

Minutes of Workshop on
Inter-sectoral convergence with NREGS for Enhancing Productivity in selected pilot districts
October 13, 2009, Orchha, Madhya Pradesh

1. In view of the inter-sectorality of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), the need to create durable assets and the common target groups of certain development programmes, the Ministry of Rural Development had held high level meetings and set up a task force to discuss effective possibilities of convergence with the Scheme. Accordingly, the Ministry had developed and disseminated convergence guidelines and taken up convergence pilots in 115 districts across India.
2. To focus on integrated development for Bundelkhand Region and NREGS with a stress on sustainable development and water conservation, a workshop was held on *Inter-sectoral convergence with NREGS for Enhancing Productivity in selected convergence pilot districts of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh*. All the 13 districts of Bundelkhand, 7 districts in Uttar Pradesh and 6 in Madhya Pradesh were included in the list of districts for convergence.
 - 2.1. The discussion at Orchha was chaired by Shri Pradeep Jain Aditya, Minister of State for Rural Development, Government of India. There were over 60 participants including Dr. Rita Sharma, Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development, Ms. Sudha Pillai, Secretary to Government of India, Planning Commission, Shri U.N Panjiar, Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Water Resources, Development Commissioner and Principal Secretary Rural Development, Madhya Pradesh Shri R Parsuram, other representatives of the Government of India, District Collectors and CEOs, Zilla Parishads of 11 districts, and other representatives from the Government of Madhya Pradesh, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), Civil Society Organizations and members of professional institutions including IIM Lucknow, Indian Institute of Forest Management (IIFM), Bhopal. The Uttar Pradesh Government communicated their inability to attend the workshop.
3. Shri Pradeep Jain spoke about need for awareness and better outreach of NREGA. He emphasized that there is large scale migration in the Bundelkhand region due to limited livelihood opportunities. NREGA has provided safety net for these households. The real challenges of implementation are faced by the field level functionaries and it is their initiatives that will make NREGA effective.
4. The Secretary Rural Development, Dr. Rita Sharma, highlighted the relevance of NREGA and water conservation. She indicated that
 - (i) It is important that the convergence projects are undertaken within the parameters of NREGA without diluting the spirit of the Act.
 - (ii) For Madhya Pradesh, all the districts in Bundelkhand have been included as part of the convergence pilots.
 - (iii) The next steps for convergence should concentrate on preparation of district plans for implementation, conducting state and district level workshops, training resource groups, close monitoring and documenting of convergence projects.
 - (iv) Issues for discussion including, preparation of district plans for implementation, setting up of Joint Review Mission, monitoring of convergence pilots

The Secretary also spoke about the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), the main aspect and strategy for the National Rural Livelihood Mission and SGSY convergence with NREGA.

5. Secretary to Government of India, Planning Commission, Ms. Sudha Pillai, in her address stressed that in Bundelkhand region at most of the places there is hard rock, water in the tube wells is not fit for agriculture, and there is scanty rainfall. For this region, NREGA works has acted as a safety net. In Madhya Pradesh, for the migrant labour, NREGA has also provided an alternate source of livelihood for these workers. SGSY can be of help to NREGA job card holders by helping in self employment and from moving from unskilled to skilled work. As a point of action, she suggested that there should be some health insurance scheme for the NREGA workers, AM ADMI BIMA be utilized for NREGA workers.

6. Secretary to Government of India, Ministry of Water Resources, Shri U.N. Panjiar: during his address pointed out that in the districts of Bundelkhand, because of shortage of rain and water there is decrease in productivity.

- i. Under repair, renovation and restoration scheme, 53 traditional water bodies in 6 districts of Madhya Pradesh, in Bundelkhand region have been identified to be covered under convergence with NREGA, for which project reports will be ready very soon. In this CPR 5% provision will be for CPR preparation and 5% provision for impact assessment.
- ii. There is only one district of Bundelkhand region covered under the MOWR scheme of Recharge of Groundwater through Dug wells. Thus, the remaining district of the region can be covered under NREGS, by making it compulsory to construct Dug well recharge structure with every dug well being constructed under NREGS. It is important to remember that under convergence certain activities are not permitted under NREGS but are permitted under the scheme of water resource and vice versa, therefore, with convergence work can be completed on holistic approach. In every district Ground water scientist have been posted by the MOWR, their services can be availed in convergence projects.

