

**Report of the Working Group on
“Specific Needs of Special Categories under MGNREGA”**

July 2010

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Chairperson and Members

Report of the working group on “Specific Needs of Special Categories under MGNREGA”

Backdrop

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is the first programme to provide guaranteed livelihood security to India’s rural poor. The MGNREGS is an innovative programme to boost (1) the rural economy, (2) stabilize agricultural production and (3) to provide livelihood security to the poor and thereby transform the scenario of poverty. The MGNREGA, by providing legal guarantee to work, marks a paradigm shift from all earlier wage employment programs. It is an inclusive programme covering all the disadvantaged sections of the society

Still, the participation levels of the special groups like minorities, disabled and aged are low. Though women participation levels are more than the stipulated norms of one third, still are not able to reach 100 days of minimum guaranteed employment. Among the socially disadvantaged, the land owning members could not reap much benefit despite adequate provision to take up work on the lands of these groups. Further, adhocism in planning and lack of awareness about the scheme’s features (rights and entitlements) also resulted under utilization of the opportunities under MGNREGA. In fact, one can infer that while MGNREGA could provide employment, it failed to convert expenditure into investment. The implementing agencies have failed to undertake the intensive and continuous Information Education Communication (IEC) to educate the people of their rights under the Act. Delivery system in general, is also not very pro-active and pro-poor in several states

In this context, to improve the situation, the Ministry of Rural Development constituted six working groups to discuss various issues and suggest recommendations which can make MGNREGS more effective. It is the endeavor of the MGNREGA to lay focus on distributive social justice even while revitalizing the agriculture and allied works.

One such working group under the chairmanship of Smt. Renuka Chowdhury, has examined the issues of socio-economic inclusion and identification of specific needs of

special groups in MGNREGS and suggests measures for meeting their specific requirements.

ToR

The specific terms of reference of this committee given by MoRD are:

A. Issues to be addressed

- (i) Gender equity
- (ii) Needs of disabled persons
- (iii) Needs of old persons
- (iv) Special benefits to SC/ST/groups or families in LWE/drought affected areas

B. Measures identified should aim at enhancing the effectiveness of the law as a social safety net especially for vulnerable groups

Approach adopted

The working group met at NIRD on 23rd April, 2010 to discuss the issues pertaining to participation of vulnerable sections like SC/ST, minorities, women, disabled and aged. The current status of participation of these socially disadvantaged groups in MGNREGS in different regions of the country has been reviewed. Members shared their experiences and views in enhancing the effectiveness of MGNREGA as a social security intervention for the deprived groups (Minutes of the meeting are presented in Annexure- I). The chairperson in the light of the deliberations decided to form three sub-groups to discuss the issues relating to the special categories in greater depth and to arrive at certain action points to overcome the obstacles and there by improve the access of the disadvantaged to MGNREGA benefits.

Sub-Group – I: Social equity and gender equity concerns under MGNREGS

Sub-Group – II: Needs of the disabled and aged people

Sub-Group – III: Requirements of people in LWE and Drought Prone areas

(Sub-Group wise list of Chairpersons and Members is presented in Annexure- II)

Sub Group on Gender Equity and Social Equity

The sub-group under the chairmanship of Dr. Botsa Jhansi, MP deliberated on the ToR of the sub group which are reproduced below.

- Effective measures for striking gender equity
- Effective measures for striking social equity (encouraging measures for participation of all socially and economically deprived classes in rural society)
- Identifying more specific needs of women at worksites and suggesting measures for implementing the same.
- Measures to popularise and propagate facilities for women under MGNREGA
- Any other issue, the sub-group consider essential

Group prepared a check list and mailed to all development corporations like SC/ST and women to elicit their opinions on the functioning of MGNREGS and suggest ways and means to collaborate or converge with MGNREGS to reach the target group more effectively. The team members visited the corporations in Hyderabad and collected their suggestions too. (Template is presented in Annexure III)

The sub group met in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh during 6-7, June 2010 to interact, consult and understand the special interventions designed and implemented for the people (SC/ST and Women) with specific needs. The team held meetings and visited the worksites where the lands of the SC and ST communities are developed and also to capture the needs of women workers and minorities.

Discussions were held with the Mandal and District level officials and representatives of the voluntary organisations to understand the processes carried out for inclusion of women and socio economically marginalised workers in MGNREGS. Suggestions made for enhancement of their participation were recorded. (Detailed Report is attached in Annexure-IV)

Sub-Group on Needs of the disabled and aged people

The sub-group was mandated to look into the following aspects:

- (i) Specific measures to identify suitable works for physically challenged persons and aged people.
- (ii) Worksite facilities for Physically Challenged and Aged persons
- (iii) Specific measures to protect their rights.
- (iv) Any other issue that the sub-group deemed suitable.

Sub group under the **Chairmanship of Sri. S.K Pattanayak**, Director, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India held discussions on 11.6.2010 and 12.6.2010 at NIRD. In the deliberations, the problems of database on differentially abled persons in terms of the number and also the degree of disability were highlighted. It was also felt by the group that there has been a rise in the share of aged in the population. Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are more vulnerable among the poorer sections. They also opined that the present coping mechanisms are inadequate to ensure livelihood security to PwDs and the aged population. They also appreciated the efforts made by the few States in this regard. (Detailed minutes of the meeting are attached in Annexure-V)

Sub-Group on requirements of people in LWE and Drought Prone areas

The sub-group headed by Dr. T. Haque met on 28th May at New Delhi and discussed the TOR given by the chair person Smt. Renuka Chowdhury. The mandate for the sub-group includes:

1. special measures for SC/ST / other workers in LWE areas
2. special measures for SC/ST / other workers in drought prone areas
3. worksite facilities in LWE & DP areas
4. work norms in LWE & DP areas
5. any other relevant issues

The problems of the socially and economically disadvantaged in particular and village communities in general residing in the Left wing Extremism (LWE) areas and Drought Prone (DP) areas are discussed at length.

The nature and extent of vulnerabilities experienced by these disadvantaged sections and determinants of livelihood (in) security are reviewed. The group also discussed the untapped opportunities in these areas and performance of the MGNREGA in some of these areas. It is to be noted that despite limitations, the contribution of MGNREGA in these areas has been found to be beneficial and measures to strengthen MGNREGS would be more rewarding to the rural communities and more so to the disadvantaged sections.(Detailed report is attached in Annexure-VI).

The Chairperson of this working group had a discussion on sub-group reports with NIRD faculty members on 28th June, 2010. Keeping in view the recommendations of the sub groups, Chairperson added few issues for consideration. (Minutes attached at Annexure-VII).

The working group had a discussion with the elected representatives, officials and representatives from civil society organisations on the issues dealt with by the working group and the suggestions made by the group at Khammam on 4th July 2010. (The minutes of the meeting are enclosed. See Annexure- VIII).

Framework for addressing the needs

MGNREGA aims at ensuring livelihood security to rural poor through provision of gainful employment opportunities. It also attempts to create productive and durable assets (community and individual) for generation of employment and income on sustainable basis. The Working Group has noted the apprehensions that MGNREGA is not serving the interests of agriculture. However, the working group strongly feels that MGNREGA can address the problems of agriculture adequately and in the process generate 100 days of guaranteed employment to all the willing workers. It also opines that through participatory planning process MGNREGA can play a key role in elimination of absolute poverty in the medium run and move towards achievement of sustainable livelihoods even while achieving the goal of sustainable agriculture in the long term. Thus, MGNREGS can visualize achievement of sustainable livelihoods as well as sustainable agriculture. The priorities and the institutional arrangements need to be reoriented for realization of the above vision. The working group made specific suggestions for addressing their special needs articulated by the special categories through MGNREGS.

Based on the deliberations and field observations and interactions with the special groups, the main needs of these groups are presented below

SC/ST

- Lack of assets and resources; meager and unproductive assets
- Low Levels of skills
- Low social capital - lack of access to formal and informal organisations
- Not able to avail of all the 100 days of guaranteed employment; not able to get employment on demand
- Lack of social security measures like pension, insurance etc
- Socially marginalized and the victims of dominance of other castes – discrimination in work allotment.
- Lack of information on provisions of MGNREGA to realize full benefits such as development of their lands.
- Delayed wage payments
- Low employment opportunities
- Undernourishment / food insecurity

Women

- Dependent and single women exclusion from MGNREGS
- Lack of awareness and skills
- Unfavourable work norms in MGNREGS (piece rate work) and so not able to get wages on par with men
- Hardships in unskilled manual labour
- Household responsibilities
- Lack of sensitivity of delivery system towards problems of women
- Lack of ownership of assets (access and control over resources)
- Low social capital- lack of formal and informal organisation
- Not able to utilize all the 100 days employment; not able to get employment on demand
- Lack of social security measures like maternity benefits, pension, insurance etc.

- Non-provision of worksite facilities
- Gender bias in labour market
- Lack of women friendly tools

Disabled

- Non inclusion in the MGNREGS (low coverage)
- Unfavourable work norms in MGNREGS
- Distance to worksites
- Lack of sensitivity of delivery system towards disabled
- Low social capital- Lack of access to formal and informal organisations

Aged

- Dependency on the children
- Non inclusion in the MGNREGS (one job card per household)
- Unfavourable work norms in MGNREGS; low wage earnings.
- Lack of sensitivity of officials towards aged for inclusion
- Lack of / inadequate security measures like pension and insurance

Minorities

- Lack of awareness
- Cultural taboos
- Low preference to unskilled work

LWE areas

- Risks posed to implementing agency by LWE
- Backwardness of the region and limited economic opportunities
- Illiteracy and low skills of people (low levels of social development)
- Weak Panchayats
- Improper and inadequate shelf of works
- Ineffective enforcement of PESA
- Non enforcement of Forest Rights Act.

Drought Prone Areas

- Resource deficiency of the area – low and erratic rainfall, poor fertile soils, problems of water and soil conservation, low productivity

- Lack of credit and market facilities
- Inadequate and degenerated natural resources
- Inadequate shelf of projects
- Lack of adequate employment opportunities

The working group has adopted an analytical framework for looking at various issues affecting the socially disadvantaged in terms of accessing 100 days of gainful employment and also in enriching their asset base so as to earn adequate incomes. Thus, besides provision of livelihood security, MGNREGS should create tangible and productive assets for revitalizing the agriculture and allied activities. The working group felt that the MGNREGS workers should be differentiated into asset owning and asset less (land and Skill) and measures should be suggested for poverty alleviation in short run and eradication of absolute poverty in medium run through a diversified and sustainable agriculture base. The Working group feels that there is ample scope for effectively utilizing the MGNREGS for modernizing the Indian agriculture and integrate with the world economy through effective backward and forward linkages. The group strongly opines that the possibilities of graduating unskilled to semi skilled and skilled workers category through convergence of MGNREGS with other skill based development programmes have to be explored.

