



Wednesday, July 5, 2006, Bhopal



## PACS NREGA WEEK

JULY 3 TO JULY 9, 2006

## PACS NREGA Week There Is Hope, But You Have To Look For It!

There is no point in expecting people to escape out of their skin. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) is characterised by good intentions, but wishes never become horses for anybody to ride. In our country, decades after independence, there has always been consistent noise of the need, on the part of the government, to eradicate rural unemployment. Indira Gandhi's *Garibi Hatao* and Rajiv's *Rozgar Yojana* have taken a new avatar now as the NREGS, a scheme (atleast this is what they mouth) for the 'aam admi' (ordinary man).

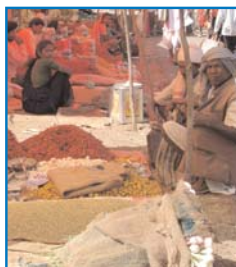
The NREGS is modelled on the plan introduced in Maharashtra decades ago by the then Chief Minister, Vasant Naik. However, there is one significant element about the NREGS that is still missing: it does not even attempt to reveal why many rural employment schemes of the past have failed of their purpose. The catch had always been in the *netas* and *babus* implementing these schemes, utilising them more for making money than for finding income for the rural folk engaged in it.

Usually, this is how most schemes have worked in our country: the bureaucracy-politician nexus pocketed most of the funds allotted; the beneficiary got less than the daily minimum wage. He did not mind it simply because he was not asked to put out any real work (no more back-breaking work in the farm!). The obvious net result was food-for-work never created any assets, while farms began suffering shortage of hands.

Then there are the increasingly strident protests against the need to avoid muster roll monstrosities, something that the PACS NREGA Week campaign is beginning to unravel. In the Maharashtra scheme, names of people long dead were found in the registers. And those who were physically present got a pittance. They did not complain because they got something and did not mind sharing in the spoils of the business with officials and their minions even with the lowest shares, which points to the need to put in place stringent penalties against truancy in the working of the scheme.

There is an interesting aspect on the financial side which has to be mentioned here: the Ministry of Small Scale Industries and Agro Rural Industries has drafted development schemes that can be started with a seed capital of less than Rs 1 lakh. Under NREGS, one member in each family would get Rs 60 daily (on an average) for 100 days making a total of Rs 6,000 which, capitalised at 6 per cent per annum, would provide Rs 1 lakh. Hence, if the money to be sunk by the government in NREGS is given to each person as venture capital, it could transform the rural scene without any administrative expense!

Of course, as in most things, there could still be room for corruption in the interaction between, say, the inspectors on the one side and the tiny sector entrepreneur under the new dispensation. That may still be amenable to rectification but the real rub would lie in the identification of ventures which the potential rural entrepreneur would at all be able to tackle.





## NREGA Week Field Reports

### Mahila Samiti, Chhatarpur

Mahila Samiti held 2 sammelan's, one at Dharadi panchayat and the other at Laloni panchayat of Ishanagar block of Chhatarpur district.

Some key finding that came out from these intense discussions have been summarised as follows:

- ▶ Weather continues to play spoil sport, with most planned activities having to be either pre-poned or postponed because of difficulty in reaching villages or communicating with workers and field staff on phone or email. In dire circumstances, some CSOs also are having to revisit their plans to ensure that only the most important and practical activities are carried out without disrupting people already busy with sowing and planting.

- ▶ **Very interestingly, widows applying for work are told to bring along a man if they want work!**

- ▶ Women are being given work for 2-3 days, and then are thrown out- quite literally!

- ▶ Work is being given WITHOUT any job card issued to applicants.

- ▶ In Dharadi, job cards are yet to be made or distributed.

- ▶ In laloni, 250 job cards were made/ distributed today, but most- if not all- are without photos, signatures or numbers.

- ▶ In a majority of cases, applicants have been bluntly told "*photo khichwa lao, iske liye paisa-waisa nahin milega* (go get your own photo done; you will not receive any money for it)".

- ▶ People who are 'close' to the sarpanch (in other words, his lackeys, hangers-on and flunkey's), demand Rs 200 from potential applicants for 'helping' to get their job cards made.

- ▶ **Women who have been given work are being paid @ Rs 55 per day, and to add insult to injury, Rs 5 are being deducted from their wages every day for 'facilities provided' at the work site!**

- ▶ Many women are being denied work or are simply thrown out just because they are not able to carry heavy weights or do extreme labour that men would otherwise have done. Just to deny women work, this strategy is emerging as a very commonly used ploy across all NREGA districts so far.

- ▶ **In Laloni, work has actually been given to a contractor on -what else- contract!**

- ▶ Women in Laloni have been bluntly refused work. Surprised?

- ▶ In the 5 panchayats covered so far during the NREGA





Week campaign, the posters produced have been used for the capacity building of communities. Most people in villages have only heard of the scheme, but have no idea about its various components that they can access for their benefit. This is where the posters are being very useful.

