

Management of Rural Development through Mgnrega: A Study in Kamrup District of Assam.

Dr Gourd Goal Banik¹, Khanindra Sarma²,

¹Recognized PhD Guide Department of Commerce Gauhati University Guwahati -781014

²Research Scholar Department of Commerce Gauhati University Guwahati -781014

Corresponding Author: Dr Gourd Goal Banik

Abstract: It is rightly said that India lives in villages. Almost 80% of the Indians live in rural areas, suffering from several socio-economic problems. Poverty is one of the main causes of slow economic development in the country. The proper management of rural development in India is really a big challenge. Government of India has launched several employment generated schemes for the rural people to come out from the acute poverty and hunger. The MGNREGA is a major flagship poverty alleviation programme of Govt. of India. MGNREGA has the legal guarantee of 100 days employment in a financial year to the rural households whose adult members are willing to do their unskilled manual work. The basic objective of this paper is to study as to what extent MGNREGA has been successful in the management of rural development in Kamrup district of Assam.

Keywords: MGNREGA, EMPLOYMENT, POVERTY, HOUSEHOLD, PERSON DAYS, DEVELOPMENT

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I. Introduction

Even after 70 years of Independence, poverty is the day-to-day companion of India. It is a major barrier of economic development in this great country. Despite considerable steps taken by the Government, the poverty has tenaciously persisted in India. According to the data of United Nations Development programme, (2010), an estimated 29.8 % of Indians live below the country's national poverty line. In India, the development of the Panchayati Raj & the effort to use it from Integrated Rural Development and District Development planning has been relatively easy because of the tradition of such local Government Institutions that India inherited from her past.

The proper management of rural development in India is really a big challenge for the Government. It is an established fact the overall development of India depends greatly on the rural development. One of major problems of the North East Region is the lack of proper employment avenues, although the region is rich in mineral & natural resources, agricultural land & climatic advantage of plantation & horticulture. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the major flagship poverty alleviation programmes of Government of India. MGNREGA is the first ever law binding programmes whose frame works are considerable under the purview of law, that guarantees wage employment enhancing livelihoods security by providing 100 days employment.

II. Profile of Study Area

The original Kamrup District is now divided into Kamrup district and Kamrup (Metro) district. The total population of Kamrup District as per 2011 census report is 15,17,202 and Kamrup (M) District is 12,60,409.

There are two nos of civil sub-divisions in the Kamrup District namely, Kamrup Sadar Sub-Division and Rangia Sub-Division. The geographical area of Kamrup Sadar Sub-Division and Rangia Sub-Division is 2197.48 Sq Km & 5,43.26 Sq. KM respectively. The total number of circles in the District is 11. The total no of Blocks is 14 out of which Kamrup Sadar Sub-Division has 11 nos & Rangia Sub-Division has 3 nos. The total no of Gaon Panchayats under Kamrup Sadar sub-Division is 100 and Rangia Sub-Division has 39 nos.

III. Kamrup District at a Glance

Total Population	1517202
Geographical Area	2740.74 sq. km
No of Blocks	14
No of Gaon Panchayat	139
No of Villages	1051
<i>Sources: Census Report of 2011</i>	

IV. Literature Review

The following Literatures are reviewed and summarized the findings.

Dr. Ashok Yakkadevi, Solapur, India (2016) in his article tried to explain that MGNREGA is a powerful instrument for rural people to upgrade their economic growth, livelihood security. They studied the performance of MGNREGA in Dharwad district of Karnataka State. The Schemes, water conservation, water harvesting, drought proofing, flood control and protection works are more essential which has declined the rural unemployment along with improvement of agricultural production.

G. Sugapriyan and S. Prakasam (2015) in their study found that most of the rural people of India depend on the unskilled manual works for their survival. The MGNREGA has been failed to provide employment as per the demand. The scheme has both positive and negative impact. The aim of the study was to examine the performance of the scheme in the Kanchipuram District. The MGNREGA has faced lots of criticism.

Arprit Shailesh, Dr. Taruna (2015) according to their study, today in India, poverty is a big challenge. The Govt. of India has given more effort for reduction of poverty as well as increase of employment. MGNREGA is offering a helping hand to reduce poverty. The study reveals some suggestion. Monitoring mechanism and social audit system is to be reinforced for maintaining transparency. The wages and materials ratio should be maintained properly. The labour budget is to be prepared in time. It is needed door to door investigation and monitoring for providing better performance of the schemes.

Hazarika (2014) examined the impact of MGNREGA on income generating and migration of the people of Lakhimpur District, Assam. The study explains that the MGNREGA has a positive impact on eradication of poverty. The income of the people has been increased for MGNREGA and decreases the rural migration.

Dutta, (2009) carried a study on MGNREGA in Dangs (Gujarat) and Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) districts. The study revealed that communication facility increased due to the impact of rural connectivity works under MGNREGS. Due to availability of works locally, migration of rural workers were found limited. Significant permanent assets were hardly noticed due to the norms of 60:40 ratios in between labour & materials cost to be maintained during execution & lack of convergence with line departments.

V. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study are

- To study the socio economic background of Job card holders.
- To study the assets created through MGNREGA.
- To study the overall benefits of MGNREGA.
- To find out various problems in the implementation of MGNREGA Schemes.

VI. Methodology

Kamrup district is selected for study area as it is one of the major districts of Assam, particularly adjacent to the state capital, where the head offices of all the Departments are situated. Naturally this has an impact on implementation of the Act in Kamrup district adhering to all norms and procedures.

The study is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected from beneficiaries, concerned authorities through structured questionnaire and schedule while the secondary data are gathered from NREGA website, report, books, journals etc. The sample size is 100 respondents.

VII. Data Analysis & Findings

PERFORMANCE OF MGNREGA:

TABLE (1) CATEGORYWISE HOUSEHOLD/WORKER					
Total number of Jobcards applied (in nos.)	242979				
Total number of Jobcards issued (in nos.)	232387				
Total nos. of active Jobcards. (in nos)	93565				
Total no. of registered workers (in nos.)	SC	ST	OTHER	TOTAL	WOMEN
	40233	64443	385001	489677	180787
Total no. of active workers (in nos.)	13002	15447	136606	165055	58615

Sources: Compiled from www.nrega.nic.in (as on 28/11/2017)

The above Table (1) indicates that 2,32,387 nos of Job cards have been issued so far in Kamrup district out of total 2,42,979 nos. households who applied for Job cards. Out of 2,32,387 nos of Job cards, only 93,565 nos (40.26%) are active Job cards. The category wise active workers are SC 32.32%, ST 23.97%, OTHERS 35.48% (women 32.42%), Total 33.71%. The Table (2), (3), (4) indicates the physical performance, financial performance & work details of MGNREGA respectively under Kamrup district for the period of 2012-13 to 2016-17.

TABLE (2) PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE					
INDICATORS	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Approved labour budget (in lakh)	21.49	17.99	16.21	12.00	15.38
Person-days generated (in lakh)	15.68	17.69	12.38	14.86	7.75
SC person-days % as total PDs	7.89	6.85	6.91	9.24	7.19
ST person-days % as total PDs	7.80	9.87	8.59	12.50	8.47
Women person-days % as total PDs	35.09	32.76	28.66	22.62	17.78
Household completed 100days Employment (in nos)	268	1287	1002	345	67
Total household worked (in lakhs)	0.54	0.53	0.44	0.56	0.30
Total individual worked (in lakhs)	0.97	0.91	0.68	0.76	0.34

Sources: Compiled from www.nrega.nic.in (as on 28/11/2017)

TABLE (3) FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE					
INDICATORS	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Total expenditure (in lakh)	5315.81	2693.56	2149.94	3127.27	1435.89
Wage (in lakh)	4573.60	1588.05	1587.48	2208.35	1041.74
Material (in lakh)	351.17	891.51	436.36	737.22	287.44
Total administrative expenditure (in lakh)	391.04	214.00	126.10	181.70	106.71
Average cost /day/person (in Rs.)	226.40	235.91	213.44	212.57	184.73

Sources: Compiled from www.nrega.nic.in (as on 28/11/2017)

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TABLE (4) WORK DETAILS					
INDICATORS	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	2013-14	2012-13
Total nos.of works taken up (New +Spill over in lakh)	0.09	0.08	0.05	0.04	0.02
Number of ongoing works (in lakh)	0.08	0.06	0.04	0.04	0.02
Number of completed works/asset created (in nos.)	767	2098	825	758	281
Percentage of expenditure on agriculture & allied works (in nos.)	46.52	44.96	43.55	37.94	25.02
Total assets generated so far (in nos)	7810				
NRM related works completed so far	449				

Sources: Compiled from www.nrega.nic.in (as on 28/11/2017)

TABLE (5) Perceptions of Job card holders			
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Indicators	Yes	No	Total
Daily wage rate is sufficient.	-	100	100
Job demand is recorded	17	83	100
Works allotted within 15 days of demand.	11	89	100
Unemployment allowances& delayed payment charges are paid	-	100	100
Custodian of Job card is Job card holders	22	78	100
Overall satisfaction with MGNREGA	19	81	100

Source: Field Survey

The performance of the district under the programme in Financial Year 2015-16 has been best on many parameters. 17.69 lakh person-days of wage employment were generated which was the highest in the last 5 years, 2098 works completed which was the highest assets created in 2015-16. Total 1287 nos household

completed 100 days & average cost /day/person were Rs. 235.91 which was again the highest in the last 5 years.

Characteristics	Indicators	Respondents
Quality of Assets Created through MGNREGA	Best	12
	Very Good	22
	Good	21
	Worst	45
	Total	100
Role of MGNREGA in rural employment	Major Role	63
	Minor Role	26
	No Role	11
	Total	100
Assets Usefulness	Very Useful	22
	Somewhat useful	27
	Not Useful or other	51
	Total	100

Source: Field Survey

Table (5) indicates the perceptions of Job card holders in respect of MGNREGA. 100% Job card holders agree with that daily wage rate is not sufficient, unemployment allowances & delayed payment charges are not paid totally. According to the more than 80% Job card holders, job demand is not recorded, works are not allotted within 15 days of demand and 81% Job card holders are not satisfied with MGNREGA. Only 22% Job card holders know that Job card holders are the legal custodian of Job cards.

