

Role of MGNREGA in Rural Development with Special Reference to Assam

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Abstract

India as a village based country; from the data of independence has been struggling a lot in its nation-building process. According to 2011 census report 70% of the total populations of India live in rural areas. So, the overall development of our country is unthinkable, without systematic efforts to create a better living conditions of the rural masses. Since independence, the government of India has made several efforts under CDP, DPAC, SFDA, SGSY and scheme like SGRY (2001) also. On the other hand, on the threshold of the 21st century another important wage employment programme for rural development was launched on 7th September 2005 as NREGA. The main objective of this act was to empower the rural masses, to strengthen the security of livelihood, providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members are interested to do unskilled manual works. However, here in study keen attention is given on the implementation of MGNREGA in Assam, which is situated in the NE- Region of India, where 86% of the total population reside in rural area. (2011 census report) Moreover, nearly 40% of the people are still living below poverty line.

Key Words: Post-globalization, Rural Development, Gaon Panchayat, Anchalik Panchayat, MGNREGA

Introduction

India as a village based country, after achievement of independence from the yoke of the British rule, India had to struggle a lot in its nation building process. In fact, development of India in isolation of rural areas is unthinkable. The reason is not far to seek, the total 98% of geographical areas is covered by rural areas. According to 2011, census report the total population of Indian is 1,210,193,422 and out of which nearly 70% population live in village areas.

So, the overall development of our country is unthinkable, without a systematic effort to create better living conditions of the rural areas, where the vast majority of the Indian population reside. Thus in the realm of development in the post-globalization scenario and post-economic reform processes rural India indeed occupies a distinct place in the development scenario of the country. So, rural empowerment as a complex issue of contemporary India has attracted the attention of administrators, planners and academicians.

Rural development as “a multi-dimensional process includes the development of socio-economic conditions of the people living in the rural areas and ensures their participation in the process of development for

complete utilization of physical and human resources for better living conditions. It extends the benefits of development to the weaker and poorer sections of rural society. It also enhances both the capacity and capability of administrative and socio-economic development agencies and agricultural marketing units working in the rural areas.”¹

According to a World Bank Paper rural development is a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor including small and marginal farmers, tenants and the landless.² The term "rural" means an area which is characterized by non-urban style of life, occupational structure, social organization and settlement pattern. Development is defined in terms of technological or industrial development. But development of rural people means raising the standard of their living. It is development of rural areas through the extension of irrigation facilities, improvements in the techniques of cultivation, expansion of electricity, construction of school buildings, provision of education facilities, health care and roads etc.³

Uma Lata defined rural development in terms of “raising standard of living of rural people”⁴ Mishra and Sunderam define "rural development as not merely development of rural areas but also the development of quality of life of the rural masses into self-reliant and self-sustaining modern little communities. Rural development is, therefore, development of rural areas in such a way that each component of rural life changes in a desired direction".⁵

According to M. N. Bhuyan, "rural development as a concept means all round development of the rural areas with a view to betterment of the life styles of rural people. In this sense, rural development like development in general is multi- dimensional. In the purely economic sense it covers development of the agricultural and allied activities and social facilities, besides development of human resources in the rural areas. As a phenomenon- it is the result if interaction between various physical, environmental, technological, economic, social-cultural and institutional factors in rural areas. Development is the approach or operational design to bring about desired positive changes in the socio-economic and cultural life of the rural people".⁶

Integrated rural development had been defined by Sharma and Malhotra as a systematic approach aiming at total development of the area and the people by bringing about the necessary institutional and attitudinal changes and by delivering a package of services through extension methods to encompass not only the economic field, i.e., development of agriculture, rural industries, etc, but also the establishment of the required infrastructure and services in the areas of health and nutrition, education and literacy, basic amenities, family planning, etc, with an ultimate objective of improving quality of life in the rural areas.⁷

Whatever be the difference in concept of the notion of rural development the widely shared view is that rural development is a multidimensional concept that its essence should be poverty alleviation and distributive justice oriented economic reformation.

The main objectives of rural development are as follows:

- A. To improve the living standards by providing food, shelter, clothing, employment and education.
- B. To increase productivity in rural areas and reduce poverty,
- C. To involve people in planning and development through their participation in decision making and through decentralization of administration,
- D. To bring about a greater Socio-economic equality;
- E. To bring about improvement in the ecological environment so that it may be conducive to growth and happiness; and
- F. To ensure distributive justice and equalization of opportunities in the society.

