

JAIPUR REPORT

Centre for Mass Communication, Rajasthan University and AMIC-India have been continuing with their endeavor to sensitize the journalism community and the media students about the coverage of the rural themes. This effort to build understanding about the grassroots journalism has been successful in bringing awareness and awakening about development and related issues.

The fifth consecutive workshop on Rural Journalism was organized in Poddar Institute Of Management from 31 January-4 February, 2006 in collaboration with FREDRICH EBERT FOUNDATION, GERMANY. Mr. Sardar Jasbir Singh, Chairman, Rajasthan State Minority's Commission was invited as the Chief Guest to the inaugural ceremony of the workshop.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Singh said that journalism calls for respecting the public sentiments. The dream of a developed India shall remain unfulfilled if media fails to highlight the plight of common masses, he added.

Veteran journalist Dr Manohar Prabhakar, correspondent, The Tribune suggested several commandments for a journalist to enrich his language and knowledge. In this session Ms Abha Sharma, correspondent, Deccan Herald said that rural reporting is the backbone of journalism.

Media Consultant of FES Mr. Rajeshwar Dayal said that three fourths of the Indian population, living in villages demands more media attention to enjoy the fruits of development. Ms. Nandini Sahai, AMIC India representative discussed the real challenges of rural journalism and substantiated her arguments about the need for development journalism with research figures. She also interacted with the participants in the first technical session and agreed that a development journalist, one need not be an activist.

Nevertheless creativity, sensitivity and honesty of a journalist earn utmost credibility in media. Dr Manoj Pataria, Senior Scientist, DST, New Delhi presented an overview of science journalism in India. He deliberated on the art and science of journalism.

On the second day of the workshop Shri. Rajendra Bohra, Resident Editor, Dainik Bhaskar sought journalist's attention towards punctuality and commitment for success in this field. He was of the view that a journalist should have simple language but powerful expressions in order to have an impact.

Dr Pratibha Jain, former principal of Maharani College, Jaipur discussed women issues and shared participant's perception towards coverage of women issues in newspaper. Her comments on the presentations of each of the participant classified the issues media needs to pay attention.

Dr Shipra Mathur, News Editor News Today, Jaipur talked about the importance of communication in personal and professional life. She insisted that a journalist earn identity out of his/her work. Therefore the work communicates the worth of the person. In the fourth technical session, Dr Surendra Kataria, Asst. Professor Public Administration, Bikaner explained and critically appreciated government's rural development schemes.

Following the precedent set by the earlier workshops, a trip to nearby village Srisuratpura by the participants made them closely observe the functioning of an NGO in Chaksu village, 35 kms away from Jaipur. The participants could sense the plight of 40 scheduled class families they met here. The pitiable living conditions and lack of basic amenities exemplified the real rural Indian life. The women of this village have dreams to open their own evening school and seek incentive from government for such ventures.

After the first hand experience of this struggling face of India, non-existent in media, the group returned with a strong message.

In the first session of the fourth day Ms. Abha Ojha, lecturer NSS, OTS, Jaipur, spoke about the much debated and revolutionary law of 'Right to Information'. Dr. Sanjeev Bhanawat discussed about the language in media and the common mistakes in media reports.

In the consecutive session talking on the child issues Dr. Manohar Prabhakar said that media should highlight the cases of child exploitation and lead the campaign against such incidents.

The final days report writing and rural journalism remained the focus themes. Rajkumar Vyas of Dainik Bhaskar motivated the participants to inculcate reading habits and Sh. Om Prakash Sharma, producer of Krishi Darshan, Doordarshan, discussed the technical skills and visual effects in rural programs.

Dr. Amar Singh Rathore, Director DIPR said that reading and language could make or unmake a journalist. In the valediction ceremony Dr. Nand Bhardwaj, Director Doordarshan, Jaipur said that as the public broadcasters, Doordarshan and All India Radio have always catered to the needs of rural audience.

Resident Editor, Dainik Navjyoti, Jaipur felt need for rural sensitization of the entire journalist to achieve the goals of development. Sh. S.B. Gandhi, Senior Deputy General Manager, Northeast Railways expressed his discontent over urban orientation of the mainstream newspapers. On the last day of the workshop students summarized their experiences in their own publication "Pehli Duniya". The feedback of the participants revealed that the workshop proved a total success and the beneficiaries were motivated enough to pursue rural journalism with dedication and sincerity.