

# **Minutes of the State Level Workshop on BPL Survey 2011, Proposed National Food Security Bill & Cash Transfer**

**Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011**

**Venue: Red Cross Bhawan, Bhubaneswar, Odisha**

**Organized By: Orissa Khadya Adhikar Abhiyan (OKAA)**

## **BACK GROUND**

The new BPL survey, which comes after Nine years of the last One (2002), is no less fraught with errors. This is evident from the proposed poverty estimation, and the proposed methodology for identifying the poor. While poor people all over India will be adversely affected by the survey, the poor of Odisha will be even more so. The poor of Odisha will be affected on account problems with both poverty estimation as well as identification of the poor. Looking to the magnitude of upcoming BPL survey, the Orissa Khadya Adhikar Abhiyan (OKAA) had organized a One day of “*State Level Workshop on BPL Survey- 2011, Proposed National Food Security Bill & Cash Transfer*” on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2011. On that workshop more than 55 participants were participated from deferent regions of Odisha.

## **OBJECTIVES:**

- To gather the civil societies, NGOs, Media & individuals in to a common Platform and aware them about the upcoming BPL survey and its negative impact on the poor and vulnerable of the society.
- To discuss our key role or strategy to help to the poor and deprived Households of Odisha before and during the BPL survey as an NGO & a part of the Civil Society.
- To discuss on Final Version of National Food Security Bill, and the Govt.’s proposal of Cash transfer.

## **MATERIALS CIRCULATED**

- Criticism to New BPL method decided by the Central Government (Oriya Leaflet).
- Criteria for automatic exclusion, automatic inclusion and seven points scoring for BPL HH selection (Oriya).

## **1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION**

The workshop was started with the inaugural speech of Mr. Bidyut Mohanty. In his speech he gave an overall idea about “Orissa Khadya Adhikar Abhiyan” to the new members as well as the objectives of the workshop. Following that Mr. Manas Ranjan gave an overall idea of BPL survey (Both 1997 and 2002). In his sharing he focused on some important points like;

- The purpose of 1997 BPL Survey and why 2002 BPL survey was not implemented
- A short discussion about the NC Saxena & Suresh Tendulkar Committee reports.

- How this BPL Survey will have a negative impact on Public Distribution System
- The suspected ground level problems which will be occurred during the time of BPL survey
- About the MoRD's new guideline (Exclusion, Inclusion criteria and scoring points.)

After this, AAINA, SMPUP & HARMONY, the three organisations shared their field level experiences of trial BPL survey done after the training conducted in Xavier Institute of Management by Mr. Rajkishor Mishra and Mr. Manas Ranjan (Supported by Diakonia) from 21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011.

#### **AAINA:**

Aaina is working with the disabilities, so their main priority was to understand that whether this new BPL survey will be helpful to the families having disable person or not? Ms. Sneha Mishra shared their findings of the BPL pilot survey and those are;

- If a women headed household is having an adult male as their relative, they will be excluded from the BPL category.
- If the HH is having a small pucca house or Indira Awas home they might lose 1 point, which can also exclude the family to come under BPL category.
- Presence of disable person in the family but also the presence of other normal members will exclude them.

#### **SMPUP:**

Mr. Fakir Rout also tried to show the ground reality and how these poor and vulnerable Households will be excluded in the Upcoming BPL survey. They did the survey of Mehers, who are the traditional weavers of Bargarh District of Orissa. He said;

- The people, whose income is mainly from the traditional occupation like weaving, will be automatically excluded from the BPL survey as per the new guideline prepared by Central Govt.
- It is also quite difficult for them to define type of Houses.
- Also 98% of Households are having mobile phones, which can reduce 1 point from their scoring
- Out of 186 surveyed households only 2 HH will come in automatic inclusion criteria and 120 households will be directly excluded from the survey i.e. only 30% of Households will come under BPL category.

#### **HARMONY:**

Mr. Sourav Ranjan Das shared his survey findings and as per their survey;

- 2 Households getting Old Age Pension and having Indira Awas Home will be excluded from the BPL survey.
- 20 family having Indira Awas home which is pucca, will be automatically excluded from the Survey as well.
- The extra veranda, where the family members are also sleeping will be taken as a room (as per the guideline) can exclude some Households too.

All of them shared few case studies with the participants that how these people will be left out in the new BPL survey.