7. Commissioner, Agriculture, Ministry of Agriculture , Dr. M.B. Singh suggested that conservation of water in the Bundelkhand region is the central issue.

- i) There is urgent need for convergence of NFSM and NHM with NREGS. At district level, where convergence can be made, who and what role one has to be played is to be worked out.
- ii) There are number of intervention under NFSM and NHM. Therefore, there is need of training at district level and down below. For the district not covered under NHM and falling in this region, convergence with horticulture plantation should be worked out.
- iii) Under NFSM, 4 technical people in every district and 6 people at State level are being provided. This will be a good technical resource for NFSM.
- iv) Seed certification can be taken in any district, which will be helpful in convergence with NREGS for value addition as land developed under NREGS.

He also reiterated Ministry of Agriculture's support and commitment to convergence initiatives.

- 8.** ADG, Forests, Ministry of Environment and Forests, Shri S. Bandhopadhyay stressed that:
- i. Under NREGS water sources have been developed that can be utilized for raising nurseries. Agro forestry is a good activity which can be carried out under convergence with NREGS.
 - ii. Under convergence with NREGS the degraded forest is developed; it will help to achieve the 33% forest cover target for India
 - iii. There is plan of Rs. 900 crore for developing primary forests through panchayats. This can also be encouraged through Agro forestry and convergence with NREGS.
 - iv. In forest area, work can be taken up only under working plan of that forest area. 90% works of works match with NREGS works, therefore, the district collector who is programme coordinator for NREGA in the district should examine these carefully and plan accordingly
 - v. Forest range officer should be given training for Data entry under NREGA, so that they can submit U.C. in time.
 - vi. Under NREGS good work has been carried out which should be compiled and communicated to other places for replication.
 - vii. Forest Department will cooperate at State level and Central level in implementing convergence of NREGS with NAP.
- 9.** Technical Expert, National Rain fed Area Authority of India, Shri V.K. Bahuguna informed/ suggested that:
- i. NRAA has issued common guidelines for watershed Development. The watershed work in the country will be carried out on these guidelines.
 - ii. For bundelkhand region, Perspective plan has been prepared by NRAA, which is to be sanctioned by GOI.
 - iii. On an average, there are 50% drought years in Bundelkhand region, whereas, in last 5 years it is 80%. How water from one area to other area can be utilized is to be worked out.
 - iv. When in Haryana, with 400 mm rain, there could be a good forest, than in 750 mm average rain, good forest can be developed in Bundelkhand very easily.
 - v. NRAA team has observed that the biggest gap in the convergence is between the forest department and other administrative departments in the district and without convergence with the forest, especially the treatment of the fringe forest areas, the desired level of improvement in improving the productivity and management of the natural resources including agriculture productivity and water conservation will be difficult to achieve.
 - vi. The Authority has already prepared a drought mitigation plan with focus on inter –sectoral convergence and is also preparing a scheme for the simultaneous treatment of fringe forest and non-forest lands in consultation with MOE&F.
 - vii. 50,000 farmers in fringe and non forest area of A.P. have been identified for Agro forestry scheme. How to do convergence with NREGS is to be worked out.

10. Development Commissioner and Principle Secretary Panchayat and Rural Development, Government of Madhya Pradesh., Shri R. Parshuram highlighted current and proposed strategic interventions:

- i. Stress on increasing productivity of rain-fed agriculture through soil conservation, water harvesting and ground-water recharge and expansion of irrigation facilities to all farmers especially those in the small and marginal categories. Construction of field channels and repair of minor/medium irrigation tanks, desilting of canals and labour intensive measures within forest area is also being undertaken
- ii. Increasing intensity on employment by enhancing capacity for double cropping for small and marginal farmers
- iii. Convergence with the village as a unit for both individual and community level interventions.
- iv. Formulation of village level panchayat and inter-departmental plans for convergence. Financial resources available to all departments shall be aggregated at the village level and works shall be planned accordingly.
- v. Creation of inter-departmental teams to bring in subject matter inputs
- vi. Realigning of departmental extension activity to respond to village plan parameters
- vii. Strengthening of social audits by engaging number of active stakeholders

He also stressed that field bunding can be better/ more effective in groups instead on individual land. 26000 K.M. road not covered under PMGSY are planed to be covered under NREGS by 2013. Secondly the quality of road constructed under NREGA is to be such so that when are taken over under PMGSY it can be overlay/ used under PMGSY.