In the Indian context, "Rural Development" can be defined as "integrated development of an area and the people through optimum development and a utilization (and conservation where necessary) of local resources- Physical, biological and human and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes by delivery of package of services to encompass not only the economic field, i.e. agriculture and allied activities, rural industries, but also establishment of required social infrastructure and services in the area of health and nutrition, sanitation, housing, drinking water and literacy, with ultimate objective of improving quality of life of "rural poor" and the "rural weak".⁸

Since independence, for the empowerment of the rural population, the government of India has made several efforts under CDP, DPAP, SFDA, MFAL. SGSY and like Sampurna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY 2001) also. On the other hand, another important wage employment programme for rural development was launched on 7th September 2005, as NREGA, and which is renamed as MGNREGA in 2009. This new scheme which was adopted on the threshold of the 21st century as a wage employment programme with the objective to empower the rural masses, to strengthen the security of livelihood, providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members are interested to do unskilled manual work. At the outset this act was enforced in 200 districts of the country on 2nd February 2006. However, from 1st April 2008, the remaining districts were covered under MGNREGA excluding those where hundred percent population are urban.

Goals of MGNREGA:

- A. The main goals behind this act can be started as below;
- B. Strong social safety which are needed to the vulnerable groups of rural society, by providing a fall-back employment source, when other employment alternatives are not sufficient.
- C. Emphasis is given on the sustainable development of agricultural economy.
- D. Empowering the rural poor through the processes of a rights-based Law.
- E. New ways of doing business, as a model of governance reforms anchored on the principles of transparency and grass-root democracy.

Basic Features of the Act:

The following are the basic feature of the act;

- a) The adult members of a rural household, who are interested to do unskilled manual work, may apply for registration in writing or orally to the Local Gaon Panchayat.
- b) It is the duty of the Gaon Panchayat to issue a Job Card, after due verification. In the job card the photograph of all adult members of the household must be included who are interested to work under MGNREGA, and is to be made in free of cost.
- c) The job card must be issued within 15 days from the date of application,
- d) Under the act a job card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gaon Panchayat, mentioning the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen.
- e) It is the duty of the Gaon Panchayat to issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.
- f) Employment to such applicant must be given within 15 days of application for work. If it fails to do so, then daily unemployment allowance as per the act has to be paid by their respective state government.
- g) Generally work should be provided within 5 km. radius of the village. If work is allotted beyond 5 km, extra wages of 10% are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses.
- h) Wages are to be paid according to the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural laborers in the state, unless the central government notifies a wage rate which will not be less than Rs. 60/ per day. Equal wages must be made to both men and women.
- i) Wages are to be paid according to price rate or daily rate. The disbursement of wages has to be made on working basis and not beyond a forth night in any case.

- j) Enrolment of one third beneficiaries must be women, who have registered and requested work under MGNREGA.
- k) Facility to the workers such as crèche, drinking water shades etc have to be provided at the work site.
- l) Any project work of MGNREGA, undertaken by a Gaon Panchayat must be recommended by the Gram Sabha and the same must be approved by the Zilla Panchayat.
- m) At least 50% of works must be allotted to the Gaon Panchayats for execution.
- n) Under MGNREGA, only those works are permissible like, water and soil conservation, afforestation, and land development works etc.
- o) The involvement of contractors and machinery is strictly prohibited. Moreover, a 60.40 wages and material ratio must be maintained.
- p) According to this act the central Government bears 100% wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75% of the material cost including the wages of skilled and semi skilled workers.
- q) Social Audit has to be done by the Gaon Sabha.
- r) Grievance redressal cells have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process.
- s) Finally, all accounts and records relating to the scheme should be available for public scrutiny.

