

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE MEETING

ON

“RIGHT TO FOOD”

ORGANISED BY

KHATARSHNONG SOCIO-ORGANISATION (KSO)

CHERRAPUNJEE.

IN COLLABORATION WITH

“PEOPLAE’S RIGHTS FORUM-MEGHALAYA”

SPONSORED BY

**INTERNATIONAL FOOD SECURITY NETWORK (IFSN) AND ACTION AID INDIA
(AAI)**

DATE::11TH JULY 2011

VENUE::NONGBAH COMMUNITY HALL, NONGBAH 12SHNONG, SOHRA.

NO. OF PARTICIPANTS: 39 (M: 17 F: 22)

NO. OF KSO STAFFS PRESENT: 3

**SHRI. LHAISING KHONGSHEI (PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR,
KSO, SOHRA)**

SMT.MEMORICA KHARSHIING. (FIELD OFFICER, KSO, SOHRA)

SMT.AIKMENLANG DOHLING. (FIELD WORKER, KSO, SOHRA)

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES:

- ✓ The aim and objective of this programme is to make native people aware of ‘Right to Food’ or ‘Right to Eat’ -a basic need of human beings being conferred by the Government of India under which various programmes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Mid-day Meal (MDM), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), etc. were launched to free Indian citizens from hunger, poverty and illiteracy.
- ✓ To ensure the smooth functioning of all Government Progrmmes made available to the common mass.
- ✓ To impress upon the people the need to access to this particular Right to Food/ to understand the importance of knowing the opportunities being denied.

METHODOLOGY:

- ✓ Welcome speech from the village Sordar.
- ✓ Introduction (Opening session)
- ✓ Taking of photos and Registration.
- ✓ Clarification.
- ✓ Questions, answers and suggestions.

FORUM'S PROFILE: People's Rights Forum-Meghalaya, is initially started in the last three years back. It is a platform of twelve partners NGOs working on the issue of Right to Food Campaign and Food security across the state of Meghalaya, having partnership with other NGOs, CBOs in the Northeast and funded by Action Aid India (AAI) & International Food Security Network (IFSN).

BRIEF NOTE:

1st session: The session begun with a warm welcome speech from the Sordar of Raid Mawshuit, to the audience and the KSO staffs which then handed over to the facilitators to do the needful. Mr.L.Khongshei, has taken over the session expressing thanks giving to the villagers and the Sordar for attending the meeting with smart and active looking face. It started with the discussion and clarification on [MGNREGA/S](#) with the following sub-key issues/ points:

The moment when Mr. L. Khongshei starts with some words about MGNREGA, the villagers shouted very loudly expressing their desire to remind its basic concept and the system as they could not keep in mind all the conditions, provisions to be done accordingly. In this connection, the facilitator clarified as follows:

- 1) All the villages should form the Village Development Council (VEC) in their own respective localities comprising of the Chairman, the Secretary and the Treasurer. Of these, one should be a lady and the Headman is automatically becoming the Chairman of the council.
- 2) Besides, another council is to be formed that is, Area Employment Council/ AEC which is a cluster of two to six nearby villages/ VECs. The VEC leaders which mean the three Office Bearers of VEC are automatically the representatives to the AEC. The AEC will hold a meeting for selection of its Office Bearers including the Chairman, the Secretary and the treasurer and to look into what the guideline says or directs. In fact, all AECs are to be made functional but while implementing the programme especially in the hilly areas, what we found is that, this is not possible and after two- three social audit reports came out, most of the AECs have been either automatically dissolved. Thus all the activities are carried out by the VECs only. This eases and speeds up the VEC leaders and the workers to complete their work within a stipulated time.
- 3) Wages should be withdrawn after every 14 days and the Muster Roll should be submitted within one week or within seven days.

- 4) Initially, the MGNREGA workers are being paid only Rs.100/- per day but now it has increased to Rs.117/- per day for unskilled, Rs.140/- for skilled and Rs120/- for semi-skilled.
- 5) The state Government has also altered some inapplicable provisions and instead Programme implementing Committee (PIC/PEC), Social Audit committee, Vigilance Committee is formed in each VEC.

