

## **Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot Inaugurates ‘Eastern Regional Conference’ on issues relating to Empowerment of persons with Disabilities**

Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment inaugurated the “Eastern Regional Conference of Eastern Region States on issues relating to Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities” organized by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment here today. Representatives from the States of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Tripura, West Bengal participated in the Conference. Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri N.S. Kang, Secretary, DEPwD and senior officers from Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the participating States were present.

In his inaugural address, Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot said that the new Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 has expanded the horizon of the rights of persons with disabilities vis-a-vis the repealed PwD Act, 1995 and casts increased responsibilities on the States/UTs to ensure that the persons with disabilities enjoy their rights equally with others. The State Governments are also required to take measures to provide institutional mechanism for registration of institutions working in the disability sector. It is needless to say that the new Act has penal provisions for violation of its provisions.

He said that the DEPwD is in the process of implementing a project viz. “Unique ID for Persons with Disabilities” with a view to create a national database for person with disabilities, and issue Unique ID card to each PwD.

Shri Gehlot said that more than 5300 ADIP camps have organized by his ministry and the objective of ADIP Schemes is to assist the needy disabled persons in procuring durable, sophisticated and scientifically manufactures, modern, standard aids and appliances that can promote their physical, social and psychological rehabilitation by reducing the effects of disabilities.

Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar, in his address, said that the Government of India has initiated many new useful schemes for the welfare of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjans) and hoped that the deliberations in the Conference will surely benefit all concerned. Divyangjans are an integral part of our society and all schemes of the central government for the welfare of Divyangjans should be properly implemented by all State governments.

This Conference was organized in New Delhi in continuation of the four zonal Regional Conferences already organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), namely, Western Regional Conference in Mumbai on 11.05.2017, Southern Regional Conference in Chennai on 12.05.2017, Northern Regional Conference in Chandigarh on 26.05.2017 and Central Regional Conference in Bhopal on 02.06.2017.

During the Conference, the following agenda items pertaining to above eastern States were discussed:-

- i. Discussion on Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and the Role of States/UTs in its implementation
- ii. Review of Schemes/Programmes of the Department namely:-
  - a) Progress of Accessible India Campaign

- b) Furnishing of Utilization Certificates under SIPDA Scheme
- c) DDRC Scheme
- d) Misc. items such as Functioning of CRCs/DDRS/ ADIP/National Action Plan for Skill Development/Scholarship Schemes/DBT
- e) Issue of Disability Certificates under UDID Project

Recently, the Central Government has enacted the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, which came into force w.e.f 19.4.2017. The new Act provides for various rights and entitlements for PwDs and casts responsibility on the States/UTs to take various measures to ensure that the PwDs enjoy their rights equally with others. It also mandates the States/UTs to frame various schemes/programme, work out mechanism to ensure inclusion and empowerment of PwDs. Keeping in view the mandate of the new Act, while the Central Government is in the process of revisiting its schemes and programmes, the States/UTs are also expected to take similar steps at their end to ensure effective implementation of the Act in a time bound manner. In the above background, the Eastern Regional Conference was organized in New Delhi.

Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept in the Act. The types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21. The 21 disabilities are : (1) Blindness; (2) Low-vision; (3) Leprosy Cured persons; (4) Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing); (5) Locomotor Disability; (6) Dwarfism; (7) Intellectual Disability; (8) Mental Illness; (9) Autism Spectrum Disorder; (10) Cerebral Palsy; (11) Muscular Dystrophy; (12) Chronic Neurological conditions; (13) Specific Learning Disabilities; (14) Multiple Sclerosis; (15) Speech and Language disability; (16) Thalassaemia; (17) Hemophilia; (18) Sickle Cell disease ; (19) Multiple Disabilities including deaf blindness; (20) Acid Attack victim ; and (21) Parkinson's disease.





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