

Legal training programme to forest officials



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Kawal Deep Kour 12 March 2013 Updated 13 Mar 6423 views

A Capacity Building Legal Training Programme 'Hunting the Hunters' for the benefit of the staff of Assam State Forest Department was organised by Tiger Trust from 8-10 March, 2013 at Don Bosco Institute, Guwahati. The said programme is sponsored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tiger Trust was founded by late Sh. Kailash Sankhla who was the Chief Wildlife Warden of Rajasthan. Revered till this day as the 'Tiger Man,' protection and preservation of the species was a passion with him. The basic objective of Tiger Trust is to accomplish his mission to save and conserve the tiger and his habitat.

The emphasis of the present training programme was discussion on pending wildlife cases to enable the mid level forest officials identify loopholes while preparing a case. It is to be noted that the conviction rate is abysmally low for wildlife crimes, around 1-2%. The lack of proper presentation of facts by the forest officials who are often unacquainted with legal provisions while preparing a case is cited as a significant deficiency. It has been the constant endeavour of the Trust, with the assistance of specialised faculty like lawyers, judicial members, police officers, forensic specialists and all other important stakeholders to acquaint the forest staff on the procedures and formalities of case preparation and present it successfully in the Court through the prosecution. Apart, the participants were also enlightened on the various aspects of conducting proper investigations in addition to inputs on proper collection and packaging of the sample for accurate forensic results- invaluable in strengthening the case in a Court of Law.

Speaking on the occasion, Sh.R.P.Agarwalla, Addl.PCCF and Mission Director, Bamboo Mission, Guwahati was much appreciative of the initiative of Tiger Trust. He asked the trainees to utilise the opportunity and ensure its application in the field. Echoing him, the Addl.PCCF(Administration and Vigilance), Sh.D.Mathur, stressed on the imperative of legal orientation of the forest staff to ensure effective prosecution. He stressed on the need of such specialised training for the forest personnel. Sh.B.B.Dhar, Addl.PCCF(Legal) also welcomed the workshop which he expressed would facilitate not only capacity building but also boost the morale of the forest officers. The participants were much benefited by the insights of the resource faculty, which included Sh.B.B.Chettri, SP Karbi Anglong, Sh.B.B.Gogoi, Additional Prosecutor, Guwahati High Court and Sh.Manas Das, Forensic Scientist from the Forensic Research Laboratory at Kahilipara, Guwahati.

Till date, Tiger Trust has trained more than 1500 forest staff in various parts of the country. Ms. Anjana Gosain and Mr.M.S. Ahluwalia, both practising lawyers in Delhi are the forces behind the programme. The participants were much appreciative of the teaching methodology and the valuable inputs that they received during the two-day programme and stressed on the need of conducting such legal orientation programmes with increasing frequency in the future.

Kawal Deep Kour

Reserach Scholar, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati.

BY KAWAL DEEP KOUR

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