

PROBLEMS AND CORRUPTION UNDER MNREGA IN NORTH BIHAR- A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

There are so many major problems and corruptions in North Bihar in Vigilance and Monitoring Techniques (VMT) for organizing and functioning of MNREGA which adopted by the state government of Bihar. Centre for Environment and Foods Security (CEFS) said the performance audit of MNREGA Scheme in Bihar funds that 73 percent of the Rs. 8189 crore scheme fund, spent in 38 districts of Bihar mostly in North Bihar districts in six years during the period 2006-12, were take money by fraud by the implementation authorities¹. Further CEFS reported to the government that “there is as open loot of tax payers money. This is plunder of rural poor’s right to guaranteed wage employment for 100 days and there is pillage or every single norm of democratic governance and public accountability. It means MNREGA funds in North Bihar disbursed for the job scheme but it went to the pocket of authority from top to bottom in a planned way.

Key Words: ICT, MNREGA, Vigilance, Corruption Control.

INTRODUCTION

Attempts to bring in transparency in organizing and functioning MNREGA by adopting vigilance and monitoring method were iron walled. This include creating hurdles in the way of the Information Communication and Technology (ICT) initiative, under which e-Shakti cards were to be issued to MNREGA beneficiaries in North Bihar. The state pilot project for distributing biometric cards to rural work forces was initiated in nine blocks of Patna District. This project also ensured biometric identification of labourers through smart cards. It prevented duplication job cards and removed changes of fake muster roll creation. The card had storage capacity

of 84 kb. The Bihar Government also planned that public distribution system (PDS) for food and the Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) would also be implemented using smart cards as these can hold large amount of data. The entire system was linked to server that generated electronic reports in XML format. This features was aimed at culling corruption and fixing accountability of officers. Bihar government officials had only to key in the data of work and the software automatically generated work estimation. The most important aim of the software was to generate a report specifying data and monitoring of the scheme MNREGA in North Bihar.

SCAMS CREATES BIG BARRIER IN RUNNING MNREGA IN NORTH BIHAR

There are so may scams in North Bihar. A few of them are mentioned below:

1. The employment guarantee scheme is nearly on its bed in the state of North Bihar as on May 5, 2008, three worker were brutally murdered as they were about to initiate a social audit of MNREGA in Saran District of Saran Pramandal in North Bihar and in last January, 2009, two women laboureres immolated themselves in Supaul District of Koshi Pramandal to protest against harassment and corruption in the context of the scheme.
2. Mr. maheshwar Prasad Yadav, MLA, Bihar Vidhan Sabha alleging corruption under this MNREGA, in Katra Village district of Muzaffarpur in Tirhut Pramandal, the VIP reference case No. 5556/MRD/07-6/6/2007 he had reported as vigilance that forwarded to Bihar State Government on dated 20.10.2008 and reminders on 05.11.08, 23.01.2009, 27.05.2009, 21.08.2009, 05.11.2009, 12.01.2010 and 08.02.2010. The report of NLM received, allegation was partly true and a copy sent to government of Bihar for comments. The report was also forwarded to SG on 04.12.2010 and reminder on 24.08.2011.
3. The VIP reference No. 7491/MRD/08-19/9/2008-J/1/2008-NREGA about the case of investigation for the corruption under MNREGA was reported by Mr. Shyam Rajak, Sachetak, Bihar Vidhan Sabhan. This case was forwarded to Bihar Government on 23.12.2008 and reminders on 23.01.2009, 27.05.2009, 21.08.2009, 05.11.2009, 12.01.2010 and 08.02.10 ATR received but it was being processed.
4. The VIP reference No. 7744/MRD/09 dated 12.01.2009, J-12014/1/2008-NREGA filed by Mr. Sitaram Yadav, MP (LS) and allegation made on letter dated 03.01.2009 regarding misappropriation of funds and other irregularities in Sitamarhi, Suresand, Sonavarsa and Bajpatti Prakhhand under the Pramandal of Tirhut. This case was forwarded to the state Government of Bihar on 18.02.2009 and MRD have replied to the complainant on 20.02.2009. Again reminders on 27.05.2009, 21.08.2009, 05.11.2009, 12.01.2010 and 08.02.10 NLM report forwarded to state government on 09.10.2009 for action and comments. Reminder issued on 17.06.11. ATR on findings of NLM sought on 28.12.2011.

