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KRISHI BHAVAN, NEW DELHI-110 114

*My dear Shri Arjun Munda ji* - 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011

1. As I had promised you, a team comprising of senior officers of the Ministry of Rural Development and other institutions visited the Saranda forest area on October 18-20,2011. They had a very useful interaction with the district administration and based on these discussions, a report has been prepared. I am attaching a copy of this report.

2. As you will observe, considerable follow-up action now has to be taken by the district administration and the state government along the lines indicated in the note. I would request for your personal intervention to ensure that the action points identified for the district administration and the state government in the note are taken immediately. I assure you that as soon as proposals are received, we will move very quickly.

3. I am sure you share my view that what we are trying to do in Saranda has enormous significance not just for that area but for other Naxal-affected regions in the country as well.

*Warm personal*  
With regards  
*h*

Yours sincerely,

*Jairam Ramesh*  
(Jairam Ramesh)

Shri Arjun Munda  
Chief Minister  
Government of Jharkhand

Encl: as above

**VISIT OF MoRD TEAM TO SARANDA FOREST, WEST SINGHBHUM DISTRICT, JHARKHAND - PREPARATION OF THE SARANDA ACTION PLAN (SAP)**

Following the meeting taken by Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development, Shri, Jairam Ramesh on the development activities to be taken up in Saranda area on October 17<sup>th</sup>, 2011, a nine member team comprising of officials from MoRD, World Bank and Jharkhand Government visited West Singhbhum district from October 18-20, 2011. The composition of the team is as under:

1. Sh. N.Muruganandam - Joint Secretary, MGNREGA, MoRD
2. Smt. Nita Kejrewal - Director, NRLM, MoRD
3. Sh. S.P. Vasisht - Director, MGNREGA, MoRD
4. Sh. Kamlesh Prasad - NMMU, MoRD
5. Smt. Meera Chatterjee - World Bank
6. Sh. Varun Singh - World Bank
7. Sh. Vinay Vutukuru - World Bank
8. Sh. Paritosh Upadhaya - Spl Secretary, RD Dept, Jharkhand
9. Sh. S.N. Pandeya - Project Director, JSLPS, Jharkhand

The team was joined by two members from the NGO, PRADAN during the field visit. The team was accompanied by Sh. K. Srinivasan, DC, West Singhbhum, Sh. Arun Kumar Singh, Superintendent of Police, K.K. Tiwari, DFO and other district officials. The team had detailed discussions with the district officials before and after the field visit. The team divided into three sub groups and visited the villages in and around Saranda forest. On October 20<sup>th</sup>, there was a debriefing session with senior officials of the Jharkhand State Government including Sh. D. Gupta, Development Commissioner, Sh. R.S. Poddar, Prl Secretary, RD, Commissioner, MGNREGA, Prl Secretary, Health and Commissioner, NRHM.

The recommendations of the team are outlined as the Saranda Action Plan which was developed in consultation with the district officials of West Singhbhum district.

## **SARANDA ACTION PLAN**

**Context:** Saranda forest is a very rich Sal forest of 800 sq.km lying in the trijunction of Jharkhand, Orissa and Chattisgarh States. It is of strategic importance and has been under the control of Maoists for many years. The Eastern Headquarters and many training camps of the Maoists were located in Saranda forest. Recently, the CRPF has conducted operations and cleared the area. The Ministry of Rural Development is keen on implementing a focussed development plan in Saranda forest through the Jharkhand Government as the tribal inhabitants have been victims of long years of official apathy and isolation from the development process due to Maoists' presence. There are around 7000 tribal households with population of 36,500 in Saranda Forest in 56 villages. It is home to the Ho tribals who speak the Ho dialect. Of the 56 villages, 14 are forest villages, around 10 are unsurveyed Jharkhandi villages and the rest are Revenue villages.

The area has 25% of the known iron ore deposits in the country and the reserves are exploited by more than 12 mining companies with 50 mines. Chiria, the biggest iron ore deposits in Asia is also located in Saranda. Presently the Administration does not have its presence in Saranda and there is no information about the implementation of the government schemes in Saranda.

### **Action Plan:**

The proposed interventions are categorised into short term and medium term. Short term interventions are expected to be completed before 6 months while the medium term ones are to be completed before two years.

## **1. Short term interventions:**

### **Entitlements:**

**1.1 Solar lamps:** The district administration proposes to distribute solar lamps to all the 7000 families. The cost will be met from IAP funds available with the district. The list of suppliers and the contact nos have been furnished to the District Collector.

**Action: District Collector.**

**1.2 Bicycles:** Distribution of bicycles to the 7000 families. The cost will be met from IAP funds . There is a State Government scheme for distributing bicycles for girls. The rate and supplier finalised under the scheme will be used by the District Administration for procurement of bicycles.

**Action: District Collector.**

**1.3 Transistors and musical instruments:** The cost towards these items will be met from IAP funds.

**Action: District Collector.**

**1.4 Including the left out in the BPL list:** Out of the 7000 households in Saranda, around 3000 households though eligible have been left out in the BPL list. As a result these households are denied the benefit of schemes like IAY, NSAP pensions, ration cards, etc. It is necessary to undertake a quick survey to include these left out persons in the BPL list.

