



Jharkhand NREGA Watch

A Forum of Concerned Citizens of Jharkhand

Live without Pay?

Thousands of Jharkhand's NREGA workers not paid for working in dobhas

Thousands of workers who worked on dobhas (small farm ponds) constructed through the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) across Jharkhand in April to June 2016 are yet to be paid. Many of these workers have complained about not receiving their wages, but their grievances have fallen on deaf ears. In some blocks, such as Petarwar of Bokaro and Chakradharpur of West Singhbhum, government officials and functionaries have even refused to accept workers' complaints.

In the bid to meet the target set by the government of constructing 1.5 lakh dobhas across the state, most workers were made to work with the assurance that muster rolls with their names would be generated as soon as possible. (Even such promises are a violation of the Act as muster rolls are to be generated *before* workers start work and are to be available at the worksite for inspection.) For many of these workers, muster rolls have still not been generated.

What's more, many dobhas for which wage payments are pending have been "closed" in the NREGASoft (the Management Information System of the employment guarantee act), thereby precluding any further payments on them.

The Jharkhand government has taken the credit of constructing over 1 lakh dobhas through NREGA in this financial year (a gross exaggeration of the number of dobhas actually constructed). However, it has no regard for the payment of workers who have worked for creating these water harvesting structures for storing rain water for irrigation. The rampant violation of NREGA workers' right to timely wages betrays the government's apathy towards this economically deprived section of the state's population.

NREGA Watch demands that all workers are paid their pending wages with the compensation due to them for the delays in payments. Also, strict action must be taken against all government officials and functionaries responsible for the delays in wage payments.

See the attachments for samples of unresolved complaints of non-payment of NREGA wages. For more information, please contact James Herenj (09852910778) or Ankita Aggarwal (09818603009) or write at jh.nrega.watch@gmail.com.

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