

The important activities of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment during December, 2016, were as follows:-

1. The 61st Mahaparinirvan Diwas of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was observed on 06/12/2016 in the Parliament House Lawns. Hon'ble President of India, Hon'ble Prime Minister, Hon'ble Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Hon'ble Home Minister and other dignitaries paid floral tributes to Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. A large number of general public and other VIPs visited the Dr. Ambedkar National Memorial and Museum situated at 26, Alipur Road, Delhi, where Dr. Ambedkar had breathed his last.

2. The Hon'ble Finance Minister in his Budget Speech during 2016-17, had announced creation of a "Senior Citizens Welfare Fund" by utilizing unclaimed deposits remaining in the EPF/PPF Accounts, Insurance Schemes, Small Saving Schemes etc. The Department of Social Justice & Empowerment has proposed a Central Sector Scheme namely, "The Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-Living Devices" to senior citizens belonging to the BPL category. Letters were sent to Hon'ble Prime Minister and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister on 3rd and 4th January, 2017 respectively. Under the scheme, physical aids and devices such as walking sticks, elbow crutches, walkers, tripods, spectacles, hearing aids, wheel chairs etc. will be distributed free of cost to the needy and disadvantaged. The total cost of the Scheme will be Rs.478 crore for and upto the year 2019-20.

3. Regional meetings were held with Principal Secretaries of State Governments/Union Territories, Regional Resource Training Centres (RRTCs), National Institute of Social Defence and NIC at Delhi, Bengaluru and Guwahati on 08/12/2016, 12/12/2016 and 16/12/2016 respectively, to review policies and programmes related to senior citizens and drug abuse, as well as for promotion of cashless transaction.

4. Two important meetings and two General Body meetings were held under the Chairpersonship of Hon'ble Minister, Social Justice and Empowerment at Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi on 19/12/2016. State Ministers and Principal Secretaries of the States participated. The meetings held were :

- (i) Twenty third meeting of the Committee constituted to devise ways and means to curb offences of untouchability and atrocities against the members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and effective implementation of the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955 and the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989.
- (ii) Fourth meeting of the Central Advisory Committee under Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) to review the implementation of the scheme.

(iii) The General Body Meeting and the Governing Body Meeting of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation were held on 20/12/2016 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, Social Justice and Empowerment.

(iv) The 5th General Body Meeting and the 14th Governing Body Meeting of Babu Jagjivan Ram National Foundation were held on 21/12/2016 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister, Social Justice and Empowerment at Vigyan Bhawan Annexe, New Delhi.

5. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and National Scheduled Castes Finance Development Corporation (NSFDC), a public sector undertaking of the department, for the year 2016-17 was made effective from 08/12/2016 to promote economic development of the scheduled caste persons living below Double the Poverty Line limit.

6. The Ministry has been awarded the Website Quality Certificate on 23/12/2016 by the STQC Website Quality Certification Services, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Government of India. The website of the Ministry <http://socialjustice.nic.in> now meets the requirements of the Guidelines for Indian Government Websites.