In the end, he highlighted issues to be addressed i.e. payment delay through bank and post offices due to poor coverage in particularly the tribal areas, building capacity of GP level staff, expanding technical manpower base for execution and under WRD's RRR scheme components envisaged under NREGS should be reexamined.

11. Following this, The District Collectors of Betul, Panna, Sehore, Mandla, Dewas and Jhabua made focused presentations on convergence with specific departments. The districts are in different stages of convergence projects. The presentations also highlighted the increase in irrigated area on the lands of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribe farmers through construction of dug wells, farm ponds and water recharge structures.

Some of the major measures initiated in all districts so far for convergence with other Govt. schemes with NREGS are as follows:

- Providing lifting device through SGSY funding for water harvesting structure built under NREGS.
- Watershed development programmes funded by NREGS and other programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development.
- Construction of field channels and repair of minor / medium irrigation tanks, de-silting of canals.
- Labour intensive measures on forest lands and national parks and wild life sanctuaries.
- Horticulture development.

The collectors reiterated that in Madhya Pradesh dug-wells along with water recharge structures have been successful, in terms of both the demand received from and the benefits realized by the

beneficiaries. These have also proved to be great tools of social empowerment as they are in any case built on lands helping to SC & ST families and those below the poverty line.

- 11.1. District collector, Betul focused on sustainable development through Inter- sectoral convergence with special reference to water resources. He stressed that shortfall of irrigation potential should be recovered under convergence. Under Kapil Dhara, Dug well recharge structure has been made compulsory with construction of Dug well. Due to Kapil Dhara scheme the area has come under double crop.
- 11.2. District collector, Dewas, focused of use of GIS in planning and convergence of NREGS with programmes of water resources, land resources (watershed) department for water conservation. Construction of farm ponds, construction of Stop Dam under NREGS is not only developing rural areas but also solving the problem of drinking water supply in urban areas.
- 11.3. District collector, Jhabua: informed and suggested that adequate funds should be provided to Krishi Vigyan Kendras(KVKs) from ICAR for imparting training and demonstration under NREGA convergence.
 - i. Under convergence of NREGS with RRR scheme of Water Resource department, 19 works have been taken. Under this 80% funds are being provided from NREGS and 20% by WRD.
 - ii. Stop dam, costing Rs. 50 to 70 lakh has been undertaken under NREGS in which labor material ratio comes to 70:30; State provided money to bring labor material ratio to 60:40.
 - iii. With Rs. 0.5 lakh from NREGS and remaining amount from other schemes, construction of 24,000 dug wells is being undertaken, out of these 15,000 are complete. If drip & sprinklers are provided on all these wells under some other scheme than it will increase the benefit further.
- 11.4. District Collector, Mandla informed that convergence with the schemes of water resources is being done. The aim is to create durable assets. 7900 dug-wells have been constructed under NREGS but pumps under SGSY could made available to only 1400 beneficiaries due to shortage of funds under SGSY. Convergence with sericulture is also being taken up, plantation under NREGS, machine under SGSY and building under sericulture department. In ST belt, land allotted to eligible families is being developed under NREGS by constructing Dug well and bunding. A demonstration unit for preparation of Soya products may be installed at the KVK.
- 11.5. District collector, Panna informed that Convergence with TSC is being made by providing 5 plants and construction of Soak pits to an individual family.
- 11.6. District collector, Datia posed that Canal System in the district is in very bad condition. Member of Parliament wants to converge their funds with NREGS for renovation of canals, but it is not permitted. Secondly in canal renovation, material ratio exceeds the norms.
- 11.7. District collector, Chhatarpur suggested that it may be difficult to liaison with KVK due to their limited resources and manpower. To meet out balance material component in excess of 40%, there is no source, therefore, at state level there must be some corpus fund for this excess material ratio.

