

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment**

05-July-2014 16:15 IST

**13th National Meeting of the State Commissioners for Persons with Disabilities
to Review Implementation of the Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995**

The Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot inaugurated the 13th National Meeting of the State Commissioners for Persons with Disabilities to review implementation of PWD Act here today. The Minister extensively interacted with the State Commissioners from 32 States/UTs throughout the day. The Minister in his address said that the meeting provides an important forum for exchanging views and experiences and understanding of critical issues on implementation of the Act.

Shri Gehlot also went through the minute details of the implementation status across States and observed that the proportion of persons with disabilities belonging to Scheduled Castes at 2.45% was higher than the overall proportion of 2.1% of the total population. He asked the State Commissioners to pay particular attention to the people with disabilities living in the rural and remote areas and the vulnerable disadvantaged group.

The Minister was particularly concerned about persons with severe disabilities living on the margin and observed that a huge proportion (43.15%) of persons with disabilities is yet to be issued disability certificates. He set a target of covering 70% eligible persons to be given disability certificate within six months and 100% within one year.

Shri Gehlot emphasized that a Special Recruitment Drive should be conducted in all the States to fill up the backlog of reserved vacancies for persons with disabilities. He highlighted the need for implementation of the provisions in the Act to allot land on preferential basis at concessional rates to persons with disabilities for house, setting up of a business, factories etc and said that this is important for their all round economic empowerment. The Minister emphasized on ensuring barrier free access to public places for persons with disabilities in a time bound manner. He also informed that he has recommended to the Finance Ministry to double the existing exemption limit in Income Tax in respect of persons with disabilities.

Shri Sudharshan Bhagat, Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment highlighted the importance of education for all round empowerment of persons with disabilities. He observed that despite a range of positive legal provisions, appropriate arrangements for education of children with disabilities was not in place across the country. He advised the State Commissioners to particularly focus on ensuring the right of children with disabilities to education in an appropriate environment.

Addressing the meeting, Shri P.K. Pincha, Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities highlighted the achievements of the Office of the Chief Commissioner during the period intervening between the 12th & 13th National Meeting of the State Commissioners and also enumerated certain constraints. Putting forth certain suggestions for effective functioning of the Chief Commissioner and the State Commissioners, he gave a brief account of the role and activities of the Chief Commissioner during the said period.

Speaking on the occasion, most of the State Commissioners stressed the need for greater functional autonomy for their effective functioning.
