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## Jharkhand Judicial Academy Hosts Training Session On Vulnerable

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Jharkhand Judicial Academy on April 12 conducted a specialized course of training on "**Vulnerable Witness Protection and Infrastructure Development**," as per the directions of the Supreme Court given in ***Smruti Tukaram Badade***.

The session was chaired by **Justice Gita Mittal, Former Chief Justice, Jammu & Kashmir High Court, and Chairperson of Vulnerable Witness Committee, Supreme Court, and National VWDC Training Committee**. She urged mainstreaming the spirit of inclusivity, dignity, and equality while dealing with vulnerable witnesses, especially the marginalized.

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Justice Mittal underscored that the construction of physical infrastructure alone is incomplete unless it is followed by the values of compassion and safety. She also valued the contribution of engineers and architects in converting available courtrooms to VWDCs, particularly in districts where there is an issue of land availability.

**Justice Ananda Sen, Jharkhand High Court Judge and the VWDC High Court Committee Chairperson**, delivered the inaugural speech, emphasizing the increasing trend towards hostile witnesses during criminal trials. He termed it a serious handicap in securing convictions and attributed the same to witnesses' vulnerability which is often persuaded or intimidated by powerful accused persons.

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Justice Sen pointed out that even with investigative lapses, witness intimidation is a serious issue and urged active use of the Witness Protection Scheme, 2018. He stated that the scheme classifies witnesses based on threat perception into three categories—Category A (threat to life), Category B (threat to safety, reputation, or property), and Category C (risk of harassment or intimidation).

**Justice Anil Kumar Choudhary, Member of the VWDC Committee, High Court of Jharkhand**, also participated in the function, which was also boosted with visual presentations from Delhi courts, model Vulnerable Witness Deposition Centres, as a working model to be emulated in other districts of Jharkhand. These visual demonstrations provided insight into how simple modifications, when done with empathy and purpose, can transform witness experiences in trial processes.

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The event concluded with a call for a holistic approach to witness protection, combining legal reforms, administrative efforts, infrastructural innovation, and empathetic judicial conduct. The participants acknowledged that safeguarding the dignity, privacy, and psychological well-being of vulnerable witnesses is critical to maintaining the integrity of the criminal justice system.

The event was attended by Sri Nikesh Kumar Sinha, Registrar Judicial, High Court of Jharkhand and Nodal Officer, VWDC; Shri Rajesh Sharan Singh, Principal Secretary-cum-Legal Remembrancer, Law (Judicial) Department; Shri Satyakam Priyadarshi, Director-in-Charge, Judicial Academy, Jharkhand; Sri Pankaj Kumar, Chief Engineer, Building Construction Department, as well as Registry members, judicial officers, police officers, and legal aid lawyers.

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A large number of judicial and police officers, legal aid lawyers, and engineers also participated through the virtual medium.

The stage was managed by Sri Amikar Parwar, Administrative Officer, Judicial Academy, Jharkhand, and the vote of thanks was delivered by Shri Satyakam Priyadarshi.