



Colloquium: When does MGNREGS work? Notes from Field Experiences in Andhra

Speaker:

K. S. Gopal, Director, Centre for Environment Concerns, Hyderabad

Date / Time:

September 19, 2013 - 4:00pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Auditorium, Pixel A, Azim Premji University

Abstract:

The success of MGNREGS, the world largest public employment scheme, is closely related to how the scheme is implemented. How the field activists perceive the issues, challenges, priorities and solutions is an important part of this process. Address their concerns is important for MGNREGS to deliver on its full potential, meet the expectations of the rural poor. Based on my field experiences with the implementation of MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh, which has a good track record in the scheme's implementation, my talk will provide multiple closely witnessed examples and discuss the issues faced by workers and suggest how they could be addressed. I will also suggest how the discourse in MGNREGS can be rewired to be able to collectively succeed in realizing the scheme's potential.

A Note on the Speaker:

K.S. Gopal is Director of the Centre for Environment Concerns (CEC), Hyderabad. Established in 1984 by a group of academics and activists, CEC promotes innovations on ideas and practices in environment, sustainable development, poverty alleviation and inclusive markets that cater to enhance livelihoods and natural resources in rain fed agriculture. Its tools in serving the mandate are - action research, grassroots initiatives and policy/practice advocacy.

Gopal has a Masters in Business Administration and a Diploma in International Business and began his career as Faculty Member, Management Development Division at the Administrative Staff College of India in 1977. In 1980 he helped to establish the IDL Rural Development Trust, which began work in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh. In 1984, the Trust received the national "Best Rural Development Award" from the Federation of the Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI). In 1984, Gopal and his Administrative Staff College associates founded the Deccan Development Society (DDS), wherein he served as its Founder Executive Director. In 1990, DDS received the KP Goenka Award for Environment & Development. In 1991, following the communal riots in Hyderabad, Gopal initiated DDS work to promote communal

harmony and address urban poverty in the city.

Gopal has served on the Governing Council of Environment Protection Training Research Institute, is a member on the research and academic council at the National Institute of Rural Development, has facilitated non-govt. civil society led international diplomacy for Voluntary Action Network India, was Member of steering committee of the Asia Pacific Coalition on Development & Debt and Member of AP land, Water & Tree Committee. Currently he is a Member of the National Employment Guarantee Council constituted by the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India.

He has lectured at Universities of York, Oxford, Stockholm and the Netherlands and presented papers in conferences on food security at the FAO, civil society participation at World Bank, Desertification at UN, Climate Change at UNEP and Rural Housing in UK. He has many publications on development issues including a pioneering study on Foreign Funding to Andhra Pradesh. He has been consultant with Intermediate Technology Development Group (UK), WWF (International), ETC & University of Wageningen (Netherlands), UNICEF, European Economic Commission and Planning Commission of India. He has written three books on the Indian National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme – “Capturing Stakeholder Imagination in NREGA” (2007), “Making NREGS Succeed” (2008) and “Delivering NREGS – Challenges and Opportunities” (2009). He served as “Scholar in Residence” at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai between June 2011 to July 2013. He is now assisting TISS in two areas: training Public Sector Corporate Executives in Corporate Social Responsibility and developing the State Perspective and Strategy Implementation for Livelihoods for the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission.