

## **Tour Note to Deva Block in Barabanki District (Uttar Pradesh) on 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2009**

As directed, I accompanied Hon'ble Minister of State of Rural Development, Shri Pradeep Jain, during his visit to review the implementation of NREGA in Deva block of Barabanki District in Uttar Pradesh. During the visit, Hon'ble Minister interacted with the main stakeholders of NREGA i.e. NREGA workers and a few worksites were also seen. The Member of Parliament of Barabanki constituency too accompanied the Hon'ble Minister of State (RD). Additional District Magistrate, Local Block Development Officer and Head of the Gram Panchayat were present during the interactive meeting of the Hon'ble Minister with the NREGA workers.

During the visit, it was found that adherence to non-negotiables, as provided in the NREG Act and Guidelines and implementation of NREGA was far from satisfactory. It needs to be addressed immediately.

- It was a common grievance among the NREGA workers of Deva Block though they have been paid wages but it is delayed and they were not able to correlate the payment of wages with the number of days they have worked. Job cards having no details about the number of days and period of work at all were presented by NREGA workers.
- Many job cards did not have the photograph of the household members but have photograph of a single person indicating that the job cards have been issued to individuals rather than the households.
- The level of awareness about procedural aspects of NREGA was abysmally low among the villagers. They were not aware how to demand work and their entitlement of dated receipt for demand of work. The head of Gram Panchayat did show a performa for demand of work but the villagers were not aware of such performa.
- The NREGA workers/villagers were not aware of approved shelf of works of the particular Gram Panchayat. This undermines the participatory process of Gram Sabha to decide the shelf of works.

- During 2008-09, it is reported that 855 Gram Panchayats were socially audited. But till the end of June, 2009, social audits in only 35 Gram Panchayats out of 1002 Gram Panchayats were conducted.
- During current financial year, out of 7978 muster rolls, only 3347 were verified. Out of 6347 works taken up, only 930 works were inspected by the Block and District level officers. While the guidelines provide 100:10:2 ratio of inspection by block, district and State level Officers. It appears that these guidelines are not being followed.
- The worksites visited didn't have any information board having details of nature of work, date of inception, proposed expenditure etc. at all.
- A few ladies reported that despite of repeated requests they were not issued job cards and a few villagers reported that they were not provided with works despite of their request for the same. However, no record of such requests was available.
- Accumulative numbers of households issued with job cards is 3,05,680 and till June, 2009 only 47,143 households demanded employment which is hardly 15%. That means the demand for work is going untapped due to lack of knowledge about procedural aspects for demand of work under NREGA.
- The proposal for labour budget of the district is for Rs. 199 crore out of which Central liability is Rs. 190 crore. There was an opening balance of Rs. 49 crore as on 1-04-2009 and Rs. 24 crore was released by Government of India thus making Rs. 73 crore available out of which only Rs. 37 crore was utilized till June, 2009. It needs better vision for implementation of NREGA.
- The status of MIS was also far from satisfactory as required data was not fed into the MIS reports.
- The average works per Technical Assistant was 114 while it should be ideally 15-20 works. The State average is 55 works per Technical Assistant. It will definitely lead to delayed measurements and filling of measurement books which in-turn will result in delayed payment of wages to NREGA workers.
- The cost of administrative/professional support to NREGA was 2.5% while the permitted limit of expenditure is 6% of total cost of implementation of NREGA.