

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON CONVERGENCE BETWEEN MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE & RESEARCH IN SELECT PILOT DISTRICTS HELD ON 20<sup>TH</sup> APRIL, 2009 in ICAR BUILDING, PUSA, NEW DELHI.**

Meeting of the Officials of Ministry of Rural Development and Indian Council of Agriculture & Research was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2009 under joint Chairpersonship of Secretary (Rural Development) and Secretary & Director General (Department of Agriculture Research and Education & ICAR). The meeting was attended by the officials of Ministry of Rural Development and Indian Council of Agriculture & Research, CAPART and KVKs. List of participants may be seen at Annexure- A.

### **Opening Remarks**

#### **Secretary (RD)**

- The participants were apprised the status of implementation of NREGA.
- It was emphasized that it was important to make technology accessible to the rural poor and it could be possible through convergence.
- NREGA has three fold objectives (i) strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing a fall-back employment source, (ii) wage security and (iii) transformative empowerment process of democracy.
- Task Force were constituted to formulate convergence guidelines. The sustained efforts and in-depth analysis has resulted into joint guidelines on NREGA with ICAR, Ministry of Environment & Forests and Ministry of Water Resources.
- Convergence will make the assets created under NREGS productive and durable and will lead to sustainable rural livelihood. NREGA is central to the concept of convergence.
- The ATMA responsible for all the technology dissemination activities at the district level would have linkage with all the line departments, research organizations, non-governmental organizations and agencies associated with agricultural development in the district, NGO in coordination with CAPART will have pre and post linkages with the NREGA works.

#### **Status of NREGS implementation**

- i) 4.24 crore number of households provided with employment. 193.80 crore number of person days generated. Out of this, the share of SC and ST was 55% and women was 48% .
- ii) 25.22 lakh works have been taken up during 2008-09 so far. Out of this 9.11 lakhs works have been completed. Water conservation works accounted for 66% of the works.
- iii) Out of total budget of Rs.30,000 crore, an amount of Rs.28,540 crores was released till date and expenditure of Rs.21,000 crores was reported.

- iv) 6.5 crores accounts of NREGA workers opened in post office and banks. (2.85 crores in post offices and 3.85 crores in banks) Rs.8,064.92 crores disbursed through post offices and banks which 55% of the total unskilled wages.
- v) MIS operations speeded up. 6 crore job cards and 1.2 crore Muster rolls put on the web site.
- vi) Labour budgets for all districts for 2009-10 approved. About Rs.55,000 crores fund requirement was estimated.

### **Secretary & Director General (ICAR), Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India**

Convergence is harvest of interactive efforts and meeting grounds shall be brought out among KVKs, NREGA, Agriculture Universities to bring about sustainable development. KVKs have very significant role, as they have six specialists available with them along with technical interventions and can help in bringing linkages with Agricultural Universities. It was informed that positive interaction along with estimation of works in a particular area and providing proper inputs and technology is necessary to meet the goal of sustainability. In addition to this, investment should be productive including training of people with proper planning for the better productivity in the ensuing crop season. He pointed out that convergence is not as simple as  $2+2=4$  in enhancing productivity but it is  $(2+2)^2=16$ , implying that once convergence is carried out in true spirit, the benefits to rural population will be multifold due to its multiplier effect.

### **Presentation by Joint Secretary (RD)**

A presentation on Sustainable Development through Inter-sectoral Convergence in ICAR-NREGA Interface Meeting was made.

It was stressed that convergence between inter-sectoral programmes will be at the level of management, planning and technical support.

Constitution of Resource Groups (RGs) at District, Block and village was mooted to facilitate sharing resources, planning, training and technical support.

Blending of professional expertise with participatory planning would provide informed choices. NREGA perspective plans identifies the needs and gaps in the district in all sectors, not just related to works permissible under NREGA. DRG through professionals should be there to ensure BRG/VRG training on the methodology of convergence between NAP and NREGA and to facilitate village level participatory planning.

Building of Annual work plan (AWP) permits flexibility, priority, seasonality in works to be taken up for a particular year. AWP also lists shelf of projects recommended by the Gram Sabha and finalised by the Gram Panchayat/IP/ZP.

The Programme Officer and the BRG at the Block level and the DPC and the DRG at the district level will ensure that the selection of works are in mutual coordination. On the other hand the DRG will ensure that the technical quality of the plan is maintained as per the norms of KVK

Re-scrutinizing shelf of projects to assess the feasibility of works selected is necessary. Expertise must be marshaled for quality & planning next set of activities. Along with all these it is important to share the list of works completed with KVK

Regarding the strategies of NREGA and ICAR convergence technical expertise of the KVK may be used for the purpose of appropriate choice of work in particular area at the planning stage, quality enhancing technologies/technical support at the design and Execution stages and value addition on NREGA work after completion of the work.

