

**Minutes of the Round Table Conference on NREGA with  
Social Science Research Institutes  
held on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2008,  
PUSA, New Delhi.**

A round table conference on NREGA with Social Science Research institutions was held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development on 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2008 at PUSA in New Delhi. A list of the participants is enclosed.

The agenda for discussion was as follows:

- a) Familiarizing the participants with the various components of the NREGA
- b) Identifying/highlighting areas of research interest
- c) Exploring the possibility of selected academic institutions being part of the concurrent monitoring and evaluation of NREGA
- d) Exploring the possibility of curriculum development including in courses on Rural economics, Rural sociology, Political Science and Rural management.
- e) Working jointly with selected Universities/Institutes, NREGA implementing agencies to develop case studies which can be used in teaching as well as training institutions
- f) Encouraging under graduate and graduate students in different programmes to work a summer interns in the NREGA programme and earn a certificate at the end of their internship.

**A.** At the outset, Secretary (RD) welcomed the participants and highlighted the distinctive features of NREGA.

NREGA is a path breaking legislation and a flagship programme for promoting inclusive growth by ensuring a legal guarantee of 100 days of employment to rural poor. Its Rights based framework creates a paradigm shift from earlier wage employment programmes. The Acts' objective is to generate employment opportunities, and regenerate the natural resource basic of rural livelihood through an implementation process that strengthens grass root democratic processes. She said that the objective of the workshop is to engage professional institutions with NREGA implementation through a variety of activities like debates, seminars, research, action research internships, curricula and training, monitoring and evaluation documentation. The aim is to evolve a professional network of resources institutions to contribute towards improving the quality of NREGA processes.

The Secretary highlighted the following aspects of NREGA as:

- i. Bare bones of NREGA- the systems, procedures, enshrined in the guidelines of NREGA have improved and involved as a result of feedback from institutions. The indicators of change can be seen on the NREGA website. Strengthening of administration, financial flow, financial inclusion, Social Audits, use of IT are the priority in NREGA.
- ii. 5 Acts Play- NREGA is a central Act with the RTI and other Acts, such as the Panchayat Raj Act, Minimum Wages Act, Scheduled Caste and Tribal Act, that have been energised and NREGA has infused life in them.
- iii. There are emerging issues that relate to the assets created. These issues are those of durability and sustainability of the assets created. Optimal productivity needs to be

aimed and enhancement and promotion of new works to be undertaken. The feedback from the field is that though the workers are involved in the creation but they are not the users. Hence, convergences and synergies with the different institutes is the need of the hour.

- iv. Co- benefits of NREGA are due to the nature of works, like the natural resource base- plantation, desilting etc. Issues emerging through the regeneration of natural resources can be noted on the global environment. So the research institutes can help in lobbying for changing the Kyoto rules by identifying and quantifying issues that require research and feedback.
- v. Partnerships with the specialised agencies need to be evolved in NREGA.

The scale of operation of NREGA has increased from coverage of 330 districts to 614 districts in 2008-09. NREGA is likely to provide employment to 5 crore households this year with an estimated expenditure of Rs. 30,000 crore out of which 70% shall be spent as wage payment to labourers. This has also been the basis of a major momentum towards financial inclusion by opening workers' accounts in Post Offices and Banks.

**B.** Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Dr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, addressed the participants drawing attention to the fact that poverty and unemployment are the basic problems faced by rural India. Generation of employment will lead to eradication of poverty in rural India and NREGA is a big step towards meeting this goal. NREGA is unique in that it provides a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment to all adult members of a rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. He said NREGA is successfully working on its basic goal of providing employment to rural poor and stemming distress, he emphasized on the five priority components of NREGA:

- i) Awareness ii) Participation iii) Vigilance and Monitoring iv) Transparency v) Accountability.

He highlighted the immense potential and possibilities for cooperation and collaboration between the Ministry of Rural Development and all participating institutions.

**C.** Joint Secretary (NREGA) presentation the outlining opportunities and areas of co-operation and collaboration.  
Presentation is enclosed.

