

PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS REQUIRE EMPATHY AND NOT SYMPATHY: VICE PRESIDENT

Relevant for: Government Policies & Welfare Schemes | Topic: Welfare of Persons with Disability - Schemes & their performance; Mechanisms, Laws, Institutions & Bodies

Vice President's Secretariat

People with special needs require empathy and not sympathy: Vice President

Rededicate to the cause of less fortunate;

Develop barrier-free environment for the Persons with Disabilities;

Presents the National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)

Posted On: 03 DEC 2018 7:27PM by PIB Delhi

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has said that people with special needs require empathy and not sympathy. He was addressing the gathering after presenting the 72 National Awards for the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), on the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, here today. The Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Thaawar Chand Gehlot, the Ministers of State for Social Justice & Empowerment, Shri Ramdas Athawale, Shri Vijay Sampla, Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar and other dignitaries were present on the occasion.

The Vice President stressed the need to change societal norms through intensive awareness campaigns to remove the stigma attached to disability. He further said that the society has a duty towards fellow human beings to make them lead good quality lives with dignity. One must learn to recognize the valuable human assets we have in persons with disabilities, he added.

Calling upon the people to rededicate to the cause of less fortunate, Shri Naidu stressed the need to provide appropriate career and life-enhancing policies and measures to boost their self-confidence so that the people with special needs can lead a dignified life. He further said that a number of actions with speed and sincerity were needed to build an inclusive society. Government has taken a number of initiatives to systematically address the challenges that they face, there is still a long way to go, he added.

Saying that the guarantees the equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals, including Persons with Disabilities, Shri Naidu said that legislations such as the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 focuses on various key elements of empowerment of persons with disabilities. He called upon the States and Union Territories to effectively implement the Act so

that the persons with disabilities get the desired benefits at the earliest.

The Vice President said that early identification of disability and effective interventions were important in providing care to those in need. He stressed the need to harmonize the immunization and disease-prevention programmes with appropriate rehabilitation models and added that children in the susceptible age groups should be given access to better health care and nutrition to prevent occurrence of disability.

Stressing the importance of Education in empowerment of every person including persons with disabilities, Shri Naidu opined that the provisions of the Act have to be strictly implemented to ensure that children with disabilities have access to school education with proper pedagogical support. Our education system has to be re-invented to create inclusive educational opportunities and we have to use technology creatively to make this possible, he added.

Shri Naidu said that policy makers and planners must be aware of the infrastructural requirements of persons with special needs and create accessible environment. He said that increasing access to public facilities must be priority area given the size of the existing infrastructure and added that such gigantic task require support of all stakeholders for developing barrier-free environment for the Persons with Disabilities be it in the physical infrastructure, transportation sector or the ICT ecosystem.

Shri Naidu also urged the corporate and the private entities to include in their CSR activities the development of infrastructure accessible to persons with disabilities.

Following is the text of Vice President's address:

"It is indeed a pleasure for me to be present amidst you to present the National Awards on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

The main objective of this world-wide initiative is to promote an understanding on the issues connected with disability.

I think it is very important that all of us recognize the key issues and mobilize support and create a congenial environment for persons with disabilities

They must be empowered to lead a dignified life and participate in political, social, economic, cultural and recreational activities without any discrimination.

It is, therefore, appropriate that we in India mark this date by honouring the selfless individuals, altruistic organizations and also provincial Governments for their contribution, and the time, resources and energies that they have dedicated to bring positive change in the lives of the persons with disabilities.

We are also honouring persons with disabilities for their outstanding achievements. I am sure that they would serve as an inspiration and role models for others. I congratulate all of them and deeply appreciate their efforts.

Dear sisters and brothers,

Let us acknowledge that given an opportunity and the right kind of environment, persons with disabilities can excel in every field.

What they need is empathy and not sympathy.

They need appropriate career and life-enhancing policies and programmes to lead a dignified life. They need measures to boost their self-confidence.

