquiry.

CHAPTER IV

FINANCE, ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT

15. *Grants by the Government.*—(1) The Government shall, after due appropriation made by the State Legislature by law in this behalf, pay to the Commission, by way of grants, such sums of money, which is considered to be necessary for being utilised for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The Commission may spend such sums, out of grants, as it thinks fit, for performing the functions under this Act and such sums shall be treated as expenditure payable out of the grants referred to in sub-section (1).

16. *Accounts and Audit.*—(1) The Commission shall maintain proper accounts and other relevant records and prepare an annual statement of accounts in such form as may be prescribed.

(2) The accounts of the Commission shall be audited annually by the auditor entrusted by the Comptroller and Auditor General in this behalf.

(3) All the accounts and other records of the Commission shall be made available to the auditor for the purpose of the audit.

17. *Audit report to be laid before the Legislature.*—The Government shall cause the audit reports to be laid, as soon as may be after they are received, before the Legislative Assembly.

18. *Annual Report.*—The Commission shall, for each financial year, prepare annual report giving complete information of its activities in the

previous financial year in the prescribed form and time and shall also forward a copy of it to the Government directly.

CHAPTER V

MISCELLANEOUS

19. *Chairperson, Members and employees of the Commission to be public servants.*—The Chairperson, Members and employees of the Commission shall be deemed to be public servants within the meaning of section 21 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860 (Central Act 45 of 1860).

20. *Power to make rules.*—(1) The Government may, by notification in the Gazette, make rules for carrying out the purposes of this Act, either prospectively or retrospectively.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing powers, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) salaries and allowances payable to, and the other terms and conditions of service of, the Chairperson and Members under sub-section (5) of section 4 and of officers and other employees under sub-section (2) of section 5;

(b) the manner and form of issuing Minority Community Certificate by the State Government under section 10;

(c) any other matter under clause (f) of section 12;

(d) the form of annual statement of accounts to be prepared under sub-section (1) of section 16;

(e) the form in, and time at, which the annual report shall be prepared under section 18;

(f) any other matter which is to be, or may be, prescribed.

(3) Every rule made under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before the Legislative Assembly while it is in session for a total period of fourteen days which may be comprised in one session or in two successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session in which it is so laid or the session immediately following, the Legislative Assembly makes any modification in the rule or decides that the rule should not be made, the rule shall thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so however that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

21. *Power to remove difficulties.*—(1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Government may, by order published in the Gazette, make provisions not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act which appear to it to be necessary or expedient, for removing the difficulty:

Provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of a period of two years from the date of commencement of this Act.

(2) Every order made under this section shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before the Legislative Assembly.

22. *Repeal and saving.*—(1) The Kerala State Commission for Minorities Ordinance, 2013 (44 of 2013) is hereby repealed.

(2) Notwithstanding such repeal, anything done or deemed to have been done or any action taken or deemed to have been taken under the said Ordinance shall be deemed to have been done or taken under this Act.