

LACK OF PROTECTION FOR BEECH TREES....

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Half of the trees dried up...Lakhs of rupees were wasted....

Disorganized Employment Assurance Scheme works

“We had two acres of agricultural land. Plough can be used in only one acre of land. But there is no rain. No crop in the land. Beech plants were planted in the land in which plough can not be used. The authorities told that when the plants grow up profits will be gained through beech seeds. But one fourth of the plants died.” said Mr. Narasimhulu belonging to Augapalli.

In that village of Manchala mandal of Ranga Reddy district a number of poor farmers like Narasimhulu planted these beech plants in their assigned lands. As a part of employment Assurance Scheme they planted around six thousand plants in that village. Among these 75% of the plants were planted in assigned lands. Except one farmer all other farmers who planted these plants are poor and belong to schedule caste. All these farmers kept hopes on the little earnings from their beech seeds. But their hopes went into vain. Swamy belonging to that village is saying” By now already 50 percent of the plants died. The other plants are safe as we planted them in rain season. In contradiction to this, in Japala village only 15% of the plants survived among those planted in the season when there are no rains. Some other village people belonging to Schedule Caste and Backward caste also planted these beech plants in their assigned lands. But those plants are also not given good result.” Even swamy said three acres of land. But he does not have water facility. Drilling a bore did not give any result. Due to this reason he planted these beech plants. He is signing looking at dried up plants. This is the situation of all the formers of manchala mandal who kept their hopes on beech plants.

Employment assurance scheme programme officer Mr. Suribabu said “in manchala mandal two Lakhs twenty two thousand beech plants were planted. And among these 45 to 50 percent plants were survived. According to the information given by the field assistants in the mandal among the plants planted in the rainy days, 50% of the plants survived and in some other places the leaves of survived plants are becoming red as water resources are not there. Avula Anasooya, the surpanch of Japala Village conveyed that in the awareness seminar conducted on employment assurance scheme along with her a few other surpanch’s also raised about the water problem. Even if water is supplied through tankers so many plants would not died like this. Regarding this supply of water through tankers p.o. talked in complete adverse manner. “We have severe water problem. We didn’t have water even to drink”. At the same time again he is telling that “tankers are not available.” He is saying that as the wages are very low no one is coming forward to pour water. He told that they have appointed one person for every five thousand plants for watering them, but by that time harm was happened which has to be happen. Considering what p.o. said, it is clear that half of the plants were died

in this mandal. In arutla, which is one of the largest villages in that mandal, around thirteen thousand plants were dried. Under "employment assurance scheme, they are spending rupees nine for digging the pit and planting a beech plant. According to this Calculation this, in manchala mandal the loss occurred towards the beech plants is around ten Lakhs rupees.

p.o. says that "although we dig the pits at different places, plants were not planted. Now there is possibility to plant the trees in that empty pits. But we can do it only in villages, which have water resources." That means excluding the filled up pits, there are not planting the trees in the remaining pits. Counting this the money spent on pits which are idle is waste. According to details given by Mr.V.Srividya rao, Additional Project Director of Ranga Reddy District under Employment Assurance Scheme, plantation of beech trees in manchala and ibrahim patnam mandal was failed. He is saying that "lack of supplying water to different locations, and planting of very small plants" are the main causes for this failure. Just as they did in manchala mandal, similarly they planted plants in Rangapur village of Parigi mandal. But since they have provided the water, plants survived. In the whole state level we assume around 60 to 65 percent of the plants survived. He confirmed this according to the overall opinions of other officials in the project director's meet. In the state level "constructions of mud banks and next plantation of beech trees works were implemented on large scale under employment assurance scheme. According to what p.o. of manchala mandal is saying, "To get publicity to the scheme and to attract the workers towards work, they have undertaken the simple works like planting of beech trees and construction of mud banks. But is this justified to dig Lakhs of pits to attract the workers, when the sufficient plants were not available, and when conditions are not suitable to plant the remaining trees? When they are not able to provide water resources, is it necessary to plant the beech trees on this large scale? Is this justified to waste the public money like this? The doubts like why cant they spend money on works which helps in development instead of wasting in such works are rising.

