

“Recognise Persons with Disabilities by Their Abilities, Not Their Disability”: Dr. Virendra Kumar; Government and Social Institutions Join Hands to Take DISSSA to the Last Mile

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“Our goal must be to build an inclusive society where a person is recognised not by their disability, but by their abilities, talent, competence and potential,” said Dr. Virendra Kumar, Union Minister for Social Justice & Empowerment, today, underscoring the need to move beyond a welfare-centric approach towards one that recognises and nurtures the capabilities and potential of persons with disabilities. He was speaking at the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice Empowerment, Government of India, and the Rajyoga Education Research Foundation (RERF), a sister organisation of Brahma Kumaris, for the launch of the “Divyang Samanata, Sanrakshan evam Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (DISSSA)” at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi.



Dr. Virendra Kumar said that the empowerment of persons with disabilities cannot be achieved through government efforts alone and requires the meaningful participation of society and the active engagement of social, spiritual, educational and service-oriented institutions. He observed that such partnerships can

provide an effective model for taking government schemes and services to the last mile and to those who need them most. Referring to the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, he emphasised that laws and schemes can fulfill their true purpose

only when their benefits reach every eligible person in a meaningful and accessible manner. He expressed confidence that the experience, outreach and network of RERF and its associated organisations would contribute significantly to the empowerment of persons with disabilities. He further stressed that when a person with a disability is empowered, the benefits extend beyond the individual to the family, society and ultimately the nation.

Shri B.L. Verma, Hon'ble Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment, described the occasion as a meaningful step towards social service, equality and inclusion. He emphasised that the Government, State Governments, local administrations, families and society at large share a collective responsibility to safeguard the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities while ensuring equal opportunities for them. He said that the focus should not merely be on reducing the difficulties associated with disability, but on recognising the abilities, talents, competencies and potential of persons with disabilities and providing them opportunities to realise their full potential. He expressed confidence that the initiative would strengthen social equality, dignity and inclusion and enable persons with disabilities to participate in the mainstream of national life with confidence and equal opportunity.

Representatives of Brahma Kumaris Rajyogini BK Asha didi, Member, Brahma Kumaris Management Committee highlighted that the organisation has been working continuously for the empowerment of persons with disabilities, particularly children and young people, for the past 18 years. During this period, dedicated programmes and comprehensive training modules have been developed. Two dedicated vans are used by trained teams to reach schools and colleges, with the permission and cooperation of local authorities and educational institutions. Specially developed educational materials, including Braille-based resources, teaching boards, games and other training material, are used to support training, concentration, confidence-building and personality development. National-level conferences and seminars are also organised at Mount Abu, where persons with disabilities participate in multi-day programmes focused on empowerment and self - reliance. The organisation expressed its appreciation to the Department for facilitating a formal institutional partnership through the MoU, which it expects will help expand these services to a larger number of children and young people with disabilities.



In his welcome address, Shri Rajeev Sharma, Joint Secretary, DEPwD, said that the DISSSA initiative represents an important opportunity to complement existing government efforts with the experience and outreach of Brahma Kumaris and RERF. He noted that under the Department's Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS), around 350–400 projects are being supported across the country, providing education, training and rehabilitation services to children with disabilities. He said that the expertise of the partner organisations in meditation, Rajyoga and relaxation practices can add a valuable dimension to the holistic development of children with disabilities by promoting mental well-being, self-confidence, concentration and positive thinking.

The DISSSA campaign is a nationwide initiative aimed at creating an enabling environment for Divyangjan and strengthening their equality, inclusion and empowerment. The campaign adopts a holistic and inclusive approach that complements conventional physical, educational and rehabilitation support by addressing important dimensions of mental and emotional well-being. Its activities will include value-based games and motivational songs to foster happiness, positive thinking and confidence; community meetings with parents and local communities to generate awareness about equality and inclusion; health-awareness activities promoting de-addiction, sanitation and cleanliness; and demonstrations and meditation sessions designed to help Divyangjan overcome psychological barriers such as fear of failure, feelings of inferiority and lack of confidence.

The campaign will be implemented through trained teams across multiple States and will cover persons with different categories of disabilities, including visual, hearing, learning and intellectual disabilities. Separate teams will be formed for different States, with programmes delivered in regional languages to strengthen accessibility and local outreach. The MoU reaffirms the Government of India's commitment to the empowerment and social inclusion of Divyangjan, in alignment with the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 and the ethos of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas, Sabka Prayas." By bringing together government resources, community networks and the expertise of social, spiritual and educational institutions, DISSSA seeks to ensure that persons with disabilities are not viewed merely as beneficiaries of welfare programmes, but as equal and empowered partners in the development of society and the nation. At its core, the campaign seeks to equip Divyangjan with essential life skills, strengthen their confidence and enable them to overcome psychological barriers, while creating an environment in which every person with a disability can realise their potential and participate in national life with dignity and equal opportunity. This event saw the participation of eminent dignitaries Rajyogini BK Asha didi, Member, Brahma Kumaris Management Committee, Rajyogi BK Lalit bhai, Vice Chairperson, Divyangjan Sewa Wing of Rajyoga Education and Research Foundation, Rajyogini BK Vidhatri, Rajyogini BK Rajni, Rajyogini BK Preeti, including representatives of DEPwD Shri Vineet Singhal Director, Shri Manish Kumar Mishra Under Secretary and media personnel.

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