



JANAKALYAN SOCIETY

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SDTT Supported Program



JAN SANGHATAN



Leveraging NREGA Funds to make Agriculture Profit-making & Sustainable



Volume VI



Quarterly Progress Report



April – June 2011



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1. **Summary¹:**

The intervention on “Leveraging NREGA funds to create productive agriculture assets to make agriculture profit-making and sustainable” commenced in February 2010 in 17 villages of 3 GPs of Sindhanur taluk in Raichur District, Karnataka with the support of SDTT. The project was initially sanctioned for 12 months and an extension for 2 months (up to March 2011) was sought from the Trust as we were lagging behind the set target. Finally, we could successfully achieve the set targets of 12 months in 14 months and submitted the final report as well as final utilisation certificate in May 2011.

The proposal for continuation of the efforts from April 2011 is submitted to the Trust with revised objectives and set of activities based on the learning from previous period; meanwhile, we agreed to continue the project till June 2011 without any break so that the same tempo is maintained among the project communities. Otherwise, the community would lose faith on us and it would become difficult to go back to the community; similarly, we will have to start from the zero again if we give a break in between. Therefore, minimum activities have been implemented in these villages to keep the relation with the communities as well as other stakeholders. This report is prepared at the end of June 2011 to document the achievement during the 6th quarter of the project intervention.

Though there are many issues in implementing NREGA shelf of works during this phase of the project implementation, the team is happy with its performance with the limited resources. The report elaborates findings of the programs, achievements against the objectives, design of the project and its implementation methodology, the outputs & method of dissemination adopted, capacity building initiatives for community as well as staff, project team composition, planning, review, reporting & interaction mechanism followed, etc. along with the impacts of our intervention onto the target communities and also on the larger section of the society.

At this stage of the project intervention, Janakalyan Team is of the opinion that-

- 1) To make NREGA a successful model in the country, “COMPLEMENTARY” approach would work; this can be successful if and only if the elected representatives and the public servants are taken into confidence and not using other approaches.
- 2) More than providing employment to the WE group, the focus of our (civil society organisations) interventions shall be on productive agriculture assets creation for OUR groups; in the process, the WE group would definitely get the employment. On the contrary, if we focus on employment creation, it might not create productive agriculture assets but something else which may not be useful for anybody.

¹ This section should consist of an extended summary of the report. It should address outputs produced, outcomes, project efficiency, effectiveness and relevance

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2. Background of the project²:

NREGA, the national flagship program, is an historical project everseen in India as well as in the whole world; in its 1st phase of implementation, Raichur district was selected amongst the 200 most backward districts of India. Since then, it has seen many ups and downs in its execution but not met the expectations of the very target groups for whom it is designed. The design of the project exhibits that it is meant for 2 categories of the people viz.

- 1) The Wage Earners (WE Group), who would get 100 days of employment in a financial year and
- 2) The Optimum Users of Resources (OUR Group) generated/created while providing employment to the WE groups.

This indicates that NREGA is meant for WE & OUR groups meaning WE work for creating productive (agricultural) assets for OUR own usage. If we carefully observe the 8 priorities of works mentioned in the NREG Act, we find that all 8 priorities are to create productive agriculture assets only and nothing else than that. However, how far these objectives are met is a question to be answered by the public representatives as well as public servants.

It is in this context, Janakalyan has taken up an initiative in February 2010 to leverage funds from NREGA to create productive agriculture assets in 17 villages of 3 Gram Panchayats of Sindhanur taluk in Raichur district, with the support of SDTT. The objectives of our intervention in these villages are –

- a. To empower community skills to articulate their needs (issues), demand for deserved rights under NREGA, prepare plan (using micro-planning tool) and lead its implementation to help themselves
- b. To support community action to make effective use of NREGA funds for creation of irrigation and soil health improvement assets through community capacity building initiatives
- c. To demonstrate soil and water conservation methods to enhance productivity and thus make agriculture profit-oriented to make the lives and livelihoods of communities Sustainable

The project has completed 17th months of intervention since February 2010 and has achieved almost all its targets by the end of March 2011. The major achievements till March 2011 could be summarised as under-