Although the Government has taken a number of initiatives to systematically address the challenges that they face, there is still a long way to go. We have to take a number of actions with speed and sincerity to build an inclusive society.

Our Constitution, no doubt, guarantees the equality, freedom, justice and dignity of all individuals, including Persons with Disabilities.

As you all are aware, the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 focuses on various key elements of empowerment of persons with disabilities.

It provides for promoting inclusive education, skill development, healthcare, social security, rehabilitation, recreation and sporting activities among persons with disabilities.

I am glad that the Central Government has already framed the Rules under this Act and also laid down the guidelines for assessment of various disabilities.

I call upon the States and Union Territories to effectively implement the Act so that the persons with disabilities get the desired benefits at the earliest.

To my mind, early identification of disability and effective intervention are important. There is a need to harmonize the immunization and disease-prevention programmes with appropriate rehabilitation models. Children in the susceptible age groups should be given access to better health care and nutrition to prevent occurrence of disability.

Education is the key to empowerment of every person including persons with disabilities. I strongly believe that the provisions of the Act have to be strictly implemented to ensure that children with disabilities have access to school education with proper pedagogical support.

Undoubtedly, NGOs play a significant role for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities. I am glad that the NGOs are partnering with the Government in implementing various rehabilitation schemes. **The Deendayal Rehabilitation Scheme is a major NGO-based scheme for providing project based financial assistance.**

I am glad that the Government is providing scholarships to students with disabilities from pre-metric level and also to those studying abroad. Ongoing efforts have created awareness of the opportunities that are currently available for the benefit of children with disabilities in the country. However, much more needs to be done.

I am aware that creating accessible environment for persons with disabilities has been a priority area for the Government since inception of Accessible India Campaign in 2015.

Increasing access to public facilities is a priority area. Given the size of the existing infrastructure, this is a gigantic task.

I feel that there is a need to develop collaborative efforts among all stakeholders for developing barrier-free environment for the Persons with Disabilities be it in the physical infrastructure, transportation sector or the ICT ecosystem.

I urge the corporate and the private entities to include in their CSR activities the development of

infrastructure accessible to persons with disabilities.

I am happy that the Government is also equally committed to enhance the mobility of persons with disabilities. In the recent past, it has laid greater thrust on distribution of contemporary aids and assistive devices to the persons with disabilities. I am happy to know that this programme has achieved a substantial degree of visibility and created positive awareness across the country.

I am given to understand that recently the Government has taken a decision to establish the National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation in Madhya Pradesh.

This institute will be one of the first of its kind in the continent for rehabilitation of persons with mental illness and will also promote capacity building in the area of mental health rehabilitation. I hope the institute will be developed into a world class institute for rehabilitation of persons with mental illness.

I am happy to note that the Government is also working in the area of promoting sports among persons with disabilities and is in the process of developing dedicated sports centers for them.

Promoting sports among persons with disabilities is a welcome step and would certainly instill a sense of inclusion and competence among persons with disabilities. We also need to involve persons with disabilities in social and cultural activities.

I am glad that the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre has already created a sign language dictionary of more than 3000 words and is working towards developing a standardized Indian Sign Language.

I am told that the Government is also in the process of implementing a Unique ID project to create a national database of all persons with disabilities in the country to ensure that the Government benefits reach every deserving person.

It is heartening that the Government has also launched a National Action Plan for Skill Development to impart skill training to 25 lakh persons with disabilities by 2022, to enhance their employability.

I urge the corporate sector to contribute to the cause of inclusion by creating adequate employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. This will supplement governmental efforts to reserve positions for persons with disabilities in government establishments.

Dear Sisters and brothers,

India's development story will be totally incomplete without 'inclusion' and harnessing the hidden potential of all people including the differently abled.

We need to recognize the competence of every individual, enhance the knowledge and skill levels, empower each disabled person to reach the heights each one aspires for.

Our policies and programs must be oriented towards this approach.

Our governance system needs to be fine tuned to respond to the special needs of the differently abled.

Our education system has to be re-invented to create inclusive educational opportunities.

