

NATIONAL INTEGRATION COUNCIL

Analysis of resolutions and outcomes of its Meetings

In September-October 1961 a National Integration Conference was convened by Shri Jawahar Lal Nehru, the then Prime Minister of India to find ways and means of combating the evils of communalism, casteism and regionalism etc. which were becoming hurdles in the maintenance of national unity and integrity. The conference made several observations and stressed upon some specific measures to ensure the unity, harmony and integrity of the nation and at the same time it also set up the National Integration Council as a continuing body to review and recommend on the aforementioned subjects. The NIC also constituted Standing Committees, specific sub-committees and sub-groups over the years to discuss some specific issues.

As on 30.09.2011, the Council met 15 times, first in 1962 and the last in September 2011. Date-wise list of NIC meetings held so far, is given below:

| S.N. | Date | Year |
|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | 2-3 June | 1962 |
| 2 | 20-22 June | 1968 |
| 3 | 12 November | 1980 |
| 4 | 21 January | 1984 |
| 5 | 7 April | 1986 |
| 6 | 12 September | 1986 |
| 7 | 11 April | 1990 |
| 8 | 22 September | 1990 |
| 9 | 2 November | 1991 |
| 10 | 31 December | 1991 |
| 11 | 18 July | 1992 |
| 12 | 23 November | 1992 |
| 13 | 31 August | 2005 |
| 14 | 13 October | 2008 |
| 15 | 10 September | 2011 |

In order to have an understanding of the significance of communal harmony and national integration, it is important to mention here that a sub-group of NIC, which was constituted in 1986, stressed upon the following three basic questions, which appear to be even relevant today.

- I. How could actions with regard to maintaining national integration were to be formulated or taken if there was no clear cut definition and conceptual clarity of the same?

- II. Why was it important to have national integrity or what was the need of the same?
- III. In case the concept of National Integrity was defined and clear and need was there, then what needed to be done?

These three basic questions of what, why and how lead us to think in a more precise and logical manner and enable us in proceeding towards a more desired direction in terms of national integration and communal harmony.

The brief of the resolutions and inferences of these meetings and specific NIC committees, etc. are analyzed and given below under different heads. Details about the last meeting of NIC held in October 2008, including the major agenda points and the resolution adopted, are provided at the end. The in-verbatim proceedings of the last meeting of NIC, which was held on 10 September 2011, is being prepared by the Ministry of Home Affairs.

ADMINISTRATION AND LAW & ORDER

1. General

- State Governments to evolve suitable mechanisms to review overall communal situation in the state periodically specially where there are tension spots, identifying the main irritants and quickly devise methods to eliminate them.¹
- Stress on the need of national consensus to the challenge of proxy war in the country.²

2. Committees and Cells

- Setting up of State and District level Integration Committees.³
- Minority cells should be set up in all States entrusting them with the task of formulating and monitoring programmes of the welfare of minorities. They should also be entrusted with evaluating such programmes and suggesting for future line of action.⁴

3. Court

¹ Committee on Caste and Communal Harmony set up by NIC meeting held on the 12.11.1980.

² NIC meeting held on 31.12.1991.

³ Committee on Caste and Communal Harmony set up by NIC meeting held on the 12.11.1980.

⁴ NIC meeting held on 21.01.1984.

- The Government should urge the court to expedite the case regarding this matter (i.e. Ram Janam Bhoomi - Babri Masjid issue) and the decision of the court should be respected by all.⁵

4. Punishment

- Persons guilty of disruptive and violent acts must be punished.⁶

5. Terrorism

- Places of worship must be kept free of terrorist and separatist elements.⁷
- The borders must be secured against influx and infiltration.⁸

6. Amicable Solution

- There should be continuing dialogue and discussion to consider and decide the site of the temple at Ayodhya and allied problems to the satisfaction of all concerned with a view to reaching an amicable settlement.⁹
- Religious leaders of the two committees should take initiatives for resolving the Babri Masjid Ram Janam Bhoomi issue amicably and help in creating communal harmony and peaceful atmosphere.¹⁰
- Stress on genuine grievances of the people to be resolved in a democratic manner through a process of dialogue and discussion.¹¹

EDUCATION

1. General

- Stress on the process of education and its reorientation as of primary importance to promote a sense of Indianness.¹²
- Stress on the days work of all schools to begin with the community singing of the national anthem.¹³

2. Medium of Instruction and Languages

⁵ NIC meeting held on 22.09.1990.

⁶ NIC meeting held on 07.04.1986.

⁷ NIC meeting held on 07.04.1986.

⁸ NIC meeting held on 07.04.1986.

⁹ NIC meeting held on 22.09.1990.

¹⁰ NIC meeting held on 22.09.1990.

¹¹ NIC meeting held on 31.12.1991.

