

NREGS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE - KERALA EXPERIENCE

S.M. Vijayanand

Principal Secretary

Department of Local Self Government

Government of Kerala

INTRODUCTION

- Policy priority for natural resource management in NREGS and the primary sector in People's Plan
 - 40 percent of Development Fund of PRIs (Rs.627.31 Crore) to be earmarked for the productive sector
 - PRIs plan for and spend more than 2/3rd of the investment in agriculture and allied sectors
- Participatory Resource Mapping completed in 890 Village Panchayats

INTRODUCTION (Contd..)

- NREGS linked with People's Plan
 - Working Group for Agriculture and Allied sectors for Plan ideation and projectisation
 - Grama Sabha facilitators
- NREGS first introduced in agriculturally distressed districts
 - Hence the demand factor
- Strong Krishi Bhavan network in Kerala
 - An agriculture graduate and two or three demonstrators in each Village Panchayat
 - Agriculture officer is “exofficio Secretary” of Village Panchayat
- Association of research institutions with PRIs
- Resource pool of trainers with KILA

KUDUMBASHREE & NREGA

- Extensive network of women only Neighbourhood Groups
 - 1.87 lakh NHGs covering 37.69 lakh families in rural areas
 - Entire BPL population barring a few exceptions brought into the network
- Kudumbashree network given a formal role in NREGA implementation
 - Canvassing registrants
 - First level in identification of works – labour budgeting
 - Exclusive agency for organization of work through women mates
 - Providers of facilities to workers
 - Suppliers of implements – as Micro-businesses
 - Facilitating financial inclusion and inculcating thrift habit

KUDUMBASHREE & NREGA (contd....)

- Decision to train bare-foot engineers from educated members of Kudumbashree
- Two-day special capacity building module on NREGA to cover selected Kudumbashree Members
 - 64556 Mates
 - 21000 additional volunteers

KUDUMBASHREE & NREGA (Contd...)

- Towards a convergent anti-poverty sub plan through Kudumbashree
 - NREGA for supplementary cash income
 - NRHM
 - Health Insurance
 - ICDS
 - SSA
 - Special nutrition-through ICDS
 - Mid-day meals
 - PDS
- } for health
- } for human development
- } for food security

KUDUMBASHREE & NREGA (Contd...)

- Pensions
 - Asraya of Kudumbashree
 - People's Plan - for minimum needs like housing, sanitation, water supply, electricity
 - Kudumbashree - for skill development and self-employment
- } for social security

INITIATIVES IN THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

- Food security programme
 - Common infrastructure using NREGS
 - Subsidy for land development and inputs from Panchayat and Agriculture Departments
 - Crop insurance by Government
- Preparation of watershed development plans under NREGA

ISSUES

- Identification of work in plantation areas
- Lack of practical expertise and experience in watershed management
- Delay in taking up agriculture development works in tribal lands
- Non-availability of standards and specifications for certain kinds of agriculture works

NEW INITIATIVES

- Framework for proper convergence of NREGS and Agriculture projects – to be issued as Guidelines
 - Each Panchayat to prepare a project document for the integrated plans
 - NREGS Action Plan
 - People's Plan
 - State Plan of Agriculture
- Agriculture Officer as the implementing officer of the project
- Details of individual beneficiaries and general beneficiaries to be spelt out
- Extension of technology and techniques to be detailed
- Roles and responsibilities of expert agencies to be spelt out
- Value addition to be brought in through Kudumbashree

NEW INITIATIVES (Contd...)

- Making the Working Group on agriculture responsible for monitoring the project
- Special training for agricultural officers in partnership with Agriculture Department
- Taking up networked agri-based projects under Kudumbashree
- Attempt to introduce WADI approach in tribal lands
- Inviting MYRADA and SAHYOG for technical assistance in preparing watershed-based plans
- Demonstration works in SIRD, Agriculture farms and Tribal Co-operative farms

SUGGESTIONS

- Specific support of ICAR institutions like CPCRI (Kasaragode and Kayamkulam) and CSWCRTI (Ooty)
- Need for linkage with Commodity Boards
- Freedom to decide unit cost according to prevailing schedule of rates
- Permission for land development in lands of at least marginal farmers and leased land of women SHGs
- Linkage with RKVY to be made mandatory

THANK YOU