11.8. District Collector, Sehore, made the following observations:

- i. Many of the works taken up in NAP are of a specialized nature. In the normal course, these works attract labour from outside the block or district. This also aids with timely completion of tasks. Thus, NREGA should allow for this.
- ii. Wage rate of the Forest department is Rs. 135 and wage rate for NREGS is Rs. 91. The two wage rates need to be reconciled

12. Representative from Development Alternatives, Indian Institute of Forest Management(IIFM) Bhopal, Indian Institute of Management(IIM), Lucknow, BAIF, N.D University Faizabad, made presentations on perspective frameworks for convergence, highlighting core issues for sustainable development and suggestions for future projects.

13. Representative from BAIF, Shri GNS Reddy suggested that-

- i. Plantation of tree, forestry should be under single window delivery system. Single delivery approach is very successful at Panchayats in Karnataka.
- ii. Shelf of project should be at Gram Panchayat level not at district level.
- iii. A competent agency should be created; like a K.V.K., Civil Society Organization or other agency
- iv. Livestock is an industry but not covered under NREGS, whereas, lot of scope and need exists
- v. Biomass production is very necessary in terms of horticulture and forestry.
- vi. Plantation on common land should be of use to beneficiaries. In Rajasthan BAIF has developed pasture in 20,000 ha area.

14. Representative from Krishi Vigyan Kendras suggested that

- i. KVK has local specific technology. KVK can arrange training and technical support
- ii. It has been observed that in the meeting for finalization of annual plan of KVK, the line department officers in the district do not participate. If they participate than their requirement of training and demonstration etc. can be incorporated in the annual plan of KVK.
- iii. Mobile soil testing van be provided for soil testing for tribal farmers.

15. Joint Secretary, SGSY, Dr. Amar Singh said that awareness and participation of SGSY is low in Bundelkhand. For convergence with NREGA, he suggested:

- i. SHG formed under SGSY can be involved in the activities like job card preparation.
- ii. SHG may be strengthened to save job card holders/ beneficiaries from clutches of money lenders through the financial inclusion
- iii. Training should be conducted under NREGS also.

16. The action points were put forth by the Secretary Rural Development:

- 1) For the efficient implementation of convergence projects, District and Block Resource Groups should identified and trained.
- 2) Integrated plans should be prepared by districts and reflected in the next Financial Year's Labour Budget
- 3) State and district level convergence workshops should be organized
- 4) Efforts should be made to involve Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA). Convergence with ATMA can help in capacity building and value addition. Farmer Fields Schools should be set up. Use of Systems of Rice Intensification (SRI) technology should be encouraged
- 5) Convergence opportunities with National Food Security Mission (NFSM) should be looked at.

- 6) Villages where irrigation potential has increased as a result of construction of dug wells on the fields of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, farmers may be linked with the Seed Village Programme of the Ministry of Agriculture
- 7) Self Help Groups formed under SGSY could take raising of nurseries for supplying to afforestation and plantation programmes for convergence between NREGA and Forest Department's Schemes
- 8) The convergence pilots also need to be closely monitored
 - District plans should be uploaded online
 - Documentation of progress, including pre-mid-post project completion photographs should be made mandatory.
 - Documentaries, best practices and other information on benefits accrued by households may also be compiled
 - Joint Monitoring Missions should be set up.
 - Professional Institutions should be identified for qualitative appraisal and technical support.
 - Implementation agencies should be allowed MIS entry for uploading data on convergence
- 9) Households that have completed 100 days under NREGA be identified and at least one youth from each of these households be trained for off-farming skill development and placement through a Special Project under SGSY in public private partnership mode or through RUDSETI institutions.
- 10) Joint Convergence Guidelines are not limitation, as many as possible, convergence can be made.
- 11) Water use efficiency should be taken care of by proper cropping pattern and Zero tillage operation

Issues for further discussion were identified as:

- i) Need for assessment of resources available with the Krishi Vigyan Kendras to provide technical support to NREGS convergence initiatives.
- ii) Priority to Tribal Patta holders in the works to be taken up on individual land.
- iii) Reconciliation of forest wage rates with NREGS wage rates.
- iv) Eligibility of regular migrant workers under NREGA