

# **NREGA: Strengthening Rural Livelihoods and an appointment With greatness**

Dear DPCs,

As you may be aware, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has approved an 83% increase in central release for NREGS-Sikkim for 2009-10. The total budget for the State is to the tune of Rs 75 crore and will be released installment wise based on performance and adherence to transparency safeguards.

We have if implemented in true sense by focusing on **strengthening rural livelihoods**, an opportunity to transform rural Sikkim like never before. It also guarantees to provide purchasing power and put money into the hands of the poorest of the poor on a scale that in unprecedented (About Rs 45 crore over the next 11 months).

## **Some of the assets created under NREGA that have improved rural livelihoods are:**

- Creation and repair of minor irrigation channel
- Terracing of agricultural fields in private land
- Orange rejuvenation and plantation
- Plantation of fast growing timber trees in private land
- Jhora training and box drain flood control works in private land

## **Other works that can be taken up to strengthen rural livelihoods are:**

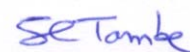
- Bamboo plantation in degraded private land
- Large cardamom re-plantation in private land
- Apple, Litchi, Guava, Kiwi etc horticulture plantations in private lands
- *Nibaroo, Gogun, Taanki, Kabra* etc fodder tree plantations in private lands
- De-silting of existing lakes and ponds in private and forest land
- Dhara Vikas by digging contour trenches in private and forest land

*(Please let me know if there are other activities, so that the list keeps growing)*

While working in private lands, there is no distinction based either on caste or poverty. So we do **not** need to restrict to SC, ST, BPL lands for the above livelihoods activities. The challenge remains to create assets that will be sustainable both ecologically and economically, and shifting from relatively non-sustainable assets like "Rural Connectivity" to those that enhance the resource base of the poor and increase the rural household income. **In a way I realized that we have a historic opportunity in our hands, and if implemented in true sense, a chance to help the poorest of the poor, in a manner that has never been done before. We have an appointment with greatness, a chance that not everyone gets even once in a lifetime.** A chance to help more than 50,000 of the poorest families of Sikkim comprehensively, and making them economically self-sufficient. As a team we can make this dream come true.

For any support and suggestions in realizing this joint dream, feel free to contact me 24/7.

Warm regards,



Sandeep Tambe  
JS-NREGA  
1<sup>st</sup> May, 2009