

CASE STUDY 5

USE OF RTI IN NREGA

Sabarkantha district is one among six from Gujarat that are covered under NREGA. In Balisana village of its Prantij block, workers got the payment as low as Rs.3 to Rs.7 per day for their work.

Sabar Ekata Manch¹ and Janpath² did fact-finding survey in Prantij block and where in, similar situations were found in all the works that were done in February and March after enactment of NREG.

Mr. Natu Barot of Sabar Ekata Manch contacted, Mahiti Adhikar Gujarat Pahal for guidance, about how to acquire Muster Roll and Payment Sheets of the works.

Since this information comes under pro-active disclosure category, he was advised to just file an application asking the copy of the muster and payment sheets under RTI.

He got the information immediately after filing an application by paying actual photocopy charges.

When this muster rolls were studied it came into light that, the amount calculated based on the quantum of work is being written in column 7 of the muster Rolls and that which needs to be paid as per minimum wages is being noted in column 10.

There is clear instruction in the printed muster rolls to pay whichever is less from column 7 and column 10. These irregularities and violations were brought to the notice of media through press conference.

A small video film was produced with the help of Janpath, which screened for the media. The issue was highlighted. The gaps in the state government scheme for implementation of NREG were submitted to the government. This built pressure on the government.

The payments made afterwards were all done as per minimum wage provision. And where quantum of work was more the payment doe is more than the minimum wages.

Copy of the muster rolls played key role in effective implementation of NREGA.

¹ A forum of community based organizations working on Dalit Rights in Sabarkantha district.

² A network of voluntary organization of Gujarat.