▶ In Gadhera, the panchayat secretary says that while money has been deposited in the bank, it is yet to be distributed because of 'internal' (read caste) problems. Thus, no work has been initiated so far, no job cards made and right now, no one's in any great hurry to begin the process at all.

▶ **When the Upsarpanch and sarpanch were asked about the work carried out so far by the panchayat, it was found that the panchayat cheque book showed payments worth Rs 6 lakhs in 20 wards, while no work has actually been done!**

▶ **Similarly, while the panchayat records showed that 3 hand pumps have been installed in the village, the reality is that only one has been installed so far. So where have the rest of the funds gone to?**

▶ When the secretary was given the format (Format 2) for filling up, he returned it blank without any information having been filled up. He has, in other words, challenged the CSO to gather the information in any way it deems fit. He, for one, will not be cooperating...



## **NREGA Update from Chhattisgarh**

▶ On Wednesday, Nukkad Nataks were organised in villages of Satepur, Hariharpur, Mendra and Kantaroli of Sarguja district by Margdarshak Seva Sansthan (MSS). Though the planning called for organising similar Nataks on NREGA at village Ghatghora, it was cancelled due to time constraint.

▶ The Nukkad Natak at village Ghatghora will be organised on Thursday.

▶ Meanwhile a Panch Sarpanch Sammelan was organised at village Goplingchua in Rajnandgaon district by Jagriti Seva Sansthan (JSS). Similar programmes were also arranged in other villages also.

▶ On Wednesday, a meeting of village leaders was held at village Nawa Nagar in Sarguja district by Sarguja Gramotthan Samaj Sevi Sansthan (SGSSS). The meeting was attended by leaders of 10 villages, namely, Pampapur, Khajurir, Nawanagar, Mawa Para, Racheli, Puniya, Karra, etc., and discussed arrangements for the proposed Nukkad Natak in these villagers scheduled on Thursday/Friday.

▶ Nukkad Nataks were also organised in villages by Lok Shakti Samaj Sevi Sansthan.



## YUVA, Betul

A samooch meeting was organised at Sendhurjana village, taluka Betul, district betul, at the village panchayat bhawan. About 50 people, including the sarpanch, attended the meeting called by YUVA field staff, and there were discussions on NREGA, the background of the scheme, role of panchayats, what type of forms to fill and how to fill them, and so on.

A samooch meeting was also held at Imli Dhana village, block Chicholi, district Betul; Motipur, block Chicholi; Godra, block Betul and Naharpur. At Godra, the meeting was also followed by a NREGA rally at the village level.

However, inclement weather continued to hamper activities in the area, impacting on the attendance of various programmes. Some programmes, as a result, are being postponed to the evening, when people are also back from working their fields.

## GVM, Balaghat

At Balaghat, the NREGA Week was inaugurated simultaneously in 7 villages through village-level samooch sammelan's. The villages included Bhanderi (Baihar block); Mendki Kinarda (Baihar block); Lokmara (Paraswada block); Ghodadehi, Gudwa and Roopjhar (Paraswada block).

The attendance was very encouraging; there were a total of 438 participants, of which 355 were female and 83 male.

Nukkad natak's were held in Paraswada block in the villages of Badgaon and Ghoradehi. About 60 people came to watch the nukkad natak at Badgaon, while 76 watched the one in Ghoradehi.

Audio and video CD's were also distributed to women SHGs for sharing with other group members.

Heavy rains and the sowing season are playing havoc with some of the planned activities.



## Ashagram Trust, Barwani

२ जुलाई २००६

**बैठक** - कृषक की पैक्स परियोजना के अर्थिक सहयोग से आशाग्राम ट्रस्ट द्वारा संचालित सवेरा परियोजना के फिल्ड स्टॉफ ने एक बैठक की। बैठक में छत्तई सप्ताह में गतिविधी करने के संबंध में चर्चा की गई। पैक्स द्वारा १ जुलाई को एक दिवसीय कार्यशाला भोपाल में आयोजित की गई थी। जिसमें मध्यप्रदेश के ८ जिलों से पैक्स पार्टनर को बुलाया गया था। आशाग्राम से लक्ष्मण ने इस कार्यशाला में भाग लिया। फिल्ड स्टॉफ को लक्ष्मण ने भोपाल की कार्यशाला के बारे में विस्तार से बतलाया। राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना के संबंध में जानकारी दी। साथ ही तय किया गया कि इस सप्ताह टीकरी ब्लॉक के १० गाँवों की जानकारी दो प्रारूप में हमें लेना है। जिसमें प्रारूप-१ में किन्ही भी १० परिवारों के सदस्य से तथा प्रारूप-२ में १० गाँवों के सरपंच/सचिव से जानकारी लेना है।