## **ISSUES DISCUSSED**

1. Improvement in productivity of public and private lands.
2. Spreading awareness about agriculture system through cooperation with NGOs some of which are already coordinated by CAPART.
3. Harnessing huge resource with optimal utilization of technology available.
4. Technology access to the end-user.
5. Investment to develop value of land for the betterment of Rural people with the aim to achieve sustainable development.

## **Principal Secretary (RD) Government of Andhra Pradesh**

Inter-sectoral convergence of NREGS will provide sustainable livelihood which in turn will result in withering away of NREGA in the long run, if

- wage employment opportunities are available for every household, in the same village from the Agriculture and allied sectors, through out the year
- Unskilled labour become skilled
- Opportunities for skilled labour are created
- Self employment opportunities are created in the village

Expansion of livelihood security to the rural households is possible if there is convergence of NREGS with other initiatives, the initiatives taken by Andhra Pradesh in this regard follows:

1. Drought Adaptation Initiative -Project has piloted 10 initiatives useful as coping mechanism against drought, selected pilots are integrated in to NREGA for up-scaling in 100 villages, initially and focus is on improving production systems on farm.
2. Common Property Resource (CPR) Management Project under NREGA in Chittoor and Anantapur districts as Action Fraterna & NGO its Partners to rejuvenate the degraded Common Lands for enhancing the livelihood support of the dependent communities. Extent: 24000 Acres, in 44 villages of 37 Mandals with 24 NGOs in Chittoor and Anantapur. Funds are provided for works execution from NREGA and Facilitation cost by NGOs.
3. Community Managed sustainable Agriculture initiative is on non-pesticide management as a means to eco-friendly & cost-effective agriculture. NREGA provides silt application & vermi-composting components and facilitation cost

born by SERP (APRPRP). Initiative covers 173 mandals and 5-10 villages/mandal

4. Livelihood based approach” to NAIP (ICAR), collaboration results will be used to upscale “farming systems approach” in rain fed areas.
5. Tree Based NRM (Watershed) Program with BAIF in Mahabubnagar district. The technical support would be provided by BAIF for improving biomass on dry lands through “multi-tier” tree species to ensure usufructs throughout the year which will provide sustainable livelihood. It is taken up in 6 Mandals of Mahabubnagar district. All Activities are funded under NREGA.
6. Plantation program with Rubber Board, Coffee Board and Tribal Welfare Department. The cost shall be shared among NREGA, TROCR and respective Boards.
7. NRM Program with ICRISAT in Mahabubnagar. An MoU was signed between ICRISAT & Dept of Rural Development. The activity cost is borne from NREGS and facilitation cost by ICRISAT. The project aims at Production Systems improvement- focus on soil fertility, micro-nutrient management, seed production, cultivation practices, value addition, etc and it provides end to end technical support in improving farming systems.

Regarding Institutional Arrangements at State a State level steering committee was formed with Principal Secretary, RD as Chairman and various partners as members. A consortium formed to provide technical support to RD Dept. and working for last 3 years (CRIDA, ANGRAU, ICRISAT, MANAGE etc as members).

4 KVKs are identified for Partnering for which a State Level meeting was held. Each KVK will cover 30-50 villages. KVKs will handhold about 1000-1500 farmers per year and ensure adoption of technologies. This collaboration will provide value-added services that are built on the infrastructure created under NREGA.

#### **Representative from Government of Gujarat:**

Convergence will provide the value addition through the NREGS also enhance the capacity of its beneficiaries by creation of sustainable assets and upgrading of infrastructure in rural areas with multiplier effects.

The technologies available for convergence with Rainwater harvesting, Group Irrigation wells, Vermicomposts, Lift irrigation, Capacity Building, Better Management of Agriculture Activities are identified eg. for channel spreading and construction of structure of dug wells expenditure will be booked under NREGS. Infrastructure expenditure work will be booked under SGSY/RSVY.

Regarding Vermicompost scheme to implement scheme it is decided to involve SHG to provide them economical activity and labour employment generation. Under NREGs every SHG will be provided 100 Days labour work on vermicompost plan which will cost Rs.20,000 +5000 Material cost. The expenditure of procuring material and vermis will be booked under RSVY / SGSY.

Capacity Building has been done by KVK for Better Management of Agriculture Activities by including Technology Support through training, Upgraded seeds, Guidance for crops pattern, Supervision.