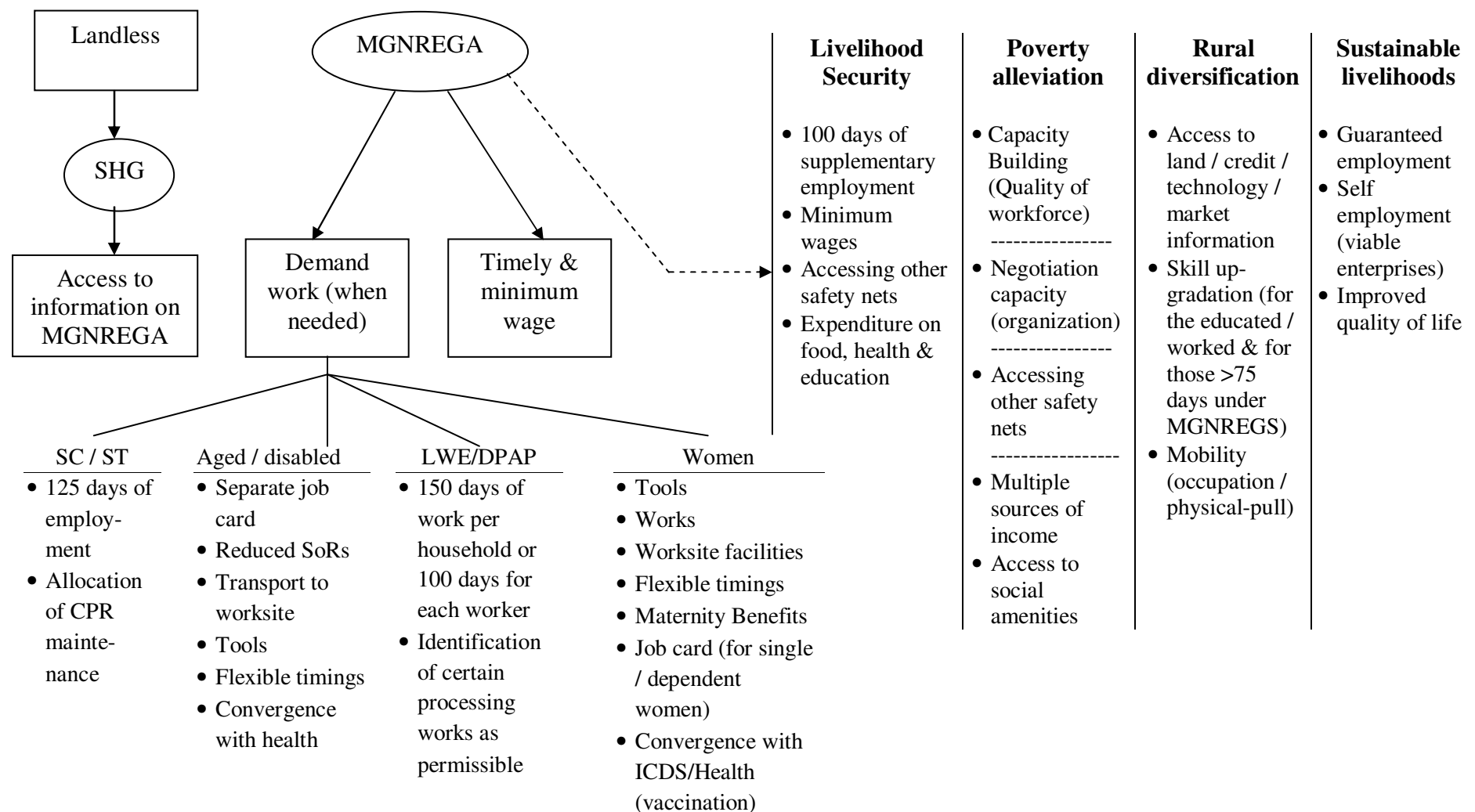
As far as disabled and aged are concerned special measures are suggested to meet their specific needs.

It is the considered view of the group that for the land owning poor, the eight categories of permissible works (if necessary by including additional works) if undertaken in a more systematic way would strengthen the natural resource base of the area. The Group suggests that the farmers need to be organized into Self Help Groups of farmers and federated into Village Organisation at village level. The VO has to act as an interface between the farmers and the other stakeholders. This arrangement will facilitate the farmers to access technology, credit and market support in an organized manner. SHGs with the help of VO can identify works to be taken up on their individual lands to make them productive and sustainable in a period of three to four years. Every farmer household has to prepare a development plan keeping his preferences and adopting

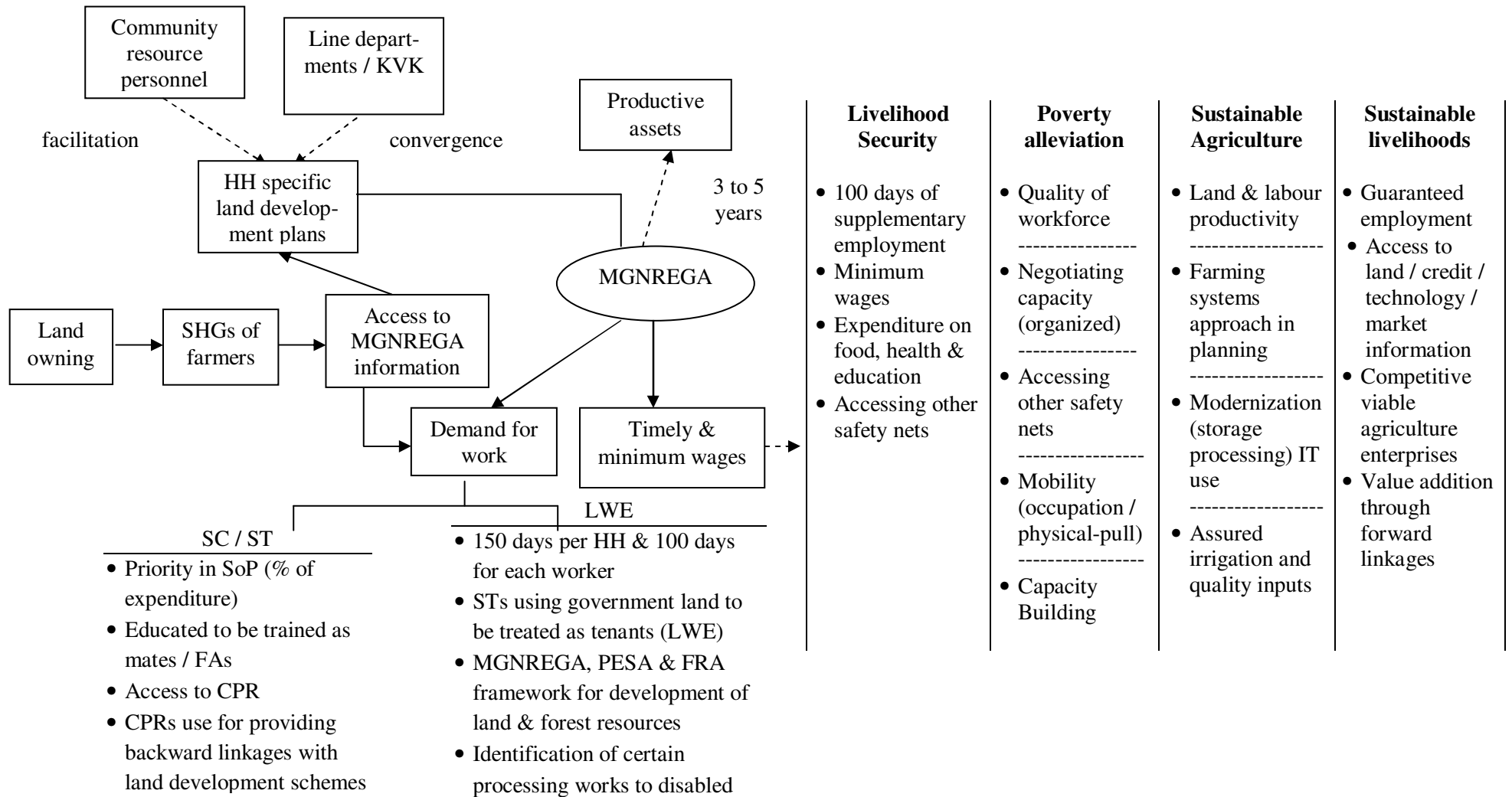
integrated farming systems approach. Being a right based programme, the working group is of view that the suggested action points should not only help meet the specific needs of these special groups but also empower them in terms of well informed and capable citizenry. Figure- 1 presents the suggested framework for the sustainable agriculture and sustainable livelihoods for the SC/ST/small farmer through MGNREGA.

Formation of landless workers into Labour Groups and federated into VOs would enable them to access the MGNREGA related information and articulate their demand for employment. The groups can also suggest works which can be taken up on community lands to access 100 days of employment. There is need as well as scope for identifying new works which would provide guaranteed 100 days employment besides strengthening agriculture and social infrastructure. The latter would facilitate in enriching the quality of life. Provision of access to other social safety nets would ensure livelihood security to these groups in the short term. It is also suggested that the landless Labour Groups should be given maintenance of the works taken up on community land. The group suggests that these unskilled workers should be graduated to higher level by providing skills and building the capacities of Labour Groups. Such arrangements would enhance their negotiation capacity and facilitate mobility which may lead to reduction in their poverty. Such type of qualitative changes in the rural labour market would reduce the burden on the agriculture (disguised unemployment) and make rural economy diversified. Figure – 2 illustrates the suggested framework for sustainable livelihoods of landless.

MGNREGA for sustainable livelihoods to landless SC & ST: A Framework



MGNREGA for Sustainable Agriculture and Sustainable livelihoods to SC & ST Farmers: A Framework



As far as aged and disabled are concerned MGNREGA should aim at providing safe and friendly working environment by responding to their special needs in terms of timing, liberal work norms, inclusion of additional works, etc. It is imputative that the local institutions should ensure their access to social security opportunities.

To operationalise the framework indicated above necessary institutional arrangements have to be made along with capacity building initiatives.

Institutional arrangements

Formation of workers into Labour Groups and SHGs of farmers should be done in a mission mode and the Mate, Field Assistant and GRS and the SC/ST women members of GP should be involved in this particular task. There should be some arrangement at GP level preferably to enable the farmers to prepare household specific plans. Arrangements are also needed to monitor the progress of the implementation of these plans and also in regard to specific outcomes expected. (Working Group on identification of works to be taken up on Individual lands dealt with this aspect in detail).

Capacity building

The group strongly feels that farmers need to be oriented towards environmental friendly practices and gradually move towards modernized agriculture through value addition measures such as processing and marketing of semi-processed products to minimize the risks. The institutions such as KVKs, Farmers Schools, and reputed NGOs with expertise in agriculture should build the capacities of the farming community in this regard.

Keeping the articulated needs in view and based on the insights from the field and views of the delivery system the working group has made the following recommendations to address the specific needs of special groups and also for enhancing the effectiveness of the MGNREGA in ensuring livelihoods and minimize the vulnerabilities of the groups.

Recommendations

a. SC/ST

- Since most of the MGNREGA workers of SC/ST community are either un-or underemployed, they have to be provided with at least 20-25 days of work additionally. This would minimize food insecurity.
- All the SC/ST farmers and landless workers should be organized into self help groups / labour groups of 15-20 members and all these SHGs / Labour Groups should be federated at the village level as Village Organisation (VO).
- All the SC/ST landless workers who participated for at least 30 days in MGNREGS should be covered under Provident Fund scheme (as in West Bengal) – as a social security measure.
- All the SC/ST MGNREGS workers should be graduated to semiskilled and skilled level in a specified time period by converging with NRLM and other self employment and job oriented programme. At least one worker in the households who participated for more than 75 days under MGNREGA should be provided with such opportunity.
- Land development of SC/ST and other farmers should be done in a comprehensive and project mode to ensure formation of productive assets yielding regular income and employment to the household. Each household should be given a work identification number and all the tasks necessary for making the land productive should be taken up in (sequential) time-bound manner. Community resource persons, the line departments, KVKs and NGOs with relevant expertise should be associated with the preparation of household specific land development plan (tree based planning, horticulture, integrated farming system, land husbandry, agro forestry systems, pisciculture, livestock management etc). It is imperative this process should be farmer specific and his priorities and preferences should be the guiding factor. DPC/PO should commit resources over the project period for development of the lands of the SC/ST. Wherever irrigation is feasible at least one acre of SC/ST land should be provided with assured irrigation in the next 2-3 years.

- All the GP plans should accompany with activity mapping in order to have a clear picture of agriculture production cycle and seasonality and demand for employment in order to safeguard the labour requirements of the farming community.
- The SC/ST land development work should be given priority in future MGNREGS planning in terms of budgetary allocation (at least 50 per cent at state-level), coverage of minimum area etc. The development of lands of 'others' and CPRs should be taken up only after meeting the targets of SC/ST lands.
- The wage seekers whose lands are taken under comprehensive land development activities should be trained in the interventions to be undertaken on their land.
- SC/ST can be given priority in other skill training in construction work, vermi compost production, horticulture and drip irrigation systems etc, and these trainings may be done in convergence with SC/ST development corporations and to concerned line departments/ agencies.
- The literate but unskilled wage workers could be trained as Mates, Technical Assistants, Social Auditors and this would enable them to acquire new skills. Such measure helps in creation of a cadre of para professionals at GP level (capacity building of community).
- A district or state level resource group be formed for capacity building of SC/ST wage workers as well as the SC/ST members of Gram Panchayats
- Separate shelf of works may be prepared for development of SC/ST lands
- Ownership and user rights on community assets be reserved and assigned for the women and SC and ST groups (landless)
- Ward Sabhas should be conducted separately in SC and ST hamlets for effective participation in planning and identification of shelf of works
- A small and separate cell may be created at the State level and positioning of one official at district level to periodically monitor the provision of the facilities and enforcement of rights and entitlements for the women and SC/ST workers. They have to submit reports quarterly and these reports along with concrete actions taken by officials should be placed in the public domain.

