Press Release from Social Welfare Department

Sikkim Participates in National-Level Deliberations on Social Justice and Empowerment; Showcases Best Practices and Recommends Measures for Strengthening Implementation

Shri Samdup Lepcha, Hon'ble Minister and Smt Sarika Pradhan, Secretary for Social Welfare and Women,Child , Sr. Citizen and Divyanjan Welfare Department participated in the two-day national-level deliberations organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India, on 18th and 19th November 2026.

The programme brought together Hon'ble Ministers and Secretaries from States and Union Territories to deliberate on key thematic areas concerning social justice, inclusion and empowerment, with a focus on sharing best practices, identifying implementation challenges and developing actionable strategies for strengthening existing programmes.

During the deliberations, the Sikkim delegation made presentations highlighting the State's initiatives and best practices under two important thematic areas, namely Prevention and Drug Demand Reduction under the Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan and Accessible Scholarships for Empowered Students.

The presentation on Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan highlighted the various initiatives undertaken by the State towards creating awareness on substance abuse, promoting preventive interventions, mobilising communities and engaging youth and educational institutions in the collective endeavour of building a drug-free society. It also showcased innovative approaches, field-level experiences and interdepartmental convergence in implementing the Abhiyaan. The presentation further outlined existing challenges, areas requiring focused intervention and suggestions for strengthening outreach, monitoring and effective implementation of the programme.

Similarly, the presentation on scholarship schemes highlighted the initiatives undertaken to facilitate access to educational scholarships for students, particularly those belonging to disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. It emphasised the importance of timely disbursement of scholarships, streamlined application and verification processes, improved awareness among beneficiaries, effective grievance redressal mechanisms and strengthening institutional coordination to ensure that eligible students are able to avail the benefits without procedural difficulties.

In addition to the above, the Hon'ble Minister and the Secretary actively participated in the Open House deliberations on the other two thematic areas, namely Early Intervention and Reduction of Disability Burden and Sugamya Bharat for Viksit Bharat. The discussions focused on strengthening early identification and timely intervention for persons with disabilities, improving access to appropriate support and rehabilitation services, and enhancing institutional mechanisms for their inclusion and empowerment. Under the Sugamya Bharat for Viksit Bharat theme, the deliberations emphasised the importance of accessibility and the creation of an inclusive environment through improved physical infrastructure, accessible public spaces and services, and barrier-free access to opportunities for persons with disabilities. The Sikkim delegation shared its perspectives and contributed to the discussions on strengthening existing interventions, addressing implementation challenges and identifying practical measures for ensuring greater inclusion, accessibility and improved quality of life for persons with disabilities.

The presentations and deliberations also incorporated feedback and recommendations for systemic improvements, with particular emphasis on addressing implementation gaps, simplifying processes, enhancing transparency and accountability, strengthening monitoring mechanisms and ensuring better delivery of benefits to the intended beneficiaries.

The deliberations provided an important platform for States and Union Territories to exchange experiences, learn from successful interventions and collectively identify practical solutions to challenges encountered in the implementation of various welfare programmes. The feedback and suggestions emerging from the sessions are expected to contribute towards developing more effective, inclusive and result-oriented action plans with clearly defined timelines.

A significant highlight of the programme was the presence and address of the Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, during the Plenary Session on 19th November 2026. The Hon'ble Prime Minister's address underscored the national commitment towards strengthening social justice, inclusion and empowerment, and the collective responsibility of States and Union Territories in ensuring effective delivery of welfare initiatives.

The participation of the Hon'ble Minister and the Secretary, Social Welfare Department and Women Child Sr Citizen and Divyanjan Welfare Department reaffirmed the Government of Sikkim's commitment to strengthening social welfare interventions, ensuring effective implementation of flagship programmes and promoting inclusive development, with special focus on the welfare and empowerment of vulnerable sections of society.