



# Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot Inaugurates “National Conference on Autism”

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Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot, Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment inaugurated a “National Conference on Autism” organized by The National Trust for the welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment here today. Ministers of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar and Shri Ramdas Athawale were also present. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was exchanged between The National Trust and Rotary Club in the field of Autism. Three publications of The National Trust were also released by Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot on the occasion.

Addressing on the occasion, Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot said that the persons affected by Autism face challenges in many areas of their lives and thus educating the public about Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and raising Autism awareness has been the focus of large scale initiatives in many countries. He awarded the talented and creative children living with Autism and wished them success in their career ahead. Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment regularly organizes Camps for distribution of all types of assistive devices to Divyangjans nationwide. He said that the National Trust has launched 10 schemes in November, 2015 for the empowerment and welfare of the Divyangjans. He hoped that the Conference will provide an excellent opportunity to obtain information about latest developments in education / skilling and inclusive living of persons with autism, apart from deliberations on latest research on medical aspects. It will also be an excellent forum to meet various parents, experts and professionals to interact on the best practices.

Shri Ramdas Athawale in his address dwelt upon many schemes for the welfare of Divyangjans initiated by the Government in past two years. He praised the efforts of The National Trust.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri Krishan Pal Gurjar opined that in the “Rights of Persons With Disabilities (RPWD) Bill passed by Parliament in December, 2016, the Disability has been defined based on an evolving and dynamic concept and the types of disabilities have been increased from existing 7 to 21.

Autism is a spectrum of complex neurological disorders that affect individuals in the areas of social interaction and communication. Several genes, in combination with environmental factors, may contribute to Autism. In India, 1 out of 89 children born are said to be living with Autism. It's symptoms include: Poor eye contact, Decreased social response; responses to their name, looking people, social smiles, Repetitive behaviors, Lack of expected language and social development, Decreased nonverbal communication and gestures. Autism is a lifelong disorder, There is currently no cure for autism, Early intervention may improve quality of life in these children. In accordance with the Constitution of India and Right of Persons with Disability Bill 2014, Several Government schemes and programmes can be availed by a person with autism, Mandatory to have disability certificate to avail benefits like travel concessions, health insurance, residential facilities, scholarships and financial incentives for self-employed.

The National Conference, which is organized during the World Autism Awareness month, is a part of the 3 days training programme on Autism being organized by the National Trust in collaboration with AIIMS, Delhi to train doctors on use of INCLEN and ISSA tools for issuance of Disability Certificate to persons with Autism. In 2007, the UN General Assembly declared 2<sup>nd</sup> April as World Autism Awareness Day (WAAD) and since 2008, 2<sup>nd</sup> April is being observed across the World as World Autism Awareness Day to increase awareness about Autism among general masses worldwide.

Eminent experts and professionals in Autism are taking part in the daylong conference which includes panel discussions on key issues related to persons with Autism like - Early detection and Intervention / Inclusive Education and College Education, Skilling and Employment and Supported and Independent Living.

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