- MIS formats should be modified to track the benefits accruing to the women and SC/ST from MGNREGS

b. Women

- To minimise the vulnerability of widows, deserted and separated women, they should be treated as separate units and job card be provided with. Separate identification and job card for single as well as dependent women residing with family members, should be issued for their livelihood security.
- Separate SoRs be prepared for different categories of wage workers (men, women, aged, physically challenged etc.) to ensure the minimum guaranteed MGNREGA wage for all.
- Flexible timings like four hours a day be treated as half day work and women workers may be allotted work for double the number of days of four hours each.
- Many places Crèche facility is not provided on account of inadequate number of children (5). More over, mothers are also not willing to bring the children to the worksite because of the distance, heat and unsafe environment. It is safer to keep children at the Anganwadi Centre. Thus, crèche facility should be provided in convergence with ICDS to ensure safety of children; this would also provide the poor children's access to nutritious food and non-school education; such measures would enable to achieve Millennium Development Goals.
- In many cases mothers can't take the children for vaccination, as they have to come for work. So, instructions may be given to the ANM to provide vaccination at the worksite itself to the children of women wage seekers or at Anganwadi and also to pregnant and lactating mothers who come for work.
- Like convergence with other development schemes, we need to converge MGNREGS with the NRHM and ICDS programmes for periodic health care camps, vaccination, supplementary nutrition etc. should be planned for reducing mortality rates.

- Women friendly works like horticulture and nurseries may be taken up and preference should be given for pregnant, lactating and aged women.
- Women friendly tools have to be made available to women, to ensure the productivity on par with men besides minimizing health hazards caused by the heavy and man friendly tools. Provision of hats to protect from heat and gum boots (to protect from water borne diseases and insect bites) are recommended by the group.
- In many of the worksites, provision of facilities is done by women. In some places, where the water availability is not adequate, women have to walk far of places. In such cases, Trolleys be used for bringing water to worksites to reduce drudgery
- Collection of non timber forest produce and processing(eg. Leaf plate making, de seeding and de- fibrin of the tamarind manually) may be considered as permissible activity under the MGNREGS
- The provision of soil and water conservation works on SC/ ST land should be extended to lands owned by women of BPL category too.
- All common property resource should be a collective property of the users of which at least 50 per cent of them should be women.
- The training and capacity building component in the programme should also focus on building skills among women labour in order to undertake skilled jobs/ works in the MGNREGS.
- There should be reservation for at least 50 per cent women as Mates
- All IEC print as well as audio visual material must communicate the need and importance of separate account in bank or post office and equal wages for men and women. IEC in NREGA would reinforce education and action on this constitutional right to all workers, especially women.
- Transport facility should be provided to the pregnant women to reach the worksite or the existing norm of 5 km for eligibility of transport allowance may be relaxed to 1 km.
- Works like nurseries, vermi compost production and vegetable garden can be considered as permissible activity for enhancing women participation.

- Maternity benefit is every woman's right. The group has suggested advance payment of wages in the advanced stages of pregnancy for all those who worked during the last year.
- Paid maternity leave may be given to those who have worked on MGNREGS for at least 30 days in a year.(But it should be restricted to first two deliveries)

c. Disabled and Aged

- i) All those workers above 65 years be treated as 'aged'.
- ii) The claim of the disabled should be supported by doctor's certificate or by fellow workers. In case of wrong certification the fellow worker should be made liable to lose the job card.
- iii) The District administration should strive to graduate all the disabled towards skilled status in a specific time frame.
- iv) In the selection of Mates, Grama Rozgar Sevaks (GRS) and Technical Assistants, the literate and/or semi skilled persons with disabilities (PwDs) belonging to labour households be given preference.
- v) A system of flexi hours should be adopted for PwDs and aged, so that they can execute the work at convenient times during the day.
- vi) The length of actual work time be relaxed for PwDs and aged and they may be allowed to work for 5.30 hrs a day (This is recommended on the basis of Work Time Motion Studies under taken by an NGO (SWADHIKAR, AP.)
- vii) The work norms (as per SoRs) for PwDs and aged should be reduced by 30 percent.
- viii) The PwDs and aged be given separate and independent Job Cards within a household. It has been observed that the households having a PwD and aged at home generally avail the benefit for a non disabled member in the family and PwDs are not allowed to work in the site and actually earn. Having a separate Job Card will make the PwDs and aged independent for pursuing employment under the scheme if s/he chooses to do so.
- ix) Exclusive staff may be posted at the block and district level for mobilization of PwDs and to look after the special needs of the workers with disabilities.

He will act as a channel between the officials / PIA and workers with disabilities and strive for creating conducive environment for PwDs to work. He will also look after the information, communication and education (IEC) needs of PwDs. The salary and allowances of such staff may be borne out of administrative expenses of the scheme.

- x) In the matters of deciding the work and also location of work the PwDs and aged be allowed to exercise their choice (in a situation where different types of work are being carried out and at different locations) and priority should be given to their preferences.
- xi) The PwDs and aged be given travel allowances at higher rate on preferential basis. For the travel from place of residence to worksite, the travel allowance may be paid @ 10 % of the minimum daily wages for the initial distance from 0 .50km to 5km and @ 20 % for above 5 kms.
- xii) At Gram Panchayat, Block, and District levels, a monitoring and reporting mechanism of the works meant for PwDs and aged be put in place and monitoring and reporting should be done on a regular and continuous basis. The present institutional arrangements in MGNREGA be strengthened/ modified to accommodate this. A dedicated Cell at the state and district levels and an additional PO would help in effective monitoring and coordinating with other departments.
- xiii) In Andhra Pradesh there is a system of providing Rs 3 per person per man day for mobilizing PwDs in MGNREGS. The CSOs/NGOs are engaged in mobilizing PwDs and the system seems to be working very well. This system may be replicated in other States. The NGOs and CSOs may also act as an implementing agency and can mobilize PwDs under this system.

This suggestion is not duplicating the suggestion given at point No.(ix) above. The staff to be posted at block and district level will be performing a job of moderator and facilitator and provide necessary intervention to facilitate a smooth work environment for PwDs and Aged.

- xiv) A suitable shelf of works and opportunities may be created for the semi-skilled PwDs having soft and traditional skills and crafts like computer, carpentry, masonry etc.
- xv) The land owned by the PwDs be given preference in the execution of MGNREGA individual works.
- xvi) Works that facilitates accessibility and barrier free entry to all public places like schools, PHCs, water sources, parks etc., should be undertaken on priority and may be included in the shelf of projects as mentioned at Point no 11.
- xvii) The work site facilities must be such that it takes care of the specific needs of PwDs and Aged.

d. Minorities

- The participation levels are very low among the minority women in MGNREGS. They prefer skilled work in the place of unskilled. Though there is no ban on their participation still cultural taboo exists which do not motivate minority women to participate in MGNREGS. So, special awareness drive should be planned for their inclusion in the programme.
- Wherever possible skill oriented trainings should be provided for these groups.

e. LWE and Drought Prone areas

Planning Process

- ❖ The LWE regions falling under Schedule V area, PESA and FRA provide necessary framework for strengthening of land and forest resources. MGNREGA could provide the necessary support (with financial and professional) for empowerment of tribal community and poverty alleviation. The adhoc planning has led to lack of adequate works and also found to be incompatible in the prevailing conditions and local priorities. Participatory approach to prepare area development plan to workout systems for livelihood security for landless and land owing wage seekers is the immediate need of the programme.

- ❖ GIS based resource mapping would facilitate in better identification and preparation of developmental plan. Watershed based planning needs to be adopted for effective rejuvenation of natural resources.
- ❖ Officials involved in planning should be given adequate time for developing the GP plan by using PRA techniques.
- ❖ Land development plan should be prepared based on the individual land owning household plan. A consolidation of activities under land development should be carried out at Gram Panchayat level.
- ❖ These consolidated land development plan should figure in the District Agriculture Plan.
- ❖ The ITDA needs to be strengthened with competent professionals to provide guidance, assistance to the tribal community in preparation of community as well as household specific development plans. The funds for tribal development are under utilized. The formal and informal institutions (Eg: Gram Sabha, Tribal Chiefs, VSS, VTDA, etc.,) should be strengthened. For this, the capacities needs to be built with the help of SIRD, ETC, ITDA and other institutions and also reputed CSOs. Each ITDA in consultation with local institutions should take up this task in mission mode with in one year. The educated tribal youth need to be trained as community facilitators. Research Institutions and reputed CSOs working with tribals may be entrusted with preparations of plans in participatory mode. Their services can be engaged to monitor the implementation of these plans periodically.
- ❖ Convergence should be an inbuilt component of planning.

Capacity building

- ❖ It is necessary to organize the wage seekers as SHG member and federate them at village. The capacity building of these wage seekers on thematic areas such as Apiary (Bee-keeping), Mushroom cultivation, scientific collection (staggered and non-destructive harvest methods) and non-exploitive procurement of the forest produce like medicinal and aromatic plants. The capacity building of the

functionaries, local leaders and community is critical and effective measures have to be taken up immediately. Their execution at field level should be technically and financially supported by the concerned line departments.

- ❖ The landless tribal poor who are in occupation of Government land should not be treated as encroachers and should not be evicted. These landless people should be considered as tenants on lease. The lease should be renewed once in three or five years. In future however, efforts should be made to avoid encroachment of village commons.
- ❖ In drought prone areas, farmers should be exposed and trained in coping mechanisms with emphasis on water harvesting and water conserving structures (viz., farm ponds, contour farming, contour bunding, tree based farming system, staggered trenching, mulching techniques, pot irrigation system, etc).
- ❖ Under MGNREGS convergence, intensive capacity building is needed in modern advances in agriculture and allied sectors for selected young farmers, especially women in every village through Krishi Vigyan Kendras acting as nodal agencies for quality training and for dissemination of knowledge and skills. In a mission mode, the KVKs in these areas should take up this task.
- ❖ These SHGs should also be made aware of the PESA, Forest Rights and their entitlements apart from the rights and entitlements provided under MGNREGA to enable them in participation at different stages of the programme (viz., planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring). Concerted efforts need to be made for empowerment of STs by improving their access to and control over use of resources (land, water and forest) in a time bound manner.
- ❖ The literate youth as wage seekers under MGNREGS in the DP&LWE area should be provided with training and skills development for self employment such as masonry, brick making, mobile repairs, book keeping, maintenance of muster roll to engage them in the MGNREGS activities

Land development activities

- ❖ MGNREGS has made a provision to undertake land development activities for the SC, ST, BPL and Small and Marginal farmers. There is an immediate need to consider the ST farmers in the LWE area to improve their livelihoods by formulating land development plans. A facilitator should be assigned to each group of 15 – 20 farmers in this regard. The SHG group leader's capacities need to be upgraded in the activities such as land and animal husbandry including Integrated Farming Systems, Non-pesticide management practices, etc.
- ❖ Most of the lands given to SC and ST communities are unfit for agriculture (either located in waste land regions/ degraded forest lands or at the ridges). Therefore more works under MGNREGS should be given as a package viz., farm pond, land leveling and development. Forest Rights Committee has to identify such land holdings for their development through MGNREGS. MGNREGS works should convert surplus lands which are barren or of poor quality so as to make them fit for cultivation or any other productive purpose (grazing).
- ❖ The rain water harvesting structure should be created under MGNREGS at free of cost for the SC/ST farmers while, at nominal charges for the other weaker sections to avoid further degradation of their lands and to restore their soil health. In case of SC/ST farmers owning small holdings (< half an acre) allowing each of them to have a farm pond may not be viable in which case, a group approach can be adopted sharing the land loss and benefits by the group. Further, these small holdings have to be consolidated on a cluster approach and developed through cooperative farming or community farming mode. Depending upon the suitability, appropriate activities should be identified by professionals under MGNREGS so as to derive more benefit from such lands.
- ❖ Tribals in forest areas should be given degraded scrub forest lands within the forest area to develop them through afforestation programmes under JFM concept (through VSS /VFC/ FPC/EDC) in order to increase the forest cover and biodiversity and long term land use rights to them.

Convergence

- ❖ Under convergence, infrastructure facilities (such as cold storage godowns, market yards) can be created under MGNREGS with support of Forest Department (LAMPS [Large-scale *Adivasi* Multi-Purpose cooperative Societies] and SC/ST federations) which will ensure lucrative prices for the NTFP procured by the tribals. The necessary credit facilities should be provided for creation of such facilities by ITDA (if necessary Tribal Welfare Department should provide security for the loans).
- ❖ The rural connectivity should be integrated with PMGSY or other rural roads programmes to ensure creation of quality all weather roads. Because of the activities of the LWE, this work could not be taken up in many villages. A different strategy has to be worked out to provide connectivity facility to all villages in the LWE area.
- ❖ In LWE areas, severe casualty is caused due to outbreak of epidemic disease (like malaria and cholera which are contagious in nature) during the onset of monsoons and continue till mid winter (January month). As a precautionary measure, mosquito controlling activities are taken up by the PHC. These works (spraying) could be included under permissible works of MGNREGS to strengthen the health care system.

