Union Minister Dr Virendra Kumar Launches ‘Vayo Samman Rashtriya Abhiyan’ to Strengthen Intergenerational Bonding

Campaign to Promote Sustained Intergenerational Engagement Through the ‘5C’ Model of Connect, Converse, Co-create, Contribute and Continue

Union Minister Administers Vayo Samman Pledge; Handbook Released and Vayo SAATHI Volunteer Initiative Launched

Two MoUs Signed And Exchanged With Shri Ram Chandra Mission And Adhyatma Vigyan Satsang Kendra In Presence Of Hon’ble Minister, Senior Officials

“This Deepavali, Let No Elder Be Left Alone”-Dr Virendra Kumar

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Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Dr. Virendra Kumar today launched the ‘Vayo Samman Rashtriya Abhiyan’, a National Intergenerational Bonding Campaign, under the Atal Vayo Abhyuday Yojana (AVYAY), in the National Capital here this evening.



The initiative marks an important step towards strengthening intergenerational solidarity and promoting a society that recognises and values the experience, wisdom and contributions of senior citizens.





The Minister also released the Handbook on Vayo Samman Rashtriya Abhiyan and launched the Vayo SAATHI volunteer initiative to mobilise citizens in support of senior citizens.



On the occasion, two Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Voluntary organizations namely Shri Ram Chandra Mission (SRCM) and Adhyatma Vigyan Satsang Kendra (AVSK), Jodhpur, were signed and formally exchanged in the presence of the Hon’ble Union Minister, Secretary MoSJE and other senior officials of the Ministry.



These collaborations aim to promote the holistic well-being of senior citizens through meditation, yoga and wellness programmes, besides encouraging intergenerational engagement through pledge drives, walkathons and other community-based activities.



Secretary, Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Sudhansh Pant, Additional Secretaries Smt Mona K Khandhar, Smt Debolina Thakur, Joint Secretaries Shri Sajeesh Kumar N, Dr Sandeep R Rathod, Shri Shailendra Kumar, Smt Monali P Dhakate, Shri Rahees M, Economic Advisor, Directors, Shri Astik Kumar Pandey, Ms Kajal Singh and other senior officials of the Ministry were present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Dr. Virendra Kumar described the Abhiyan as an *'Anubhav aur Urja ka Sangam',* bringing together the experience of senior citizens and the energy of younger generations.



He highlighted that India's population aged 60 years and above is projected to increase from approximately 10 crore in 2011 to 23 crore by 2036.



The Minister observed that urbanisation, migration and changing family structures have reduced regular interaction between generations, resulting in challenges such as loneliness, limited awareness of welfare schemes and vulnerability to cyber fraud among senior citizens.



Emphasising the importance of mutual learning and intergenerational relationships, the Minister stated, “The youth will connect our elders to the digital world and our elders will give the youth the values of life.”

Giving a special message on the eve of Deepawali, he urged citizens to ensure that no elderly person in their homes or neighbourhoods is left alone and that one diya is lit in their honour.

The Minister highlighted that the Abhiyan would reach every village and mohalla through Panchayats, local bodies and educational institutions. He emphasised that even simple acts of care, such as spending half an hour with an elderly person or accompanying them to a doctor, represent meaningful contributions towards their well-being.

Dr Kumar said the Abhiyan reinforces the message that the welfare, dignity and inclusion of senior citizens are not merely governmental responsibilities but a shared social commitment.

During the programme, the Hon’ble Union Minister administered the Vayo Samman Pledge to all those present, encouraging collective commitment towards ensuring the dignity, care, respect and social inclusion of senior citizens.



Welcoming the gathering, Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Shri Sudhansh Pant, stated that the initiative recognises senior citizens not merely as beneficiaries of welfare programmes but as active contributors, mentors and valuable repositories of knowledge, culture and social experience. He encouraged States and Districts to undertake activities in accordance with the Handbook to ensure effective implementation of the Abhiyan.

A Senior Official in the Ministry said the Abhiyan is based on the '5C' model – Connect, Converse, Co-create, Contribute and Continue – which seeks to establish sustained engagement between generations.

He said Abhiyaan promotes connecting younger and older generations through community platforms and educational institutions, encouraging conversations and storytelling, undertaking joint activities, sharing knowledge and skills for community welfare, and continuing such engagement as a regular community-led practice rather than a one-time activity.

The Official said the Campaign encompasses twelve thematic areas, including *'30 Minutes Together', 'Teach Me – I'll Teach You', 'My Story, My India', 'Digital Dada-Dadi / Digital Saathi', 'Generation Health & Wellness' and 'Silver Skills – Seniors as Mentors'*.

These themes aim to promote companionship, preserve oral histories, enhance digital literacy, create awareness about cyber fraud, encourage health and wellness, and recognise senior citizens as mentors and knowledge contributors, he said.



Another major component of the initiative is **Vayo SAATHI** (Support, Awareness, Assistance, Training, Health and Inclusion), a digitally enabled volunteer initiative open to all citizens aged 18 years and above, including students, young professionals and institutions, he said.

Volunteers will act as friends, facilitators and connectors for senior citizens, supporting their social inclusion and well-being adding that interested citizens can register through the SCW SAMAVESH Portal or JEEVAN App and receive a Vayo SAATHI Certificate, the Official further said.

The Official informed the Handbook released during the programme provides a comprehensive guiding framework covering the objectives, implementation strategy, thematic activities and roles of States, Districts and community institutions in carrying forward the Abhiyan.

The MoUs signed with Shri Ram Chandra Mission and Adhyatma Vigyan Satsang Kendra, Jodhpur, will further strengthen efforts towards the holistic well-being of senior citizens through meditation, yoga, wellness programmes and intergenerational engagement activities, he added.

Through Vayo Samman Rashtriya Abhiyan, the Ministry seeks to build a stronger culture of respect, care, companionship and solidarity across generations. The Department invites citizens, educational institutions, universities, youth organisations, NGOs, Resident Welfare Associations and CSR partners to participate in the initiative and register as Vayo SAATHI volunteers.

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