# PACS NREGA WEEK

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**गाँव का चयन** - सवेरा परियोजना ठीकरी ब्लॉक के ३६ गाँवों में संचालित हो रही है किन्तु छत्तै सप्ताह सिर्फ १० गाँवों में ही मनाया जा रहा है। इसलिए १० गाँवों का चयन किया गया। जिसमें सजवाव, कोयडिया, उचावद, बिलाव डेब, बजट्टा, हतोला, बांदरकच्छ, सुराना, भमोरी और सेमल्दा डेब है।

**गतिविधी** - ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना पर जागरूकता बढ़ाने हेतु नुक्कड नाटक, आम सभा आदि गतिविधियाँ करना तय की। नुक्कड नाटक ग्राम सेमल्दा डेब (३ जुलाई), कोयडिया (४ जुलाई), बिलावा डेब (५ जुलाई), हतोला (६ जुलाई) व बजट्टा (८ जुलाई) में करना तय किया। शेष गाँवों में आम सभा ही करना है।

**नुक्कड नाटक की तैयारी** - फिल्ड स्टॉफ ने तीन घण्टे नुक्कड की तैयारी की। जिसमें सभी ने अपना-अपना अभिनय अपनी रुचि अनुसार चयन किया।

### ३ जुलाई २००६

**नुक्कड नाटक** - ग्राम सेमल्दा डेब में छत्तै की जानकारी को गाँव में बढ़ाने के उद्देश्य से सायं ६ बजे नुक्कड नाटक करने फिल्ड स्टॉफ पहुंचा किन्तु बाराश की अधिकता के कारण रात्री ८ बजे नाटक प्रस्तुत किया गया। नाटक में ग्रामवासियों का उत्साह बहुत अधिक था। नुक्कड नाटक प्रारंभ करने से पहले दो गीत प्रस्तुत किये गये।

नुक्कड नाटक में बतलाया गया था कि गाँव के रामू नाम के गरीब मजदूर को घर छोड़कर दूर शहर में मजदूरी करने जाने की स्थिति पैदा हो जाती है। रामू घर के सदस्यों को अकेला छोड़कर दूर शहर में जाने की सोच ही रहा था। जिससे बच्चे को पढाई नहीं करवाना, घर में जरूरी सामान कैसे आयेगा आदि परेशानियों के बारे में विचार चल ही रहे थे कि गाँव में एक बैठक का एलान होता है। रामू भी गाँव की बैठक भाग लेता है। जहाँ कुछ ऑफिसर लोग राष्ट्रीय ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना की जानकारी देते हैं। साथ ही ग्रामीण व्यक्तियों के मन में इस योजना के संबंध उठने वाले सवालों के जवाब भी देते हैं। रामू को गाँव की बैठक से ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना की जानकारी मिली जिसमें रामू अपने ही गाँव में १०० दिन का रोजगार मांग सकता है। अब रामू को घर से दूर जाकर मजदूरी नहीं करनी पड़ेगी, अपने ही गाँव में उसे काम मिलेगा और वह अपने बच्चे को स्कूल में पढा सकता है। यह बात जब वह घर जाकर अपनी बीबी-बच्चे को बतलाता है तो वह लोग खुशी से छलक जाते हैं।

नुक्कड नाटक के पश्चात् फिल्ड स्टॉफ द्वारा ग्रामवासियों के समक्ष खुली चर्चा रखी गई कि ग्रामीण रोजगार गारंटी योजना के संबंध में यदि किसी को कोई समस्या या अंधूरी जानकारी हो तो वह खुलकर पूछ सकते हैं। जिसमें ग्रामवासियों ने खुलकर अपनी परेशानियाँ पूछी कि काम करने के बाद पैसा कौन देंगे, हमारे गाँव में काम नहीं चल रहा है तो हम क्या करें, कितने व्यक्तियों को काम मिल सकता है, काम मांगने की क्या प्रक्रिया रहेगी, मस्टर रोल क्या होता है आदि के जवाब किरत और मोहन ने दिया। कार्यक्रम में लगभग ५० पुरुष व १५ महिलाएँ उपस्थित थीं। कार्यक्रम के पश्चात् गाँववासियों ने कहा कि इस प्रकार के कार्यक्रम करते रहना चाहिये, जिससे गाँव में सरकारी योजनाओं की जानकारी बढ़ेगी। साथ ही कई लोगों ने कहा कि आपके गीत बहुत पसंद आये कृपया इन्हें फिर से दोहराये। नुक्कड नाटक में चन्द्रप्रकाश, किरत, रमेश, रुकमणी, शांतिलाल, नारायण, तपस्या, सीमा, अनिता एवं शांतिलाल ने भाग लिया। शेष लोगों ने नाटक और आमसभा की प्रक्रिया को उत्प्रेरित किया। सभा के अन्त में सभी को चाय व बिस्कुट भी वितरित किये गये।



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