Person days under MGNREGS

- ❖ During the man made and natural calamities in LWE and DP areas, employment opportunities are very scanty. The landless labourers and small farmers are very often forced to migrate; such people may be provided with more than 100 days of wage employment. In respect of LWE areas, the group recommends 365 days of employment while 150 days per household in the Drought prone areas based on the intensity of the calamity.

Worksite facilities

- ❖ Priority should be given for construction of temporary shelter with drinking water, child care and medical facility to ensure increased women participation, more so, pregnant women and lactating mothers.

Payment of wages

- ❖ Timely payment of wages is one of the major concerns of MGNREGS and in several of LWE / some DP areas, the postal and bank network is rather weak. As in case of Chenchu (PTG) tribes of Andhra Pradesh, an advance payment may be made which can be adjusted against the payment of their wages at the weekends, as they cannot afford to wait for their wages for longer periods. Further, disbursement of wages may be entrusted to the local institutions (PDS dealer or retail merchant) or VOs of MGNREGS workers or thrift groups formed under ITDA for timely disbursement of wages on commission basis.
- ❖ Senior citizens or unemployed youth of the village may be engaged by Dept. of Post on temporary basis on consolidated pay of Rs. 3,000 to assist BPM for maintaining and updating records relating to MGNREGS wage payment. It will help in reducing delays in payment of wages.
- ❖ Escorted mobile vans should be provided to the Branch Post Master to disburse the wages at a common point in their respective villages in the LWE area.

Poverty Alleviation

- ❖ One of the main causes of rural poverty is disappearance of Common Property Resources (CPRs) through which poverty stricken households were using to supplement their livelihoods and incomes. The MGNREGS should consider restoration of CPRs through drought proofing and tree plantation for the purpose of sustenance of livelihoods of the poverty groups. Forest department should converge with MGNREGS to contribute for the material (nursery and planting material) and technical component (selection of suitable species and harvesting technology). Wherever, any occupation group like fisher folk, grazers, honey gatherers and the like had customary rights over Common Property Resources and other natural resources, such rights should be statutorily protected and properly recorded and user pattas should be issued jointly in the name of both wife and husband and women alone for female headed households.

Strengthening of Delivery System:

- ❖ Administration finds it difficult to meet the requirements of the Gram Panchayats in the LWE areas for the past few decades. There is a need for rejuvenation of the Traditional Panchayats, to strengthen the community participation and planning process under MGNREGS.
- ❖ There is a need for expanding the permissible works so as to meet their requirements such as provision of drinking water / potable water, sanitation facilities, rural connectivity, education and health systems.
- ❖ The social development infrastructure is very weak and MGNREGS in convergence mode should take up construction of anganwadis, overhead tank, individual and community toilets in SC/ST habitations and residential schools at taluk level. Part of the labour cost in the case of individual toilets may be met from MGNREGS wage bill.

*Annexure-I***Proceedings of the Working Group on 'specific needs of special groups' held at National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad on April 23, 2010.**

Dr. M.V.Rao, Deputy Director General, NIRD welcomed the chairperson and members of the working group. He briefly presented about the expectations of MoRD while constituting the six working groups.

This was followed by a round of introduction by all present in the gathering.

In her initial remarks, **Smt. Renuka Choudhury**, Chairperson emphasized that MGNREGS is a revolutionary measure and have potential to establish a matrix of social justice. She also underlined the government's honest and sincere intentions for reaching out to the most marginalized. She has shown concerns over lack of participation of women. She empathised with the plight of mentally challenged and urged for redefinition of mental health.

Dr. K. Hanumantha Rao, Professor & Head, CWEPA shared few of the research experiences carried out by the NIRD. He found that though MGNREGS is a right based programme, it is turning out to be another wage employment programme at the cutting edge level. MGNREGS aims at provision of livelihood security and as well offer economic opportunities to the asset (land) owners of marginalized groups. For ensuring active participation of primary stakeholders, first, the community should be adequately informed and then an enabling environment should be created. For achieving so, workers' organizations are needed. Andhra Pradesh is making efforts to form one lakh labour group by the end of this year. He informed about the three important studies undertaken by the CWEPA, NIRD: 1) Change in Gender relation through NREGS 2) impact of NREGS on SC/ST and 3) A study on financial Inclusion. He observed through these studies that IEC system is not effective. The delivery system is reluctant to provide information on the account of mainly two reasons: 1) unemployment allowance and 2) worksite facilities. He stressed on exploring options for awareness building other than conventional means. Owing to limited presence of credible NGOs, he mentioned that

CBOs can be potential agents of taking up IEC activities for special groups. He opined that due to insufficient MGNREGS works there is unmet demand at the countryside. It also provides opportunity for resource pooling and thereby resource augmentation. But, generally due to lack of IEC, these opportunities are not latched upon by special groups. Problem of special sections in poverty stricken states is rather worse. Delivery system is also not effective. There is scope of addressing issues of SCs/STs/Women as wage earners and asset owner as well. But in practice they are not realizing even minimum wages. An important reason of woman not getting minimum wages is that the works which were traditionally performed by men are being performed by women and implements and tools are also not compatible with physiological characteristics of women. Therefore, modification in work norms or provision of women friendly tools should be looked into. He observed that assets belonging to SC/ST are of inferior quality therefore, a concerted effort, may be in the form of a package of inputs, must be thought out. It should be so planned that convergence should be a natural process. He also mentioned that silo attitude of line departments is an obstacle in convergence of resources. Line departments should facilitate not dictate the community since community has the wisdom to address their needs what all is required is little support from the line departments to help the small farmers to realize his plans. He criticized that MGNREGS in many states is 'Sarpanch centric' and emphasized the need for wider participation of members of GP more so representative of special groups. He underlined that MGNREGS, indeed, has brought about an increase in women's income thus, an improvement in intra household relations. The expenditure done by women is generally on human resource development such as education, health etc. He pointed out that NREGS has been a socially and economically inclusive scheme. He also highlighted the problems of specific area such as LWE area, hilly areas etc., where due to various reasons participation of the marginalized sections is low and thereby problems of livelihood security and low productivity of resources owned by them.

Dr. Botcha Jhansi Laxmi , Member of Parliament, shared her field observations with the group. In her visit to several worksites she saw that disabled people were not given employment. She suggested for more women mates to be engaged as they have proved to be better managers and this will improve the women's participation. She made a case for

scientific matching and batching, which will improve performance of MGNREGS and hence the chances of realization of minimum wages. She also referred to Indiraprabha Yojna for wasteland development of SC/ST land. She argued for community managed agriculture (sustainable land development) system and converting assigned SC/ST land into productive assets. She suggested that separate tent /shade may be provided for lactating women and either hike in the wages or advance may be given to women in advanced stages of pregnancy and early stage of lactation, which may be recovered later. She suggested that extent or percentage of disability of a person may also be indicated on the job card.

The chairperson felt that payment of wages (partial or full) to the women workers of these categories should be viewed as 'Maternal rights'.

Dr. Sivakumar, Director, National Institute of Mentally Handicapped, observed that disability and poverty are correlated. He pleaded for creation and maintenance of reliable database at disaggregated levels in view of conflicting statistics of World Health Organization, National Sample Survey Organisation and Population census. He stressed upon awareness creation and attitudinal change among officials towards Persons with Disability (PWD) for better delivery. PWD generally face two problems: 1) problem of mobility and 2) problem of accessibility. Sometimes, handicapped situation is created by the environment. He expressed a need for involvement of professionals and rights based organizations with district authorities for identifying work and training of PWD and officials. Time Motion studies should also be carried out keeping the specific disadvantages of PWD. He pleaded that three percent reservation on jobs may be extended to MGNREGS also. A national chart of works suitable for PWD can be prepared with pilot study to begin with.

Dr. R.R. Prasad, P&H, CESD, felt that PWD are basically differently abled, and accordingly work should also be identified. According to him PWD should be imparted and rehabilitated rather than encouraging them to take up hand work under MGNREGS. He drew attention of the group on the problems of Primitive Tribe Groups (PTGs). PTGs refuse to work under MGNREGS as theirs is a subsistence economy and wages under this

scheme are not paid daily. Therefore, advance wage payment to PTG should be made. He suggested that the cooperative society of SC/ST workers should be given opportunity to supply the material so that they can realize commission from material ratio also. He argued that distinction between SC and ST should be maintained. Since, SCs live in contiguous area therefore, such blocks may be identified and integrated development may be taken up. Dr. Prasad pointed out that as per the Census in about 44,000 villages, SC population is more than 50 per cent and these need to be accorded priority. He also argued for community mobilization to make MGNREGS community driven.

Dr. B. Chakravarthy, P&H, CMRD, flagged issues pertaining to SCs. He observed that there is an acute poverty among SCs. An assessment should go to see how much of resources are owned by SCs and how much investment is required to help them come out of poverty. He identified two streams to come out of the poverty – SGSY and MGNREGS. Out of which SGSY has failed and MGNREGS is not providing 100 days of employment in reality. He objected the inclusion of APL in provision of works under MGNREGS.

Dr. P.S.Geethakutty, P&H, CWDGS, raised gender issues under MGNREGS. She cited the example of Tamilnadu and Kerala, where individual job card has been given which enabled individual access to bank by the women wage seekers. She urged this to be scaled up at national level. She pointed out that there is a need to examine whether MGNREGS structures at local level are ensuring access to women and removing their hardships. She observed that MGNREGS has increased work opportunities for women but these works and implements are not gender sensitive. ICAR, Agriculture Universities etc. have developed some women friendly implements. She felt that Time-motion study from gender point of view should be carried out. MGNREGS is also contributing in reduction in domestic violence and trafficking.

Dr. Haque, underscored the need of institutional arrangements at the grassroots level for the ownership of the programme. Identification of work should be need based and should not be Panchayat centric rather led by people's institutions. He pleaded for systematic study of MGNREGS on agriculture.

Dr. Joseph Abraham, Consultant, CWEPA, observed that the ownership on land in case of STs has not been established. Therefore, works on them are neglected. In LWE area, as there is no work opportunity other than MGNREGS, therefore the 100 days ceiling should be reconsidered. In Backward areas and for backward classes investment is not adequate for productive use. Hence, investment should be linked to productivity. He compared the cases of Jharkhand, where market wage rate are lower than minimum wages and Kerala, where market wage rates are higher than minimum wages. In Kerala, people from disguised unemployed household sector come out to participate in MGNREGS. They do not pay much attention to sustainability and productivity in MGNREGS works rather look it as government job.

Dr.V.Annamalai, Faculty, NIRD opined that MGNREGS works should be so synchronized that community land may be made use by the special groups.

Dr. V.Suresh Babu, Asst. Professor, CWEPA, observed that due to works taken up in the individual land, at many places people are going for fragmentation of land.

Dr. K.P. Kumaran, Faculty, NIRD informed that in Amaravati district of Maharashtra, people expressed the view that the farm work is more comfortable than MGNREGS works. He also highlighted the need for awareness programme to sensitize the functionaries at all the levels.

Dr.C.Dheeraja, Asst. Professor, CWEPA, presented few observations regarding women workers based on NIRD study- Changing Gender Relations through MGNREGS. She stressed upon the need for capacity building for women MGNREGS workers alongside functionaries. These training modules should focus not only unskilled but skill development module also. She advocated for a greater role of SHGs. In this regard, flexibility in the guidelines should be incorporated to accommodate women based organization such as SHGs to take care of awareness generation and worksite facility provision. As 80 per cent of the sample workers are illiterate, conventional methods of IEC activities such as wall writing, pamphlets etc. will not prove to be effective. Therefore, right agency and right media should be identified to disseminate the

information to the target groups. She informed that separate SoRs are there for male and female in West Bengal and Bihar, and the same may be emulated elsewhere also.

Ms. Neeta, ANANDI, touched upon some of the burning issues relating to women in MGNREGS. She viewed that definition of household is not clear under the Act which is denying the rights of women. She argued for separate bank account for women so that she could have access to her own wages. She opined that the kind of works given to women is sometimes socially unacceptable. Thus, 'attitudinal and behavior change' module need to be built into the training programmes for officials. Who owns the asset is a moot question and that should be addressed adequately. Because even after working hard, women create asset but they do not own it. Inadequate worksite facilities, especially lack of crèche, are prohibiting women to take part in MGNREGS. There should be an attempt to define community accurately and attempt should be made to create a database showing ownership of MGNREGS assets by women. India has the largest women anemic population. Keeping this in mind, nutritional security may be built into the wage component. This may also be achieved through convergence such as convergence with Janani Suraksha Yojana. Maharashtra EGS Act provides for maternity leave, she desired that same may be extended to MGNREGS. She also made the case for value addition on SC & ST land and resources. She informed that, they have prepared the list of work identified by PWD and same will be shared with the group.