¹² National Integration Conference - Sept.-Oct., 1961

¹³ National Integration Conference - Sept.-Oct., 1961

- Linguistic minorities to have instruction in their mother tongue at primary stage of education.¹⁴
- Regional language to be medium of instruction at secondary stage.¹⁵
- Develop Hindi as link for Inter State communication.¹⁶
- Acceptance of three language formula.¹⁷
- Employ regional languages at the University level but without jeopardizing the quality of education; and students to be equipped with a progressively better knowledge of Hindi and English.¹⁸
- Every University should also have provision of permitting Hindi or English as an option to the regional language for answering question papers.¹⁹
- Stress on teaching English as a compulsory subject.²⁰

3. Textbooks and curriculum

- Accepting the idea of writing textbooks at national level rather than at state or regional level.²¹
- The need for creating better atmosphere of nationalism and national integrity from the youngest days of children by bringing improvement in their educational curriculum.²²

4. History

- Teaching of history, highlighting the composite culture explaining the present and vision of a glorious future was urged.²³

5. National Advisory Board and NCERT

¹⁴ National Integration Conference - Sept.-Oct., 1961

¹⁵ National Integration Conference - Sept.-Oct., 1961

¹⁶ National Integration Conference- Sept.-Oct., 1961.

¹⁷ National Integration Conference- Sept.-Oct., 1961.

¹⁸ NIC meeting held on 02.6.1962 and 03.6.1962.

¹⁹ NIC meeting held on 02.6.1962 and 03.6.1962.

²⁰ NIC meeting held on 02.6.1962 and 03.6.1962.

²¹ National Integration Conference- Sept.-Oct., 1961.

²² NIC meeting held on 21.01.1984.

²³ National Integration Conference- Sept.-Oct., 1961.

- National Advisory Board consisting of eminent scholars and university teachers from different states be set up to advice on inter-provincial text books and making recommendations for revision and improvement of text books in different states.²⁴
- Entrusting NCERT with the task of evaluation of textbooks for the promotion of National Integration.²⁵

MISCELLANEOUS

1. General

- To discourage communal ill-will and regional animosities and weaning away the misguided elements of society from the path of violence.²⁶
- To propagate active and energetic principles, especially of tolerance and harmony.²⁷
- To mobilize the constructive forces of society in the cause of national integration, unity and solidarity and giving them leadership encouragement and articulation.²⁸
- Stress on the need to isolate the communalism from politics.²⁹

2. General Call and Appeal

The NIC meetings of the 11th April, 1990 and the 2nd November, 1991 made general appeal to all the people of India and specific appeal to all concerned with *Ram Janam Bhumi* - Babri Masjid controversy to exercise utmost restraint, to maintain peace, tranquility, harmony, goodwill, seek an amicable solution and create conducive atmosphere.

LAST MEETING OF NIC

The last meeting of NIC was held on 13th October 2008 under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and its major agenda points were National Integration; Social Structure – Caste and Identity divisions and rhetoric; Economic

²⁴ National Integration Conference- Sept.-Oct., 1961.

²⁵ Committee on Education constituted by NIC meeting of 12.11.1980.

²⁶ Declaration of Objective- NIC meeting, 20.6.1968 to 22.6.1968.

²⁷ Declaration of Objective- NIC meeting, 20.6.1968 to 22.6.1968.

²⁸ Declaration of Objective- NIC meeting, 20.6.1968 to 22.6.1968.

²⁹ Meeting of Standing Committee held on 23.6.1987.

development – Equitable development and removal of regional imbalances; Promotion of feeling of security among minorities and other vulnerable sections; Education – Promotion of education among minorities, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes; Extremism; Communal Harmony; and Other elements contributing towards national integration. After discussions, the Council adopted the following resolution.³⁰

- “1. The NIC meeting discussed various issues impacting on national integration and communal harmony such as caste, communal, regional and identity divisions, economic and regional disparities, inequitable development, need for empowerment of various disadvantaged groups, weaker sections and minorities, and the threats to national integrity and national integration emanating from terrorism and extremism in all its forms.
2. The meeting noted that the vast majority of Indians cutting across religious and cultural lines are peace-loving, believe in the spirit and idea of tolerance, communal harmony and the rule of law. They abhor violence, inhumanity and disorder in society.
3. The meeting recognized that unity in diversity and communal harmony, constitute the bedrock of our nationhood and civilizational values. Preserving this unique heritage is the challenge of our times and the bounden duty of every citizen of India.
4. The meeting expressed concern at the recent incidents of communal and terrorist violence in various parts of the country. It resolved that the foundations of our civilization lie in secularism, equality, justice-social, economic and political- and fraternity amongst all communities. These must be preserved and promoted at all costs, and towards this end, an environment of security for all sections of the society must also be ensured.

³⁰ Website of the Ministry of Home Affairs www.mha.nic.in.

5. The meeting condemned all acts of violence, and covert and overt attempts to strike at the roots of our national integrity, solidarity and pluralism, and all forms of extremism, terrorism and violence, and resolved to deal with all such challenges firmly and in accordance with the rule of law.
6. The meeting called upon all political parties, civil society organizations, citizens' groups, religious, social and other opinion leaders, and the media to rise above narrow thinking or interests, and to act unitedly to defeat all forms of extremism and any attempt at division of our society on social, religious and communal lines."³¹

[Note: Copies of the proceedings of the NIC meetings are available in the library of the Foundation for reference.]

³¹ Website of the Ministry of Home Affairs www.mha.nic.in.