

REPORT OF THE VILLAGE MEETING

ON

“RIGHT TO FOOD”

ORGANISED BY

KHATARSHNONG SOCIO-ORGANISATION (KSO) CHERRAPUNJEE.

IN COLLABORATION WITH

“PEOPLE’S RIGHTS FORUM-MEGHALAYA”

SPONSORED BY

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

DATE::09TH JULY 2011

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

NO. OF PARTICIPANTS: 28 (M: 12 F: 16)

NO. OF KSO STAFFS PRESENT: 3

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

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

SMT.AI KMENLANG DOHLING (FIELD WORKER, KSO, SOHRA)

SMT.CREAMLETCY KHONGNGAIN (FIELD WORKER KSO, SOHRA)

PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- ✓ The aim and objective of this programme is to make village 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 Programmes 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, slightly and normally come into existence in the year 2007. 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: The program began at 8:00am in the morning with a very warm welcome speech from the village Sordar, shri Madras Diengdoh to all the participants and the KSO staffs continuing with a round of introduction to the meaning and concept of ' Right to food' given by Mr. L.Khongshei.

Broadly speaking, 'Right to Food' means 'Right to Eat' and under this particular umbrella we have the following components which are to be discussed separately. These are also the social security schemes or the opportunities meant/ discussed for the benefit of the vulnerable people. They are as under:

MGNREGA: Three years of implementation of the scheme in the State, there have been lot of changes came off in those rural villages where MGNREGA is working. Meanwhile, the village where PRF-Meghalaya through its partner set foot on 09th August 2011, to hold a public meeting to discuss not only about MGNREGA but other Right to Food programmes also, is one of the villages where MGNREGA is made functional since 2008. In this connection, the key issues discussed and clarified in the meeting are:

1. All job cards should get updated every now and then.
2. The work order(s) should be pasted in the working place or in visible public place.
3. Signboards wherein the list of MGNREGA workers, number of working days, name of work and wages are displayed are to be made.
4. Different committees like VEC, PIC/PEC, Vigilance Committee, Social Audit committee etc. should be formed in every village/ VEC. This order came from the Deputy Commissioner's Office (East khasi Hills) through the Block Development Officer-Khadarshnong Laitkroh C&RD Block.
5. All the registers/ books of accounts should be maintained in a proper manner.
6. All minutes of each and every meeting should be recorded properly.
7. All Job cardholders are to be part in decision making process.
8. Implementation of the scheme must have accountability and transparency.

PDS: The Government and the Supreme Court are in fact advising the concerned department to issue or to provide all the essential commodities to the BPL, AAY, APL and ANAPURNA beneficiaries without any discrimination or without any deduction from the amount sanctioned either in the rate, quantity and quality. But still there is a tremendous corruption from this Public Distribution System (PDS) leading to the great loss and the backwardness of the people of the State. It is a great shame on those who do not involve in corruption from this people's right.

CLARIFICATION/ EXPLANATION: The facilitator (Shri. L.Khongshei) has immensely urged and clarified that people never had interest in listening to the new ideas or knowledge on various Government schemes/ assistances. This kind of behavior should be dissolved or in other sense people could not realize the need of the future generation. Thus, KSO and the PRF _Meghalaya get sick when they see fellows are deprived of different Social security Schemes. Therefore, in this meeting the key issues discussed may vary from one village to another and they are as under:

People might misunderstand that many or some of the families were not included in the PDS because at times when Socio-Economic Survey was done there were only few households residing in that particular area or village. But with the passing time, population is increasing and the newly formed families were automatically being excluded and that the Government had already sanctioned the quotas for those whose names are displayed and recognized. Yet, the Vigilance Committee does agree to include un-registered poor families in the PDS and there should be understanding and equal distribution of essential

commodities among them. Another reason for not being included is that the Government still follows the same Census which had been conducted in 1997.

The Office of the Sub-Divisional Officer (SDO) through the Inspector (Supply department) recently publicized that temporary APL cards (Quotas) will be issued to families having no cards at all. In this connection, notification has been sent to all villages informing the Village leaders to submit their application along with the name of those families to be included in the PDS.

MDM- CLARIFICATION: This is also a part of right To Food programs which contributes to the Nutritional status of poor children in the State. Here, we have discussed the following sub-Key issues:

1. The aim and objective of this programme is to lessen dropout rate and to encourage schooling children to attend school regularly.
2. To make children smart and active.
3. Conversion cost meant for buying vegetables and meat never disburse in time and the teachers in-charge by themselves many times never withdraw the money, expressing that the amount is sanctioned can serve for 5-10 days only.
4. Sometimes, MDM is stolen away by someone making it unfair implementation.
5. On the whole, teachers do not submit their Utilization Certificates (UCs) within the stipulated time, adding confusion to officials to enter the correct data.

ICDS: Since the day of inception, the implementation of the project is god and fair. Therefore, no objection arises but the only problem is that, the cook keep on changing from time to time because of very less payment. So, the facilitator suggests that the Angandwadi workers must write a petition to the higher authority asking for increment of their wages and other facilities.

FINDING AND PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED:

- ✓ People are more aware of some basic rights, started moving to different Government offices asking for any information on various projects and schemes.
- ✓ MGNREGA—PIC, Social Audit and Monitoring committee have been formed but not yet implemented.
- ✓ Number of working days varies from one VEC to another. In these last three years most of the villages got only 25-75 days of work per annum at the minimum wages of Rs.70/- to Rs100/-per day.
- ✓ Books of Account cannot be maintained exactly what the guideline says without proper training.

- ✓ **Suggestions:** (I) Training on Book keeping is a must. (ii) No bribe has to be made.
- ✓ **ICDS:** complaint should be made if food items are not distributed regularly. People can write to us (PRF) for help and the PRF leaders would forward to the concerned department.

CONCLUSION: With a view to ensure smooth functioning of all Right to Food programmes the forum through its partner members will endeavor with commitment to fight tooth and nail for the welfare of the common mass.



