

CUTS' Memo to Chief Minister of Rajasthan on the occasion of Pre-Budget Consultation with NGOs on March 15, 2012.

Introduction

We most heartily welcome the initiatives by the Government in terms of making the government citizen friendly through laws like Public Services Delivery Guarantee Act and the new proposal to pass a Lincoln-type law of forfeiting assets of corrupt officials etc. These need effective implementation alongwith effective monitoring through naming and shaming processes. Among other good initiatives of the government, we would like to draw attention to few other critical issues which can raise the living standards of people.

1. Rural Development

The Government of India had initiated several carefully designed welfare schemes/programmes with huge budgetary support for the welfare of the poor and the marginalized. In 2011-12, 36.4 percent of the total plan outlay (which comes to about Rs.1, 60,887 crore) was allocated to the social sector mainly for the flagship schemes. But these schemes are faced with various problems on ground. The main issue is that the allocated resources are not reaching the intended beneficiaries and achieving the expected outcomes. Thus effective implementation need to be ensured through proper monitoring & evaluation to identify the problems in the course of implementation and to take corrective measures with the aim to make the benefits fully reach the target population etc.

Alarming Status of Implementation of MG-NREGS in Rajasthan

The NREGA launched by the UPA in 2006 to provide rural livelihoods is having an annual budget of more Rs 40,000 crore. NREGA, which is the largest job guarantee scheme in the world, is having the potential of transforming the lives of millions of people across the country that has low income. Employment under MGNREGA by income category indicates that 40% of households accessing MGNREGA fall within the low-income group, with a monthly income of up to Rs. 657.

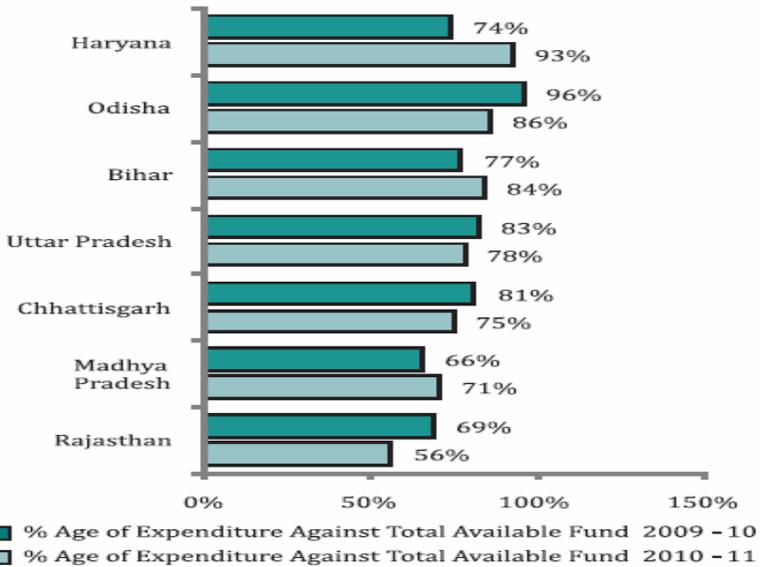
Rajasthan was one of the best implementing states and it was ranked first for NREGA implementation (in terms of employment generation per rural household) by MoRD during 2007-08. However the recent studies and data from the Delivery Monitoring Unit Report show that the status in Rajasthan is alarming.

The table below taken from the NREGS website of Rajasthan (<http://nrega.raj.nic.in/>) shows the declining trend for the last 4 years in terms of expenditure, number of families given work, number of days of work given, average wage rate etc.