Table (6) indicates the evaluation of MGNREGA. 45% of the respondents opine that the quality of assets created through MGNREGA is worst though the scheme has major role in rural employment. Regarding asset usefulness, 51% respondents claim its negative impact.

Table (7) presents the problems of MGNREGA faced by the sampled respondents. Most of the respondents are not satisfied with MGNREGA programmes. The rural people are not much aware about the features of the programme as a result of which they failed to avail the lots of facilities under the Act. They claim that a fund constraint is a major problem of the programme. Moreover late payment, corruption, political interference, partiality is one of the major hick-ups in implementation of the programme. The implementation process of the programme is mostly dependent upon contractual staff, so responsibility has been shifted from the reality of the programme.

VIII. Convergence

Due to lack of technical manpower and constraints of funds, there is a need of convergence with the line departments. The state Government has various departments for socio economic development at various stages. These

Indicators	Respondents
Ignorance of rural people	40
Fund constrain	93
Late Payment	69
Corruption	74
Political interference	61
Lack of supervision	30
Non maintenance of assets	21
Partiality	58
Most of staffs are contractual	34
Total respondents	100

Source: Field Survey (Respondents answered more than one options)

departments should be allowed to undertake works adhering to MGNREGA on convergence with their schemes. At present, Government has given more emphasis to eradicate poverty & to create sustainable livelihood opportunities through Self Help Groups (SHG) in rural areas. For these purposes, a Credit Related Issue Committee was constituted by the MoRD in 2010 under SGSY to study the various aspects like improvement of SHG & their federations, enhancing bank linkage, capacity building & skill development of SHGs, converging on various schemes for the efficient social economic support to the rural households in implementation of schemes. As sugesstet by the Credit Related Issue Committee the SGSY was restructured into National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) in FY 2010-11. The framework for implementation of NLRM was approved by the MoRD on 9th December, 2010 & it was formally launched on 3rd June, 2011. But the momentum of NRLM activities in Kamrup district is still in the initial stage.

IX. Findings

- 1) The wages rate Rs. 183 is too low in comparison to the present market rate of wages
- 2) Although the Government has promised 100 days guaranteed employment to the Job card holders, practically Job card holders are given much lesser no of work-days in the year.
- 3) Since the wages rate is too low in comparison to the present wages rate in the area, many efficient workers migrate to the other private employers leaving the Job cards with the less efficient members of the family.
- 4) The work site facilities provided to the Job card holders are just negligible.
- 5) No unemployment allowances are paid to the beneficiaries including delayed payment.
- 6) The information provided in the schematic display board is not sufficient to understand the details of the scheme.
- 7) Procedure of selection of mate is not maintained.
- 8) All Job card holders are not provided job. Job demands are not recorded. Most of Job cards are not kept in the custody of the Job card holders.
- 9) The Job card holders are not aware about the unemployment allowances.
- 10) Assets created by the programme suffer from lack of maintenance. There are even cases where the assets are not handed over to the concerned body for maintenance.
- 11) The Technical manpower is not sufficient in execution level. Most of them are employed in contractual basis except Junior Engineers.

X. Suggestions

- 1) The Govt. should increase the wages rate under MGNREGA schemes so as to attract the efficient workers.
- 2) The schemes should be selected in such a way that it becomes feasible for Job card holders to work. It will prohibit the use of machinery in unskilled manual works and increase the scope of work for the Job card holders.
- 3) The work should be distributed categorically on a seasonal basis so that the Job card holders get employment in all the seasons in a balanced manner.
- 4) All the job cards must stay with the job card holders and wages paid to him/her must be recorded in their respective cards properly so as to assess the 100 days' employment availed by them.
- 5) Dated receipts for Job demands should be issued at G.P. level so as to claim the unemployment allowances by the Job card holders.
- 6) The provision of work site facilities should be kept in estimate as a mandatory item of works.
- 7) The contractual staffs like Accredited Engineer, Gram Rojgar Sevak, Mate, Data Entry Operator, and Social Auditor who are the key persons of the implementing process of MGNREGA should be paid respectable honorarium for motivation.
- 8) There should be a redress cell at G.P level to examine the injustice done to the Job card holders, if any, and compensate accordingly.
- 9) The maintenance of assets created by MGNREGA should be a priority for the benefit of the public.
- 10) Technical manpower should be strengthened in Block level and programme officer should be a technical person so that he can verify the bills & vouchers submitted by Junior Engineer for payment.

XI. Conclusions

Although MGNREGA claims to be the largest rural development programme in the world; but in reality the scheme has not been able to touch the heart of the ultimate upgradation of the rural economy. The poor have remained poor, and the vision of MGNREGA has remained in papers & files only. The potentials of the schemes have not been capitalized in the expected manner over the years. It can be safely asserted that if the schemes under MGNREGA are properly implemented, then it may totally change the rural landscape so as to make the Indian economy a much stronger one in all respects. The present Government both at the center and state will definitely look into the matter and take positive steps in this regards.

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