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**Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DePwD) & Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) partner with Corporates to empower 3000 Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to secure promising livelihood opportunities**

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Mumbai: The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), in collaboration with the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India, organized a Roundtable Meet for Corporates to ‘Support, Activate and Build Assured Livelihoods (SABAL) for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) under CSR Actions’.

Dr. Vineet Rana, General Manager, National Handicapped Finance Development Corporation, DePwD, Government of India; Shri Jagannath Sahoo, President, SBI Foundation; Shri Rajendra Nimbalkar, IAS, Managing Director, Maharashtra Small Scale Industries Development Corporation Ltd., Mumbai; Shri Saumya Chaudhuri, CGM, IDBI Bank Ltd; Dr. Sunil Shukla, Director General, EDII; Dr. Raman Gujral, Director, Department of Projects (Corporate) at EDII, as well as senior officials from DePwD and CSR leaders from leading corporate entities attended this groundbreaking meet. The ‘Meet’ took up the agenda of sensitizing society at large and instituting interventions and measures that ensure the establishment of 3,000 new enterprises PwDs, including 1,500 technology-driven and 1,500 general enterprises.

This pivotal roundtable meeting brainstormed on creating a better world for PwDs through an effective synergy between government, corporates, and institutions. The discussions revolved around the specific objectives of ensuring empowerment of PwDs through sustainable enterprise creation; creating a set of best practices in the context of infrastructure, perception, environment, security, and other facilities to promote their complete inclusion in society; floating ways to ensure an integrative working environment; deciding on an inventory of business opportunities that PwDs could tap into to create own enterprises; aligning the project and its interventions with sustainable development goals and breaking the professional segregation in society that relegates disabled PwDs to lower-paying jobs.

Based on the discussions and takeaways, the participating corporates identified some primary areas of cooperation. Some of the activities identified to achieve the goal of creating 3000 PwD-led enterprises included: Awareness Campaign to Ensure Community Integration of PwDs; Immersive Life Skills for Adolescents with Disabilities; Sourcing Business Opportunities for PwDs; Sensitization workshops for PwDs; Credit Linkage Support; Entrepreneur Growth-cum-Counselling Programme (EGCP) to Support PwD-led Enterprises and Micro Skillpreneurship Development Programme (MSDP) to enable unemployed PwDs to set up their business.

Dr. Vineet Rana emphasized the pivotal role of NHFDC in empowering Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), stating, “Through NHFDC, we aim to facilitate financial development, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for PwDs in collaboration with EDII and corporate partners.”

Shri Jagannath Sahoo highlighted the collaborative efforts of SBI Foundation with EDII, stating, “SBI Foundation, in partnership with EDII, is committed to creating promising livelihood opportunities for differently-abled individuals through our collaborative ‘Support, Activate and Build Assured Livelihoods’ programme.” Shri Sahoo emphasized on the significance of equity and new possibilities for PwDs.

Shri Saumya Chaudhuri endorsed the role of IDBI Bank’s CSR wing, stating, “IDBI Bank, as part of its CSR initiatives, actively engages in sensitization workshops and credit linkage support aimed at fostering an inclusive environment where people from various echelons of society get multiple opportunities to thrive and prosper.”

A video was screened explaining the features of newly launched DePwD PM Daksh portal for skilling and employment of Divyangjan.

Dr. Sunil Shukla, opined, “For development process to deliver better outcomes, the approach has to be inclusive. Inclusive Development focusses on equity and social growth, which is important for any society. And, in this context, development opportunities for PwDs needs to be curated on high priority, on a regular basis. We need to ensure that the PwDs get suitably trained and handheld. It is also important to establish best practices at workplaces and at various levels of the social framework to foster equality and inclusivity at all levels.”

Dr. Raman Gujral, discussing the various projects undertaken by corporates to empower PwDs, said that EDII has so far 8,653 PwDs through 272 skill training programs, leading to the establishment of 1,247 enterprises. EDII houses the Centre for Empowerment of the Differently Aabled (CEDA), supported by the Department of Social Justice & Empowerment, Directorate of Social Defence, Gujarat State Handicapped (Divyang) Finance & Development Corporation, Government of Gujarat, on its campus.

A brainstorming session was held between the officials and corporate leaders present in the conference room. The one-hour long round table discussion included topics related to accessibility, aids and assistive devices, AI for PwDs, Job mapping, entrepreneurship opportunities and disability sensitization.

The meeting ended with vote of thanks and group photo.

#### About Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII)

The Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII), Ahmedabad was set up in 1983 as an autonomous and not-for-profit Institute with support of apex financial institutions – the IDBI Bank Ltd., IFCI Ltd., ICICI Bank Ltd. and State Bank of India (SBI). The Government of Gujarat pledged twenty-three acres of land on which stands the majestic and sprawling EDII Campus. EDII has been recognized as the CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Govt. of India. The Institute has also been listed as the Institute of National Importance by the Education Department, Govt. of Gujarat. EDII operates across the country through its seven regional offices and PAN India project offices. It has international affiliates in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar Vietnam, Uzbekistan and Rwanda. For more information visit: [www.ediindia.org](http://www.ediindia.org)

#### About Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India

Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, GoI was set up in May 2012 with the aims to facilitate empowerment and inclusion of the persons with disabilities and acts as a nodal agency to look after all development agenda of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan). Empowerment of persons with disabilities is an inter-disciplinary process, covering various aspects namely, prevention, early detection, intervention, education, health, vocational training, rehabilitation and social integration. The vision of the Department is to build an inclusive society in which equal opportunities are provided for the growth and development of Persons with Disabilities so that they can lead productive, safe and dignified lives.