

NREGP SAVES A POOR FAMILY FROM DISTRESS AND HAZARDS OF MIGRATION

- A Case study from Srimajjanapalli watershed

Mr. Obanna is a farm labourer residing in Srimajjanapalli village. He is the head of the family consisting 21 members with only 5 acres of land. Except 8 members of his family (3 old people and 5 school going children), all others work as daily wage labour, during the cropping season and in tamarind harvesting and processing during the off-season. The women of the family used to get Rs.15/- to Rs.20/- and the men Rs.30/- to Rs.40/- as wages for these works. This income was grossly inadequate to meet the ends of such a big family. So, every year at least 8 members from the family used to go on migration to Bangalore. Even then they could save just Rs.1,000/- to Rs.1,500/-, that too if they did not face any health problems or any unforeseen expenditure. In these miserable conditions, they were unable to provide higher education to their children.

"Not only our family many other families in the village are now able to utilize the NREGP. 3/4th members of the village are participating in NREGP works. It stopped us from migration. As the villagers are participating in the common work and getting equal wages irrespective of caste or gender, it developed unity among them. Thanks to AF for taking initiation and providing awareness on NREGP works and helping us to get the job cards in time."

*Obanna and family,
Srimajjanapalli village,*

Under these circumstances NREGP came as a boon to the family. But for the first six months they were unable to utilize the programme due to lack of awareness. During this period AF formed farmer and farm labour groups in the village and conducted awareness camps on NREGP for farmers and labourers, explaining the benefits of this programme. AF has helped farmers and labourers to identify the works and prepare proposals for NREGP. Now from the last 8 months the family is getting sufficient work in the village and has stopped migrating. As men and women are getting high and equal wages for NREGP works, the wages for the Agriculture works in the village have also increased. So, now they are able to go for NREGP works in the morning and for tamarind harvesting and processing works in the evenings.

This year under NREGP they worked in pebble bunding and tank de-siltation works and they were able to earn Rs.37,000/- . They earned Rs.4,500/- from tamarind harvesting and processing work. With this amount they could purchase food grains like Ragi, Jowar, and Rice required for the year. Also they purchased a small colour T.V. Now they are sending their children for higher studies to near by town.

Now the family is very happy that they are able to earn according to their needs and feel that NREGP and AF have bailed them out, of their misery.