

## Exploring Challenges & Opportunities through Outreach Programme in Remote Districts of MP

**Prabal Roy<sup>1</sup>, Dinesh Kumar Soni<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Coordinator, Dr. C.V.Raman Center for Science Communication, Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

<sup>2</sup>Coordinator, CRIG-AGU, Rabindranath Tagore University, Bhopal (M.P.) India.

### I INTRODUCTION

National Council for Science & Technology Communication (NCSTC), DST, Govt of India, had sanctioned a project titled 'Mission-Eco-Next' to RNTU

for execution in 5 backward districts of MP. The districts were Raisen, Vidisha, Khandwa, Rajgarh & Singrauli which were enlisted under less endowed region (LER) of Govt. The duration for completion of the project in 5 districts was 1 (One) year.

#### Programme at a glance:

Districts	Date	Talent Hunt	Date	Eco-Next Training
Raisen	23 Dec '21	256	18-22 Jan '22	45
Vidisha	18 Feb '22	340	8-12 March '22	45
Khandwa	28 June '22	257	19-23 July '22	43
Rajgarh	30 July '22	259	29Oct- 2Nov '22	44
Singrauli	20 Nov '22	220	26-30 Dec '22	42

### II OBJECTIVE OF THIS PROJECT REPORT

The objective of this report is to explore the challenges & opportunities found or faced while executing the project in the backward districts of MP.

The challenges faced are listed below: -

- (a) **Knowledge Level:** - under the project, we had to select 45 participants from each district for the 5 days Eco-next Training Programme. Hence we used to conduct the screening test through a Written 'Talent Hunt' exam for around 250/300 students in each of the district. It is revealed from those talent hunt exam that the general knowledge level and primary science awareness in those areas are very poor, among the students and the teachers as well.
- (b) **Social challenge:** - We faced a lot of difficulty in inducting the selected girl candidates to participate in the 5 day's free residential training programme. The parents did not allowed the girl candidates to take part in the free training programme inspite of assuring them full safety & security. That shows the social & cultural backwardness among the parents community in these areas.
- (c) **Geographical Challenge:** - Some of the training Sites/ Venues (viz Singrauli) were located in the areas which are not well connected by railways. Even the hilly terrain Roads were very risky for the vehicles to reach the destination site. Night journey was not possible at all.
- (d) **Infrastructural Problem** - In most of the training sites in the backward districts, the minimum facilities viz. a training hall, audio-visual equipment's,

computer labs, boarding & lodging arrangements for the participants or resource persons were not available. We had to somehow manage with the help from other organizations.

- (e) **Financial Constraints:** - The allocation of fund under each head of expenditure was so limited that some time it becomes very difficult to arrange within the sanctioned limit. The local bodies viz : the schools, DIETs have also no financial power or provision to help in case of emergency need for such training programme at the site.
- (f) **Transportation:** Where residential training programme could not be arranged due to non availability of camping/ lodging facility, we faced a big problem in daily to & fro transportation for the 50 participants from their residence to the training venue because of lack of local transportation facility.

### III MY SUGGESTIONS/OBSERVATIONS

- (a) **Implementation of various govt. schemes:** There are various govt. schemes viz on primary health, sanitation & cleanliness, self-employment, skill development for the youth, scientific awareness, demystify the myths & beliefs, science behind the miracles etc. We, from RNTU can organise awareness & training programmes on those schemes in the remote districts of MP regularly.
- (b) **Financial assistance to the local staff:** - The state govt. should make some provision for paying monetary incentives to the local staff members who participate or support in conduction of such programs in order to encourage them.

- (c) **Infrastructural Improvement:** - It is suggested that the local nodal schools of remote districts may be provided with a training hall, audio-video equipments, Computer Lab, Lodging & boarding facility, etc. for the participants for smooth conduction of the Training programmes.
- (d) **Local Transportation facility:** - The Local authority should introduce the local transportation facility for the convenience of the participants for regularly attending the training programme venue from their residence & return back to their home.
- (e) **Language classes:-** Special language & communication class may be conducted for the students as well as teachers to improve their communication skill.
- (f) **Marketing Opportunities** - While conducting these training/awareness programmes in various districts of MP, we have come across many H.S. Students who will seek admission in HEI next for pursuing higher studies. During the training programme the HS students were also given exposure to the facilities of RNTU/AGU so that they choose AGUs for admission. This opportunity was evident in our past experiences.
- (g) **Geographical location:-** It is necessary to connect all the district headquarters by good roads so that the remote sites can be reached easily by Road / Rail.

#### IV CONCLUSION

In view of the above challenges and observations, it is felt that there is lot of opportunities for AISECT to take up such awareness / training programmes in the various districts of MP. These programmes would not only uplift the social & educational standards in those remote & rural areas but will also explore their participation in AISECT through various schemes for higher education.