

Public Hearing on NREGA

Venue : Bilaput
Gram Panchayat : Bilaput
Block : Nandapur
District : Koraput
Date : 26th May 2007

Welcome and sharing of objectives of social audit

The Public Hearing process started with a welcome note by Bidyut Mohanty, Secretary of SPREAD. He said that focal objective of social audit is to ensure transparency and accountability in development programmes that are being implemented by panchayat and block administrations. He said that social audit is mandatory in NREGA and should be conducted for all works. Another objective of this process is to develop ownership and stake of people so that poor people benefit the most. Briefing about the social audit, he said that following NREGA work in 4 villages of Bilaput, Jabagada, Pangiput and Godiput of Bilaput Panchayat under Nandapur Block would be covered :

Name of Village	Name of Work
Bilaput	Protection Wall
Jabagada	Construction of CC Road
Pangiput	Construction of CC Road
Godiput	Construction of CC Road

He said that though there was provision of suo motto disclosure of information under NREG Act, it was neither available in Bilaput Panchayat nor in Nandapur block. Then a few volunteers from the above four villages applied for detail information under Right to Information Act in December 2006. They were provided the information in March 2007. After receipt of information the volunteers, along with activists of SPREAD, analyzed the information and verified the same with villagers. The presentation of this public hearing is the outcome of that analysis and verification. He introduced panel members and asked Daniel of Koraput to moderate the process. List of panel members are :

1. Gora Sisa, Sarpanch, Bilaput
2. Sukura Muduli, Sarpanch, Guneipada
3. Railu Matam, Samiti Member, Bilaput
4. Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Local MLA
5. Gupta Panigrahi, Advocate
6. Nihar Patnaik, labour leader
7. Sudeshna Misra, ActionAd India

Norms of Social Audit under NREGA

Daniel moderated the process and presentations of villagers. He set the tone by detailing all the entitlements due to workers under NREGA. He said the Act ensures 100 days work and minimum wage for that to all labourers. He said the public hearing was based on social audit by volunteers from four villages along with community members. The hearing is not only aimed at finding fault

and corruption but also praising good work done by Panchayat administration. He facilitated village wise presentations and sharing of findings.

Social audit presentations

Analysis of Bilaput NREGA Work

Total households : 39
 Registered families : 35
 Not registered families : 04
 Families issued job card : 34

Summary of Findings

- Muster roll shows 58 persons have worked on protection wall constructed under NREGA in Bilaput and people confirmed number but internet muster roll states 27 persons have worked. When job cards were verified a total 49 persons were employed in this work.
- The team found that figures relating to number of labourers employed varied between muster roll, internet muster roll, job card and labourers' own statements. This was found to be matching in only three cases – Adu Suabi, Samari Suabi and Madhaba Bimari.
- Total persondays generated in muster roll is 1184 but labourers stated that 767 persondays work was generated. Verification of job cards revealed 1093 persondays and internet muster roll revealed 351 persondays were generated.
- According to muster roll, labourers got a total of 772 kgs of rice as part wage payment worth Rs 4,864 but the bill shows 35 quintal rice worth Rs 20,050 was disbursed to labourers. There is no mention of this payment in internet muster roll. Therefore there is difference of Rs 15,186 between the bill raised by the JE and the muster roll prepared by the village labour leader.
- According to muster roll total wage payment was Rs 60,195 but labourers stated that they had received Rs 31,560 and internet muster roll states wage payment of Rs 19,565.
- Under materials procured for the construction of the protection wall, bill states 658 cement bags were procured at a rate of Rs 185 per bag totaling to Rs 1,21,730 but labourers stated that a total 550 bags cement at Rs 185 per bag were procured at a total cost of Rs 1,01,750. Therefore there is a difference of Rs 19,980 between bill raised and labourers testimony.
- A total 31 women labourers out of total 58 labourers who were employed. But this was not so in many cases. Mukunda Khara had gone to worksite for labour work but was turned away by Village Level Worker (VLW) Rajendra Kumar Mishra stating that Mukunda was too old to work.
- Saita Suabi and Raila Khara stated they had worked as labourers at the worksite. But in the muster roll their names were entered under worksite facility providers of water and crèche. All labourers confirmed that neither was water nor was crèche facility provided at the worksite.

Bilaput presentation by Rajkishore Lendru

Problems	Testimony
Old man refused job card as he is getting pension	Samara Bimari
Photographs are not pasted in job card	Basudev Suabi
People have no idea about NREGA work	Burunanda Suabi

Work is non implemented according to priority list of Bilaput Palli Sabha	Padma Suabi
Problems faced in getting work order. Villagers gave bribe of Rs 3000 to VLW	Budu Khada
Monitoring committee is only for namesake	Shyam Sundar Suabi and Mani Hantal
Wage variation (More days and wages according to muster roll as against labourers' statements)	Malti Suabi, Rama Khada, Padma Khada, Mangali Khada, Balram Suabi, Kamala Tangu, Adu and Budu Khada
Nothing written on information board and no payment against construction	Basudev Suabi

