

Speech of His Excellency Shri K. Sankaranarayanan, the Governor of Jharkhand on the occasion of inauguration of State Peer Learning Workshop on National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme Jharkhand on 12th September, 2009.

Advisor to Governor Shri G.Krishnan, Director General, National Institute of Rural Development, Shri B.K.Sinha and other distinguished guests, Secretary Rural Development, Commissioner NREGS, Deputy Commissioners, DDCs, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I am happy to inaugurate this first "State Peer Learning and Convergence Workshop" on NREGA in Jharkhand. It is an opportunity to look at the status of implementation of NREGS in the State and learn from the experiences, best practices and success stories of other states.

NREGA is a programme which can change the face of rural India and especially Jharkhand for the better but this goal will be realized only when provisions of NREGA are implemented vigorously, truthfully and with a sense of commitment at all levels.

Even after more than three years of implementation of this flagship scheme, we have shortcomings in its implementation, which must be identified, acted upon and sorted out so that every penny meant for poor rural household reaches them in time and without any leakage.

Providing wage employment to any person who demands it is a state guarantee and if we will look at the picture in Jharkhand, only about 8.74 lakhs households have demanded work against 34.94 lakh households issued Job Cards. This reflects that either people in rural areas are unaware of their rights under NREGA or we have not adequately reached out to them to capture their need. In either case the responsibility lies on us. I think a massive campaign for awareness generation must be undertaken so that lack of knowledge does not deny the rural workers their right to employment as

envisaged in the Act. Adherence to mandatory provisions of NREGA, ensuring quality of assets, value addition to assets by facilitating backward and forward linkages through convergence of NREGS with programmes of other departments are the need of the hour.

Destiny of India lies with the destiny of rural masses of this country. We will fall short of our objectives of inclusive growth, if we fail to ensure optimum utilization of precious resources earmarked for NREGA in the state.

It is also imperative that all stakeholders must be involved in the processes defined in NREGA, be it planning, implementation, monitoring or evaluation. Comprehensive Social Audit should not be an isolated event; instead it must be a continuous exercise, which will go a long way in improving the performance of NREGS in the State.

You all have assembled here to take stock of your performance, discuss, exchange views and learn from better practices of other states. The areas of convergence of NREGS with other government schemes must be clearly understood for it will not only increase the productivity of NREGS scheme but would also supplement the resources of other government schemes.

I thank Director General, NIRD, Hyderabad and other senior Experts/Officers/faculties for their concern for improving the performance of NREGA in the State.

I hope that the DCs and other Officers will utilize this opportunity for learning and imbibing the best practices of other places.

I once again wish all success of this workshop.

Thank you.