1. Promotion of WE Groups in all 17 villages and making them aware about their rights and entitlements under NREGA
2. Promotion and empowerment of OUR Groups (previously termed as Agriculture Interest Groups –AIG) and creating demand for productive agriculture assets creation by leveraging NREGA funds.
3. Preparation of microplans to assess the real needs of the communities (WE & OUR Groups) and articulating the same in NREGA terms to get approved by Gram Sabha.
4. Creation of productive agriculture assets by leveraging NREGA funds worth Rs.185,40,000 as against the target of Rs.202,50,000 for soil and water conservation, biomass generation, flood control measures, land development and connecting roads to the farms.
5. Demonstration of various agriculture technologies to make use of productive agriculture assets in order to make agriculture profit-making and sustainable in long run.

² This section should consist of information on the rationale of the project, background information on the project scope, baseline information on the project area and the peoplescope. It should also provide information on the objectives of the project

3. **Program Findings³:**

This report is prepared at the end of 17th month of the project intervention and the major findings of our team out of this intervention could be summarised as under-

- 1) The Gram Panchayat does not have an approved plan of action for the year 2011-12 yet and thus not been able to provide any employment to any WE group since April 2011.; while we had submitted microplans to include in Annual Action Plan 2011-12 in January-February 2011 and also an application drive to submit more than 500 demand for productive agriculture assets, which was not accepted citing a reason that the Action Plan is already being approved: then why no work allotment to the WE groups?
- 2) Basically, April-June is the most important period when the rural people do not have work at their hands and need it most to earn for their livelihoods; but the implementing authorities do not execute any work during this period citing a reason that they do not have any approved plan of action.
- 3) Budget for each GP has gone down by 50% than that of previous year due to lack of job cards since the government deleted many job cards at the end of 5th year of its implementation; therefore, our team emphasized creation of new job cards but the implementing authorities creating many hurdles to create new job cards. They are asking for voter identity card or ration card and also insisting submission of the application for new job cards individually.
- 4) On the other hands, when we motivate the bring the communities to the GP for submission of application for either job-cards or job, the GP Office remains closed throughout the day; the WE groups get frustrated and start losing faith on us.
- 5) With all hurdles even if we succeed to provide some employment to our WE groups, proper documentation is not done by the concerned authorities and thus delaying the process of payment of wages; the WE group loses faith on us and start keeping away from NREGA itself. Thus participation of the community in NREGA is reducing day by day. The public representatives as well as public servants expect such situation and thus delay the process of payment so that the community does not participate in work from next time onward; they can then execute all works using machines.
- 6) The present situation is such that, not even 30% of the amount is not actually spent to execute the works; leakage is more than 70% in NREGA and community (WE group) participation is less than 10% while the payment is made through their post office/bank account.
- 7) The job cards are sold to the GP members for Rs.200-500 per card and whenever the GP member ask the family head to sign, they just sign without even bothering how much amount is drawn by the GP member from his account; the corruption has percolated to the last common person of the village through NREGA.
- 8) The GP members also threaten the WE group if they resist signing in the post office; some of them also tell them that they won't get any benefits (such as house or any other scheme) from the GP if they don't sign the accounts in the post office.
- 9) There is a feeling among the common people of the village that the NREGA is meant for the GP members and our role is to sign the bank / post office account for them; even the opposition party in the villages does not utter a single word against the misappropriation. When asked them about it, they say for these 5 years, it is these set of GP members who can do whatever they want; we will see when we come in power in next election.

³ This section should provide a summary of the information on the key findings of the project

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3a. **Fulfillment of objectives⁴:** The objectives of the intervention are assessed in this section of the report as under-

Sl. No.	Objectives of the intervention	Status as on date	Justification
1	To empower community skills to articulate their needs (issues), demand for deserved rights under NREGA, prepare plan (using micro-planning tool) and lead its implementation to help themselves	Satisfactory	The community empowerment & microplan preparation part of the objectives is completed very satisfactorily while in implementation of these activities the participation was little less.
2	To support community action to make effective use of NREGA funds for creation of irrigation and soil health improvement assets through community capacity building initiatives	Satisfactory	Due to election code of conduct, the work execution was banned until January 2011 and then executed all activities in February-March; therefore, participation of WE group was less due to simultaneous execution of all works.
3	To demonstrate soil and water conservation methods to enhance productivity and thus make agriculture profit-oriented to make the lives and livelihoods of communities Sustainable	Very Satisfactory	Demonstration of agricultural technologies was very satisfactory with the participation of the AIG in all planned activities.

