

## Gram Pradhans getting impatient with the social audit



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On the second day of social audit of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) by a group of citizens in the Miyaganj Block of Unnao District the Gram Pradhans continued to create trouble.

They are feeling quite frustrated that their attempt to scuttle the social audit process by spreading a rumour that they had obtained a high court stay against the social audit did not work.

Today a number of them sat at the Block office grumbling and abusing the

social audit team in private conversations. Sudeep Singh, the son of Gram Pradhan of Virugadhi, Shukrapal Singh, barged in with a group of his friends, all armed with lathis, while the social audit team was having lunch and even tried to drive them away from the village.

However, the social audit team stood their ground and ultimately when he was warned that a FIR could be lodged against him, Sudeep Singh tendered a written apology. The ten social audit teams continued to perform their work although not in the most congenial atmosphere.

In village panchayat Korari Khurd the administration had organized an open meeting of the Gram Sabha today. The District Panchayati Raj Officer came to attend this meeting from Unnao. Coincidentally one of the social audit teams happened to be in this panchayat today.

It encouraged a few people to speak out about the irregularities in the implementation of NREGS in their panchayat. Sachin s/o Shiv Prasad has been shown to have worked for 38 days in tree plantation work on his Job Card No. 422 whereas in reality he has not worked at all. The Job Card No. 52 of Ram Sewak s/o Jhuri shows 30 days of work whereas Ram Sewak has actually put in 14 days of work only. Durga's Job Card No. 442 shows 14 days of work performed whereas she has worked only for half a day. But when these people tried to present their case, their Job Cards were snatched by the Pradhan's men and they were dragged out of the meeting. All this happened while the DPRO was present and the Gram Pradhan was sitting next to him in the open meeting.

Today some villagers from Makhbool Kheda approached the temporary office of the social audit set up at the Block office to register their complaints. Sheetla s/o Jagannath presented his Job Card which reflects total work of 42 days. The Job Card of Matadin s/o Joddha shows 74 days of work. In reality both of them have not even worked for a single day. Shaym Lal s/o Haridas has been shown to have worked on a pond deepening work for 7 days whereas in reality he worked only for two and a half days.

In village panchayat Aaseewan Lok Man a number of people have been shown to have worked for 8 days on a drain digging work. However, Shankar s/o Neelkanth, Shivdeen s/o Chote Lal, Chote Lal s/o Deena, Ramrati w/o

Shankar, etc., people whose names appear on the muster roll testified that they have not worked for a single day on this particular work.

It must be realized that exaggeration of number of days of a worker on the muster roll not only means embezzlement of funds but also reduction of number of exaggerated days from the 100 days of legal guarantee of employment under the NREGA, 2005. This irregularity ought to be treated as a violation of the law.

**Dr Sandeep Pandey**

[Author is a noted social activist, recipient of Ramon Magsaysay Award (2002) for emergent leadership and heads National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) in India]



**[editor](#)**

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