Paradigm Shift from Wage Employment Programme:

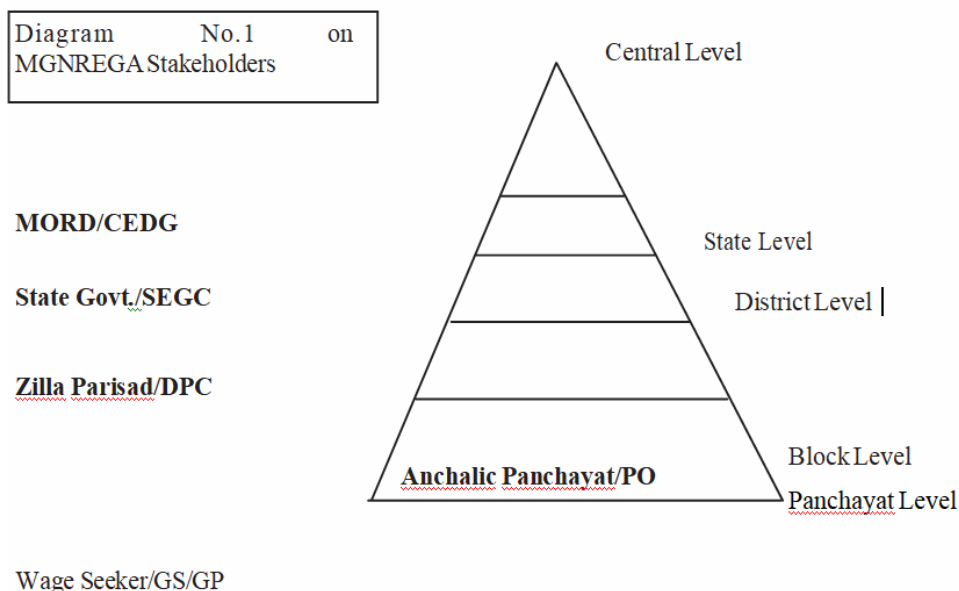
In comparison to earlier wage employment programmes, the MGNREGA is completely a new strategy for rural development. The significant aspects of the act can be stated as below;

- i. MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee of wage employment.
- ii. It also provides a rights-based framework for wage employment. A worker can get employment opportunity by obtaining a job card through registration to his Panchayat and the time and duration of employment can also seek as he prefer.
- iii. It is the legal right of a worker to get employment within 15 days from the date of application for work.
- iv. Another significance provision is that, it also provides the unemployment allowance.
- v. MGNREGA is designed to offer an incentive structure to States for providing employment as 90% of the cost for employment provided is borne by the central Government, on the other hand, the disincentive provision of the act is that, when a state government fails to provide employment under NREGA, unemployment allowance as a compensation to the applicant must be given by the respective state government.

- vi. In comparison to earlier wage employment programmes, MGNREGA is completely demand driven. Resource transfer under MGNREGA is based on demand for employment and seeks to meet the employment needs of the poor.
- vii. It has also extensive inbuilt transparency safeguards; **(a) Documents:** A job Card holder has the right to keep in his custody, the recordings of the job card, written application for appointment, Muster Rolls, Measurement Books and Assets Registers etc. **(b) Processes:** Acceptance of employment application, issue of dated receipts, time bound work allocation and wage payment, citizen Information Boards at worksites, Vigilance Monitoring Committees, regular block, district and state level inspections and social audits.
- viii. The legal responsibility and liability of all concerning authority and persons are also ensured under the NREGA. The act incumbent upon the central Government to present an Annual Report on the outcomes of MGNREGA to the Parliament and to the legislature by the Stated Government also.

The Main Stakeholders of the MGNREGA and their Role:

The MGNREGA is purely a central sponsored scheme for rural development. So for the proper implementation of the programme the Act gives a detailed description of the key stakeholders and their management responsibilities at different levels. The design of Infrastructure system of the key stakeholders and their role from the apex to the grassroots level is like a pyramid. In this context a diagram of the key stakeholders can be states as below;



The wage seekers, Geon Sabha and Gaon Panchayat are the primary stake holder at the village level of the Act. Under this Act the wages seekers, as a part of their right can apply for registration and to obtain Job Card. After obtaining job card, they have the right to application for work specially mentioning the time and duration of work. Employment facilities must be provided by the respective G.P. within fifteen days from the date of application. Necessary facilities on work site must be provided to them. Moreover, payment of wages must be given within 15 days work done.

On the other hand, the responsibilities of the Gaon Shabha are to recommendation of works to be taken up under MGNREGA, conduct social audits on implementation of the scheme, and to act as a forum to give information about the scheme also. The responsibilities of G.P. are to planning of work under MGNREGA, issue of job card and works to the applicants through proper justification of the applications of the wage seekers etc.

In the block level, the Anchalik Panchayat plays a prominent role in the formulation and implementation of MGNREGS. Moreover, there is also a programme Officer (PO) who acts as a coordinator for MGNREGS at the Block level and he is directly accountable to the District Programme Coordinator.