3b. **Project Design and implementation⁵:** During this quarter of the project, since the proposed activities have yet not been approved by the Trust, major focus was on preparatory activities. In all villages, the emphasis was on-

- 1) **Application Drive for Asset Creation:** Demand creation by submitting individual written application by OUR group (previously known as AIG) to include their work in the Annual Action Plan 2011-12. More than 400 applications have been submitted by these OUR group members to respective GP with a request to include farm pond, drainage in waterlogged areas, tree plantation, farm roads, etc. in their respective farms.
- 2) **Job Card Application:** Since government has deleted most of the job cards that the communities had in 2010-11, we have prepared the communities to apply for fresh job cards in Form No.1 in all these GPs; so far, more than 1500 job card applications have been generated in these villages. Some of these have already submitted to the GP and acknowledgement received while rest are still to be submitted but the PDOs

⁴ This section should use the log frame or the objectives mentioned previously and enumerate the satisfactory rating of achievements along with rationale for the same. The satisfactory rating could consist of the following categories – very satisfactory, satisfactory, less satisfactory and quite satisfactory (or any other)

⁵ This section should enumerate how the implementation aspect of the project was designed and actually reveal insights into the field level activities of the project in detail

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- are now insisting that individual applicant must come and submit the job card application and not in groups.
- 3) **Job Application:** Those who have job cards and bank accounts, the emphasis for them were to submit job application demanding employment during this summer season. Though, many people were interested for participation in work execution, the officers did not receive any such application citing the reason that they don't have any approved action plan to allot employment during this period.
 - 4) **Project Concept Orientation:** Efforts have also been put to orient the WE & OUR groups about the project concept that we would be adopting for next 3 years in these set of villages (17 villages of 3 GP in Raichur district) and also in next set of villages (about 25 villages in 5 GPs of Gadag district); the activities for next 3 years in these villages would be –
 - a. **Developing the skills and empowering the communities to prepare their own plan using micro-planning tools, shelf of works and labor budget under NREGA for their Gram Panchayat and get it approved in the Gram Panchayat and subsequently include in the district level plan**
 - i. Task Force Committee (TFC) formation in each of our operational villages for NREGA.
 - ii. Promotion of Women Groups, Wage Earners Group (WEG) and Agriculture Interest Groups (AIG)
 - iii. Strengthening Women Groups / SHGs in each village through capacity building training
 - iv. Ensuring effective conduct of Gram Sabha and preparation of action plans in the gram sabha
 - b. **Sensitization Campaign for (3 tiers) PRI members with special focus on Gram Sabha members to sensitize the importance of irrigation tanks, plantation, drainage and physical connectivity of the land and the scope of covering these under NREGA**
 - i. PRI members must be given motivational, personality development and life skill development training to imbibe high level principles in their lives.
 - ii. Workshop to sensitize bureaucrats as well as elected representative
 - c. **Implementation of sanctioned shelf of works to generate employment opportunities for their fellow villagers; at the same time, create water harvesting structures (irrigation tanks), improve connectivity, improve soil health and plant biomass generating species in the farms. Supplement these activities with demonstration of IIFS package to make agriculture sustainable.**
 - i. Execution of productive agricultural assets creating activities in project villages
 - ii. Demonstration of latest agricultural technologies with farmers
 - d. **Facilitation of knowledge building by providing access to information through knowledge center establishment as well as community magazine introduction in the villages**
 - i. Wall Magazine to display NREGA works related information on weekly / monthly basis in every village
 - ii. A Kiosk with internet connection shall be put in each GP head quarter

