

NO EMPLOYMENT... NO IDEALISM!

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Her name is Danchuka Kamalamma. She is a resident of an 'ideal village' Lingampalli. This village is located in Manchala Mandal (province) of RangaReddy district, AndhraPradesh. Kamalamma's family is residing in a poor house located in a street in the village slum area. Adjacent to their house one can see a half built house. If look deep into the details regarding the construction of that house, Kamalamma will narrate her life story which is closely related to that half built house. It is an immense story which will reveal all the secrets of the Government Schemes which are laterally realistic but internally having so many defects.

Kamalamma is a daily wage worker in agricultural fields. She is playing the key role in maintaining her family. She earns Rs 30/-per day whenever she gets chance to work in the fields. But at present she is not getting any chances. So she is not able to earn. But Kamalamma is having the "Job Card" issued by the Government's National Employment Assurance Scheme. As a card holder she can demand for the work. She is having that right. But she is not aware of that right. Even she doesn't know that she can go to Panchayat Secretary and can submit the application for getting chance to do work in the fields. Also she doesn't know that , if the government is not in a position to provide work then compensation should be paid to the job card holders. As not having the awareness of all these facts, she is not able to utilize her job card even though she is not getting any chances of work over a month. The same situation is with all the women in that slum. There are about 50 families are living in that slum. Among those 40 families are having the job cards. But they don't know how to utilize their job cards. And the remaining families even not heard of the job cards.

Kamalamma said **"We, a group of 200 members, went to village Council and asked for work. The Panchyat secretary has issued the job card, but didn't assign any work. And the secretary told that at present work can not be provided and intimation will be given whenever there is necessity of workers."** On the overleaf of the job cards it was mentioned that work will be provided to the card holders within 15 days from the submission of the application. But the women in that slum can not read that note as they are illiterates. Also according to the details given by those women there was no proper canvassing about the Employment Assurance scheme. Due to this they were not able to utilize their job cards and earn money by working in the fields. Fortunately some of the poor families got money from their job cards and laid foundation for their **"ADARSA"** (IDEAL) houses. How it means...

Lingampalli has been declared as **"INDIRAMMA ADARSA GRAMAM"** (INDIRA'S IDEAL VILLAGE) by the Government. Under this scheme, The Government has sanctioned permanent houses for 305 poor families in that village. Also the Government has committed that for the construction of each house Rs 31,200/- will be given. In that scheme there are certain rules and conditions. According to those rules... Rs 3,200/- will be sanctioned from the Employment Reserve Funds to the families having the job cards. Beneficiaries should lay the foundation for their houses with that amount. For this purpose the job card holders should utilize 40 days of their working days out of 100 days allotted under the Employment Assurance scheme. After the completion of the construction of foundation concerned officers will send a housing inspector for checking the construction progress. The basement bill will be released only after the housing inspector has sent the report that contains the details of the progress of the construction. This is the first phase of the construction of the house. In the next phase the balance Rs 28000/- will be sanctioned in three installments through Housing Corporation. The installment will be released only after the completion of the construction in each and every phase. In this scenario Kamalamma's family has laid the foundation for gaining Rs 3,200/- upon job card. From there itself her family is facing problems. For constructing the house she has borrowed money from so many sources. For the sake of the debts Kamalamma has joined in **"SAMATHA MAHILA PODUPU SANGHAM"** (SAMATHA SAVING SOCIETY FOR WOMEN). In that society she is saving Rs50/- every month and borrowing money from the same society whenever she is needs money. This way she is leading her life hardly by borrowing money. She has borrowed Rs 25,400/- from that society for the purpose of the construction of the house. She is paying thousand rupees (principle and interest) every month to that society. At present she is immersed in debts of Rs 19,150/-. Poor Kamalamma is saying "Even not half of the construction is over. There is still a lot of construction work. I need to borrow some more money. Still one lakh has to be spend on construction" And she is very eager to pay all the debts. Why because if she didn't pay one month installment to the society interest will be doubled.

