

Ministry of Rural Development

Department of Rural Development decides to institutionalize social audits in major schemes; To hold National Seminar on Social Audit of RD Programmes on 13-14 November to assess current status & develop roll-out plan

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The Department of Rural Development has decided to institutionalize the social audits in major schemes of Rural Development, starting with NSAP and PMAY-G as a beginning is made in these two schemes by preparing the Guidelines. In this backdrop, a two-day '**National Seminar on Social Audit of Rural Development Programmes**' is being organised at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 13th and 14th November 2019 jointly by the Department of Rural Development and National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, with an objective to understand the current status of social audits and Social Audit Units and develop plan for roll out of social audit in other programmes.

The National Seminar will be inaugurated by the Minister of State for Rural Development, Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti. Shri Rajiv Mehrishi, the C&AG and Secretary, Department of Rural Development Shri Amarjeet Sinha will also be present during the inauguration and share their thoughts. State Principal Secretaries of Rural Development, MGNREGA Commissioners, senior officers from the NSAP and PMAY-G (implementing) Divisions, Directors of Social Audit Units (SAUs) and selected social audit resource persons from the States have been invited to participate in the Seminar. In addition, senior officials of the Department of Rural Development and NIRD&PR will also participate.

The Seminar will take stock of the current status of Social Audits and SAUs in terms of independency, funds, issues identified, actions taken etc. and will provide a platform for SAUs to share their experiences of conducting social audit. Models and best practices in social audit from across States in India and also from other countries will be showcased. Participants will also develop an action plan for strengthening SAUs and roll out of social audit in other rural development programmes especially National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G).

Social Audit is recognized by many, including the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), as a powerful tool to enforce transparency and accountability. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was the first Act to mandate Social Audits by the Gram Sabha of all the projects taken up in the Gram Panchayat. According to Section 17 of the MGNREGA, 2005: '*The Gram Sabha shall conduct regular social audits of all the projects under the scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat*'. MGNREGA Audit of Schemes Rules was passed by the Central Government, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in 2011.

In addition to MGNREGA, few States have taken up social audit of other schemes as well. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) audits are done in Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya

and West Bengal. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) audits are done in Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. Meghalaya Legislature has enacted 'The Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2017' which mandates social audit in 26 different schemes in Education, Health, Rural Development and other areas. Eight States have taken up Social Audit of 11 different schemes including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meals (MDM).

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