In the district level the sole responsibility of the MGNREGS is exercised by the Zila parishad. In this level a District programme coordinator is appointed by the state government to act as a MGNREGS programmes coordinator. The district programme coordinator deals with activities like information dissemination, training, consolidating block plans into a district plan, ensuring administrative and technical approvals to the self of projects has been accorded on time, release and utilization of funds, ensuring 100% monitoring of works, Muster Roll Verifications and submission of monthly progress reports etc. The Act also makes provision for the establishment of state Employment Guarantee council (SEGS) by every state government at the state level under section 12 of MGNREGA. It acts as a advisory board to the state governing in the implementation of MGNREGS.

Moreover it has to prepare an Annual Report on the implementation of the MGNREGS in the state and to be presented to the state legislature. On the other hand the government of a state must take responsibilities like wide communication of the schemes, setting up the SEGC, establishing a state Employment Guarantee Funds, appointment of essential official persons, release of state share of the MGNREGS budget, training, establishment of a network of professional agencies for technical support, review of MGNREGS and maintaining accountability and transparency in the scheme at all levers etc.

At the apex of the scheme, the Ministry of Rural Development exists which act as the guardian of the MGNREGS. Moreover, a central Employment Guarantee council is there under the chairmanship of the Minister of Rural Development, which acts as a advisory body to the central Government on MGNREGA related matters. It also bears the responsibility of the preparation of Annual Report on the Implementation of the MGNREGA for submission to Parliament. Thus, the infrastructure of the stakeholders of the MGNREGA is framed in a hierarchical order from the apex to the grass root level for the proper implementation of the MGNREGS.

Planning Strategy: Planning strategy and procedure of MGNREGA scheme is also a significant part of the Act. The main target of the Act is to ensure employment to the applicants within time bound as state in the Act. Moreover, the designed and selection of works must be made in such a way under which good quality of assets can be developed. So, conformity with these specific ends proper planning procedures is adopted under this Act. In the planning process the involvement of all section from the grassroots level to the apex level is found which are entangled with the Act.

At the primary level, the Gaon Panchayat is authorized to prepare a development plan and maintain a self of works and the same must be forwarded to the P.O. of Block level for scrutiny and preliminary approval prior to the commencement of the year in which it is proposed. The Development plan as an Annual works plan must contain the following components;

- i. Assessment of labour demand.
- ii. Identification of works to meet the estimated labour demand.
- iii. Estimated cost of works and wages.
- iv. Benefits expected in terms of employment generated and physical improvements. (Waterconservation, Land productivity)

In the preparation of development plan a Gaon Panchayat must be followed the following guiding principles also;

- i. Accordingly, the number of works in the self of projects in a village should be adequately more than the estimated demand.
- ii. Another guiding principle is that, the plot number of the sites where works
- iii. are to be executed should be mentioned so that each work has a unique location code.
- iv. Outcomes expected from the works must be mentioned in terms of; a) Estimated benefits in terms of employment generated measurable in person days. b) Physical improvement expected from specific units and benefits to the targeted community etc.

- v. In simple local language, list of approved work with technical estimates should be also display on the Gaon Panchayat.
- vi. Pre-Mid-Post Project condition of works must be recorded with photographs.
- vii. Moreover, each works taken up with unique number has to be recorded on works register to be maintained at GP to enable verification and prevent duplication.

On the other hand, in the Pre Planning Process in Gaon Panchayat level, the Gaon Sabhas are to be held on 2 October of each year for identification and recommendations of works. All the Gaon Panchayat development plans must reach the programme officer by October 15th. It is the duty of the PO to consolidate all GP proposals into a Block plan and must be submitted to the Intermediate Panchayat by November 15th. The Intermediate Panchayat by maintaining the priority among different works indicated by the Gaon Panchayat must approve the Block plan within fifteen days and the same Block plan must be submitted by the Block programme officer to the District Programme coordinator (DPC) by November 30th. After receiving the same it is the duty of the DPC to scrutinize the Block plans, examining the appropriateness and adequacy of works in terms of likely demand as well as their technical and financial feasibility. However, priorities to such plans must be given as indicated in the block plan. Moreover, the DPC will also formulate the Labour Budget on the basis of the district plan to indicate the amount of funds required implementing the schemes in the next financial year and the same must be submitted to the Zila Parishad by December 15M for its approval. The Zila Parishad must approve it within 31 December and after its approval, the DPC will forward the Labour Budget to the state Government which will in turn, forward it with its recommendation to the Ministry of Rural Development by 31 January to enable to release the central share of funds for implementing the MGNREGA. Thus a proper planning procedure is adopted under this act for the proper realization of its aims and objectives.

