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Press Release

Empowering the Grassroots: Day Two of Leadership & Management Development Program Illuminates the Path of Technology and Rural Transformation

In an ambitious stride towards sculpting the vision of *Viksit Bharat* through robust local self-governance, the Leadership and Management Development Program (MDP), being held at the hallowed grounds of IIT (ISM) Dhanbad under the aegis of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj and the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, entered its intellectually invigorating second day on Tuesday.

The ongoing five-day residential MDP being conduct under the leadership of Prof. Rajni Singh, Dean of Corporate Communications as it's Coordinator has convened a distinguished cohort of **47 elected representatives and key functionaries** of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) hailing from five culturally and geographically diverse states—Tamil Nadu, Odisha, West Bengal, Bihar, and Jharkhand. These torchbearers of decentralized governance have gathered with a shared purpose: to augment their leadership potential and managerial efficacy for fostering inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development in the rural heartlands of the nation.

The proceedings of **Day Two** unfolded within the technologically-empowered precincts of the **Smart Classroom at TEMiN, i2h Building**, where deliberations centered on **Technology Integration and Rural Management**—pivotal pillars in the transformative architecture of rural empowerment.

The day's intellectual odyssey commenced with a profoundly insightful and panoramic exposition by **Prof. Dheeraj Kumar**, Deputy Director of IIT (ISM), whose oration unravelled the intricate tapestry of the **startup ecosystem**, with particular emphasis on the organizational nuances of **Section 8 companies**—the not-for-profit entities catalyzing socio-economic rejuvenation. Prof. Kumar, who also helms three such Section 8 institutions—**TEXMiN, ACIC, and NVCTI**—elucidated upon the dynamic interplay between Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives and grassroots development, drawing from lived experiences and institutional case studies. His address not only informed but also inspired, offering a roadmap for leveraging entrepreneurial ventures in service of rural upliftment.

The baton of erudition was then gracefully passed to **Shri Kunal Kumar**, Chief Manager of the State Bank of India, who conducted a lucid and compelling discourse on **Rural Banking and Financial Inclusion**. Shri Kumar underscored the indispensable role of rural banking frameworks in nurturing the financial autonomy of PRIs and catalyzing rural development through access to capital, credit, and institutional support.

Further enriching the academic mosaic of the day, **Prof. Esha Saha** from the Department of Management Studies and Industrial Engineering imparted an enlightening session on **Technology Adoption in Rural Healthcare**, highlighting the criticality of digital tools and innovation in bridging the healthcare divide and advancing well-being in underserved regions.

The day's capstone was marked by a session from **Dr. Dhiraj Kumar**, Horticulture Officer at IIT (ISM), whose comprehensive discussion spanned **Irrigation, Rural Livelihoods, and Agricultural Development Projects**—foundational domains in the agrarian ecosystem that underpin the livelihood security and economic stability of rural India.

As the program unfolds, **Day Three** promises further pedagogic richness with focused modules on **Project Management and Monitoring**, and sessions by acclaimed faculty members including **Prof. Shashank Bansal, Prof. Himanshu Gupta, Ms. Deepika A Bara, and Prof. G.S. Pathak**, who will delve into themes such as Time Value of Projects, Role of Gram Panchayats in LSDG 2030, and Team Leadership.

This monumental collaboration between **IIT (ISM)** and the **Ministry of Panchayati Raj** is more than a convergence of academia and governance—it is a clarion call for decentralized leadership driven by knowledge, empathy, and innovation. With its century-old legacy of excellence and an unwavering commitment to national progress, IIT (ISM) is proud to be the crucible where theory meets praxis in the service of *Gram Swaraj*.

Indeed, this initiative is not merely an academic exercise, but a resounding affirmation of the Government's steadfast commitment to capacitate and empower those at the helm of grassroots governance—laying the groundwork for a **self-reliant, just, and prosperous India**.

Rajni Singh

Dean (Corporate Communications)