

Tribals Demand for their Entitlements/ Pending Wages **for MNREGA Work**

15th November 2011, Bilaspur

MNREGA is such an important Act that can improve the livelihood resources and economic condition of poor people, provided it is effectively implemented. It can not only enhance the income of the rural poor in the short term but also can create durable assets in the villages and thus generate productive infrastructure in a sustainable manner which is much needed for poverty alleviation. However question remains on the implementation of the Act. The government has initiated many welfare schemes and policies but poverty still remains high. Policies are good but implementations of these policies are pathetic. That is why it is aptly said that ***“All policies and Acts are as good as they are implemented”*** !

Delays in wage payments have always been a matter of concern and this issue continues to plague the MNREGA. Wage payments are delayed for weeks, sometimes months. In Kota block of Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh, month-long delays were noted. There has been massive delays in payment of wages since 2007, about 1723 labourers of 12 Panchayat had not been paid up to 704 days' wage payment on an average.

At this backdrop on 15th November 2011, a one day Rally was organized at Bilaspur (Chhattisgarh) under the banner of ***“Jaago Jan Parishad”*** (People's organization initiated by CASA and GSS, PAT unit Bilaspur). This Rally was led by people belonging to the indigenous community from 12 Panchayats of Kota block, Bilaspur against the overdue payment of MNREGA work and weak implementation of other Social Security Schemes.



Jago Jan Parishad Rally at Bilaspur



Communities from 12 Panchayats of Kota Block

About 1000 people participated in this rally which culminated into Aam Sabha (General Meeting) at Nehru Chowk in Bilaspur where Participants expressed their experience on ill implementation of government schemes and how it has affected their social and economic lives. After this a group of 10 leaders went to meet the collector Mr. Ram Singh Thakur and gave him the memorandum which contains 19 demands and suggestion.

Demands and suggestion mentioned in the Memorandum are:

1. In Kota block of Bilaspur, due payments are to be made within 7 days for the period of 2007 to 2011.
2. To ensure wages be paid within 15 days of work being done under MNREGA.
3. The work should be sanctioned as per the demand of villagers and every adults should be provided with 100 days of employment in every financial year.
4. Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work; if it is not so, then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act should be given to the applicant.
5. The Annual Plan of MNREGA should be written on Panchayat Bhawan (Building).
6. After the end of MNREGA work all the expenses should be written on Board and displayed.
7. Payment of wages should be made regular by Bank and Post office and if any complaint received immediate action is required on part of senior Officials.
8. After the distribution of Cheques the payment should be made within 3 days.
9. Prior to social audit process training should be provided to ensure that the process is carried out properly.
10. The maximum limit of money and staff should be increased in Post Offices appropriately.
11. The cheque of MNREGA work should be appropriate and must be checked before distribution.

12. Under *Indira Gandhi National Pension Scheme* beneficiaries must get their pensions by 7th day of every month.
13. From April 2011 beneficiaries of *Indira Gandhi National Pension Scheme* are not getting their pension. Therefore, within 10 days beneficiary must get their dues.
14. If the due pension is not given to the beneficiaries within 10 days then the concerned official should be penalized.
15. Under *Janani Suraksha Yojna* all mothers should get cash assistance of Rs 1400 in one go at the time of delivery, if it is institutional and Rs 500 within 7 days delivery if it is at home. They must not be charged any extra amount in the name of document's photocopy or else.
16. In Panchayat the money of health committee is for the health of poor and needy and people so accountability and transparency should be ensured.
17. Beneficiaries of *National Family Benefit Scheme* should get their entitlements within 4 weeks.
18. The list of beneficiaries of *Indira Awas Yojna* and their approved amount should be written in Panchayat building.
19. PTG (Primitive Tribal Group) should get their Ration Cards and should get 35 kg of rice as per their entitlements.

With this initiative **CASA & Jago Jan Parishad** hope that needy beneficiaries will get their entitlements and other rights, enabling them to live a life of dignity. Collector also assured that due payment of wages will be given within 15 days and other demands mentioned in Memorandum will also be taken care of! Members of other network and media were also present there for support of the cause and this news was covered by many electronic and print media.