Permissible Works under MGNREGA and their Execution: The basic intention behind this Act is to provide employment guarantee in rural areas. So, according to this Act under schedule1 only the following works are permissible:-

- a) Water conservation and water harvesting.
- b) Drought prone area programme including afforestation and tree plantation.
- c) Irrigation Canals, including micro and minor irrigation works and Land development.
- d) Provision of irrigation facility, plantation, horticulture, land development to land owned by households belonging to SC/ST, or to land of the beneficiaries under the IAY/BPL families.
- e) Renovation of traditional water bodies, including de-silting of tanks.

- f) Flood-control and protection works, including drainage in waterlogged areas.
- g) Rural connectivity, including culverts and drains to provide all-weather access to rural masses excluding those roads already undertaking under PMGHY network. No cement concrete road is permissible under MGNREGS. Priority to ST/ SC areas must be given.
- h) Any other work that may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the state Government.
- i) However in some circumstances, to ensues employment or to meet labour demand, a state Government with due consultation with the central Government is authorized to add new categories of work also.
- j) The maintenance of assets created under the NREGS are also permissible.
- k) The acquisition of Land from the small and marginal formers SC/ST landholders cannot be made for works under the MGNREGA programme.

On the other hand, in the implementation of the NREGS, the Act makes it mandatory to allot at least 50% of works to the GP. The other executing authorities are the Anchalik Panchayat and the Zila Parishad, Line departments of the Governments, Public sector undertaking of the central and state Governments, Cooperative societies reputed NGOs and self Help Groups etc.

However, for the proper implementation of the schemes under MGNREGA and for the abolition of corruption which is the main virus of rural development programmes, the Act totally prohibited the engagement of contractors in the execution of works.

Wage Payment Procedure:

- a. To provide economic security as well as maintenance of transparency in the payment of wages to workers the Act directs to follow the following criteria;
- b. The Act ensures that the minimum wage to the workers must be provided by the state Government on the basis of Minimum Wages Act 1948 unless it is reviewed by the central Government.
- c. Equal payment for equal works for both men and women.
- d. Wages must be paid on a weakly basis on a pre-specified
- e. Day of the week in each Gaon Panchayat. In the event of any delay in wage payment, workers are entitled to compensation as per the provisions of the payment of Wages Act 1936.
- f. It is the duty of the concerning authorities to noticing the wage rate to the workers in simple language to understand by them.

- g. The Act also makes provision that, the state Government may dovetail the wage payments under NREGS with social security arrangements. Such as health insurance, accident insurance survivor benefits, maternity benefits etc. However the prior consent of the workers are needed to do so.

On the other hand, for the maintenance of separation between the payment agencies and implementing agencies the Act also allocates the all wages payment procedure through Banks or post offices Emphasis is given to ensure smooth and timely payments also. The Act states that Bank accounts should be opened pre-activity on behalf of all concerned labourers by an appropriate authority (e.g. Bank or Gaon Panchayat). Labourers should not be required to open their own Bank account. Knowledge on handling process of Bank account should also provide to them to make them familiar with such acts. All dates regarding wage payment through Bank/post office must be recorded in the Job Card, which is also a significant part of the Act. However, if a worker is not provided employment within 15 days from the date on which work is requested, an unemployment allowance shall be payable by the State Government at the rate prescribed in the Act.

MGNREGA & Rural Development in Assam: Assam is located in the north-east corner of India, which has an area of 78,438 Sq. Kilometer. It is the second largest province among the north-eastern states but it covers only 2.4% of India's land area. Moreover, Assam is the most populated province of N.E. India. The growth rate of population of Assam is also more than its all India rate. From 1981 to 1991 the growth rate of population in India is 23.9% whereas in Assam it is 24.2%. According to the census of 2011, the 312'06 lakhs total population of Assam is 312.05 lakhs out of which only 14% live in urban area and a large number of it i.e. 86% live in rural area and above 40% are still below poverty line.