Chairperson, wondered that why Muslims are not evincing much interest in MGNREGS? She observed that, Muslim women generally possess some skills and therefore, probably do not venture out for MGNREGS (unskilled) works.

Dr.M.V.Rao, DDG, NIRD, based on his field experience as an MGNREGS Commissioner, West Bengal found that especially in Eastern India, Muslim women participation is next to nil. The main reason is stigma attached to some MGNREGS works. Whereas, for some other works such as horticulture, nursery development etc., their participation levels are impressive. Therefore, the scope of MGNREGS works should be enlarged so that these women may also participate.

Dr. K. Hanumantha Rao suggested that all women group supervised by women may encourage Muslim women to participate in MGNREGS activities.

Ms. Neeta observed that rural Muslim household has very low asset base therefore the questioned of asset augmentation does not arise for them.

Chairperson concluded the meeting by deciding the working group to be divided into two or three sub groups and work upon specific areas. Later on all the reports may be collated and in the form of consolidated working group report. She called upon all the members to put their best efforts as they are dealing with the most complex and delicate issues.

Dr. K. Hanumantha Rao proposed the vote of thanks to the chair, all the distinguished guests, DDG and NIRD faculty members.

Annexure-II

**Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Working Group on
Specific Needs of Specific Category of Workers**

List of Sub-group Members and Tasks

- A. Sub-group on Gender and Social Equity
(Issues to be addressed: Gender Equity and Social Equity)**
- | | | |
|----|---|-------------|
| 1. | Dr. Botcha Jhansi Lakshmi
Honourable Member of Parliament
B-7, A Block, MS Flats, BKS Marg,
New Delhi – 110001 | Chairperson |
| 2. | Ms. Neeta Haridkar,
ANANDI, Pareksheri Street
Devgadh, Baria
Dahod, Gujarat – 389380 | Member |
| 3. | Prof. R. Lambadri,
Centre for Dalit Studies
Dept. of Public Administration
Osmania University, | Member |
| 4. | Prof. RR Prasad,
Prof. & Head
Centre for Equity and Social Development
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad | Member |
| 5. | Prof. Geetha Kutty
Professor & Head
Centre for Gender Studies
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad | Member |
| 6. | Dr. A. Rizwana
Associate Professor,
Centre for Gender Studies
NIRD, Rajendanagar, Hyderabad | Member |
| 7. | Dr. C. Dheeraja,
Assistant Professor
Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad | Member |

Mandate:

- i. Effective measures for striking gender equity
- ii. Effective measures for striking social equity (encouraging measures for participation of all social and economic classes in rural society)
- iii. Identifying more specific needs of women at work-sites and suggesting measures for implementing the same.
- iv. Measures to popularise and propagate facilities for women under MGNREGA
- v. Any other issues the sub-group considers essential

B. Sub-group on Special Benefits to SC/ST/Groups in Left Wing Extremism Areas (LWE) and Drought Affected Areas

- | | | |
|----|--|----------|
| 1. | Prof. T. Haque
Council for Social Development
Sangha Rachanaa,
53, Lodhi Estate,
New Delhi – 110003 | Chairman |
| 2. | Shri AK Srivastava,
Director (SG)
Ministry of Tribal Affairs,
Govt. of India | Member |
| 3. | Ms. Rashmi Arun Shami
Chief Executive Officer
MS State EG Council
Government of MP
Bhopal | Member |
| 4. | Dr. B. Chakravarthy
Professor & Head
Centre for Media and Rural Documentation
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad | Member |
| 5. | Dr. V. Annamalai
Associate Professor,
Centre for Equity and Social Development,
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad | Member |
| 6. | Dr. V. Suresh Babu
Assistant Professor,
Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad | Member |

7. Mr. David Brenyard
Consultant,
Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad
- Member

Mandate:

- i. Special measures for SC/ST etc. workers in LWE areas
- ii. Special measures for workers in drought affected areas
- iii. Work-site facilities in LWE and drought affected areas
- iv. Work-norms in LWE and drought affected areas
- v. Any other issues the sub-group deemed suitable

C. Sub-group on Physically Challenged Persons and Old Age Persons

1. Shri S.K. Pattanayak,
Director,
Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Govt. of India
New Delhi

Chairman

2. Shri Javeed Abidi
Honorary Director
National Center for Promotion of Employment
for Disabled People (NCPEDP)
A 77,Ground Floor ,South Extension
Past 2,New Delhi-110049 Phone:011-26265647 / 26265648

Member

3. Shri TC Shiva Kumar
Director,
National Institute of Mentally Handicapped
Manovikas Nagar
Secunderabad – 500 009

Member

4. Representative from Govt of Orissa

Member

5. Dr. KP Kumaran
Associate Professor
Centre for Equity and Social Development
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad

Member

6. Dr. Joseph Abraham
Consultant
Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation
NIRD, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad

Member

Mandate:

- i. Specific measures to identify suitable works for Physically Challenged Persons and Old Age People
- ii. Work-site facilities for Physically Challenged and Old Age Persons
- iii. Specific measures to enshrine protective measures
- iv. Any other issue that the sub-group deemed suitable.

*Annexure-III***Working group on Specific Needs of Special Groups
(SC/ST/Women/Minorities)****Schedule for Opinion**

1. Currently what role your Corporation has been playing in the Implementation of MGNREGA, If so give details; (like land development, housing, horticulture etc.);
2. Was there any initiation from the district officials to involve you in the implementation of the scheme?
3. What difficulties, if any, you are facing in performing this role?
4. Are you experiencing any benefits due to the convergence efforts between your Corporation and MGNREGS?
5. If there is no role at present, in what way you can converge with the implementation of MGNREGA?
6. Have you made any efforts to create awareness among your cliental group (SC/ST/Minorities/women) about MGNREGS?
7. Kindly give your opinion on the possible role that you can play to facilitate better participation of SC/ST/Women/Minorities in MGNREGA?
8. Can you provide a list of GPs/blocks where more than 50% of the population belongs to these specific groups? (SC/ST/Minorities), so as to take up MGNREGA in a project mode to give more benefit to these groups?
9. Can you suggest some works to be taken up under MGNREGA which are more suitable and useful to these groups?
10. Please suggests possible areas of convergence between your Corporation and MGNREGA.

*Annexure-IV***Report of the Working Group on Specific Needs of Special Groups
Sub Group on Gender Equity and Social Equity****Context**

Social and economic indicators for developing countries consistently show that women bear the brunt of hardship in poor communities. The vast majority of the world's poor and the world's non literates are women. Of the millions of school age children out of school, the majority are girls.

Women bear almost all responsibilities for meeting basic needs of the family, yet are systematically denied the resources, information and freedom of action they need to fulfil this responsibility. The current world food price crisis impacts socio economically poor and women more specifically, as they are denying themselves the meal to ensure that their children are fed. These women are already suffering the effects of even more severe malnutrition, which inevitably is their children's fate as well.

While the policy approach recognizes the link between gender equality and economic development in programmes and efforts to overcome poverty, the efforts are feeble to address gender discrimination, gendered distribution of productive assets and resulting vulnerability of women.

The NREGA may not be women's empowerment programme, but all legislations have an intrinsic obligation of empowering the citizen and the community at large. NREGA has significant achievements with regard to mobilisation of women wage workers, gender parity of wages and increased control over women's earnings from NREGA. Many women prefer "government work" as it provides dignity and higher wages compared to the work available in the village or as migrant worker available in the market. It is important to note that there are limited or no opportunities created for specific needs of specific category of workers. This includes socio economically marginalised communities of SC, ST and minorities, pregnant women, nursing mothers, aged and physically challenged people.

While there is a need for building gender and social equity concerns centrally in the policy and programme of NREGS.

Field Visit

The sub group met in Vizianagaram, Andhra Pradesh on 6-7 June 2010 to interact, consult and understand the special interventions designed and implemented for the people with specific needs. This included meeting and field exposure to the worksites where the lands of the SC and ST communities are developed and needs of women workers are regarded.

Interface with the mandal and district level officials and representatives of the voluntary organisations helped to understand the processes carried out for inclusion of women and socio economically marginalised workers in NREGS. It was tried to incorporate all the recommendations and observations of all the stakeholders in this report of the sub group.

Suggestions

Gender Equity

- To minimise the vulnerability of widow, deserted and separated women, the household definition for NREGA job card must recognize them as separate household. Separate identification and job card for single as well as dependent women residing with family members, should be issued for their livelihood security.
- It was observed from the interactions that, women usually can not put as much as output as men. So to have gender equity, separate SoR be prepared for different categories of wage workers (men, women, aged, physically challenged etc)
- Flexibility in time of work could be thought specifically for women, as they are engaged in multi activities including household chores. eg 4 hours a day be treated as half day work and women workers may be allotted to work for double the number of days of 4 hours each.

- Many places Crèche facility is not provided saying that there are no sufficient children(5). More over mothers are also not willing to bring the children to the worksite because of the distance, heat and unsafe environment. It is safer to keep children at the Aanganwadi Centre. Hence the AWC should allow a wage worker as Ayah to be at the AWC with children, whose mother is working in MGNREGS. Thus the children will be looked after by the Ayah when their mothers are at the workplace. The AWW and the helper can take charge of children and their needs (food and water, safety and pre school education). If necessary, the timings of Anganwadi may be changed.
- In many cases mothers can't take the children for vaccination, as they come for work. So instructions may be given to the ANM to provide vaccination at the worksite itself to the children of women wage seekers and pre- natal and anti natal mothers who come for work.
- Like convergence with other development schemes at the state level for building and strengthening assets for livelihood, we need to converge with the NRHM and the ICDS programme for periodic health care camps, vaccination, supplementary nutrition and monitoring of the crèche etc.
- Lighter and women friendly works like horticulture and nurseries may be provided not only for pregnant, lactating and aged women but also for all women groups
- Women friendly tools and technologies be made available to women, to ensure the productivity on par with men
- The Monitoring and Vigilance Committee should have at least 50 per cent women members, who would ensure that the right of workers to have worksite facilities is protected.
- In many of the worksites, provision of facilities is done by women. In some places, where the water availability is not adequate, women have to walk far of places. In such cases, Trolleys be used for bringing water to worksites to reduce drudgery

- To encourage more women participation, collection of non timber forest produce and processing(eg. Leaf plate making, de seeding and de- fibrin of the tamarind manually) may be considered as permissible activity under the NREGS
- The provision of soil and water conservation works on SC/ ST land should be extended to lands owned by women of BPL category too. This would also encourage to build asset in the names of women.
- All common property resource should be a collective property of the users of which at least 50 per cent of them should be women.
- The training and capacity building component in the programme should also focus on building skills among women labour in order to undertake skilled jobs/ works in the NREGS.
- There should be reservation for at least 50 per cent women as mate since this would help the women workers interactions with the mate at the worksite
- All IEC print as well as audio visual material must communicate the need and importance of separate account in bank or post office and equal wages for men and women. IEC in NREGA would reinforce education and action on this constitutional right to all workers, especially women.

