

Site Visit Report – NREGA Project at Rajatalab (Asha for Education) – 13th November 2017
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Details:

- After my visit to Navjyoti School, I met Mahendra Rathaur and we went to their office first. We met Omprakash Master who is helping them voluntarily while finishing his studies.
- We went to nearby Payagpur village directly around 1-30 pm. Suresh Rathaur was talking to villagers from Ashwari, Payagpur and Mataldehi. We discussed about the current problems and solutions. They left around 2-20 pm to join their work.
- Discussions with villagers
 - The newly appointed Mrs Sonam Kesari has joined their team from Harsos School run by NJSS.
 - The current government is not focussed on NREGA. Hence the results for NREGA requests are not that positive. Most people got 0 to 10 days of work this year. They moved the main application center to Lucknow thus it is very difficult to meet officials. When they apply for some work under NREGA, they were given few days of work only. Considering all this, later we wanted to redefine the directions of this project
 - Suresh and Mahendra have been training the village leaders and they keep them updated with the new Government initiatives as they come. Some new initiatives they mentioned were getting INR 3000/ year for health, INR 55000 to a family for the expenditure of their girls marriage, INR 225000 life insurance cover etc. There are also scholarships for students in BPL families that they apply to. Sonam Kesari distributed the Bank passbooks for their children getting scholarships.
 - The villagers mentioned their income issues. During demonetization they lost 2-3 months work and recent GST issue has increased the costs of cement causing a standstill in construction work. Their main income from construction work. In this situation, almost no income from NREGA has caused problems too.
 - We discussed about the collective efforts by villagers and what went right in last one year. All of them have Aadhar and got their electronic ration card recently with some help. They have toilets.
- Discussions with Suresh and Mahendra
 - Sonam is coming up to speed joining recently. They requested if we can give some support to Omprakash for his studies. They also requested an increment in their honorarium given their 16 year association with Asha.
 - They also mentioned their current efforts, working with a young adolescent group in Nagepur. They want to explore theatres to raise awareness to

combat violence and gender related issues. For coming year, they proposed if we can have 5-6 day program involving this youth group.

- Also, they mentioned possibility of allocating some budget for an exposure trip to another NGO working in the same field. They mentioned Richa Singh of Sitapur.
- Among infrastructure, a printed would be useful in their office.
- They mentioned their current focus
 - 25% enrolment of BPL students under RTE
 - Focussing on giving access to the working schemes of Government depending on the priority of working party. Like NREGA cannot be the focus now.
- Overall impression – I think this work is very important. Only the supporting chapter needs to consider it as a community awareness and training people to access existing schemes. This is no longer just an NREGA project.



Pictures with villagers (Padmanava Sen in Blue shirt)