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- 3c. **Project Outputs and Dissemination⁶:** The period under reporting was focussed for ground level preparation and thus no major workshops or training programs has been conducted during this period. However, many publications have been brought out during this period for the target communities; some of these are listed below-

Sl. No.	Publications	Quantity Published
1	A brochure on NREGA concept, rights and entitlements of the WE & OUR groups	1000 copies
2	A pictographical handbill about NREGA concept, rights and entitlements of the WE & OUR groups	2000 copies
3	A Poster on NREGA concept, rights and entitlements of the WE & OUR groups	300 copies
4	Form No.1 for Job Card application	3000 copies
5	Form No.6 for Job application	2000 copies

- 3d. **Capacity Building⁷:** Except the village level group meetings, none of the organised capacity building initiatives have been carried out during this period. However, for the staff involved in the project, many training have been organised in order to equip them to deal with various issues related to NREGA. In addition, the weekly review meeting also deals with one or the other subjects related to the project implementation. These training can be tabulated as under-

Sl. No.	Theme / Subject matter of the training	Venue	Date
1	Project Concept Orientation from April 2011 – March 2014	Janakalyan	7-8 April 2011
2	Salient features of NREG Act with latest changes made by GoK in its execution	Janakalyan	13-14 May 2011
3	Documentation, measurement, payment, unemployment allowance under NREGA	Janakalyan	16-17 May 2011
4	Job Card and Job Application	Janakalyan	10-11 June 2011
5	WE & OUR group concept, formation and strengthening	Janakalyan	25 June 2011

Some of these training were combined with the training program organised under the “Swabhimanada Baduku” project supported by SDTT in Raichur district. The project staffs involved in this project were also involved some of these training.

⁶ This section should provide information on the workshops/conferencess, etc. conducted as part of the training program and also provide for information on the papers, reports, etc. as part of the project

⁷ This section should enumerate the various capacity buildings programs carried out as part of the project. It should also detail out capacity building programs for the staff, communities and others

4. **Project Management⁸:**

Project Team: Since, we have not got the approval from the Trust from April 2011 onward, we have reduced the staff size to reduce burden without compromising with the quality of the project. The following professionals constitute our team, which is responsible for execution of the activities planned under this project.

Sl. No.	Designation	Name of the staff	Qualification	Experience in NGO	Period of service
1	Project Officer	Prasen Raptan	B. Tech. (Ag.Engg.), PGDMN	15 years	1.2.2010 - till date
2	Training Organizer	M. Basavarajaiah	B.Com.	24 years	1.9.2010 - till date
3	GPO – Alabanur	Pranab Mukherjee	PUC	12 years	1.12.2010 - till date
4	GPO – Badarli	Prahlad Biswas	SSLC	5 years	1.2.2011 – till date
5	GPO – Madsirwar	Venkatesh A	MSW	6 years	1.2.2011 – till date
6	Accounts Officer	Manojit Biswas	B.Com.	6 years	1.2.2010 - till date

Planning: The project planning is done before submission of the proposal to the donor in consultation with the target communities while Annual Action Plan is prepared by the Project Execution & Management Teams in the beginning of the year. However, based on the field conditions, the weekly plan of action is prepared by the team which is reviewed in the Weekly Review Meeting. Based on the inputs from the field team and also the inputs the management team receives during their field visits, this weekly plan is prepared and executed.

Review: Weekly review meeting is the forum for discussions, decisions, planning, review and interaction between the execution and management teams of Janakalyan. Every Saturday, the teams meet in Janakalyan Office to review the activities planned for the week and plan the activities for the next week. This weekly review meeting is conducted in the presence of Executive Director of Janakalyan. It is worth mentioning here that Janakalyan has introduced a new system of Program Review by the Governing Board members such as President, Vice-president and Secretary in absence of Executive Director.

Reporting: The GPOs directly report to the Training Organiser (TO) and the TO in turns reports to the ED in this project.

Interaction Mechanism: In addition all the field staffs are provided with mobile allowance and the execution team is in regular contact with the Management Team on day-to-day basis in order to facilitate the field level activities; this also keeps the management team updated on daily basis.