As per the details given by Ayyalu, the field assistant of the Employment Assurance scheme... **'The Government has restricted not to cover the roof with tiles or sheets. The roof must be a cement slab. In the case, If the roof is not of cement slab, then the will not be sanctioned.'** For this purpose again Kamalamma has been forced to borrow more money. In that slum area where Kamalamma is living about 99 percent of the women are members in the saving groups just like Kamalamma. All these women workers have been sandwiched between the savings and debts who were struggling for their daily needs. Actually the amount sanctioned by the Government is sufficient only for two lorries of bricks. It costs around Rs 16,000 per lorry. Hence the women were saying that they have to borrow money for the sake of the house construction. In these circumstances about 200 families are not able to come forward to lay the foundation of their houses even though the houses have

been sanctioned under the scheme. Only 105 families started constructing their houses.

As told by one of the women, Erpula Balamani, belonging to the slum area of the village Lingampalli, in the slum area only 10 families have laid foundation. Among them 5 families not yet received their basement bill. She didn't start constructing her house as she is not having sufficient funds. Panthangi Padma of same slum area has been also forced to borrow money for the purpose of constructing the house. The only desires of these people is to own a house even though they are not having work and money. The Government has simply started the schemes like "ADARSA" for the sake of the poor people and is ignoring further responsibilities. To fulfill the desire of having own house people like Kamalamma and Padma have been forced to borrow money. The burden of debts is affecting is affecting their daily needs like food and health. So it is most essential for the Government to revise the meaningless conditions regarding the "ADARSA" schemes. It has to take the responsibility regarding the construction of houses so that it can reduce the burden of debts on poor. At the same instance the Government has to create awareness of the job cards in the poor people who were not known how to utilize their job cards. The Government should clearly explain the facts regarding the job cards. Because of lack of awareness only Danchuka Lakshamma is ideal for two to three months without having any work. Consequently she is forced to fell in debts. Erpula Andalu was telling that she is not having any work for 20 days as the authorities didn't assign her any work and she also didn't ask for the work. As she is not having the awareness of the scheme she was not able to utilize her working days which have to be gained legally.

Rs. 1200/- crores have been sanctioned to the state under the Employment Assurance Scheme. And there are sufficient works in the villages. But at present not even 800 crores have been spent. This fund has to be utilized within 2 months. On the other hand the workers have to face the problems either due to not getting chances of work or not getting the correct result for their hard work. If the same situation continues in this way, the goals of Employment Assurance scheme will not be achieved. Hence in order to implement the scheme in a successful way proper awareness should be created in the Panchayats. Why because according to the rules 50 percent of the funds should be spent through the village Panchayats. Each Panchayat should make a development plan by considering the recommendations of the village and ward councils.

But in the villages like Lingampalli even the village sarpanch; Anmanthu Mysamma didn't have the knowledge of the scheme. She was saying "There in no property for me. I can lead my life only if I go for work. Anybody may come for me. So I'm not going out to work and earn money." She has been elected under Schedule Tribe reservation. With her experience she came to know that life is closely related to work only. If the awareness of Employment Assurance scheme have created in such a sarpanch and proper training has been given then the situation would be different. She

(Anmanthu Mysamma, the sarpanch) may help the other workers like Kamalamma. The official staff has failed in explain the facts regarding the scheme to the sarpanchs like Mysamma and also in encouraging them.

On the other hand the careless behavior of Panchayat Secretaries has become the big obstacle in implementing the scheme. Actually the Panchayat secretary should play the key role in implementing the Employment Assurance Scheme. In Lingampalli it was seen that the secretary who must be responsible is not only absconding from the duties but also blaming the workers. M.Narasimha Reddy, the secretary of Lingampalli blamed **"If they go to work in the agricultural fields they can earn Rs.70 to 80/- per day. For some other hard works in the fields they can earn Rs 100/- also. That is why they are not showing interest towards the work which we are offering. They rejected when we called them for digging pits. Also we canvassed that to submit the applications for work. They were thinking that they were so busy with their works."** In this situation there two essentials things must be done immediately. One is to let the secretaries like Narasimha Reddy in the correct track and the second thing is to create proper awareness of the schemes in the Sarpanchs.

It is very essential to show much interest in the case of female surpanchs. The Government should not think that its duty is over by simply giving reservations to women in the local areas. If proper training and encouragement has not been given then the objectives of the schemes will not be achieved. So in this case the official staff should have utmost interest. Then only the schemes like **'ADARSA'** which have been proposed for the poor in rural areas will be successful. Also they can give helping hand to the female workers who are interestingly participating in the Employment Assurance scheme works.

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