It is important that the left out people are provided ration cards for providing food security. The deprivation is very acute in Jharkhandi villages which have been left out of BPL and suffer the most from lack of food.

**Action: District Collector.**

**1.5 Provision of IAY houses:** It is estimated that around 4000 IAY houses will be needed to provide all the households with decent housing. The design of the houses should be based on local design which is acceptable to the tribals.

Concrete roofs are not preferred. Even in the fringe villages, local designs are being successfully used. The District Administration can initiate the construction of IAY houses using local design and through the beneficiaries themselves. Subsequently, a good agency can be contracted to develop a design with the participation of the tribals.

**Action: MoRD (Rural Housing) / District Collector.**

**1.6 NSAP pensions and community certificates:** After inclusion of the left out families in the BPL list, special camps can be conducted to provide OAP pensions, Widow pensions and other pensions to all eligible persons. Cash payment of the pensions has to be permitted to ensure the benefits reach the people. Insistence of payment of pensions through Banks has led to large pension amounts lying in the accounts of beneficiaries who are unaware of the fact. The cash payment can be made before the payment committee constituted for payment of wages under MGNREGA.

The camps can be used to provide Caste Certificates to all tribals which will be useful to them for educational purposes and as an identity card.

**Action: District Collector.**

**1.7 Forest Right titles:** Distribution of Forest Right titles has not progressed in Saranda. The coverage at present is estimated to be less than 5 % of the eligible families. The titles can be distributed very quickly in the forest villages where the possession and ownership are well established. In other villages the awareness about Forest Right titles is very poor and there is a need for the services of a facilitating agency. It is learnt that the NGO, ICFG is doing good work in this field and is already working with JSLPS. Their services can be procured and the expenditure can be met from the funds available for preparatory activities under NRLM.

**Action: MoRD(NRLM)/ State Government /District Collector.**

**1.8 Employment guarantee under MGNREGA:** There is tremendous demand for MGNREGA works in the area and starting the works will signal the

initiation of the development process. The Administration is constrained because of lack of adequate technical manpower to facilitate and monitor the works. There is only two technical staff (JE) who look after the entire Manoharpur Block. All the interventions mentioned above also need a machinery to deliver. The present staff availability with the district administration is limited and are mostly outsiders who visit the distant Saranda Forest occasionally. It is essential to employ a strong team of local tribal youth (both men and women) from Saranda who can deliver all the services.

**Rozgar Sahayaks:** It is recommended that around 30 tribal youth can be engaged as Rozgar Sahayaks under MGNREGA and paid the wages of unskilled/ semi-skilled workers. Their terms of reference would be:

- i. Create awareness about their rights under MGNREGA and about the programme.
- ii. Ensure provision of job cards and commence works.
- iii. Ensure regular payment of wages to the workers.
- iv. Assist the Administration in providing all the entitlements like including in the BPL list, IAY houses, ration cards, pensions, etc.

Engaging these Rozgar Sahayaks is the starting point of the development process. This has to be done immediately by the District Collector who is fully empowered to do so. There is no qualification required for this position and the District Administration can engage suitable youth from Saranda who can function as the extended limb of the government in the area.

**Cash Payments:** There is no functioning Bank or Post Office in Saranda. In the fringe villages where some MGNREGA works have been started, the biggest problem is getting timely payment of wages. The programme is not taking off because of this constraint. At present the mate is collecting the wages on behalf of the workers from the Bank/Post Office and distributing to the workers. It is better that the Administration makes weekly cash payment instead of this informal arrangement. The payment can be made in front of a payment committee which can comprise of:

The GP President, Panchayat Secretary, Rozgar Sewak and Sahayak, the Ward member, at least three women representatives from SHGs/other women organisations/MGNREGA workers and the traditional tribal head .

The payment should be made at a designated place and day so that the workers are aware and can collect the wages.

**Engaging JEs with modified qualifications:** Though MoRD has permitted employment of a JE for each GP in IAP districts, the administration is not confident of getting JEs with ITI qualification. Moreover, the recruitment has to be done at State level which is not happening. To MGNREGA works take off, adequate technical staff to make measurements is essential. The State Government may consider relaxing or broadening the qualifications and also delegating the powers to recruit JEs to the District Collector at least in case of the six GPs in Saranda.

**Demand for land development works :** Most of the tribals have land holdings in Saranda and are engaged in primitive and subsistence farming. From our interaction, it was clear that the tribals want their lands to be developed by taking works under MGNREGA. This can be a good value addition to improve the productivity of the lands and can be commenced from the fringe villages immediately.

