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Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches Mission Suvidya to improve basic services at tribal hostels

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BHUBANESWAR: Chief minister Naveen Patnaik on Wednesday launched Mission Suvidya that aims to ensure quality in availing basic facilities like safe building, functional toilets, safe drinking water, proper kitchen and dining in the hostels managed by the SC/ST development department. For effective implementation of the mission, the department has signed two MoUs one with Quality Council of India (QCI) and another with Akshara Foundation, at the secretariat in presence of Naveen at the state secretariat.

“I am happy to launch Mission Suvidya that aims at bringing qualitative shift in accommodation facilities provided to students in the SC/ST hostels. The mission has a maximum laid down standard for assuring and sustaining quality with an objective to achieve ISO certification,” said an official

statement quoting Naveen.

According to the MoU, the QCI will conduct a comprehensive assessment and evaluation of all hostels under the department and help to improve the standard and quality of these hostels to achieve ISO certificate, said official sources.

Similarly, the Akshara Foundation, a well-known non-government organization working on quality education will collaborate with the department to improve learning outcomes of the students.

“The foundation has developed specific education programmes for school kids, classroom/hostel library programme and digital learning solutions. More than two lakh students at the primary sections in schools under SC/ST department will be benefitted from the move in the first phase,” said state SC/ST development minister Jagannath Saraka.

Around 5.7 lakh students studying in as many as 6500 tribal hostels. Mission Suvidya will provide a congenial atmosphere to all the inmates in these hostels. The mission will guarantee quality services in safety and security, health, hygiene and food provisions for the inmates which will help them to focus on studies.

Stating that the endeavor conforms to the objectives of the 5T initiative of the government, Naveen said he is hopeful that the move will have a multiplier effect in the overall quality of education in the state.

The move assumes significance in view of the criticisms faced by the state government over reports of teenage pregnancy from these tribal hostels. Official data in the department suggests that at least 17 cases of teenage pregnancy and 14 cases of mental harassment were reported from the schools and hostels managed by the state SC/ST development department during 2009-18.

On the occasion, a MoU was also signed between Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) and Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation of Odisha limited (TDCCOL) to ensure market linkages to various products produced by tribal artisans and tribal entrepreneurs in the state.