Though this state is full of natural resources, it is encumbered with having socio- economic and political burdens like poverty, unemployment, population pressure, illiteracy, under utilization of man power, untapped natural resources, slow growth rate, Low per-capita income, Lack of infrastructure facilities, natural calamities, problems of insurgency and ethnicity etc.

Thus under such situation, development of rural areas, must receive must attention in the various schemes designed for the development of state's economy. Accordingly, since the inception of economic planning in Assam, the First plan period introduced CDP on 2nd October 1952 and during the 1st plan period 26 blocks were set up, The CDP has taken ambitious programmes for all round development of rural areas which included improvement of agricultural techniques, exploring supplementary sources of employment, extension of minor irrigation facilities, improvement of transport facilities, provision for social services and development of co-operatives and panchayats. In spite of all these attempts the CDP failed to step ahead the

villages into the spirit of self- help, self-reliance and co-operative efforts. Though some land reform measures were introduced but it failed to bring any substantial change in agrarian relations. Therefore, all agricultural labour household and a large population of small and marginal farmers and land less non-agricultural rural labour households are basically poor. With the growing size of population, the agriculture economy of the state has been facing the problems of labour surplus. In the absence of the growth of alternative occupations through the development of cottage and small-scale industries and gradual decay of rural artisans, the volume of disguised unemployment has been increasing day by day. Therefore, under such a situation, the introduction and implementation of various rural development schemes for the development of agriculture and allied activities has become very much imperative in the state.

Accordingly, since the Sixth Plan onwards, various self employment and wage employment programmes like IRDA, FWP, NERP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, JRY and EAS etc were launched in the country and those were also introduced in Assam. At present the state government has been implementing various rural development programmes through a network of 219 Development Blocks all over the state. In post independent era, two departments namely, Panchayat and Community Development Department and the Rural Development department were established to deal with rural developmental activities. However, in 1989 both these two departments were amalgamated in a single one which is know as the Panchayat and Rural Development Department. Thus, with a view to improve economic conditions of the rural poor, a number of rural development programmes are under implementation in the state. The department has taken responsibility of enhancing rural livelihoods through a variety of programmes and projects. The emphasis is on building up local resources through increasing the capacity of the rural poor, self employment programmes and improving Infrastructural facilities in the rural areas of Assam. The Panchayat and Rural development Department is activity taking new innovative projects for building community assets, strengthening the existing occupational strategies of the poor farmers and cultivators and to provide wage employment to the poorest section of the rural society. The following are the ongoing schemes for rural development in Assam:

1. Sawarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)
2. Rural Housing (IAY, PMGY).
3. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGY).
4. Integrated Wastelands Development Projects.
5. National Social Aid programme.
6. Mid-day Mill Scheme.
7. Annapurna Achari.
8. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

9. Chief Minister's Jeevan Jyoti Swaniyojon Yojana,
10. Employment Assurance Scheme
11. Project Golden Thread etc.

The MGNREGA for rural development also enforced in Assam in the first phase of the Act in 2005. From the date of enforcement various schemes are implemented under MGNREGA through the PRI of Assam. Regarding its status of functioning a table is given below according to the official sources-

Table :1 - Implementation Status of MGNREGA.

| Financial Year | Expenditure (Rs. in Core) | H H provided employment (in Lakh) | Man days generated (in Lakh) | Average Man days |
|----------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|
| 2013-14 | 700.46 | 12.62 | 299.17 | 23.70 |
| 2014-15 | 502.89 | 9.68 | 210.87 | 21.81 |
| | | | | |

Sources Govt. of Assam Panchayat and Rural Development.

But in reality the act is not implemented in its proper way. The first hand data reveals the following drawbacks of the act in its implementation process.

(i) Coverage of STISC Areas: The MGNREGA as a wage employment strategy directs executing authorities to give priority to the ST and SC dominated areas. But it fails to cover.

(ii) Political Interference in Planning Process: The Act, in conformity with democratic decentralization process of 73rd amendment to the Indian Constitution recognizes the bottom up planning process from the grassroots level through Gaon Sabha of PRI. So, in this context the PRI can play a prominent role in planning process of MGNREGA. However, in actual practice, the state level MPS and MLAs while defining their constituency priorities in Zila Parishad meetings thus interfere with the MGNREGA rural development programmes. These political leaders with their allotted constituency amount do not seem to visualize any legislative constituencies, ultimately hampering the economic development of rural areas,

(iii) Less Flexibility in Works Plans: The allotted works under MGNREGA like almost all rural development programmes, which are planned and implemented at the village level, do not enjoy any flexibility in terms of turning them to the specific needs of the villages, as they are governed by the Central guidelines, thus leaving little scope for accommodating the actual needs of the village people.