TPDS: - When we talk about Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), there is not much corruption on it as the people of the region are aware of it. But still there is a need to hold a follow up meeting to spread over the updated/latest information or new provisions of the Government. Shortly, Mr. L.Khongshei has just highlighted and gave a brief description about the notification provided by the Inspector of Supply Department, Sohra Civil Sub-Division, Sohra on the issuance of temporary APL cards to families who have no cards of any category. The quantity of rice to be distributed is yet to be fixed by the Office of the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO), Sohra Civil Sub-Division, Sohra. With regards to this, all the villages and the village headmen of different localities in the whole Sub-Division are directed to enroll such excluded families along with necessary documents specifying the full address of the correspondent. In between there has been an interaction on the issue discussed, in which the villagers revealed that the quantity and the price of essential commodities are fixed in consultation with the Vigilance Committee. Currently, all AAY card holders are receiving 47kgs of rice@ Rs.3/kg. This really shows a good impact on the work done by the Organization and the Forum. Furthermore, the facilitator explained that the rate of BPL Rice is actually fixed at Rs.6.15p/kg but the government itself never disburses the subsidy to the distributors. Therefore, the vigilance Committee suggested that it should not exceed Rs. 8.50p per kg and this must come off only if all concerned leaders (Vigilance Committee) seated to take up decision for the betterment of all the beneficiaries.

MID-DAY MEAL-CLARIFICATION: The co-workers (KSO staffs) highlighted the aims and objectives of this particular government program so that rural parents and the teachers must understand the importance of Nutritional status of their school going children. Going through the guideline helps people know better about the issue and here is a short note: MDM supports malnourished and poor children to get better health and better environment. Teachers might have known that hot/warm cooked MDM is to be distributed every day or 20days a month and 200 days a year. This is also according to the Supreme Court Order. On the conversation with the Deputy Inspector (DI) of Schools Sohra Civil Sub-Division, Sohra, and the teachers concerned, they said that the implementation of MDM is not really successful because of the following few reasons: (1).The Department(DI) always issues a monthly permit in time but the wholesalers and the Dealers distribute Rice only once in three months.(2)Most schools do not submit their Utilization Certificates (UCs) on time.(3) Conversion Cost and other related grants-in-aid are not disbursed within the stipulated time. In this connection the Forum through its partner member emphasized and encouraged that all

concerned, must take this issue seriously without fear and requests them to write a complaint to the higher authority or any supporting organizations if something goes wrong with the implementation of the scheme.

ICDS: Since ICDS is the issue that KSO has been striving hard to avail to villages having no ICDS centers; it is in fact a good opportunity for the community to understand the importance of accessing to it. Nongbah is one of the villages in Khatarshnong region where ICDS is made functional. Thus, with regards to this, the co-workers (KSO staffs) have immensely urged that parents must work together with the teachers and the children to achieve success of the program.

FINDING AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED: In spite of the active and enthusiastic participation witnessed in the information oriented programme, the village is still lacking lots of infrastructures for instance, road and communication, health care facilities etc. Illiteracy is another problem for the Village/ VEC leaders to master book keeping and Accounting, the inevitable and compulsory quantitative and qualitative measurements of the programme. In term of PDS scam the Supply Officials always try to escape from telling the truth making the village leaders unable to ensure well functioning of the programme. Whereas implementation of MGNREGA is not exactly according to the provisions provided by the Government. This is because of some circumstances faced by both the parties which mean the Block Office and the VECs.viz, late submission of MRs by the VECs; work orders were not issued on time etc.

SUGGESTUION(S): The Forum and the partner NGO from time to time suggests that the individual(villagers) has the right to know all the above captioned rights and encouraged all the citizens not to have fear or any inferiority complex in asking and demanding for the right thing specially those rights which are universalized and implemented so far. In turn, the villagers have collectively urged that the social activists must carry out this voice before the authority concerned so that all facilities and benefits announced and provided shall not be vain.

CONCLUSION: Towards the end of the meeting the facilitator (s) requested all the participants or the village as a whole to come forward to work together for the betterment of ages and generations to come. The Sordar dismissed the session with a vote of thanks, putting his blessing words upon people of good will not give up the deity or the task without reaching the destination.