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Launches Deen Dayal Divyangjan Sahajya Scheme

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that stigmatization and discrimination cannot be tolerated by any civilized society and people with disabilities have every right to live with dignity. He was addressing the gathering after launching Deen Dayal Divyangjan Sahajya Scheme to coincide with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, in Guwahati, Assam today. The Governor of Assam, Shri Jagdish Mukhi, the Chief Minister of Assam, Shri Sarbananda Sonowal and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President said that according to United Nations, a disability is a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual of their group. The impairment could be physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, mental illness and could relate to any of the various types of chronic diseases, he added.

The Vice President said that people with disability need to be treated with empathy and not sympathy. They do not want to be pitied upon but want to be provided with opportunities that will enable them to overcome their handicaps, he added.

The Vice President complimented the Government of Assam for its proposal to provide Rs.5,000 for medical treatment as a one-time grant-in-aid for each of the 4,50,000 Divyangs in the State under Deen Dayal Divyangjan Sahajya Achari and for allocating Rs.250 crore for the scheme. He further said that he was happy to know that the Government of Assam has introduced a new Act, called "Assam Employees PRANAM Act, 2017", under which each government employee is compelled to contribute 10 per cent of his/her salary towards taking care of his/her parents, including persons with disabilities. He advised other State Governments to emulate Assam Government's scheme in view of the growing population of the elderly in India.

The Vice President appealed all people to strive to build an inclusive New India where none is discriminated, especially persons with disabilities, and where all Indians are equally benefited by economic prosperity and growth.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"Friends, today we are launching Deen Dayal Divyangjan Sahajya Achari to coincide with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The aim of observing the International Day is to increase awareness on the problems faced by persons with disabilities and to mobilize support for their rights, dignity and wellbeing.

According to United Nations, a disability is a condition or function judged to be significantly impaired relative to the usual standard of an individual of their group. The impairment could be physical, sensory, cognitive, intellectual, mental illness and could relate to any of the various types of chronic diseases.

It is estimated that more than one billion or around 15 per cent of the world's population have some form of disability and 80 per cent of them live in developing countries.

According to 2011 census, around 2.21 per cent of the Indian population suffers from some form of disability. To enable them overcome various obstacles, successive governments at the Centre and in various States have been coming out from time to time with new policies and schemes. But what matters most is the attitude of the policy-makers and the people and not the laws or schemes.

People with disability need to be treated with empathy and not sympathy. They do not want to be pitied upon but want to be provided with opportunities that will enable them to overcome their handicaps. They need to be understood properly and treated in a humane way and not viewed as some kind of a burden. In many cases, the mindsets of the immediate family members, the community and the society will have to change so that people with disability are not discriminated against in any manner. Stigmatization and discrimination cannot be tolerated by any civilized society. People with disabilities have every right to live with dignity.

I compliment the Government of India for having extended the coverage of disability from seven to 21 types of disabilities and also for launching a unique ID card for people with disability. I am confident that these measures will positively impact them and improve their living conditions.

I would also like to appreciate the Assam Government for its proposal to provide Rs.5,000 for medical treatment as a one-time grant-in-aid for each of the 4,50,000 Divyangs in the State under Deen Dayal Divyangjan Sahajya Achari and for allocating Rs.250 crore for the scheme. I am told that the State Government in partnership with other agencies is distributing various aids and appliances to persons with disabilities.

I am happy to learn that the Government of Assam has introduced a new Act, called "Assam Employees PRANAM Act, 2017", under which each government employee is compelled to contribute 10 per cent of his/ her salary towards taking care of his/her parents, including persons

with disabilities.

This is a unique Act and I laud the Assam Government for launching such a welfare measure.

In fact, I would like other State Governments to emulate Assam Government's scheme in view of the growing population of the elderly in India.

As mentioned by me earlier, it is very important for all people, particularly the policy makers to be sensitive to the needs of people suffering from disability. They should not face any kind of exclusion in their daily lives. The attitudinal and physical barriers that come in the way of the disabled people have to be dismantled to ensure proper accessibility.

Firstly, school buildings have to be made accessible and both teaching and non-teaching staff need to be sensitized regarding the care to be taken for children with disabilities. Similarly, there should not be any difficulty or obstacles in accessing government and private buildings.

Let us all strive to build an inclusive New India where none is discriminated, especially persons with disabilities, and where all Indians are equally benefited by economic prosperity and growth.

JAI HIND!"

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