(iv) Ad-hoc oriented Plan: Another major problem is NREGA Sponsored schemes are Ad-hoc oriented i.e. all the activities are planned and executed do not provide any scope for preparing a long-term plan for village development.

(v) Lack of Transparency in issue of Job Card: According to this Act, the adult members of a rural household, who are willing to do unskilled manual works have the right to receive a Job card under his Panchayat through proper application, within 15 days. It is the prime duty of a GP to select such beneficiary and use the Job Cards, without maintaining any red-tapism. However, in actual practice such required norms have not been maintained. During the course of interactions with the Job Card holders it has come to my notice that some middle man including the ward members of GP had involved in bribery in allocation of Job Card. Moreover, in the same name of a household, double Job Cards have been allotted under two different respective GPS to contain the profit motive interest of the involved bureaucrats.

(vi) Fails to fulfill the legal Guarantee of Employment: In the analysis of my study, it is dear that the NREGA schemes have failed to provide 100 days of Wage employment to a household in a financial year, which is the main objective of the Act. Actually the action plans which are allotted to a GP are not sufficient to ensure the same. So, a review on the allotted works of the MGNREGA is very much essential to achieve the basic objective at the act.

(vii) No Allotment of Unemployment Allowance: It is stated in the Act that, if a Job card holder is not provided employment within 15 days from the date of application for work, an unemployment allowance must be paid to him. But in reality, the State Government till now has taken no step in this line, which indirectly indicates the failure of the Government in the maintenance of the transparency in the implementation process of the Act.

(viii) Dissatisfaction on Daily Wage Rates: In our present economic order, the daily wage rate which is fixed for a wage seeker is not sufficient for his livelihood security. So, a review in this regard is very much essential to encourage the manual workers to perform their duty properly.

(ix) Anomaly in Payment of Wages: The workers are entitled to receive their remuneration on weekly basis, against their works through their nearest banks or post offices. But in practice, it is a difficult task for those workers who are residing in remote areas with limited facilities of post offices. Generally the post offices have limitations on financial transaction. So it is needed to enhance their capacity to ensure the wage payment to the beneficiaries

(x) Creation of Quality Assets: MGNREGA as a infrastructural development programme though ensuring the wage employment to the wage seekers of the rural areas has also failed to create quality assets for the rural masses for their betterment of living conditions. In pen and paper, the execution of works has been done properly, but in real sense there is no quality of works. Moreover, the social audit system of MGNREGA

works are not maintained properly, so the lack of transparency in the utilization of allotted fund has also been found. It mainly, benefited the bureaucrats rather than the targeted beneficiaries.

(xi) Misuse of Job card: From the ground zero report it comes to notice that the Job card holders are less interested to involve in allotted works. They generally hand over their job cards to the contractors with a mutual understanding against which they are paid Rupees 200 to 300 per week. Thus, manipulating all the legal existing procedures of the act all the people's representatives and the officials from the Panchayat level to the ZPC level are involving in corruption which is the main drawback of the act. Moreover, issued Jobcards are found in those families where govt. employees are there. So, a proper investigation is needed in this regards.

At last, it can be stated that the MGNREGA as a time-bound strategy has failed to ensure employment to the wage seekers within the stipulated time which is already mentioned in Table No.1.

So here an attempt is made to put forward some suggestions for the respective implementing agencies of MGNREGA, which are necessary for the effective implementation of the MGNREGS to realize its basic goals.

Suggestions:

1. The awareness of the rural masses and their active participation in the development programmes are very much essential to ensure the rural development process. They must feel a sense of belongingness to such a developmental plans and programmes. The trend of expecting the government to do everything for them should come to an end. Programmes and schemes with active participation of the people will become more successful. This could be done by involving the people through PRIS, Local bodies, SHGs, Voluntary Organizations etc.
2. Indeed a holistic approach is needed to ensure the rural development process.
3. Steps should be taken to make information available, as a matter of right to the rural masses on the various development programmes. Though the MGNREGA has made the provision of communication networks but in real sense it is not functioning.
4. Misuse of Job cards and the indirect involvement of Contractors must be checked.
5. The wage rate must be raised to attract the attention of the Jobcard holders to work under this scheme.

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