For Pregnant Women / Nursing mother/ Aged women:

- Community Kitchens be started for elderly people and pregnant women who also go for work under the NREGA
- Transport facility should be provided to the above mentioned group of workers to reach the worksite.
- Relax the existing norm of 5 km for eligibility of transport allowance
- Identification and allocation of lighter works like plantation, watering, nurseries, vermi compost production and vegetable garden can be considered as permissible activity.
- Maternity benefit is every women's right. The group has suggested advance payment of wages in the advanced stages of pregnancy.
- Paid maternity leave may be given to those who have worked on NREGS for at least 30 days in a year.(But it should be restricted to first two deliveries)

Social Equity

- SC and ST wage seekers be provided with at least 20-25 days of work additionally.
- The existing SC/ST land development work should be strengthened with vegetable cultivation along with the horticulture programme.
- The wage workers whose lands are taken under comprehensive land development activities should be trained in the interventions undertaken on their land
- The literate but unskilled wage workers could be trained as mates, technical assistants, social auditors and this would enable them to acquire new skills.
- SC/ST can be given priority in other skill training such as in construction work, vermi compost production, horticulture and drip irrigation systems etc, and these trainings may be done in convergence with SC/ST development corporations and concerned line departments/ agencies
- A district or state level resource group be formed for capacity building of SC/ST wage workers as well as the SC/ST members of Gram Panchayats
- Separate shelf of works may be prepared for SCs/STs
- Ownership and user rights on community assets be reserved for the women and SC and ST groups
- Ward Sabhas should be conducted separately in SC and ST hamlets for effective participation in planning and identification of shelf of works
- SC/ST be given priority in training and recruitment for mates, technical assistants and field assistants
- A small and separate cell may be created at the State level and positioning of one official at district level to periodically monitor the provision of the facilities and enforcement of rights and entitlements for the women and SC/ST workers. They should submit reports quarterly and these reports along with concrete actions should be placed in the public domain.
- MIS formats should be modified to track the benefits accruing to the women and SC/ST from MGNREGS

Annexure-V

Sub Group On
Physically Challenged and Old Age Wage Seekers

Discussions held on 11.6.2010 and 12.6.2010 at NIRD by the Sub Group under the **Chairmanship of Sri. S.K Patanayyak**, Director, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India

2. Dr. Hanumantha Rao, Prof. & Head (CWEPA) welcomed the Chairperson, members and invitees to the meeting. He highlighted the problems of database on differentially abled persons in terms of the number and also the magnitude of deprivation. He also drew the attention of the group to the rising share of aged in the population and mentioned that the aged among Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) are more vulnerable among the poorer sections. He opined that the present coping mechanisms are found to be inadequate to ensure livelihood security to PwDs and the aged population. He appreciated the efforts made by the States like Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in protecting and promoting the interest of PwDs. He raised a number of issues to be discussed by the group which included the need for changing the work time motion study design to accommodate the specific groups like aged and PwDs. He also suggested that there should be flexibility in the timings, differential SORs and treating every PwD and aged as a separate unit under MGNREGA. Planning of works should also include those which are PwD friendly. Since the participation of aged has been increasing under MGNREGA, the convergence of health and other departments with MGNREGA should be ensured.

3. The Chairman, Shri S K Patanayyak, welcomed all the members and invitees to the meeting and drew the attention of the group to various issues that needed to be addressed. He categorised the problems of the PwDs broadly into two categories, one that relates to psycho-social barriers and other, physical limitations. He desired that pro-active nature of delivery system in providing equal opportunities with human dignity to the PwDs would be essential. 'Right to work' and 'Right to equality' of PwDs should be

honoured and efforts need to be made to create an environment that promotes equality and ensures equal opportunities. India is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) which casts a number of obligations on the Country. With a view to secure increased and effective participation of PwDs in the wage employment programme like MGNREGA, special arrangements have to be made for the PwDs and the aged in terms of Aids /Appliances/ Tools and also in creating enabling environments such as worksite facilitation, transport, etc. He also briefly pointed out issues relating to measuring population of PwDs and variation of figure in Census and NSSO survey.

4. Shri Murali, Director, MGNREGA, Govt. of AP made a brief presentation on the efforts of the State Govt. to include PwDs in Rights- based framework and elucidated steps taken in this regard in the context of MGNREGA. He has made a number of suggestions for promoting the participation of PwDs and also empowering them in the process.

5. The members of the sub-group and the invitees have deliberated on several issues.

6. Major points that emerged out of the presentations and deliberations are summed up as below:

- (i) In the selection of Mates, Grama Rozgar Sevaks (GRS) and Technical Assistants, the literate and/or semi skilled persons with disabilities (PwDs) belonging to labour households be given preference.
- (v) A system of flexi hours should be adopted for PwDs and aged, so that they can execute the work at convenient durations on a day.
- (vi) The length of actual work time be relaxed for PwDs and aged and they may be allowed to work for actual work time of 5.30 hrs per day (this is recommended on the basis of Work Time Motion Studies under taken by an NGO (SWADHIKAR, AP.)
- (vii) It may also be considered to make provision to fix the per unit work turn over as per SoRs at an enhanced or concessional rate in the ratio of 0.70: 1 in the

case of PwDs vis- a - vis the general workers. This enhancement be given to PwDs and aged without any other binding considerations.

- (viii) The PwDs be given separate and independent Job Cards within a household. It has been observed that the households having a PwD at home generally avail the benefit for a non disabled member in the family and PwDs are not allowed to work in the site and actually earn. Having a separate Job Card will make the PwDs independent for pursuing employment under the scheme if s/he chooses to do so.
- (ix) Exclusive staff may be posted at the block and district level for mobilization of PwDs and to look after the special needs of the workers with disabilities. He will act as a channel between and the workers with disabilities and will arrange for special intervention for creating conducive environment for PwDs to work. He will also look after the information, communication and education (IEC) needs of PwDs. The salary and allowances of such staff may be borne out of administrative expenses of the scheme.
- (x) In the matters of deciding the work and also location of work, PwDs and aged be allowed to exercise their choice (in a situation where different types of work are being carried out and at different locations) and priority should be given to their preferences.
- (xi) The PwDs be given travel allowances at higher rate on preferential basis. For the travel from place of residence to worksite, the travel allowance may be paid @ 10 % of the minimum daily wages for the initial distance from 0.50 km to 5 km and @ 20 % for above 5 kms.
- (xii) At Grama Panchayat, Block, and District levels, a monitoring and reporting mechanism of the works meant for PwDs be put in place and monitoring and reporting should be done on a regular and continuous basis. The present institutional arrangements in MGNREGA be strengthened/ modified to accommodate this arrangement so that specific and categorized monitoring in relation to PwDs is possible from village to district level. A dedicated Cell at the state and district levels and an additional PO would help in effective monitoring and coordinating with other departments.

- (xiii) In Andhra Pradesh there is a system of providing Rs 3 per person per man day for mobilizing PwDs in MGNREGS. The CSO's/NGO's are engaged in mobilizing PwDs and the system seems to be working very well. This system may be replicated in other States. The NGOs and CSO may act as implementing agency and can mobilize PwDs under this system.
- (xiv) This suggestion is not duplicating the suggestion given at point no (vi) above. The staff to be posted at block and district level will be performing a job of moderator and facilitator and will look forward for providing necessary intervention to facilitate a smooth work environment for PwDs and aged.
- (xv) A suitable shelf of works and opportunities may be created for the semi-skilled PwDs having soft and traditional skills and crafts like computer skills, carpentry, masonry etc.
- (xvi) The land owned by the PwDs be given preference in the execution of MGNREGA individual works.
- (xvii) Works that facilitates accessibility and barrier free entry to all public places like schools, PHCs, water sources, parks etc., should be undertaken on priority and may be included in the shelf of projects as mentioned at Point no 11.
- (xviii) The work site facilities must be such that it takes care of the specific needs of PwDs and Aged

The other issues emerged in the discussion are as follows:

1. In Andhra Pradesh there is a system of Fixed Labour Groups (FLGs) of PwD's. It has been noted that in this FLGs, the PwDs form a small groups like self help groups. The groups plan, execute, maintain and own the work. It has been viewed by many of the participants that the FLGs have several advantages emerging out of the homogeneous concerns and needs. As a fixed group these PwDs seem to perform better as the Andhra Pradesh experience suggests. This practice may be tried in other States with suitable modifications.

2. For the vulnerable groups and senior citizens the works be such that it does not involve much travel and that the works provided are not very strenuous for them.
3. A system of payment through cash may be considered for PwDs and aged in habitations which are far from the Banks/Post Offices, until the “Business Correspondent’ model comes into operation.
4. It may be considered to make provision for adjustment of the cost towards artificial limbs and appliances based on individualized needs of PwDs from the 40 per cent of the material costs under MGNREGA works.
5. Thrust may be given on research and development activities. R& D be carried out on continuous basis to develop technology and equipments needed for the PwDs, to increase their productivity level at par with non disabled persons. National Institutes and agencies may be identified for R& D purposes to undertake specific areas of research.
6. Convergence with other departments like Social Welfare and Agriculture be worked out in detail with regard to schemes and funds that can help better coordination and execution.
7. The involvement of Non Government Organisations, Community Based Organisations and Civil Society Organisations be encouraged in converging and promoting the welfare of the PwDs.
8. Follow up
Sri. Murali, Director, APREGS of Andhra Pradesh was requested by the Chairman to give a brief note to the Sub Committee on the following issues/ practices as adopted in AP :
 - i) SoRs for PwDs
 - ii) Fixed Labour Groups of PwDs
 - iii) Suitable shelf of works applicable to the PwDs.
9. The Chairman wanted the draft recommendations to be circulated among the members for comments.
10. The meeting ended with thanks to the Chair.

FIELD VISIT

A field visit was undertaken on 12.6.10 by the Chairman to Rajapur village in the Balanagar Mandal of Mehaboobnagar district. The team interacted with a group of PwDs who have been working under MGNREGA. The interaction revealed inter alia the following:

1. Formation of group helps them in organising their activities, better earning, supporting each other, etc. The group also addresses other issues beyond the ambit of MGNREGS.
2. The PwDs require better facilities at the work site and other facility like transport, etc.
3. Suitable intervention to address to specific needs is required in more organised manner.

The issues emerged during discussion with the PwDs on the field are getting addressed/ covered in the suggestions listed out in the meeting.

NIRD/12.6.10 (Draft report Prepared by Associate Prof. Kumaran and Dr. Joseph Abraham)

*Annexure-VI***Report of Sub- Group on “SPECIFIC NEEDS OF SPECIAL CATEGORY OF WORKERS in LWE and DP Areas”****Preamble:****LEFT WING EXTREMISM (LWE) AND DROUGHT PRONE AREAS**

The term left wing extremism (LWE) is generally used to refer to the various Maoist terrorist groups in India. It affects areas in the country spread over 35 districts in 9 States of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It is the tribal nature (85 per cent of schedule Tribes resides in forest tracts of central and peninsular India) of this movement that compounds the internal security threat potential of this insurgency. Naxalite movement has its support among the landless, share-croppers, agricultural labour, Harijans and tribals. There is huge economic disparity due to deprivation and exploitation. The root causes are as under:-

- i) Exploitation and oppression of Dalits, Adivasis, and landless people in interior areas.
- ii) Absence of developmental activities and virtual absence of health care, drinking water, roads, electricity and educational facilities in areas where Naxalism has taken roots.
- iii) Disillusionment of people living in interior areas with the Parliamentary democratic system of governance in India.
- iv) For tribals, forest, land, and water mean their livelihood. They have been deprived of these under various acts and orders.

Due to multiple causes, there has been a failure of the administrative system at the grassroots level. The development programmes and the management of natural resource are in vicious circle. The extremist forces have led to low productivity, poor livelihood systems, unemployment and poverty and hence under development of the LWE area.

DROUGHT PRONE AREAS

Drought is a serious problem in India which has affected many parts of the country intermittently. Most drought-prone areas lie in the arid (19.6%), semi-arid (37%) and sub-humid (21%) zones which occupy 77.6% of the total land area of the country. Increased climate variability has made rainfall patterns more inconsistent and unpredictable in the country increasing the recurrence of drought or drought like situation. Apart from reduction in agricultural production, drought has other multifarious long drawn impact, like shortage of drinking water, fodder, less water in reservoirs for power generation etc., which has severe impact on the economy of the country affecting its growth. Social impact arises from lack of income causing out migration of the population from the drought affected areas. Farming community cope with drought in several ways which affect their planning: they withdraw their children from schools, postpone daughters' marriages, and sell their assets such as land or cattle.

The sub-group headed by Dr. T. Haque, Centre for Social Development met on 28th May at New Delhi and discussed the TOR given by the chair person Smt. Renuka Choudhary. The mandate for the sub-group includes:

1. special measure for SC/ST / other workers in LWE areas
2. special measure for SC/ST / other workers in drought prone areas
3. worksite facilities in LWE & DP areas
4. work norms in LWE & DP areas
5. any other relevant issues

The problems of the socially and economically disadvantaged in particular and village communities in general residing in the Left wing Extremism (LWE) areas and Drought Prone (DP) areas are discussed at length.

The nature and extent of vulnerabilities experienced by these disadvantaged sections and determinants of livelihood (in)security are reviewed. The group also discussed the untapped opportunities in these areas and performance of the MGNREGA in some of these areas. It is to be noted that despite limitations, the contribution of MGNREGA in these areas has been found to be beneficial and measures to strengthen

MGNREGS would be more rewarding to the rural communities and more so to the disadvantaged groups.

