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Inclusive Education for Visually Impaired Students SSEPD Department Signs MoU with IIT, BBS

Bhubaneswar, 04/03/2024

SSEPD Department has roped in IIT, Bhubaneswar focusing on inclusive and quality education for visually impaired students in the State. An MoU has been signed in this direction between the Department and IIT, Bhubaneswar today which envisages for provision of comprehensive technological solutions for quality education of visually impaired students. Sri Ashok Chandra Panda, Minister SSEPD who was present in the MoU signing programme, said that improvements in assistive technology, particularly with regard to computers, tablets and smart phones, have made it possible for individuals with visually impaired to read and write in standard scripts on par with sighted individuals. With the use of suitable screen reading software and a few software applications on a computer, a visually impaired student can effectively assess digital books and online content and can also write in his preferred language, said Sri Panda.

Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy (SRIC) of IIT, Bhubaneswar will work in collaboration with Exclusive Tinker Lab to emphasize on modern learning via Coding, Micro bit, 3D Painting, Games and Animation, Mobile Apps, Machine Learning, Artificial Intelligence and Robotics etc. Provision of Tabs and Smart Phones for secondary students and necessary support for online classes, career guidance, soft skills, sheltered workshops, personality development, digital library and distribution of audio books through engagement of MSW scholars and NSS volunteers will be the major components of inclusive education for the students. There will be provision of Kibo Device for visually impaired students in high schools and higher secondary schools. The agreement will be valid for 5 years.

Sri Bishnupada Sethi, Principal Secretary of the Department said that there will be regular monitoring of the activities implemented through the MoU. IIT, Bhubaneswar will provide technical guidance and support for identification of right Assistive devices as per the identified needs of the visually impaired students. He further said that IIT, Bhubaneswar will work to enhance the educational aspect by broadening avenues for professional development in terms of inclusion. The project will take up Training of students, career counselling, setting up of recording lab and accessible art centre, said Sri Sethi.

Niyati Patnaik, Director, SSEPD Department and Dinakar Pasla, Professor and Dean, Sponsored Research and Industrial Consultancy (SRIC) of IIT, Bhubaneswar were signatories in the MoU on behalf of the Department and IIT, Bhubaneswar respectively. Senior officers of the Department and academicians from IIT were present in the programme.

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