

CONFERENCE

Fifth Media *Chaupal* held in Haridwar

The fifth media chaupal was held in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. On the initiative of an NGO, 'Spandan', the event was organized with collaboration from the Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalya, Divya Prem Sewa Mission, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources, India Water Portal, and the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Hindi University.

Around 350 journalists, scholars, scientists, philosophers, academicians and students from all around the country participated in the fifth chaupal whose theme was 'Science, Development & Media'.

In his welcome speech, former chief minister of Uttarakhand, Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishankh' applauded the vision of the media chaupal and emphasized the importance of action more than just mere words. He said, 'Media needs to understand its importance, because you never know, which topic or coverage could change the life of a person.' He said that the media, the fourth pillar of the country, needs to address the real issues of the society.

Dr Manoj Patariya, Director, CSIR-National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources (CSIR-NISCAIR) in his address said that media has a big role to play — science and media come together and form a bridge of knowledge which is vital for everyone. For the students, he stated that social media is enjoying a lot of popularity and it has a huge value, it is important to take it along and use it for benefits.

Next, in his address, Shri Govindacharya talked about development and said that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is not a perfect way to understand development. According to him, development is when every child in the country gets appropriate amount of nutrition and the happiness index is rated higher than the GDP. He also said that development should not be human-centered. Development should include trees, animals, birds and all

the other living beings because if we do not consider their welfare, we will end up destroying the environment and ultimately ourselves too.

The inaugural session was followed by a discussion on the science of happiness. Mr Anurag (senior journalist and TV anchor at Lok Sabha TV) mediated the discussion. The first speaker, His holiness, Bhakti Nishkam Shant Swami (PhD in medical engineering) said that the media is not putting enough efforts towards promoting science and it needs to improve the science reporting standards. He said that in order to bring happiness in the lives of people, it is necessary to improve the education levels.

The next speaker, His holiness Bhakti Vigyaan Muni said that physics and chemistry can't explain 'life'. 'Life is above mechanical and chemical reactions,' he said.

Prof. Rameshwar Pankaj said that 90% of the scientists are not working for the welfare of the society as they are more concentrated on military sciences. He said that a good journalist is one who adds positivity in most of the aspects of his work.

In the third session the topic of discussion was 'Is professionalism/expertise important?' Mr Ritesh Pathak (Editor, Hindi Yojna) moderated the session and Mr Anil Pandey (Head, Delhi Union of Journalists) was the first one to speak. He started off by questioning the syllabus and the content of students studying journalism and mass communication. He felt that topics like Indian economy, history and culture should be a must for students who wish to make a mark in this field.

Mr Jaydeep Karnik said that while deciding the viewership through TRPs is a misleading practice in electronic media, it is very clear and easy to identify the audience in digital/social media. Mr Anil Pandey said that, 'Editors fear experimenting and are not confident about putting brave news in the front of the public as they fear that their media houses might collapse.' Mr Keshav (India Water Portal) said that environment today may not be a great issue of concern but it will be by the next 15 years; because our media waits for the situation to get worse to talk about it in the mainstream.

On the second day of the fifth media chaupal, Mr Baldev Bhai Sharma (Chairman, National Book Trust, India) stressed that development of humans is possible only through the development of

humanity. He said that it is the responsibility of the media to spread the message of humanity because media is a hope for better society.

While Prof. Kusum Lata Kedia (Economist) explained the role and importance of geo-politics and geo-economics in our country, Dr Sukhnandan Singh (HOD, Dept of Communication, DSVV, Haridwar) shared his views on how farmers can be encouraged to go in for organic and profitable farming.

Towards the final session of the chaupal, students and research scholars from different universities of India presented abstracts of their research papers on topics like dissemination of information regarding Jan Dhan Yojna among the people of slums and role of media in agricultural productivity. These research works were further elaborated by panelists like Ms Meenakshi Arora, Prof. Sukhnandan Singh, Ms. Kumkum and Mr Baldev Bhai Sharma.



Former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal delivering the opening address