

Rs 350 cr: NREGA fund for 2009-10

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THE LATEST FISCAL disbursement under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) for Nagaland has been sanctioned by the Government of India. For 2009-2010 till the month of February 2010, the Government of India has released Nagaland Rs 370.91 crore.

The NREGA sanction comes in the wake of the April 5 sanction of Rs. 5 crore for another rural development scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana. The Ministry of Rural Development had released the grant-in-aid for Phase VI for construction of rural roads in Nagaland under PMGSY.

The Rs. 370. 91 Crore was released as the share to Nagaland during the fiscal 2009-10, national media agencies had reported on April 1. The state govern-

ment of Nagaland government contributed Rs 15.53 crore for implementation of the NREGA, now rechristened the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme' (MGNREGS). The Rural Development department's annual administrative report till February lists about 3, 21,141 households as having been issued job cards to avail employment as provided for under the scheme. Also, Out of the total job card holders about 3,10, 941 households have been recorded as having been provided with employment and wages.

During 2010-11 an amount of Rs 57.99 crore was set as Nagaland government's share to the scheme. The NREGS is funded on the basis of 90:10 between the Centre and the NREGA-implementing states.

The NREGS for Nagaland remains a simmer-

ing and prickly tug-and-debate issue between the state government and the opposition. The basic consensus especially for detractors of the NPF-led DAN government is that the rural employment scheme has been misused, at least for the Opposition Congress. Notwithstanding dissent against the anomalies in its implementation at the political level, complaints from the grass-roots have also been received in the recent times.

The current statistics of the implementation of NREGA in Nagaland shows a small improvement from the comparatively much-criticized 2007-2008 and 2008-2009 years of implementation. The Union Ministry of Rural Development (NREGA department) has listed 3.19723 Lakhs households as having been provided with em-

ployment. From the total funding of Rs. 465.21 crore, the expenditure was stated at Rs. 438.98 Crore. The total number of works taken up was listed at 7718 while the works completed stood at 4065. The work-in-progress was stated at 3653.

The NREGS outreach for Dimapur – the commercial hub of Nagaland – was relatively initial. The ministry's records show that 0.383 Lakh households were provided with employment, with person-days at 22.94 Lakh. Comparative with the ST population, a percentage of "0 [0%]" was stated as the participation of Scheduled Castes (SC). The number is interesting considering Dimapur has perhaps the largest concentration of non-Naga labor force and comparatively, even to the local population in the state.

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The STs households employed were listed at '22.94' lakh which was accounted as "[100%]." Of the number, 10.78 [46.99%] were women while "0 [0%]" was listed in "Others" category.

The total fund for Dimapur was stated at Rs. 42.34 crore with expenditure at 39.97 crore. The total number of works taken up under NREGA in Dimapur was stated at 562, with 96 completed and 466 in progress.

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