

State pursuing tribal status to Labana Community: Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal

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INVC,, Shimla,, State Government would be re-iterating its proposal to GOI for granting tribal status to Labana community by providing specific ethnographic evidence to substantiate the demand. This was stated by Prof. Prem Kumar Dhumal, Chief Minister, while addressing the 10th Meeting of HP Labana Welfare Board, held here under his Chairmanship, today. Chief Minister said that the State had already raised the matter of granting Tribal Status to Labana Community with the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs which would be reiterated with the quarter concerned and efforts made to get the community enlisted in the Scheduled Tribe Community. He said that the State had already included the community in the Other Backward Classes list and all benefits were available to the eligible members of the community. He said that there were 49 communities enlisted under OBC and Labana was one of them. He said that complete and balanced development of the State could be ensured with the speedy development of all the communities and State Government was making concerted efforts to achieve the objective. He said that members of the OBC were being provided 18 percent reservation in direct class III and IV categories and 12 percent in Class I and II categories so that maximum number of applicants could be given employment. He said that with a view to make maximum people available to avail of various benefits the creamy layer criteria in income had been enhanced from Rs. 2.5 lakh to Rs. 4.5 lakh. Prof. Dhumal said that the State Government was spending Rs. 11 crore during current financial year over Health Insurance Scheme launched for the IRDP families by providing them smart cards thereby making them eligible to avail health insurance cover of upto Rs. 30,000 on getting admitted as indoor patient in the state owned hospitals and Rs. 1.75 lakh for critical ailments. He advised the members of the community to propagate the scheme amongst the masses so that maximum number of people were benefitted. He said that there were several other schemes under implementation which were not being availed by many people for want of knowledge wherein the awakened society needed to lend its supportive hand. He urged for people's active participation in educating the society about all such schemes so that the objective of the scheme was obtained to the optimum. He directed the authorities to keep members of the community posted of the status of their grievance so that they could further intimate the community of the welfare measures being initiated by the State Government. He also advised the department to bring out a complete compendium of the welfare schemes and circulate the same amongst the targeted groups. Smt. Sarveen Chaudhary, Social Justice and Empowerment Minister, also welcomed the Chief Minister and said that the state had constituted Labana Welfare Board with the objective to take stock of their genuine grievances by interacting to them face to face. She said that Labana happened to be part of the OBC and all benefits were uniformly available to them. She said that with the increase in the creamy layer criteria from Rs. 2.5 lakh to Rs. 4.5 lakh more families were now eligible to draw various benefits. She said that additionally education loan were also available to the students of the community at low rate of interest. She appealed to the members of the community to take benefit of all such schemes and strengthen their socio-economic status. Shri Surat Naik, President, Labana Welfare Association, thanked Chief Minister for constitution of the Board and providing fair representation to all the sections of the society. He assured Chief Minister that all cooperation would be extended to the state government by the community. Shri Maneesh Garg, Director of Social Justice and Empowerment, welcomed the Chief Minister and conducted the proceedings of the meeting. He apprised the Board of the status of their grievances and assured that remaining pending issues would also be resolved on priority. He also proposed vote of thanks. Shri S.Roy, Additional Chief Secretary, Principal Secretaries, Secretaries, Heads of the Department, Deputy Commissioners, Non-Official Members, other senior officers were present in the meeting.

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