In places like manchala mandal, plantation of beech trees clearly shows the negligence in planning. With works like "planting the trees with workers and neglecting in taking proper care, and digging the pits and leaving them without planting the trees", situation is looking like "Employment Assurance Scheme work means "useless work". Questions are rising in large numbers like "what is the use of Employment Assurance Schemes, except providing the work to the labour? The awareness of social development, which is the aim of this scheme, is not focusing on. It also seems that no efforts were made from the authorities in making the public understand about the scheme. Meanwhile, when representative of news magazine "PRAJA SHAKTI" recently visited in Timmajipet and gattu mandals in Mahaboobnagar District, subject of 'corruption in plantation of beech trees' came into light. It came to know that interest among the farmers is gradually decreasing, as they were not getting the reasonable rates. News paper "PRAJA SHAKTI" released an article on this on 26th December.

Government is telling that "we can develop alternative oil and natural resources (Bio Diesel) using "Beech" and "Jatropha". If so to make this wish into reality,

secure measures in protecting these plants with proper care is to be taken and they have to fix suitable market price” suggests Dr.Aribandi. He also says that even by doing this fuel is not going to be cheap. It can't get survived unless there is financial support from the government. Who are deciding the matter of planting only beech and jatropa trees under the works of employment assurance scheme? Where are these plants sourcing from? Who are going to benefit from selling the plants even which are not fully grown? As told by chennareddy guda saranch P.Yasodha, and Agapalli Sarpanch Pittala Padma, “By developing the lakes and ponds with these funds, why can't they help farmers and fishers of backward categories to improve their livelihood? Why can't they preserve the natural resources, which are help for production? These are all the questions before us. These issues have to take into consideration. There is need of thinking deeply to solve all these issues.

THESE ARE PROTECTION MEASURES

According to the details provided by the agricultural scientist Dr.Aribandi Prasada Rao, beech plants have to be given water regularly in summer in the first year. Following the water protection measures land has to be made wet at least once in a month. If we don't put water in second year, the growth rate will be reduced. By saying that “if proper water is not given to beech plants the money and hard work spent on these plants will become waste”, he suggests that if government thinks of planting the beech trees, it has to make proper arrangements in protection of plants, has to come forward to arrange water tankers and workers to put water to the plants. Not only that, to get real yield of beech, they have to take some protective measures compulsorily. As directed by Agricultural University, in the first two years they have to use four kilos of dung, hundred grams of DAP for every plant to give a healthy growth.

DIG THE PITS.....FORGOT TO PLANT PLANTS.

In the Dadpally panchayat range no other work was under taken except planting beech trees under employment assurance scheme. But that work was also not completed. They dig thirty seven thousand pits. But not even planted a single plant. Agricultural workers union village secretary G.Srinivas says that as it is more than four months they dig the pits and no plants were planted. Half of the pits were again filled up. In arutla they spent ninty two thousand two huynred rupees and dig eleven thousand pits and still they kept empty. Officers have not told how many pits to be digged for beech trees, says field assistant srikanth. Eight thousand eight hundred pits digged in Ellamma Tanda and Seven Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty Pits in Chittapur, were also not filled with plants. According to the details given by the P.O. in manchala mandal, total four lakhs eighty two thousand pits were digged, and in these only two Lakhs twenty two thousand pits were empty without plants. According to local people and field assistants details, roughly around three and half to four months back pits were digged in large number and now they are filled up with sand. But according to P.O. only ten thousand to

twelve thousand pits were filled. The loss incurred in digging these pits and of dead plants is of rupees eleven Lakhs approximately. According to unofficial sources this loss is more than these figures.