5. Mr. Naval Kishore Shahi, Ex-minister of Bihar made an allegation which VIP reference no. was 6707/MRD/08 for misappropriation of MNREGA fund forwarded to the state government of Bihar on dated 24.03.2008 and reminders on 27.05.2009, 21.08.2009, 05.11.2009, 12.01.2010 and 08.02.2010.
6. Mr. Salman Ansari was also the complainant made allegation for construction of Dadra & Jharna Bandh, the VIP reference No. was 7670/MRD/08. Mr. Asnari was a member of Zila Parishad. His letter was forwarded for action by the ministry of Rural Development to the state Government of Bihar dated on 11.02.2009 and reminder so many times from 27.05.2009 to 08.02.2010 & replied by Ministry of Rural Development on dated 16.02.2009.
7. National Alliance for Peoples Movement (NAPM) has launched a series of agitations to strengthen the basic framework of the scheme. Mr. Purshuram Ray who also exposed the MNREGA scam in Bihar as well as mostly in North Bihar said the state government will do everything to siphon money from the scheme. He alleged that there is a larger network of the ministers and bureaucrats who are thriving on employment scheme funds.
8. According to the report of Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS) that the job scheme scam mostly in North Bihar total Rs. 5977 crore for the fiscal year 2006-11. The report also mentions that modus operandi adopted for the scam through submitting inflated or fake job entries in muster rolls, fake entries of undeserving prosperous and non-labour household in official records and beneficiaries taking a commission of 5-10 percent of the money taken by fraud and non-payment or only partial payment of the due wages to worker.
9. According to the report of Hindustan Paper in Alinagar Prakhanda of Darbhanga District in Darbhanga Pramanal that near about 10 thousands peoples are suffering from their poor livelihood because they are not getting any Ration Card for food according to the list published by the government on the basis of Food Security. No anybody has found Ration Card in the village Rupuspur of Ex-Apposition Leader Mr. Bari Siddique. Panchayat wise position of total number applied cards and received number of cards as 3604 and 502 in Harsinghpur, 2897 and 1280 in Dhamsain, 2488 and 1563 and Adhaloam, 2361 and 1495 in Haryath, 1799 and 1080 in Lahta, 2726 and 2019 in Motipur, 2792 and 2205 in Hanuman Nagar, 2798 and 2415 in Alinagar, 2744 and 2129 in Garaul, 2555 and 2294 in Pakri, and 2450 and 2203 in Narma respectively in September 2014. Narma Panchayat has positive response to distributed Ration Card 2203 among the applied card of 2450. The BDO of this area told to the reporter that Ration Card will be distributed in coming month as soon as possible.

From the above discussion about the corruption into MNREGA in North Bihar we find that the corruption is going on every level. There is a large network of ministers and bureaucrats who are thriving on employment scheme money. There is no political will to implement the scheme for the welfare of rural work force in North Bihar. even Union Minister during the period of Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh like Jairam Ramesh had complained about poor implementation of MNREGA in all Bihar. As we know that the implementation of MNREGA largely depends on the active participation of three-tier decentralized self governance units called Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The Panchayats are responsible for all work and check at the grass-root level to functioning and organizing MNREGA in North Bihar. Only control corruption and solution for its depends on political will power. Therefore, the state government of Bihar has taken many steps to control lied and scam from North Bihar for the success of MNREGA.

ACTION OF BIHAR GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL CORRUPTION IN MNREGA:

Bihar Government has taken so may actions and ordered a probe into allegations of corruption by vigilance and Delhi based NGO in the states rural jobs scheme in the wake of a performance audit reports in the region of North Bihar Divisions, who that revealing an open loot of MNREGA funds. Government has also conducted the physical verification of beneficiaries and areas covered under the MNREGA.

The action has been taken by the Government of Bihar to control corruption in North Bihar include:

1. During the period of Sushil Kumar Modi as Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar who also holds the Finance Ministry portfolio has blacklisted around 14 private and nationalized banks for ignoring agriculture and rural sector. A week before listing blacklist of the banks, Modi said 9213 villages in the state having including mostly villages in North Bihar a population of more than 2000 people do not have any banking facility. With such a major problems of banks in rural areas. It is highly doubtful that the government will be able to pay the wages to rural work forces.
2. The state government of Bihar has already issued a notification, announcing that all wages of MNREGA workers will be paid only through banks and post offices from February 1, 2013. But Ashish Ranjan, convenor of National Alliance for peoples movement (NAPM), working in Bihar pointed out that payment through banks only stall the wages of rural work forces working under MNREGA in North Bihar because there is very low act of banks in rural area of rivers bank of Bihar. In this situation, payment through banks is a big problem.
3. At the time of Nitish Kumar as a Chief Minister of Bihar, during the ceremony of the project was termed as “Pet Plan” the chief minister got a smart card prepared in his own name and withdrew a sum of Rs. 3000

using the card, then a move termed as a publicity stunt by his detectors. But after a year the launched the project started facing problems. The Bihar State Rural Development Ministry, in a letter to Smarftech, informed the company that the government of Bihar has decided to integrated the e-Shakti with UID-Adhar Government said that it cannot support two identification projects at a time. But in April 2011 suddenly the government of Bihar stopped all operations of e-Shakit scheme. Smartech had repeatedly appraised the Government that the UID-Aadhar Scheme is also facing major difficulties and might not take off. But in November 2011 Government of India informed the Bihar Government that UID scheme will not be rolled out in Bihar.

