

Need for community development programmes stressed

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Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences Vice-Chancellor Chandrashekar Shetty today stressed the need for implementing community development programmes having greater social acceptability and accountability to effectively tackle the socio-economic problems facing the country.

He said that for the progress of any country, priority for development programmes in education and health should be provided so that they first reach the poor. "Social acceptability and accountability is the deciding factor for the success of any community development project", he stated after inaugurating a "South Asian dialogue on poverty and health" organised here jointly by the World Health Organisation, International Poverty and Health Network Advisory Group and the Community Health Cell.

Dr Shetty stressed the need for inclusion of character development programmes in higher education so that all sections of the society play a crucial role in solving the socio-economic problems of the country. He mooted the idea



From left to right: Dr R Narasimha, director, NIAS, Dr Robert Kim Farley, WR-India representative, Dr Chandrashekar Shetty, Vice-Chancellor, RGUHS, Dr C M Francis, consultant, Community Health Cell, Mr John Martin, WHO-HSD representative at the inaugural session of "South Asian dialogue on poverty and health" in Bangalore on Tuesday. DH photo

of an integrated health, education and social-service oriented project for poverty alleviation.

National Institute of Advanced

Studies Director Roddam Narasimha said that in spite of the progress made in science and technology it was ironical that a large section of the society were still de-

prived of proper healthcare and access to education.

Mr Abhijit Sen Gupta, secretary, Department of Health and Family

Welfare said that equal attention should be paid to all regions during implementation of developmental projects. He said while there were a number of non-governmental organisations working in South Karnataka, very few NGOs worked from the districts in north Karnataka.

In his keynote address, Prof Debabar Banerji, from the New Delhi-based Nucleus for Health Policies and Programmes suggested decentralisation of health programmes to the village level and political action for devolving power to the people for effectively solving the problem of providing medical relief to the poor. He further suggested the integration of family planning and other health departments and strengthening education, training and research capabilities of health administrators for improvement in the health sector.

The participants will deliberate on socio-economic deprivation and poverty in developing countries for the next three days and submit a draft action plan to State and Central governments besides the World Health Organisation for action. 60 participants from the SAARC countries, USA, UK and other countries are participating.