

Decentralisation focus of Purulia workshop on PRIs

by spjs students

PURULIA, 3 MARCH: Understanding the policies of decentralisation for better implementation of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) was the topic of discussion at the workshop on 'Evaluation of the Curriculum prepared on Panchayati Raj Institution,' held at Bhandarpura - Chipida Gram Panchayat Hall in Purulia district, West Bengal, between 26 February and 1 March, 2013. Jointly organised by the Centre for Environmental and Socio-economic Regeneration (CESR) and the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and Technical Education (CREATE), Lucknow, and supported by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), New Delhi, the workshop saw local representatives of PRI interact with trainers, mainly local body leaders and civil society functionaries, for the effective functioning of local self-governance. The 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India has empowered the Panchayats to take decisions on local problems. However, awareness, knowledge and education are still below standard in rural India. In this context, the decision to design a curriculum to guide the trainers on effective implementation of PRI programmes and activities, was taken during the annual Joint Staff Development Programme (JSDP) in 2007, organised by KALYAN, Ramakrishna Mission and KAS at Darjeeling. The purpose was to include even people from the grass-root level to participate in the decision making processes affecting their daily lives. After nearly five years of meticu-



(On the dais, from left to right) ~ Mr Swapan Mullick, SPJS, Mr A K Pati, CESR, Mr Tandon, CREATE. In Purulia.

lous research, countless discussions and deliberations with partners, other NGOs and experts in the field, a training manual was finally scripted. The workshop in Purulia began with a brief introduction by Mr A K Pati, Chairman, CESR, and followed by a unique interactive session between the participants. The following sessions were based on the 15-module training curriculum designed by Vishwa Yuvak Kendra. Some of the modules discussed over the course of the workshop were on the 'evolution of PRI as a Constitutional entity,' thoughts on Panchayati Raj by eminent leaders like M K Gandhi, B R Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru and others,' 'democratic decentralisation,'

'present status of decentralisation of power,' 'social and gender justice' and 'local body finance.' Each of the sessions of the workshop was followed by a question and answer round where the feedback of the participants, divided among four groups, were collected and evaluated for future use. A series of pilot workshops has already been conducted by KAS and CREATE, on PRI Curriculum Implementation and Evaluation, in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh, with West Bengal being the last stop. The collective evaluation and feedback from these workshops will be analysed and interpreted as to what extent has the workshops benefited the participants.

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