Analysis of Jabagada NREGA Work

Total households : 100
Registered families : 80
Not registered families : 20
Families issued job card : 80

Summary of Findings

- PEO issued job cards after survey; he also helped people fill up job cards
- According to on line report Mangali Khara and Shyam Matam worked for 10 days each, but their version was that they did not work for a single day
- Labour and transport cost of cement and sand was adjusted with workers' wages
- The payments were made after 6 months of completion of the work
- Though it is a concrete work of a CC road, the wages of skilled labourers and semiskilled labourers was not counted separately
- The ratio of wage and material which should be 60:40 was not maintained
- Delay in payment forced labourers to migrate to Andhra Pradesh in search of work
- All labourers confirmed that neither water nor crèche facility was provided at the worksite. But Moti Khada and Nabbeena Hantal, who had actually worked as unskilled labourers, were shown in the muster roll as having got wages for providing worksite facilities
- The PEO has taken job cards of all the villagers since last six months.

Jabagada presentation by Jogeswar Khemundu

Problems	Testimony
Not issued job cards and therefore not provided work	Mangala Suabi, Bhagaban Bimari and Miniguru Dalpati
Job cards with VLW since last six months	Daitary Asandari
Workers migrated to Andhra not getting NREGA work	Mangala Suabi and Bhagaban Bimari
Wage variation – total families 42 (More days and wages according to the muster roll as against labourers' statements)	Sukhdev Dandsena, Mangali Khada, Nabeena Khada and Shyama Matam
No work site facilities provided but labourers names enlisted in muster roll as worksite facility providers	Moti Khada and Nabeena Hantal

Written information board is there but payment not made to people	Samara Dandsena
---	-----------------

Analysis of Jabagada NREGA Work

Total households : 32
Registered families : 27
Families issued job card : 17
Families not issued card : 15

Summary of Findings

- The work of CC road under NREGS was started before villagers applied for work. The community was not aware of the scheme. Only some persons who were issued job cards were informed about the work
- PEO made people aware about the scheme where he informed that persons who do not have job card cannot get work in the village. They could not recall about discussions in Palli Sabha
- Only male members knew that they are members of VLL committee
- Panchayat record mentioned about information of village vigilance committee but people do not know about their responsibilities
- PEO took Rs 2000 from village leaders to give it to JE. During payment of first bill Sarpanch took Rs 500 and Rs 1000 to give it to JE
- Work started during rainy season and people got rotten rice as part of wages

Pangiput presentation by Sadananda Singh

Problems	Testimony
Forcefully worked during rainy season	Bhagaban Nayak – VLL
No work site facilities provided	Bhagaban Nayak – VLL
VLW misbehaved when asked for actual wages	Sugri Khada

Views and Responses of Panel Members

Railu Matam, Samiti Member, Bilaput

- This public hearing and statement made by people clearly indicates that there was corruption in all four NREGA works
- He said police should take action against those responsible for this.

Sudeshha Misra, ActionAid India

- She said those who had taken bribe money from Bilaput villagers should immediately return the same to the people
- The manual data and internet data are not matching and government should make efforts not to confuse people in this way and provide false information on the internet
- The people should be given back their due wages as per the actual muster roll

- Those in whose cards fake entries on number of days worked have been entered have lost those many days of work from 100 days' entitlement and therefore this should be rectified

Gupta Panigrahi, Advocate

- He said that cases presented here are in clear violation of Labour Act. These are cases of misappropriation, cheating and fraud. Therefore, FIRs should be immediately lodged by the villagers and demand for formal enquiry into all the cases
- Villagers can also file case against the concerned persons before Labour Commissioner stating that clear violation of the Minimum Wages Act
- They can also sit on dharna before the Collector's office or use other democratic means for opposing the ongoing corruption, punishing the culprits and recovering all their dues.

Nihar Patnaik, Advocate

- Villagers should get united to fight against corruption and those who are corrupt
- Such issues and problems should be raised in the next Assembly session.

Tara Prasad Bahinipati, Local MLA

- Though India celebrated its 60th year of Independence and lot of welfare and social security schemes have been implemented, still the poor people are yet to get real benefits from these schemes as they are not aware of these schemes
- After long debate and efforts by social activists, leaders and thinkers, Central government brought the Act to ensure work entitlements to tribal people to enjoy land, water and forest. Conspiracy is going on to withdraw the Act so that benefit can go to rich and affluent class
- He said he would question the Collector on no Government officials attended the audit
- He said he would also raise the issue of cashew plantations with the Collector and try to ensure entitlements over the plantations are given to tribals who had protected the trees
- He believed that if people were organized then they can act against corrupt officials

Daniel concluded the session by calling on social activists, political leaders, journalists to support tribal people's movements which are fighting for rights and social justice.

At the end, Satyanarayan Jagdev, SPREAD Project Coordinator, gave the vote of thanks.

This document was created with Win2PDF available at <http://www.win2pdf.com>.
The unregistered version of Win2PDF is for evaluation or non-commercial use only.