

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
RAJYA SABHA
QUESTION NO 02.03.2010
ANSWERED ON
OMBUDSMAN FOR NREGS .

78

Shri Rajeev Shukla

Will the Minister of COAL, HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE, INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING, RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state :-

- (a) whether there are no takers for greater transparency in implementation of Government's flagship National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) as State Governments have failed to appoint ombudsman in around 600 districts across the country, even after the lapse of 3 months period from 7 September, 2009 when his Ministry directed various Chief Secretaries to appoint district level ombudsman to monitor implementation of NREGS;
- (b) whether his Ministry had taken this decision so that an independent authority may redress grievances in implementation of NREGS expeditiously; and
- (c) if so, what other steps Government proposes to take to see that NREGS is successfully implemented?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

(DR. C. P. JOSHI)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement as referred to in reply to parts (a) to (c) of Rajya Sabha Starred Question No. 78 for answer on 2.3.2010

(a): Order by the Ministry of Rural Development directing all States to establish district level ombudsman was issued on 7.9.2009. Some of the State Governments sought clarifications from the Ministry regarding the selection procedure to be followed for appointment of Ombudsman. The requisite clarifications have been issued by the Ministry on 21.1.2010. States are required to follow the selection procedures as provided in the scheme and as per clarifications issued.

(b): Yes, Sir. The decision by the Ministry for appointment of district level Ombudsman has been taken for grievance redressal under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA in a time bound manner.

(c): For successful implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, additional steps taken by the Government are as under:

(i) A Web enabled Management Information System (MIS) (www.nrega.nic.in) has been made operational which places all critical parameters such as job cards, muster rolls, wage payments, number of days of employment provided and works under execution online for monitoring and easy public access for information. 9.0.crore job cards and 2.9 crore muster rolls have been up loaded on the web site.

(ii) Wage disbursement to NREGA workers through Banks/Post Office accounts has been made mandatory to ensure proper disbursement of wages to NREGA workers. 8.66 crore bank/post office accounts have been opened so far. To cover the gaps in financial services and outreach and also to ensure greater transparency in wage disbursement, Rural ATM, hand held devices, smart cards and biometrics have been initiated.

(iii) The Ministry has accorded utmost importance to the organization of Social Audits by the Gram Panchayats and issued instructions to the States to make necessary arrangements for the purpose. Modifications have been made in para 13 of Schedule-I of the Act to provide for procedures on conducting social audits. The Ministry has issued instructions to the State Governments for enforcement of the new social audit provisions under NREGA

(iv) Scheme for Independent Monitoring by eminent citizens has been approved.

(v) District level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees have been set up for monitoring of rural development

programmes including NREGA.

Observance of selection procedure as prescribed in the instructions on Ombudsman. As per reports received from State Governments, process for appointment of Ombudsman at district level has been started in all the States except Tamil Nadu. The procedure for selection of Ombudsman includes publication of advertisements for inviting applications for the post, shortlisting of the applications, convening meetings of the Selection Committee, verification of the antecedents of shortlisted candidates followed by their appointments.