



Message from Hon'ble Minister,
Panchayati Raj & Culture, Orissa
Dr. Damodar Rout
on the Occasion of Launching of the Orissa Rural
Employment Guarantee Scheme
on February 2, 2006.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (September 2005) envisages a collaborative partnership between the Center and the State Governments, the Panchayats and the local community. The Gram Panchayat has a pivotal role in implementation. It is responsible for planning, registering, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50% of the works and monitoring. The importance attached by the Act to the Gram Panchayats is evident in its section 15(7) that provides that the State Governments may direct that the functions of the Programme Officer be discharged by the Gram Panchayat or a local authority.

The Act authorizes the Palli / Gram Sabha to recommend works to be taken up, monitor, supervise and undertake social audit of the implementation of the Scheme. In addition, it is suggested that the institution of Gram Sabha be used extensively for facilitating the implementation of the Scheme. The Scheme is intended for the village communities, many of which may be located in remote or isolated areas, and the Gram Sabha could be the most effective institutional vehicle for reaching out to them. The Gram Sabha should be used as a forum for sharing information about the Scheme so that people may come forth for registration as well as for verification of applicants and for reporting on each aspect of implementation of the Scheme.

The Gram Sabha is the statutorily mandated institutional mechanism for eliciting community participation. In addition, other methods of community participation could be evolved such as local vigilance and monitoring committees, local beneficiary committees, local self-help groups, user groups, and other grass root structures that broaden base of participation so that the implementation of the Act has transparency and public accountability.

All key agencies would need to be trained to discharge the responsibilities under the Act. This would include PRIs, District and State level Department Personnel involved with Employment Guarantee Scheme, as well as local committees/groups formed for the purpose of vigilance, monitoring, and social audit.

I am happy to know that Panchayati Raj Department is taking all necessary steps so that this legislation fulfills the dream of getting gainful employment for the rural poor within his/her village in 19 districts covering 205 blocks, 3672 Gram Panchayats in Orissa.