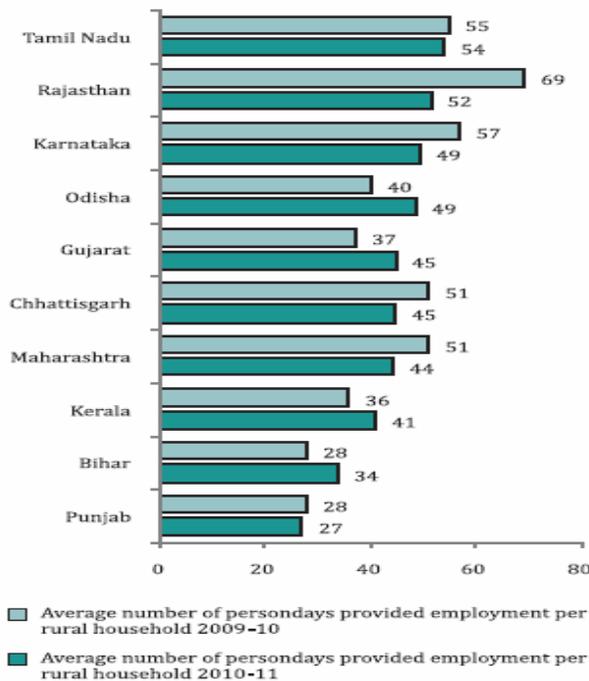
S. No.	Items	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
1	Family with job cards (<i>in lacs</i>)	84.68	89.28	92.74	95.84
2	No. of families given work (<i>in lacs</i>)	63.69	65.22	58.24	43.55
3	Total person days created (<i>in lacs</i>)	4829.38	4498.08	3026.65	1696.41
4	No. of families completing 100 days (<i>in lacs</i>)	25.94	17.63	5	1.37

5	Average employment days (<i>Per family</i>)	76	69	52	38
6	Total expenditure (<i>In crores</i>)	6175.55	5669.05	3300.33	2517.02
7	Average wage rate per person days	89	87	75	95

In FY 2010-11 Rajasthan could spend only 54% of the allocations. Whereas Haryana spent 93% and Bihar spent 84% of the allocations. In FY 2009-10, the total expenditure of Rajasthan was 69%. In the most of the bigger states the trend is upward. The following is a comparative chart of various states.



In FY 2010-11, Rajasthan could provide only 52 person days of employment per family in comparison to 69 person days in FY 2010-11. The following is a comparative chart.



In FY 2010-11, Rajasthan spent an average of Rs. 75/- on wages. In comparison the GoI notified wage rate for Rajasthan stood at Rs. 119/- and the minimum wages for the agriculture unskilled work was Rs. 135/-.

Rajasthan could utilize only 50 % of the total labor budget demanded for the year FY 2010-11. This indicates that half of the money provided by central government remained unspent which could have been utilized for betterment of the state.

The implementation is maligned with a number of typical problems like issue of dated receipt, delay in measurement and payment, inadequate planning and approval of

projects and many more. A recent CUTS study on NREGS in Rajasthan highlighted these issues.

Action Required: There is an urgent need for streamlining the whole process of MNREGS from demanding job to wage payment, to overcome the downward trend and to gain declining faith of employment seekers in the scheme.

Data sources:

Performance Review Committee, MoRD, June 2011, Available online at:

http://rural.nic.in/sites/downloads/meeting-PRC/MGNREGA-agenda_June%202011.pdf

MGNREGA, Delivery Monitoring Unit Report, Physical Employment Generation. Available online at:

http://164.100.12.7/Netnrega/mpr_ht/nregampr_dmu.aspx?flag=1&page1=S&month=Latest&fin_year=2010-2011

http://www.accountabilityindia.in/expenditure_track

2. Education

The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) launched in 2001, aims to provide universal primary education to children between the ages of 6-14 years. SSA is now the primary vehicle for delivering the Right to Education. Govt. of India had allocation Rs. 63,363 Crores for education in FY 2011-12 out of this total allocation for Sarve Shiksha Abhiyan alone was Rs. 21,000 crores in FY 2011-12 but the total expenditure rate was only 70 percent out of total allocation in FY 2010-11.

According to the recent, ASER Report 2010, only 35.7% of children in Std. III in Rajasthan can read Std 1 level text and 34% of children in Std III still cannot recognize numbers between 11 and 99. Issues remain at higher-level competencies – 32.8% of children in Std. V cannot do basic division as well.

As far as the norms for State Pupil Teacher Ratio is concerned only 47 percentage of schools are having that while the norms for Teacher Classroom Ratio are concerned only 83 percentage of schools are fulfilling the norms. In the schools basic facilities are lacking and in the primary schools 11 schools do not have proper office and 43 percent do not have even playground facilities. In more than 30 percent of schools drinking water and toilet facility is lacking. There is only 23% of use of library books in the primary schools, where there are libraries.