4. During the period of Bihar Rural Development Minister, Nitish Mishra has initiated action against the officials involved in the scam and the Government is now planning to send the MNREGA wages directly to the bank and post office accounts of the rural work forces in North Bihar.
5. State government of Bihar has dismissed its 251 officials for corruption in MNREGA the rural job guarantee scheme and some 101 officers were dismissed earlier, after a probe. The government has also lodged first information reports (FIRs) against 288 officials for irregularities in the implementation of MNREGA including North Bihar. Government says that we are committed to make the implementation of the scheme more transparent to check corruption and strict action will be taken against guilty officials.
6. Bihar state government has adopted a monitoring formats for employment guarantee monthly progress report under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), monthly progress report on physical report on physical performance indicating assets created during the year, monthly progress report performance of MNREGA, capacity building personnel report, capacity building training report, Bank and post office report and transparency report have to show to control corruption into MNREGA in North Bihar according to the act of MNREGA.
7. The MIS currently used by MNREGA is already the we have ever had. More than 8 crore muster rolls and 12 crore job cards have been placed online in India including North Bihar. This information Technology allow us to get rid of inefficiencies and corruption in a manner quitted inconceivable in the past. So, MNREGA is the foundation for solving the problems of the poorest rural work forces of our state.

In this way, we can say that the scale and dimension of MNREGA corruption in North Bihar the open loot is impossible without active connivance of the block and district level authorities. The government of Bihar has taken strict action against officials those who will be found involved in irregularities in the implementation of MNREGA. The initiative also has been taken to wage payment through Banks and Post offices to worker. Bihar Government has dismissed its 251 officials and FIRs lodged against 288 officials for corruption in MNREGA.

The state government began a probe into the allegations of scam and corruption in the MNREGA after a performance audit report by NGO and government vigilance. Government has taken tight action to use monitoring format for wage employment, under MNREGA in every Panchayat level, block level, district level and state level. Hence, government are committed to make the implementation of the MNREGA in North Bihar through to hike wages with more transparent to check corruption. MNREGA is the way and unique in not only ensuring at least 100 days of employment to the willing unskilled workers, but also in ensuring an enforceable commitment on the implementing machinery that is the state government, and providing a bargaining power to the rural work forces. The failure of provision for employment within 15 days of the receipt of job application from a prospective household will result in the payment of unemployment allowance to the job seekers. Hence, the Panchayat are responsible for process in the registration of job seekers, insurance of job cards, receipts of application for employment, allotment of jobs, identification of work sites, planning, allocation and execution of works, payments of wages and commencement of social audit, transparency and accountability check at the all level thereby impacting rural-urban migration in North Bihar.

CONCLUSION

But the present scenario is highly complex with Panchayati Raj Institutions and the future does not hold any great promise because various social, political and cultural impediments are in the path. Only the sole of commitment and conviction will determine whether or not PRIs can become effective tools of good governance in future. Their successful implementation has been claimed on papers by a number of the states including Bihar of Indian Union. But the fact is that these local bodies remained the executive branches institutions generally used to be presided over by an IAS officers equivalent to the district collector in rank. Most of these bodies have either been conveniently dissolved or superseded by the party in power for political interest in North Bihar. PRIs elections had been put off by the state government of Bihar. Hence, there was no constitutional binding on the state government to hold regular elections of these local self-bodies. These grass-roots institutions were in a moribund state. It is not surprising that the PRIs failed to generate a local political initiative for decentralized development and wage employment by rural work forces as a whole. Here, local politicians who had dreamt of being Zilla Pramukh (ZP), often acted or behaved as ‘mini chief Ministers’ in their own areas in North Bihar particularly. They found that their roles were largely ceremonial, because mostly of the state governments have retained with themselves the critical power of the purse and control over higher level bureaucracy. However the Panchayati Raj Institutions largely depended on grants from the state government of Bihar. The huge grants is still tied to specific schemes which are planned and supervised by the state secretary such as MNREGA itself. The chief executive officer of these bodies does not act in the manner that the chief secretary does to the chief

minister, and the elected members of the local bodies democracy have nothing to do with them. Hence, the PRIs system has near to failed to realize the dreams of its architects.

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