⁸ This section should provide information on the management aspects of the project. It should provide information on the staff involved, reporting and interaction mechanism, etc. it should also throw light on the planning aspects of the project

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5. **Impact⁹:**

The impacts of the interventions during the previous reporting period has been documented and reported in the previous volume (Volume V: Final Report) of the report and therefore not repeating the same in this volume again except the impacts that is achieved during the reporting period only. However, as clear from the above discussions that not much activity has been done during this phase and therefore we cannot expect such impacts of our intervention during this quarter. Some of the major impacts that could be mentioned here are –

- 1) WE group has realised the importance of job card and thus they are not ready to hand over their job cards and/or the bank pass book to the GP members; this has created conflicts between the community and the elected representatives. Further, those who do not have a job card are requesting the field team to assist them to get a job card. This is why the team could mobilise so many applications for job card from these villages.
- 2) OUR group has also realised that NREGA is meant for the farming communities only to create productive agriculture assets and as a result so many applications have been submitted by them to the GP demanding works to be carried out in their farms in the financial year 2011-12 itself.
- 3) The PRI members have realised that the communities have become aware now and thus it won't be that easy for them to go ahead without involving the WE & OUR groups in its implementation.

Issues remained un-addressed: The major issues emerged during the project implementation during this period but the team could not handle completely are-

- 1) Though the team tried hard to take up some asset creating activities during the reporting period, the GP denied on account that they do not have an approved Action Plan for 2011-12; as per the NREG Act, whenever the WE group demand for employment the GP must provide or else provide the unemployment allowance. With all efforts we failed to submit the job demand applications to the GP as they denied accepting such applications.
- 2) Motivating the PRI members is another issue need to be tackled very systematically; though we have put all efforts since they got elected fresh to keep them away from pollution of corruption, it still remained an issue of concern for the team. Systematic strategies need to be designed in future course of action.
- 3) With all efforts, we could not include all the demands of OUR group for productive asset creation in the Annual Action Plan 2011-12; they have only accepted 10-15% of their demands and assured to take up in next financial year. How to get bigger share for productive agriculture asset creation is a concern before the team.

⁹ This section should provide information on the impact of the program. This section should provide information on what the outcome of the project is and what changes it has brought about on to the peopescap and landscape of the region with reference to the poverty-orientation, gender equality, human rights/democratic functioning and environment. It should also mention any outstanding issues that the project could not address or those that emerged during the implementation phase. Further, this section should throw light on the program efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes. If relevant, this section should also throw light on the policy levels outcomes of the project.

6. **Overall assessment¹⁰:**

We at Janakalyan are happy with the performance of the team in translating the planned activities into action during the reporting period; we have also achieved the objectives to the extent as compared to the project period. However, there is much to do in the days to come which are planned for next 3 years in order to achieve the revised objectives and target; also to take the project to the next level of sustainability.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning here that the team could have achieved little more had it gone ahead with the planned activities; due to lack of resources, the activities planned for 1st quarter were skipped and only the minimum activities were carried out which does not require much resources in order to keep relation with the target communities.

7. **Recommendations¹¹:**

At this stage of project implementation, it is not wise to recommend as the learning are still at raw stage; however, whatever remained our experience in more than a year of intervention in NREGA, we feel that-

- 3) To make NREGA a successful model in the country, "COMPLEMENTARY" approach would work; this can be successful if and only if the elected representatives and the public servants are taken into confidence and not using other approaches.
- 4) More than providing employment to the WE group, the focuss of our (civil society organisations) interventions shall be on productive agriculture assets creation for OUR groups; in the process, the WE group would definitely get the employment. On the contrary, if we focuss on employment creation, it might not create productive agriculture assets but something else which may not be useful for anybody.

¹⁰ This section should provide information on what are the organisations' overall assessment on the project outputs and objectives. The project holder may also voice their opinion on the relationship with the Trust

¹¹ This section actually provides an area for the organizations/partners to voice their opinion on how the Trust should look at similar issues in the future and how they should be tackled, based on lessons learnt in the project