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State Advisory Board on Disability Meets Emphasis on Inclusive Education and Skill Training

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Expansion of the horizons of the rights and entitlements of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), assuring their dignity and socio-economic participation in order to bring them into the mainstream has been emphasised. Strengthening of special schools for PwD students and encouraging skill training for meaningful employment have become the priorities of Department of Social Security and Empowerment of PwDs (SSEPD), said Sri Ashok Chandra Panda, Minister, SSEPD. Sri Panda was speaking while presiding over the 3rd Meeting of State Advisory Board on Disability held here today.

It was stated that Integrated Infrastructure Complexes (Shradhalayas) have become operational in eight districts while Manodaya (State Institute for Disability Rehabilitation) is also functional at 3 places. About 36 Lakh beneficiaries have been included in Madhubabu Pension Yojana (MPY). Around 3000 PwDs have been imparted skill development training. About 25 thousand students are receiving Banishree Scholarship while 104 Special Schools are given Grant-in-Aid from the Government. Sri Ananta Narayan Jena, MLA also emphasised on convergence of various Government Departments for successful implementation of schemes aimed to bring development of PwDs.

Sri Bishnupada Sethi, Principal Secretary, SSEPD in his introductory address said that Advisory Board provides platform involving all stakeholders to workout collectively to find ways to overcome the challenges and to ensure effective implementation of various schemes and programmes for the PwDs.

The Board, constituted with MLAs, representatives of various Departments and organisations working for the causes of PwDs deliberated on different issues relating to the welfare and development of PwDs. Matters discussed in the meeting included identification of employees with Disabilities working in Government and other State PSUs, Revision of conveyance allowance for Employees with Disabilities, Inclusive education for Children with Disabilities, Incentivise Health Insurance companies to formulate insurance schemes for PwDs and coverage of PwDs under BSKY, Sign Language training for employees at Police Stations and Hospitals, Availability of universally accessible education material in braille and sign language, subsidized loans for entrepreneurs with disability, DBT of social security scheme benefits, encouragement of Private sector to employ PwDs as employees, revision of GST on smart appliances, concession on purchase of Private vehicles to be used by PwDs (both adapted or normal), preventive disabilities like Blood related disorders are to be screened and awareness to be generated, strengthening office of SCPD, felicitation of Sports persons with Disabilities at par with normal Sports persons and accessible audit of all public buildings.

A Power Point presentation pertaining to the activities of the Department was made while Smt. Niyati Patnaik, Director gave welcome address. Among others Kasturi Mohapatra, Biaya Parida, Narayan Pati, Niranjana Jena, Suresh Chandra Panda, Akshaya Sahoo, Gaurishankar Panda, Sujata Patnaik, Ranjit Mohapatra, Pramod Mallick, Kamala Kanta Rath, Chumki Dutta, Gopangana Das, Kamala Kanta Nayak, Damodar Das and others from various organisations offered a number of proposals and recommendations. Senior officers from Government Departments were also present.

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