An issue was raised that the 100 days ceiling should be enhanced for the tribal districts and for convergence of NREGS with SGSY scheme the BPL limit should be relaxed. The concept of Krishi Rath was advocated to take technology from laboratory to field.

### **Prof S.L. Mehta**

It was emphasised that efficient water harvesting and its utilization, promotion of horticulture, provision of basket of technology to villages will lead to generation of more mandays per year per hectre. In a case study in Rajasthan, the convergence has resulted into enhancement of rural poor from 20-30,000/- per annum to 50,000/- to 1,00,000 in 78 villages under study.

Capacity building through technology is essential for the success of convergence programme. Basket of technologies should be provided to villages along with survey of area to ascertain quality of soil and water etc. The role of NGOs may be explored in formation producer group, business groups and marketing groups.

The technical support should be followed up by handholding of the rural poor at least for minimum of 5 years in selected say in 10 villages. The convergence of NHM and NREGA has immense potential for sustainable livelihood of rural poor.

### **DDG (Horticulture) ICAR**

Regarding convergence, participation of all institutions is necessary. Training farmers through farmers is the best instrument to take technology to the poor. Horticulture is the best option as it helps the poor to earn living and educate their children. The main objectives are to recognize the importance of horticulture, vermicomposting , quality planting material, conservation agriculture and nutrition and food security.

Emphasis were put on analysis of gap in differential productivity in different areas and development of area specific to the convergence like identification of type of irrigation, planting material etc.

### **Ms. Rashmi Arun Shami ,CEO MP State Employment Guarantee Council**

NREGS-MP has formulated various sub schemes for increasing agriculture productivity like KAPILDHARA for Dug wells and Water recharging structure, BHOOMISHILP for Land Bunding and Land Levelling, and Horticulture & Sericulture under NANDAN PHALODYAN, RESHAM, VANYA. State has under taken Watershed Management programme under the sub-scheme "NREGS Watershed". Convergence between NREGA & ICAR is done with objective to ensure application of appropriate technologies developed by ICAR & KVKs in works carried out under NREGA.

### **S.M. Vijayanand, Principal Secretary, Department of Local Self Government, Government of Kerala**

Policy priority is required for natural resource management in NREGS and the primary sector in People's Plan. Participatory Resource Mapping was completed in 890 Village Panchayats. In Kerala, NREGS was first introduced in agriculturally

distressed districts leading to high demand for employment. It was help y strong Krishi Bhawan network with an agriculture graduate and two or three demonstrators in each Village Panchayat in addition to this Agriculture officer who is “exofficio Secretary” of Village Panchayat. Under KUDUMBASHREE & NREGA extensive network of women and Neighbourhood Groups is formed. 1.87 lakh NHGs covered 37.69 lakh families in rural areas covering entire BPL population barring a few exceptions. Kudumbashree is also engaged in skill development and self-employment. Regarding Food security programme, Common infrastructure using NREGS, Subsidy for land development and inputs from Panchayat and Agriculture Departments, Crop insurance by Government are undertaken.

Certain issues were pointed out in carrying out convergence among different schemes. (a) identification of work in plantation areas; (b) lack of practical expertise and experience in watershed management; (c) delay in taking up agriculture development works in tribal lands; (d) non-availability of standards and specifications for certain kinds of agriculture works.

Suggestions were given for specific support of ICAR institutions like CPCRI (Kasaragode and Kayamkulam) and CSWCRTI (Ootty). Need for linkage with Commodity Boards was also felt. It was suggested that freedom should be there to decide unit cost according to prevailing schedule of rates, permission should be given for land development in lands of at least marginal farmers and leased land of women SHGs. It was also suggested that linkage with RKVY should be made mandatory.

#### **R.S. Dohre, Rajasthan, Zonal PD Jodhpur, Rajasthan**

Constraints regarding lack of orientation and interface among implementing institutions were pointed out. KVKs are not much conversant with the convergence guidelines. There is lack of linkage among line departments like DRDA, Animal Husbandry, Forest, Soil and Water Conservation, fishery etc., except Agriculture and Horticulture.

#### **Dr. S. Karuna Raju, Joint Development Commissioner Govt. of Punjab**

There is great of convergence between horticulture/vegetative crops and NREGA works. Hoshiarpur, it was informed that the climatic conditions and the soil structure along with underground water though deep is of good quality which may help in value adding activities on NREGA work. Entrepreneurship development for women-allied agri vocations, skill intensive and service oriented vocations along with Horticultural based cropping system is being extensively implemented.

