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SIRD & PR Signs MoUs with National and International Organizations to Achieve SDGs

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SIRD & PR, the apex training institute under Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department, Odisha has collaborated with national and international organizations through the signing of Memorandum of Understandings to achieve Sustainable Development Goals through localising SDGs. The MoUs were signed by the Director, SIRD & PR, Bhubaneswar with the representatives of Odisha Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Foundation for Ecological Security (FES), Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) and Swami Vivekananda National Institute of Rehabilitation Training & Research (SVNIRTAR) in the presence of Honourable Minister of Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water, Odisha, Principal Secretary and other senior officers of the department.

The vision of signing of MoU is to promote model panchayats through the creation of Centre of Excellence by way of Panchayat Learning Centres. Strengthening of service delivery in a time bound manner will enable Gram panchayats to get ISO certification.

Sri Pradip Kumar Amat, Minister, Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water expressed gratitude to the collaborating organizations for extending technical support to Govt of Odisha for strengthening PRIs. He mentioned about 73rd Constitutional Amendment which paved the way for democratic decentralization and the participation of people in local governance. He further added about Article-243-G of the constitution which mandates the Panchayati Raj Institutions to provide basic services for its citizens and plan for holistic development of rural local bodies. The Hon'ble Minister also highlighted the need for empowering women and children by organising Bal Sabha and Mahila Sabha and other innovative measures to make the development initiatives sustainable at the local level.

Sri Sushil Kumar Lohani, Principal Secretary, PR & DW Department emphasised the need for localising various Sustainable Development Goals at the level of Gram Panchayat so that no one in the villages is left behind. He further stressed to creation Panchayat Learning Centre in 60 Gram Panchayats of Odisha and ISO Certification of 90 Gram Panchayats to set the benchmark in providing basic services in a time-bound manner. He further added that SIRD & PR completed the induction training of all newly elected PRIs within 6 months of assuming their office which is a landmark achievement in the history of Odisha. As SIRD & PR has reached up to village level through organising various training programmes such as National Panchayat Award, Localization of SDGs, Peoples Plan Campaign etc, Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department intends to build the capacity of members of Village Water and Sanitation Committees (VWSC) in the entire state.

Sri Surendra Kumar Meena, Director, SIRD & PR welcomed the dignitaries and briefed them about the purpose of the MoU. He further highlighted the achievements of SIRD&PR during the last financial year such as securing 2nd rank by Odisha in the Country in the event of National Panchayat Award 2023. The institute has documented various innovative and outstanding initiatives of Government of Odisha by developing 54 Audio-Visual films which have been displayed in various national-level workshops and seminars across the country and are also highly appreciated. NITI Ayog has declared SIRD&PR as one of the key resource centres for capacity building and training of field-level functionaries of the Aspirational Blocks.

Books on thematic training modules for Localising Sustainable Development Goals, capacity building of GPEOs and PEOs, ISO certification of Panchayats and Panchayat Learning Centres were released by the Honourable Minister of Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water, Sri Pradeep Kumar Amat in presence of the delegates. Mr William J Honlon, Chief, Field Office, UNICEF, Odisha, Smt. Susmita Behera, Executive Director, OSDMA, Mohammad Nadeem Noor, State Head, UNFPA, Ms Abha Mishra, State Head, UNDP, Dr Patita Paban Mohanty, Director, SV-NIRTAR, Mrs Meena Das Mohapatra, State Head, FES and Mr Ajit Kumar Naik, State Lead, PRADAN were present for signing the MoUs.

Mr William J Honlon, Chief, Field Office, UNICEF, Odisha opined that UNICEF is privileged to enter MoU with SIRD & PR for the creation of women and child-friendly Gram Panchayats. These kinds of initiatives would improve the concept of social inclusion at village level.

The Executive Director of OSDMA expressed her gratitude on having MoU with SIRD&PR. In her address, she emphasized to train all the elected representatives of PRIs up to Gram Panchayat level with the support of SIRD&PR so that disaster response warriors can be groomed at village level.

Director, SVNIRTAR expressed that since their institution work for the disabled section of the population, the collaboration with SIRD&PR would help them in reaching out Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), providing them the required facilitating devices etc. for creating healthy villages.

The programme concluded with Vote of Thanks to dignitaries by Dr Dharanidhar Nanda, Additional Director, SIRD & PR.

Saurav Pradhan
PRO (GoD)