



PACS NREGA WEEK

JULY 3 TO JULY 9, 2006

PRESS CONFERENCE

Solutions, the PACS State-Based Communication Agency (SBCA) organised a Press Conference here at Raipur on July 11, 2006, at Raipur Press Club.

CSOs from Rajnandgaon, Sarguja and Kawardha districts addressed the press conference about the PACS-NREGA week that was observed between July02-08 by these CSOs in their respective districts.

The press conference was addressed by Mehendilal Yadav of Margdarshak Samajsevi Sansthan, Sarguja, Ravi Manav from Vardaan, Rajnandgaon and Anil

As part of its capacity building process for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) working under the PACS programme in Chhattisgarh & Madhya Pradesh, Write



Dwivedi from RIDE, Sarguja. Besides CSO members from Parivartan, Lok Shakti Samaj Sevi Sansthan, Rajnandgaon, and Jagriti Seva Sansthan, Rajnandgaon.



At the beginning Shruiti Mishra of Sutra Consulting spoke about the PACS programme as well as the objective of the NREGA week. The PACS Programme is a DFID-funded seven-year (2001-2008) effort to empower millions of poor people living in many of India's most backward districts.



It seeks to achieve this by strengthening civil society organisations

(CSOs) working for the poor, and till May 2006, covered 89 districts across six states, and 15,853 villages through a network of over 562 CSOs. The NREG Week campaign is being observed across the six PACS States of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra at the national level by the Management Consultants consortium of Development Alternatives-PricewaterhouseCoopers, at the State level by the Programme Support Team (PST) led by the State Anchor Sanjeev Ranjan. The Resource Organisations include Samavesh, Towards Action And Learning (TAAL), Green Earth, Sutra Consulting (Chhattisgarh), the State-based Communications Agency - Write Solutions - and at the cutting edge - district, block and village level - by PACS CSOs.

The PACS Programme focuses on strengthening the awareness and capabilities of poor people, so that they can demand and exercise their rights - political, economic, social and human - to improve their own lives.

The PACS Programme area across 6 states has been defined on the basis of a list of 108 'poorest' districts of India prepared by a committee of the Government of India. The PACS Programme area so created covers around 85% of the 'poorest' districts of India, as defined by the Government of India in 1997. About 40% of India's population lives in the programme area.

An estimated 100 million people living in the programme area are 'extremely poor'. She said that NREGS was an important legislation by the Union Government

which envisages a responsibility on the government to provide employment to the people.

Looking at this, she added that NREGS week was observed to create awareness about various provisions of the scheme so that people could demand work when needed.

This was followed by a briefing to the media by Mehendilal, Ravi Manav and Anil Dwivedi.

Outlining the activities carried out by CSOs in their respective areas, they spoke about street plays, Panch-Sarpanch meetings, mass rallies and public awareness campaigns that were held during the seven-day NREGA Week campaign by PACS. This will be followed by information dissemination through Nukkad Nataks, data collection to know the status of NREGA awareness and the progress of the programme. To create awareness at the community level and identify issues, self help groups (SHGs) took out rallies at the village and panchayat level. Some memorandums were also submitted at the block and district level to inform Government about identified gaps and areas that need to be looked into, he added.

Later, they answered questions raised by the mediapersons, like the status of NREGS scheme in their respective working areas, benefit to the disabled people, timely and accurate disbursement of payments etc.

They said that PACS partners working in NREGA districts organised the week-long awareness campaign, dubbed NREGA WEEK, to generate awareness on a host of issues that reflect not only the challenges in making such a far-reaching piece of legislation a reality, but also the positive effects of having such a system in place.

They were also separately interviewed by electronic media television channels like Sahara Television, ETV news, local M Channel and CNBC-TV18. A large number of mediapersons were present during the press conference.