The specific suggestions vis-à-vis the TOR are as follows:

Planning Process

- ❖ The LWE region falling under Schedule V area, PESA and FRA provides necessary framework for strengthening of land and forest resources. MGNREGA could provide the necessary support (financial and professional) for empowerment of tribal community and poverty alleviation. The adhoc planning has led to lack of adequate works under shelf of projects and also found to be incompatible in the prevailing conditions and local priorities. Participatory approach to prepare area development plan to workout systems for livelihood security for landless and land owning wage seekers is the immediate need of the programme.
- ❖ GIS based resource mapping would facilitate in better identification and preparation of developmental plan. Watershed based planning need to be adopted for effective rejuvenation of natural resources.
- ❖ Land development plan should be prepared based on the individual land owning household plan. A consolidation of activities under land development should be carried out at Gram Panchayat level.
- ❖ These consolidated land development plan should figure in the District Agriculture Plan.
- ❖ The ITDA, needs to be strengthened with competent professionals to provide guidance, assistance to the tribal community in preparation of community as well as household specific development plans. The funds for tribal development are under utilized and leakages are also reported to be significant. The formal and informal institutions (Eg: Gram Sabha, Tribal Chiefs, VSS, VTDA, etc.,) should be strengthened by building the capacities by ITDA with the help of SIRD,ETC, ITDA institutions and also deputed CSOs. Each ITDA in consultation with local institutions should take up this task in mission mode with in one year. The

educated tribal youth need to be trained as community facilitators. Research Institutions and reputed CSOs working with tribals may be entrusted with preparations of plans in participatory mode. Their services can be engaged to monitor the implementation of these plans periodically.

- ❖ Convergence should be an inbuilt component of planning.

Capacity building

- ❖ It is necessary to organize these landless wage seekers as SHG member and federate them at village. The capacity building of these wage seekers on thematic areas such as Apiary (Bee-keeping), Mushroom cultivation, scientific collection (staggered and non-destructive harvest methods) and non-exploitive procurement of the forest produce like medicinal and aromatic plants is necessary. The capacity building of the functionaries, local leaders and community is critical and effective measures have to be taken up immediately. Their execution at field level should be technically and financially supported by the concerned line departments.
- ❖ The landless tribal poor who are in occupation of Government land should not be treated as encroachers and should not be evicted. These landless people should be considered as tenants on lease. The lease should be renewed once in three or five years. In future however, efforts should be made to avoid encroachment of village commons.
- ❖ In drought prone areas, farmers should be exposed and trained in coping mechanisms with emphasis on water harvesting and water conserving structures (viz., farm ponds, contour farming, contour bunding, tree based farming system, staggered trenching, mulching techniques, pot irrigation system, etc).
- ❖ Under MGNREGS convergence, intensive capacity building is needed in modern advances in agriculture and allied sectors for selected young farmers, especially women in every village through Krishi Vigyan Kendras acting as nodal agencies for quality training and for dissemination of knowledge and skills. In a mission mode, the KVKs in these areas should take up this task.

- ❖ These SHGs should also be made aware of the PESA, Forest Rights and their entitlements apart from the MGNREGS rights to enable them in participation at stages of the programme (viz., planning, implementation, evaluation and monitoring). Concerted efforts need to be made for empowerment of STs by improving their access to and control over use of resources (land, water and forest) in a time bound manner.
- ❖ The literate youth as wage seeker under MGNREGS in the DP&LWE area should be provided with training and skills development for self employment such as masonry, brick making, mobile repairs, book keeping, maintenance of muster roll to engage them in the MGNREGS activities

Land development activities

- ❖ MGNREGS has made a provision to undertake land development activities in the SC,ST, BPL, IAY beneficiaries and Small and Marginal farmers land. It is notice from the research study findings that some Village Panchayats have not executed any works on the individual lands that would facilitate their livelihood systems in LWE areas. There is an immediate need to consider the ST farmers in the LWE area to improve their livelihoods by formulating the land owning job card holders into Self Help Groups. Each group of 15 – 20 members need to be formulated. The SHG group leaders' capacities need to be upgraded in the activities such as land and animal husbandry including Integrated Farming Systems, Non-pesticide management practices, etc. The SHG leaders should be educated by the agriculture department (involved in ITDA) in identifying cropping pattern based on the moisture availability and the crop growth period.
- ❖ Most of the lands given to SC and ST communities are unfit for agriculture (either located in waste land regions/ degraded forest lands or at the ridges). Therefore more works under MGNREGS should be given as a package viz., farm pond, land leveling and development. Forest Rights Committee has to identify such land holdings for their development through MGNREGS. MGNREGS works should convert surplus lands which are barren or of poor quality so as to make them fit for cultivation or any other productive purpose (grazing).

- ❖ The rain water harvesting structure should be created under MGNREGS at free of cost for the SC/ST farmers while, at nominal charges for the other weaker sections to avoid further degradation of their lands and to restore their soil health. In case of SC/ST farmers owning small holdings (< half an acre) allowing each of them to have a farm pond may not be viable in which case, a group approach can be adopted sharing the land loss and benefits by the group. Further, these small holdings have to be consolidated on a cluster approach and developed through cooperative farming or community farming mode. Depending upon the suitability, appropriate activities should be identified by professionals under MGNREGS so as to derive more benefit from such lands.
- ❖ Tribals in forest area should be given degraded scrub forest lands within the forest area to develop them through afforestation programmes under JFM concept (through VSS /VFC/ FPC/EDC) in order to increase the forest cover and bio-diversity and long term land use rights to them.

Convergence

- ❖ Under convergence, infrastructure facilities (such as cold storage godowns, market yards) can be created under MGNREGS with support of Forest Department (LAMPS [Large-scale *Adivasi* Multi-Purpose cooperative Societies] and SC/ST federations) which will ensure lucrative prices for the NTFP procured by the tribals. The Necessary credit facilities should be provided for creation of such facilities by ITDA (if necessary Tribal Welfare Department should provide security) as to facilitate the financial inclusion concept.
- ❖ The rural connectivity should be integrated with PMGSY or other rural roads programmes to ensure creation of quality all weather roads.
- ❖ In LWE areas, severe casualty is caused due to outbreak of epidemic disease (like malaria and cholera which are contagious in nature) during the onset of monsoons and continue till mid winter (January month). As a precautionary measure, mosquito controlling activities are taken up by the PHC. These works could be included under permissible works of MGNREGS to strengthen the PHCs.

Person days under MGNREGS

- ❖ During the man made and natural calamities in LWE and DP areas, employment opportunities are very scanty. The landless labourers and small farmers are very often forced to migrate; such people may be provided with more than 100 days of wage employment per individual or 150 days per household based on the intensity of the calamity. Presently, they are not able to fulfil the 100 days employment per household (on average the LWE areas households are provided with 50 days of employment) due to inadequate works under shelf of projects.

Worksite facilities

- ❖ Priority should be given for construction of temporary shelter with drinking water, child care and medical facility should be provided at worksite in DP area before initiating works to ensure increased women participation.

Payment of wages

- ❖ Timely payment of wages is one of the major concerns of MGNREGS and in several of LWE / some DP areas, the postal and bank network is rather weak. As in case of Chenchu (PTG) tribes of Andhra Pradesh, an advance payment may be made which can be adjusted against the payment of their wages at the week ends, as they cannot afford to wait for their wages for longer periods. Further, disbursement of wages may be entrusted to the local institutions or VOs of MGNREGS workers or thrift groups formed under ITDA for timely disburse of wages on commission basis.

Poverty Alleviation

- ❖ One of the main causes of rural poverty is disappearance of Common Property Resources (CPRs) through which poverty stricken households used to supplement their livelihood and incomes. The MGNREGS should consider restoration of CPRs through drought proofing and tree plantation category for the purpose of sustenance of the poverty group. Forest department should converge with MGNREGS to contribute for the material (nursery and planting material) and technical component (selection of suitable species and harvesting technology). Wherever, any occupation group like fisher folk, grazers, honey gatherers and the like had customary rights

over Common Property Resources and other natural resources, such rights should be statutorily protected and properly recorded and user pattas should be issued jointly in the name of both wife and husband and women alone for female headed households.

Strengthening of Delivery System:

- ❖ Administration finds it difficult to reach out to the requirements of the gram Panchayats in the LWE areas for the past few decades. There is a need for rejuvenation of the Traditional Panchayats, to strengthen the community participation and planning process under MGNREGS.
- ❖ There is a need for expanding the permissible works so as to meet their requirements such as provision of drinking water / potable water, sanitation facilities, rural connectivity, education and health systems.
- ❖ The social development infrastructure is very weak and MGNREGS in convergence mode should take construction of anganwadis, overhead tank, individual and community toilets in SC/ST habitations and residential schools at taluk level. Part of the labour cost in the case of individual toilets may be met from MGNREGS wage bill.

*Annexure-VII***GIST OF DISCUSSIONS HAD WITH SMT. RENUKACHOWDHARY ON
28.6.2010**

The chairperson of the working group called for a discussion on progress of tasks allotted to different sub-groups and the course of action, especially towards submission of report, with NIRD faculty members. Accordingly, Dr K Hanumantha Rao, Prof. & Head (CWEPA) and Dr. G RajaniKanth, Assistant Professor (CWEPA) attended the meeting to appraise Chairperson on the issues concerned. Keeping in view, the direction of recommendations arrived at by the sub-groups, current issues pertaining to targeted wage seekers and also the issues emerging out of research conducted by NIRD, Smt. Renuka Chowdhury dwelled at length on various aspects and the gist of issues emerged for consideration are as follows:

- i. De-silting of huge tanks can not exclusively be attended to by manual labour. It results in hardship to the wage seekers. Hence, the issue of mechanization of works to some extent should be focused on to improve quality of works as well.
- ii. The very instances like students discontinuing (especially at Plus Two level) education and joining MGNREGS as wage seekers is a disturbing trend and this issue needs to be addressed.
- iii. How does EGS playing role in planning issues at national level has to be examined in general context to cull-out the very direction and interventions of the programme.
- iv. The issue of '1 of 70' has become a huge problem and issues surrounding it has to be examined. For instance, in areas to be covered under Polavaram Project or in areas of similar nature no EGS or any other programme is happening and this needs to be looked into.
- v. While making recommendations, the very social issue among Muslim women i.e. taboo of carrying head-load, is resulting lack of penetration among them. Such issues may also exist among different social communities and this aspect needs to be addressed.

- vi. Regarding PWDs, the stipulation of including a minimum number of such persons in every labour group should be made.
- vii. While quoting incidents happening in Rajasthan and elsewhere in India, she highlighted the issue on how 'the delays' in payment resulting in wage seekers borrowing money against their expected wages from money-lenders and ultimately they were deprived of their wages since most of it consumed as payment towards interest rate.
- viii. A kind of recommendation resulting in taking up 'Visible Assets' under EGS should be made to avoid proliferation of invisible and repeated works of no use. Lack of works related invisible works results in huge leakages.
- ix. A consideration should also be made to include 'all types' of works under EGS so that meaningful assets can be generated.
- x. The issue of 'duplication' of works under the tag of convergence needs to be addressed.
- xi. The very genuine issue of feelings among younger people that 'Old Age' persons are not able to do rigorous work under EGS and yet claiming equal wages has to be addressed without disturbing stake of each other.
- xii. The very concept of cut-off age of Old Age may be fixed at 60 years and there should be mutually agreeable upper age limit.
- xiii. Turning her attention on the likely recommendation of provision of advance payment of wages to pregnant and lactating women etc. care has to be taken to curtail exploitation by linking the payment with the portion of work completed etc.
- xiv. The working group should carefully look into the issue of 'percentage of disability' while considering weightage under 'disabled category' of workers. Such workers should get certificate from the authorities concerned or the fellow normal workers may certify the requisite but he/she should be made liable to loose EGS Job Card if wrong certification is made.
- xv. Emphasizing on the very issue of 'convergence' of works taken up under EGS, Chairperson considered the involvement of different Ministries concerned and a recommendation should be made accordingly.