#### **STATE ADVISOR'S SECRETARIAT, RTF**

At last Mr. Rajkishor shared the experience of pilot BPL survey of 25 villages of Orissa and he emphasised on;

- The problem of scoring by Saxena committee and Tendulkar committee for which the rich people will be automatically included and the poor will be excluded in large quantity from the BPL category,
- Also the target system at Panchayat level is another big issue for this which needs to be considered.
- Lack of awareness among the community members is also a matter of concern

#### **2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION**

##### **NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY BILL**

Mr. Manas Ranjan shared the National Food Security Bill in gist and the bill indicates that again the National Food Security Bill of Government divided the Indian Households into two category, the 1<sup>st</sup> one is the Priority Households and the mentioned Food Entitlement for them will be 7Kg. of food grains (rice, wheat or nutria cereals) per person/month and the Price will not exceed Rs. 3/2/1/ per Kg. And the 2<sup>nd</sup> category is the General Households and their Food Entitlement will be 3Kg. of food grain/ person/month and the Price will not exceed 50% of Minimum Support Price.

The RTF Campaign is opposing the central Govt and says that the Central Govt. shall also determine the additional number of persons belonging to the general household, in such a manner that in each state the combined coverage under the TPDS belonging to priority and general household are 75% and 50% of the rural and urban population, respectively.

##### **CASH TRANSFER**

In the state like Orissa, the Public Distribution System is highly necessary not the Cash transfer and the Orissa Khadya Adhikar Abhiyan is totally opposing this crude idea of Central Government. To show the ground reality of PDS Mr. Sambhu and Ms. Bijayini shared the detail findings of the recent survey did by Allahabad University and IIT Delhi aimed at studying the status of PDS on the ground and amidst the growing debate amongst policymakers on replacing the PDS with cash transfers, also tried to find out people's preference between PDS and cash transfers. There were 9 selected states including Orissa for the survey and the districts of Orissa are Nuapara and Sundergarh. The survey also followed by small group discussions in some respected villages. About 90 percent of the people said they prefer ration over cash. Reasons for this are;

- General satisfaction with the PDS
- Fear that cash will get spent on other things (Mainly on liquor)
- Cash would mean going to the bank and market, both of which are often far from the village

- There was also the fear of the local market selling the ration at a rate higher than the rate at which the government will transfer cash to them.

The main reason why 10% of people prefer cash out of which 5% was conditional preference for cash are; Bad quality of rice, Irregularity of distribution of sugar and kerosene and to invest in various ways (specially other food items and cloths). When it was asked that if the double amount of cash will be provided to them, at that moment 5% of beneficiaries said that they will prefer cash instead of food is a conditional one.

#### **FUTURE ACTIONS**

- ✓ Oppose the anti poor BPL survey 2011 through a state level convention by the end of September
- ✓ To send the case studies/evidence and findings of Trial BPL survey to the NAC members and Central Govt.
- ✓ Create awareness in the grassroots about the anti poor BPL survey through meeting, audio-visual cassettes and CDs on BPL survey and through trial BPL Survey in each district.
- ✓ Connect to and Mobilise the groups such as small farmers, fishers, weavers and other artisans, petty traders, Dalit Christians, Single women, persons with disability etc. that are going to be the worst affected in the BPL survey.
- ✓ To highlight the issues through Media, MLAs and MPs of Orissa
- ✓ To file a case against Child Labour Act to extend the age from 14 to 18 years and this will directly help lot of poor households to be in BPL category.
- ✓ To share and highlight these issues in upcoming Gram Sabhas on 15<sup>th</sup> August.
- ✓ The survey finding will be shared by emails and also in the coming meeting (probably in the last week of August).

#### **DETAILS OF BPL ISSUE MEETING IN DIFFERENT DISTRICTS**

<b>Sl. No</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Time limit</b>
1	Koraput	SPREAD/ SEARCH/EKTA/RCDC/KFA	August (1 <sup>st</sup> week)
2	Bolangir	RCDC/ Adhar/SMPUB/LWSIT	August (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
3	Keonjhar	CYSD, Wosca/ Prakalpa/ Word	August (3 <sup>rd</sup> week)
4	Bargarh	SMPUP	August (1 <sup>st</sup> week)
5	Kandhamal	Swati/ Jana Bikash/ SFDC	August (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
6	Nayagarh	Mati Maa Mahila Morcha	August (3 <sup>rd</sup> week)
7	Gajapati	ISR/ UAA	August (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
8	Ganjam	Harmony/ RITES	August (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
9	Kalhandi	SEWA JAGAT, LWSIT	August (3 <sup>rd</sup> week)
10	Sundergarh	Sewak	August (3 <sup>rd</sup> week)
11	Sambalpur	MASS	August
12	Nuapara	Ayushkam	August

13	Rayagada	OPDSC/ LNSRD/FARR	August (2 <sup>nd</sup> week)
14	Nawarangpur	RCDC	August (3 <sup>rd</sup> week)
15	Puri	Young India	August

After the setting up of future actions, the Workshop was ended up with the vote of thanks by Mr. Bidyut Mohanty. And finally a sharing of the workshop was done with some media persons to highlight the issue.

#### MEMBERS PRESENTED

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