**D.** The views of the representatives of institutes are summarized below:

1. **P.K. Patnaik, CRRID-Chandigarh** suggested that the organization would be interested in the capacity building of Panchayats.
2. **Dr Surjeet Singh, Institute of Development Studies, Jaipur**, suggested for taking up the capacity building of PRIs, especially for conducting social audit and strengthening the role of women functionaries.
4. **Dr. Kanchan Chopra, Institute of Economic, Delhi**, expressed to take action research and documentation of case studies on the assets created through NREGA and their use by the community.
5. **Proff. Indraneel Dutta, OKD Institute of Social Change and Development, Guwahati**, expressed concern about the lack of awareness and non availability of banks in the 6 Schedule areas of North –East as the major hindrance in the implementation of NREGA.

6. **Dr. Ashim Roy, CDA, Ahmedabad**, identified “multiplier Impact assessment” and research on various aspects of NREGA as the areas of interest.
7. **Ratna Sudershan, Institute of Social Studies Trust**, expressed that the thrust area of their interest is the documentation of case studies and research on the issues around Gender.
8. **Prof. Milindo Chakraarty, Development Evaluation Society of India**, suggested conducting studies on the impact of natural and social resources on sustainability of environment and income generation. The other areas identified include capacity building of communities on planning at district level for watershed, monitoring of eco-system services and convergence with the programmes of the Ministry of Environment
9. **Dr. G.K.Karant, CMDR, Karnataka**, identified studies on variations in the socio-cultural settings across a given geographical area; impact on the wage fixation as a result of NREGA interventions, time and motion study, financial inclusion, especially the use of SMART Card. Besides these the documentation of case studies would also be included.
10. **Dr. Alex Ekka, Xavier Institute of Social Service, Ranchi**, expressed interest in conducting studies around monitoring and evaluation
11. **Dr. M.L Rao, IPE**, suggested capacity building in planning at the grassroots level and Impact assessment of different aspects NREGA as the themes of interest.
12. **Dr. Srijan Pal Singh, IIMA** suggested promoting summer internship for students and fresh graduates for research and setting up open source for all studies and reports.
13. **Prof Prabal Singh, XLRI, Jamshedpur**, suggested conducting studies on assessment of quality of assets and co-benefits evolving as a result of NREGA interventions, especially the financial inclusion.
14. **Prof R. K. Mishra, IPE, Hyderabad**, suggested taking up action research, capacity building and developing the district profiles to suit the works permitted under NREGA during the planning exercise for identifying works.
15. **Prof S P. Pandhi, NKE Centre for Development Studies, Orissa**, suggested maximising the use of the inter-disciplinary faculty, at the Centre, in conducting a comprehensive evaluation study in 4 districts of Orissa. Besides the evaluations, capacity building, research and documentation of case studies were other subjects identified by the institute.
16. **Prof A K Singh, GIRI, Lucknow**, suggested to take up qualitative study of the assets and micro -economy impact study. Another innovative feature shared was developing curriculum on NREGA for schools that GIRI would like to work upon.
17. **Prof M R Murty, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development**, identified concurrent evaluations on core identified variables in selective 5% districts as the themes.
18. **Prof Pranab Banerji, IIPA, New Delhi**, suggested for strengthening convergence of different rural development programmes.
19. **Prof K.S.Bhatt, Council for Social Development, Hyderabad**, expressed interest in conducting researches around the bare bones of NREGA, highlighted by the Secretary. Apart from these, the study/assessments of assets (quality etc), study on convergence between the different rural development schemes, documentation of case studies and capacity building, were also identified by CSD.

20. **Shri. K. S. Joseph, Xavier Institute, Bhubaneswar**, suggested conducting comparative studies across the State, capacity building of NGOs in participatory methodologies, evaluation and impact assessment and micro-level studies on financial inclusion in NREGA, through Banks and Post Offices.
21. **Shri. Shailendra, IRMA, Anand, Gujarat** expressed interest in Action Research and documentation of case studies and capacity building of implementers in planning and managerial capabilities.
22. **Dr. S.C. Mukhopadhyaya, CSSSC, Kolkata** suggested for conducting land surveys in West Bengal and baseline survey to generate database of land use.
23. **Proff. Hashim, ISIT, New Delhi**, expressed interest in participating in any of the aspects discussed during the conference.
24. **Kartika, Govind Ballabh Pant Institute**, expressed that since the institute has already developed tools and reference materials on NREGA that are being used in the field for muster roll verifications, social audit and other activities related to the workers, the institute would like to continue the collaboration on the same issues.
25. **Dr. K. Hanumantha Rao, National Institute for Rural Development**, suggested conducting study on processes of monitoring; impact of NREGA on climate change, assessment of implementing agencies and local governance; developing district profiles for planning and identification of works; creation of database through baseline survey; impact study around agriculture, natural resource base and women empowerment.
26. **Shri. Prof.Sakaram Somayaji- TERI**  
TERI expressed interest in taking environment related issues in NREGA.

#### **E. Decisions taken**

The following decisions were taken:

- Interested institutions will send proposals on the areas of their interest to the Ministry along with the budget.
- Lessons learned will be disseminated.

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS  
STRENGTHENING NREGA  
ROUNDTABLE CONFERENCE WITH SOCIAL RESEARCH INSTITUTES  
11<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2008**

S.No.	Name	ORGANIZATION/INSTITUTION
1	S.MADHESWARAN	INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMICS CHANGE BANGALORE-560072
2.	SURJIT SINGH	INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES JAIPUR
3.	DR. ALEX EKKA	X AVIER INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SERVICE RANCHI, JHARKHAND
4.	Dr. INDRANEE DUTTA	OKD INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL CHANCE & DEVELOPMENT, VIP ROAD UPPER HENGARABAK, GUWAHATI- 781036
5.	Dr. S.R HASHIM	ISIT VASANT KUNG NEW DELH70
6.	DR. MLN RAO	IPE, D.C COMPUS, ITI DEVUBALL
7.	SRIJAN PAL SINGH	IIMA
8.	Prof. PRADAL K. SEN	XLRI- JOUDHPUR
9.	R.K MISHRA	IPE HYDERABAD
10	S.P PADHI	NKE CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT
11.	PINAKI CHAKRABORTY	NIPFP NEW DELHI
12.	Prof M.R MURTHY	INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT
13.	Prof PRANAB BANERJI	IIPA, IP ESTATE NEW DELHI
14.	DR. G;K KARANTH	CMDR, DHARAWAD KARNATAK
15.	DR.K.S BHAT	COUNCIL FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT RAJENDRA NAGAR HYDERABAD.
16	Prof. KANCHAN CHOPRA	INSTITUTE OF ECONOMIC NEW DELHI
17.	K.HANUMANTHA & HEAD	NIRD HYDERABAD
18.	ANISH GANDHI ADVISOR	NIRD NEW DELHI
19	DR. MILINDO CHAKRABARY DIRECTOR	DEV. EVALUTION SOCIETY OF INDIA
20	DR. P.T TERHH	XIMB, BHUBNESHWAR
21.	DR.BHASKAR SINHA	IIFA, BHOPAL
22.	SUKHVINDER SINGH	CRRID, CHANDIGARH
23.	DR.PP BALAN	CRRID, CHANDIGHAR
24.	DR. B.K PATNAIK	CRRID, CHANDIGHAR
25.	Prof. SAKARAMA SOMAYA JI	TERI NEW DELHI
26.	H.S SHYLENDRA	IRMA,ANAND
27.	Prof. S. ALAB	CESS HYDERABAD
28.	DR. ANIL ROY	CFDA,AHMEDABAD
29.	Prof. A.K SINGH	GIRI INSTITUTRE LUCKNOW
30.	DR. SURAJIT CHANDRA MUKHOPADHYAY	CSSSC, KOLKATA
31.	RATNA M.SUDARSHAN	INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES TRUST
32	RINA BHATTACHARAYA	INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES TRUST
33.	MADHURI KARAK	INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL STUDIES TRUST
34	AMITA SHAH	GIDR
35	ANINDITA	GB.PANT SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE
36.	SUNIL	GB. PANT SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE
37.	KARTIKA	GB. PANT SOCIAL SCIENCE INSTITUTE