- xvi. The recommendation of providing '**Hats**' to **women workers** has to be made in view of the scorching sun under which the female labor works. The hats can be produced by women SHGs. Provision of 'Gum Boots' should also be considered since working in wet soil attracts several skin diseases.
- xvii. The suggestion of providing skills in processing NTFP may be earmarked for Handicapped ST women.
- xviii. EGS works should be taken up in a phased manner as a integral part of Five Year Plans for meaningful contribution to rural development.
- xix. Endorsing the suggestion on forming Farmer and their Workers Groups to identify the works to be taken up in their lands, she emphasized that the workers identified for such grouping should be dominated by farm workers.
- xx. She also endorsed the recommendation of building awareness among SHGs among land-owners and asset-less.
- xxi. On the lines of ATMA, she felt there is need to educate the farmers once the EGS works are completed. She felt that it can become an effective tool in utilizing the natural resources management resulted through EGS works.
- xxii. Recommendations benefiting small and marginal farmers to dissociate from copy-cat farm practices should be made. Towards this she emphasized a recommendation on the lines of integrated planning while taking up works under EGS.
- xxiii. Reaction to the recommendation on 'tree-crop' she emphasized that such recommendations should take into consideration the complex issues prevailing in agriculture sector.
- xxiv. She considered the 'Irradiation storage' complexes (based on the technology from BARC) have immense value for small and marginal farmers since it results in vast drop in wastage and spoilage of agriculture crops.
- xxv. Turning her attention on agents of awareness, she identified the local Grocery Shop Owner, Pan Shop Owner and the fellow who runs PDS centre as principal resource persons to generate awareness among EGS workers and a recommendation towards this should be made for effective awareness generation.

- xxvi. Turning her attention on the need for graduating a wage seeker, recommendations should be made so as to enable the workers to acquire skills towards building nation for sustainable development. The EGS Card holder should become a Card Holder of Skilled work in future.
- xxvii. Further turning her attention on categorization of workers based on the skills possessed by them, different Job Cards on the lines of Platinum, Gold, Blue etc. should be introduced denoting the level of skills the workers possess. She felt that if categorization of workers is attempted then a kind of 'dynamism' would creep in among wage seekers.
- xxviii. After completion of each work taken up under EGS, there must be counseling sessions for the workers on various issues of social and economic development. It results in graduation of workers from wage seeking to skills based development.
- xxix. Finally, she focused on the very issue that recommendations of the Working Group should also be on how EGS works can be converted positive to agriculture.

Annexure VIII

Minutes of the Consultative Meeting of Working Group on “Specific needs of Special category of Workers in MGNREGA” held on 04.07.2010 at TTDC, Khammam Chaired by Smt. Renuka Chowdhury

The Project Director, DWMA, Khammam welcomed the Hon’ble Chairperson of working group, Hon’ble MP of Vizianagaram, Member of the working group, and the District Collector & DPC, MGNREGS-AP, Khammam and all present in the gathering.

This consultative meeting was aimed at suggestions and recommendations from the all corners of Public, Elected Representatives and Officials concerned with implementation of MGNREGA. These suggestions were mainly on promotion of participation of SCs, STs, Women and disabled group of wage seekers working under MGNREGS.

The chairperson informed that, after implementation of the scheme, the Social Security of people in rural areas has increased and it is benevolent to the common man and working groups in rural areas. The Hon’ble chairperson explained that impact would be felt on LWE area, Agriculture and drought prone area and hence valuable suggestions were invited from all the participants to help the landless labour and as well as agricultural farmers.

The Hon’ble Member of Parliament, Vizianagaram and Chairperson for the sub group of SC, ST and Women category shared her experiences on the working of sub group in Vizianagaram district. She felt that this is the ‘rights’ based programme and not a charity programme and the SC, ST and women category of wage seekers are now getting their livelihood security under MGNREGS. She argued that the notion of agriculture has been impacted adversely by MGNREGS is not correct. She explained that 50% wage seekers are from women category through out the India and some entitlements to the women workers and particularly pregnant women workers have to be provided.

She suggested that in the Fixed Labour Groups of Andhra Pradesh, there is a problem with old aged wage seekers and women. Anemic women should be given extra wage. The disabled persons with more than 40 % of disability may be given special works/ easy nature of works such as nurseries and plantation works. The pregnant women

wage seekers may be provided with friendly tools instead of hard tools. To avoid the soil erosion, protection walls shall be constructed in coastal belt of Andhra Pradesh, and Cashew and Coconut plantations may be taken up. She suggested that in ponds created under MGNREGA cultivation of Gambusia fish may be taken up to increase the livelihoods for coastal people. Children of wage seekers may be provided with bicycles for dropping the wage seeker parents to the work spot as well as for going to their schools. The small kids of wage seekers may be taken care of by the Anganwadi workers, as *Aaya* is not sufficient only at worksite. Water storage tanks are to be purified with material components under MGNREGS to reduce the health problems in rural areas. Training on Collection and Packaging of tribal products should be provided to the wage seekers. The payments of wages may be disbursed at village fair (Santha) once in week, so that a large number of wage seekers may get their wages at a time at one place, as the postal payments resulted in some delays. Agricultural based works of small and marginal farmers should be included in shelf of works, so that Comprehensive Land Development may take place. Instead of present ceiling of 05.00 Acres, even in one acre of land the ring wells may be taken up with sprinkle irrigation, so that a small farmer can get more benefit. She observed that by implementing the programme the child labour has decreased and migration for the works has also been reducing. And more over food security and education in rural areas has been increased.

The District Collector, Khammam suggested that for every work video recording may be a must for evidence purpose in the interest of transparency; the works which have been executed but not visible/ not existing can be verified. This may be incorporated in the rules under MGNREGA.

In Left wing extremist Mandals of the district, work may be provided for 365 days to whoever has no work, so that extremism may be decreased to some extent and work security may be provided to the people. The District Collector, has suggested that disabled and old aged particularly wage seekers above the 60 years of age should be given extra allowance or they must be given time based wage. Further suggested that wages under MGNREGS may be on par with the market wage rates so that migration to the other works may be decreased and all the job card holders could come for the EGS works. Providing Drinking water work at worksite may be given only to disabled wage

seekers. In agency areas, 2 to 3 months may be given for preparation of realistic plans for the benefit of youth by giving ITI/ Computer trainings. The District Collector informed that due to lack of man power to the Postal Dept., they have provided two hired vehicles for mobilization of payments to be disbursed promptly to the wage seekers. The Collector has also suggested that one or two persons with a consolidated pay of Rs.3000/- each may be temporarily engaged to assist the BPM in writing, updation of records but not with money related work. So that the dissatisfaction of the wage seeker in getting delay payments may be solved.

The chairperson of the working group accepted the proposal and suggested to take the services of either senior citizen or un employed youth in the village for this purpose.

The Chairperson, Zilla Parishad, Khammam observed that there is a problem with the temporary establishment like FA, and TA as they are not taking of the programme seriously. In view of that permanent staff may be recruited at all levels under the programme. She requested for taking up of side walls, side drains to internal roads and CC roads under this programme. The women wage seekers shall be given priority and one or two hours relief in work may be allowed.

The representative for ANANDI, Gujarat has shared her experience on gender equality and social equality. Women wage seekers have to play important role under this programme. Maternity benefits to the extent possible shall be provided to the women wage seekers. The planning not only by the Gram Sabhas but at Hamlet level shall be taken up so that the ownership of the assets e.g., community lands of small farmers will be developed and their income levels will also increase.

The Representative of NGO-SECURE, Bhadrachalam has suggested that orientation is needed for tribal wage seekers. Tools at free of cost may be given to the SC/ST wage seekers who completed 30 Person days under this programme. The Kondareddy tribes in Bhadrachalam division may be given works such as “Voota Cheruvu” in their villages. Sanitation particularly common toilets to the women have to be provided. Under MGNREGS, Extra Agency allowance in addition to the wages shall be given in tribal Mandals. Fixed Labour Groups may be reshuffled as per the willingness of the wage seekers formed in the groups.

Wide range publicity in agency area may be given on the land development works and productivity based agricultural works in these lands.

The Hon'ble MP of Vizianagaram urged that drains works, school fencing with tree guards and road bumps works may be provided under the convergence programme with 60: 40 wage and material ratio at the district level. This integrated approach under MGNREGS will develop the livelihood security and increase the income of rural people. Tank works such as desilting of tanks shall be provided giving priority to SCs and STs. For this activity mapping for a period of 2 to 3 months may be prepared by giving wide publicity in the village.

The Professor of CWEPA, NIRD, Hyderabad suggested that every farmer wise plan may be taken up for development of land in project mode and funds be earmarked. The support from all the line departments may be ensured for the comprehensive land development of the farmers.

The Sarpanch from Chintoor suggested that the old aged and disabled wage seekers shall be given lighter works such as Percolation Tanks etc., and wage seekers may be provided insurance policy under the programme.

The Sarpanch from Thallada Mandal has claimed that due to the implementation of this programme 80% poverty has been eliminated during the last four years in the rural areas and suggested that Katcha drain works may not be taken up which may damage the fair roads. Plantation programme in each and every village should be taken up for the Environmental sustainability as is being done in Karnataka State and for watering to the trees for 365 days provision should be made under the programme.

The Hon'ble chairperson has responded that the watering and maintenance works will be taken up by the disabled wage seekers under MGNREGS. All the works shall be provided with work site boards displaying the details of works under the MGNREGS.

The MPDO, Dummugudem suggested that in agency area, the traditional works of tribals such as collection of tamarind, amla, and honey may be included under MGNREGS.

The Chairperson explained that the original concept of the MGNREGS is to get supplementary income after completion of agricultural activities and coordination

between the farmers and wage seekers has to be arrived by the field functionaries at Mandal level.

The MPP, Chintoor informed that payments are being delayed due to insufficient staff at Mandal level.

Chairperson observed that if wage payment is delayed, private money lenders will come into the picture and wage seeker get dissatisfaction over the scheme. She suggested that local institutions, PDS dealers, etc., may be entrusted with this task.

The Hon'ble Chief Whip, Govt., of AP appreciated MGNREGS and informed that in more than half of the agency Mandals poor people are getting wage employment while creating their own livelihood. In implementation, employment creation was concentrated in the 1st phase and now asset creation is to be concentrated in the 2nd phase. He congratulated MORD for this achievement and suggested that the target groups of wage seekers particularly Dalits should be financially benefitted. The Patta lands given to tribals should be developed under the scheme. The works of land leveling and plantations should be taken up in the water logging areas of Govt. establishment like Hostels, Hospitals and Schools.

The Hon'ble Minister for Co-Operative, Employment and Labour, Govt., of Andhra Pradesh stressed that the wage rate should be based on the work turnout only. The workers under construction sector are being given insurance and suggested that the wage seekers who completed 90 days of EGS works may also be covered under the scheme of insurance.

The Hon'ble Chairperson, working group under MGNREGS has requested all the public representatives and NIRD officials and district level and Mandal level officials to play enabling role in implementation of the MGNREGS Programme.

The Project Director, DWMA, Khammam offered vote of thanks to the Chairperson, all the members and participants of the consultative Meeting.

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Elected representatives and Officials Present:-

1. Sri R. Venkata Reddy , Hon'ble Minister for Co-Operative, Employment and Labour Govt., Of Andhra Pradesh
2. Sri M Batti Vikramarka, Chief whip, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh
3. Dr Smt B.Jhansi Lakshmi, Hon'ble MP, Vizianagaram and member of working group.
4. Smt G Vijaya Lakshmi, Hon'ble Chairperson, ZPP, Khammam.
5. Dr. Sri N Nageswara Rao, District Collector & DPC, MGNREGS-AP, Khammam
6. Dr. K Hanumantha Rao, Prof. & Head, CWEPA, NIRD, Hyderabad.
7. Sri S. K. Pattanayak, Dy. Director-III, Ministry of SJ&E, Govt. of India
8. Sri A Rama Rao, PD & Addl.DPC, MGNREGS-AP, DWMA, Khammam.
9. Sri V Chakradhar Rao, PD & Addl.DPC, MGNREGS-AP, DRDA, Khammam.
10. Ms. Neeta Hardikar, Director, Anandi, Gujarat.
11. Sri T S Siva Kumar, Director, NIMH, Secunderabad.
12. Prof. R Limbadri, Director, Centre for Dalit Studies
13. Sri S David Brynerd, Consultant, NIRD, Hyderabad.
14. Dr. V Suresh Babu, Faculty, NIRD, Hyderabad.
15. Dr. C. Dheeraja, Faculty, NIRD, Hyderabad.
16. Dr. V Annamalai, Faculty, NIRD, Hyderabad.
17. Sri Saurabh Kumar, TRG-Manager, NIRD, Hyderabad.
18. Sri N A S V Prasada Rao, CHESTD, NGO, Bhadrachalam.
19. Sri P S S Hari Prasada Rao, AID, NGO, Khammam
20. Sri V Gandhi Babu, ASDS, NGO, Khammam
21. Sri S Subhani, ASHA-NGO, Chintoor.
22. Other District Line department Officers, Khammam.
23. Public Representatives (Mandal Presidents, and Sarpanches)
24. (05) MPDOs in the district.

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