**Action: MoRD(MGNREGA)/ State Government /District Collector.**

#### **Livelihood interventions under NRLM:**

**1.8 Employment linked skill training for youth:** There is good potential for providing skill training to youth who can be absorbed in the mining and other sectors. There are nearly 12 big mining companies operating in the area. The JSLPS project in Jharkhand is working with 12 organisations which are providing employment linked skill training including L&T, Don Bosco and IL & FS. The JSLPS which is the nodal agency in the State to implement NRLM should ascertain the willingness of these organisations to work in Saranda and facilitate a workshop with the help of the District Administration and invite the Corporates (employers), training providers and local PRI representatives. The Skill training provider agency can make a need assessment to identify the skills which can generate employment and prepare a special project for skill training for Saranda area. MoRD can approve this proposal which will help in providing

employable skills to the youth. JSLPS can coordinate this work which can be started immediately.

**Action: MoRD(NRLM)/ State Government/ JSLPS /District Collector.**

**1.9 Including Manoharpur as a pilot Block under NRLM and placing a team to assist the District Collector:** At present only two Blocks excluding Manoharpur are included as pilot Blocks in West Singhbhum district. It is proposed that Manoharpur should be included as a pilot Block in the NRLM action plan to facilitate the livelihood interventions. It is also necessary to place a three member livelihood team in Chaibasa to assist the District Collector and coordinate the livelihood interventions. JSLPS agreed to place the team immediately.

The livelihood interventions including skill training have to be started immediately. Instead of waiting for the approval of the NRLM action plan, the activities can be financed using the preparatory fund available with JSLPS.

**Action: MoRD(NRLM)/ State Government/ JSLPS /District Collector.**

**Other interventions:**

**1.10 Mobile Health Units/ Health Camps:** Under NRHM, Mobile Health Units can be operationalised to provide health services to these 56 Villages. The Rozgar Sahayaks can also be trained to provide some basic health services.

**Action: State Government/ NRHM Commissioner/District Collector.**

**1.11 Drinking water supply:** All the 56 villages are in need of potable water. There is problem of high iron content in the water. 200 Hand pumps can be installed as an immediate measure by the State Government.

**Action: State Government/ M/o DWS**

**1.12 Mukyamantri Dal Bhat Yojana:** The State Government had proposed to open 10 new centres in Saranda. This can be a good entry point activity.



**Action: State Government/District Collector.**

**1.13 Watershed programme for Gangda:** This proposal is pending with the State Government and Department of Land Resources, GOI as it is not satisfying the minimum non-forest area norm. This needs to be relaxed in order to take up Watershed programmes in Saranda area.

**Action: State Government/D/o Land Resources/ District Collector.**

**1.14 PMGSY roads:** The District Administration has identified 11 roads for taking up construction under PMGSY of which five are CC roads. It has been decided to sanction these roads in the meeting in MoRD on 17.10.2011.

**Action: MoRD(PMGSY)/ State Government /District Collector.**

**1.15 Capacity building for PRIs:** The PRI functionaries have been elected recently and need capacity building to discharge their functions. The Director, SIRD, Ranchi agreed that he can impart the following trainings to the PRI functionaries from Saranda.

- i. General training to PRIs on their role and functions.
- ii. Orientation on MGNREGA
- iii. Awareness creation on Forest Right Titles and role of PRIs
- iv. Induction for Rozgar Sahayaks and JEs

**Action: SIRD, Ranchi /District Collector.**

## **2. Medium Term measures:**

**2.1 Livelihood interventions:** To empower the tribals and to promote sustainable livelihoods, social mobilisation into SHGs and their federations is a sine qua non. This can be done only by a sensitive support organisation like a NGO. PRADAN is working in the

district and can be a suitable service provider . JSPLS can ascertain their willingness. NRLM can engage a good support organisation which can take up the work of social mobilisation. Regarding livelihoods in Saranda , the following sectors hold promise:

- i. Promotion of improved agriculture and horticulture
- ii. Development of animal husbandry and poultry
- iii. Collection of NTFP and their value addition
- iv. Skill trainings leading to employment particularly in mining sector.

NRLM can take up these sectors for focussed attention in the medium term.

**2.2 Watershed Programmes:** Five additional watershed projects can be prepared for approval with relaxation of the minimum non-forest area norm.

**2.3 Residential schools – Ashram schools:** Ten ashram schools can be constructed in Saranda under the scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

**2.4 Integrated Development Centres (IDC):** IDCs to be set up in temporary structures where security and civil officials can be put up to deliver various government schemes. The cost of construction of IDCs can be taken up under IAP through a special window. The cost of construction of IDCs has to be an additionality under IAP.

The medium term interventions particularly the livelihood ones have to be initiated from the fringe villages first and move gradually to the core. The short term interventions are meant to provide immediate relief and for trust building which will set the stage for taking up the medium term interventions. While most of the short term interventions can be taken up across all villages of

Saranda, the sustainable interventions may be taken up in the following order of priority:

1. Jharkhandi Villages
2. Forest Villages
3. Revenue Villages.

**Monitoring mechanism:** It is recommended that a steering committee under the Chairmanship of the Development Commissioner should be formed at the State level to monitor the implementation of the Saranda Action Plan. It can have the following members:

1. Development Commissioner - Chairman
2. Prl Secretary - RD department,GOJ
3. IG, CRPF
4. District Collector , West Singhbhum
5. NRLM Commissioner,GOJ
6. Commissioner, NRHM
7. A representative from MoRD
8. A representative from MHA in charge of IAP