#### **Representative from Govt. of Uttarakhand**

For Technological Orchard Development Intervention areas are identified in wasteland along with selection of suitable horticultural activities according to Agro Climatic Zone, Fodder Plantation In Van Panchayat, Protected Agriculture – Poly houses, Drip Irrigation, Rejuvenation of Old Orchard- Golanaspati, Medicinal plants Cultivation, Mushroom- Dhingri, Food Processing and Marketing – Pear-Vinegar.

Constraints of small scattered and fragmented land holdings, rain fed agriculture, erratic weather conditions, wild animals hazard, poor-marketing network and high transportation cost were pointed out.

It was suggested that Individual land development of SHG members, user groups should be allowed under NREGA. Roof water harvesting in private and community

Buildings should be initiated. Reserve for NREGA fund Minimum 1 Lac per GP should be set and Administrative expenses should be enhanced @ 10%.

#### **Representative from Govt. of Bihar**

The thrust areas identified for the Vaishali districts are water conservation, development of Irrigation facility, flood control and protection works, value addition and income generating activities.

Constraints were pointed out like storage facility for grains is not available to the farmers, Seed production and proper Capital support is also required.

#### **Representative from Govt. of Karnataka**

It was reported that Technical expertise are available in KVK for - implementation of Animal husbandry (dairy, sheep and goat rearing), Vermicomposting, earth worm culture and vermi wash production, production of all major crops grown, horticulture, land development and creation of irrigation facilities

Some constraints were also pointed out as difficulty in mobilizing men youth as they are involved in other remunerative activities like sand mining, small size of holdings of farmers, unsuitability of machineries for special situations and confusion regarding the ownership and management of machineries.

#### **Amar Singh, (Joint Secretary- SGSY), Ministry of Rural Development**

SGSY mobilizes rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) for setting up of sustainable micro enterprises by selection of key economic activities depending on available resources, occupational skills, appropriate technology and ready market. It provides infrastructure, technology and marketing support forward and backward linkages. The constraints of lack of awareness about available and latest technologies, absence of the professional at the field level to provide technical support for preparation of viable projects can be overcome by convergence as it will fill in the gaps due to constraints discussed earlier. The importance of convergence can be felt as more than 60% of SHGs members directly or indirectly depend on agriculture/horticulture/animal husbandry/dairy based activities for their livelihood. The technologies of ICAR may provide value inputs to SGSY.

The convergence model with ICAR and SGSY was put forward with greater role for KVKs and DRDAs.

#### **Mohd. Haleem Khan, Director General (CAPART)**

There are more than 12,000 NGOs which works in close coordination with CAPART. Such NGOs can be identified in these 50 pilot districts which in turn can provide inputs for utilization of enhanced productivity due to convergence and make rural poor aware about convergence of schemes and role of KVKs in it.

#### **Follow up**

JS (NREGA) summarized the follow-up points:

1. Setting up State Resource Group (SRG) and District Resource Group (DRG) was proposed along with identification of projects to be taken up.

2. Besides this planning holistically for them in terms of Technology, linkages with income generation and training is intensively desired.
3. Monitoring Review and monthly reporting in prescribed format with concurrent research with proper documentation should be followed.
4. Training institutions should be identified to train for identified projects under convergence.
5. A district plan with time line for all above is also needed.
6. It was suggested that steps should be taken to catch up with the next sowing season as the kharif season will start from the month of July.
7. It will be the responsibility of District Project Officer to factor in all administrative costs of convergence within 6% cap of administrative expenditure.
8. It must be ensured that District Action plan is to be co-signed by DPC and KVK in charge and be placed on websites-NREGA and ICAR

## **ANNEXURE A**

1. Dr. Rita Sharma  
Secretary  
Ministry of Rural Development  
Government of India
2. Dr. Mangala Rai  
Secretary and DG(ICAR)  
Department of Agriculture Research and ICAR  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Government of India.
3. Smt. Amita Sharma  
Joint Secretary(NREGA)  
Department of Rural Development
4. Shri. K.Raju  
Principal Secretary,  
Government of Andhra Pradesh
5. Shri. Arun Kumar  
Principal Secretary  
Government of Assam
6. Shri. S. M Vijayanand  
Principal Secretary  
Government of Kerala
7. Shri. Sudhir Agarwal  
Special Secretary PARD  
Government of Chhattisgarh
8. Shri. Anil Shrivastav  
Secretary P&RD Bhopal  
Government of MP
9. Shri. H. N. Chhibber  
Additional Comissioner  
Government of Gujarat
10. Shri. P. Ravi Kumar  
Secretary RD  
Government of Karnataka
11. Smt. Santosh  
Deputy Secretary  
Ministry of Tribal Affairs
12. Shri S K Singh  
Director (NREGA)  
Department of Rural Development