Action Required: It is extremely important to take measures to enhance the quality education in the primary schools in the state and to introduce strict civic monitoring of the schools and activating school management Committees.

3. Health

Launched in 2005, the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) is the Government of India's (GoI) largest public health programme. Using government data, this brief reports on NRHM expenditures along the following parameters: a) Overall trends in fund allocation and expenditure: GoI and States, b) Allocation and expenditure on key programmes like immunisation, c) Physical coverage and human resource availability, and d) Outcomes (IMR and MMR).

In 2009, expenditure on public health accounted for 1.4% of India's GDP. This is significantly lower than most developing countries. Brazil spent 4.1% and China spent 2.3%

of its GDP on public health. NRHM expenditures have improved. 73% of allocated funds were spent in FY 2005-06. In contrast, all funds were spent in FY 2010-11. The health sector suffers from a serious human resource deficit. In 53% Primary Health Centres (PHCs), specialists are not appointed. In March 2010, there was a 65% shortfall in the required number of specialists at Community Health Centres. In 2009, 61% children aged 12-23 months received full immunization. Much more need to be done for full coverage of immunisation.

Action Required: Take measure to improve the service delivery under NRHM. Along with the free medicines scheme, introduce a scheme for providing free necessary vaccinations also.

4. Social Justice and Empowerment

Addressing the concerns of Persons with Disability (PwDs)

Despite India having entered the 21st century with various programmes for addressing the needs of socially excluded vulnerable groups, persons with disabilities remain far away from the mainstream of development for lack of voice and organisations working in this sector existing in the disability box. Moreover disability is treated in India more as a charity issues rather than with an approach towards empowerment. Due to this state of existence, even sound data on disability is not available since exclusive programmes do not exist that cater to the needs of disabled.

There are various estimates on disability. The World Bank estimates the prevalence between 2 percent to 8 percent. The census of India year 2001 states that 2.5 percent of the population of Rajasthan has some form of disability, the number being more among males (2.86 percent). This data is higher than the national average of 2.13 percent. According to conservative estimates, approximately 6 percent of India's population is disabled. Seventy percent of them live in rural areas and suffer from lack of adequate services. Eighty two percent of them live below the poverty line. Less than 5 percent have access to education, 3 percent have access to livelihoods and less than 1 percent buildings, public places and transport is accessible to people with disabilities.

An accessible built environment has been recognized as a core element of an inclusive society. An accessible environment provides citizens with autonomy and the means to pursue an active social and economic life (EC Expert Group on Accessibility, 2003).

- ✓ An accessible environment increases the pool of potential new workers that an employer can tap into. It also helps organisations retain existing employees who may acquire a disability;
- ✓ An accessible building enables more people with disabilities to enter the premises and/or use the services;
- ✓ Accessibility improves overall safety of buildings, which has a direct impact on the number of accidents taking place and therefore the cost of insurance premiums;
- ✓ An accessible environment gives greater customer and staff satisfaction and can improve public perception and recognition of a Department or Agency.

Action required: Immediate appointment of Disability Commissioner with institutional support in the state and making the entire government offices barrier free and fully accessible

5. Access to Information

The RTI movement started from Rajasthan which resulted in the enactment of the Right to Information Act (2005), which opened up the entire governance process of the country to the common man. In Rajasthan though the act has been implemented well but still it needs more actions to be taken by state Govt. to make it more effective. Though the state Information Commission was established in April 2006 with one State Information Commissioner, still it remain with one person. There is a need for appointing more commissioners in the Information Commission to oversee the effective implementation of the Act in Rajasthan. Several departments at various levels, still the Public Information Officers (PIOs) are not notified.

Action Required: Appointment of more Information Commissioners in the state and appointment of more and more PIOs at grassroots level or lower than block level in all the departments for providing the information.

6. Other issues

There are various other issues which require the government's attention, such as road safety, agriculture, investment promotion etc, which can add to economic growth and create new jobs.