

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee
Act (MGNREGA) and Tribal Livelihoods: A Case Study in
Sundargarh District of Odisha**

A Dissertation Submitted for the Master Degree in

Development Studies

by

Soumya Mohanty

Under the Guidance of

Dr. Nihar Ranjan Mishra

ROURKELA

**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
National Institute of Technology
Rourkela – 769008, Odisha, India
May 2012**

Dr. Nihar Ranjan Mishra

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
National Institute of Technology
Rourkela – 769008
Odisha, India

Date:
Rourkela

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that **Soumya Mohanty** has carried out the research embodied in the present dissertation entitled “**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Tribal Livelihoods: A Case Study in Sundargarh District of Odisha**” under my supervision for the award of the master degree in Development Studies of the National Institute of Technology, Rourkela. This dissertation is an independent work and does not constitute part of any material submitted for any research degree or diploma here or elsewhere.

INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
ROURKELA

(DR. NIHAR RANJAN MISHRA)
Research Supervisor

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. It provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have an impact on reducing migration, restricting child labor, alleviating poverty, and making villages self sustaining through productive assets creation such as road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc. For which it has been considered as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. But the success of this Act depends upon its proper implementation. Thus, the present study attempts to critically examine the implementation process of this programme and its impact on tribal livelihoods i.e. to what extent MGNREGS has given justice in sustaining the livelihoods of poor tribal communities in a tribal dominated panchayat of Sundargarh district, Odisha. The study reveals that there is little impact of MGNREGA on tribal livelihoods. The faulty implementation strategy has ruined the spirit of this programme. Religion and street biasness and favoritism in case of distribution of job card, dominance of dominant families, defective leadership and improper coordination among the stakeholders have stood as major hurdles in this programme.

Chapter-I

Introduction

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, mal-nourished children, anaemic pregnant women, farmer suicides, starvation deaths, migration resulting from inadequate employment, poverty, and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. In order to make solution of these problems and to provide livelihood security to rural unemployed, Government of India (GOI) enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. It is the biggest poverty alleviation programme in the world which is started with an initial outlay of Rs. 11,300 crore in year 2006-07 and now it is Rs. 40,000 crore (2010-11). This Act is now called as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The Act provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household will to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Thus it is a universal programme. This minimum wage varies from state to state, in some states it is Rs. 80 whereas in other it is Rs. 125 or Rs. 120. According to the Act the minimum wage cannot be less than Rs. 60. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year.

1.1. History of MGNREGA

NREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Govt. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana

(SGRY) from 2001; National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) from 2004 were national rural employment schemes. Among these, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

1.2. Time-line of MGNREGA

The following table 1.1. Shows the time line of MGNREGA whereby the scheme got its modifications during the years of its running.

Table 1.1: The Time line of MGNREGA

Aug 2005	Feb 2006	Apr 2007	Apr 2008	Oct 2008	16 Feb 2009	Oct 2009
NREGA legalized	Came into force in 200 districts	130 more districts included	Universalization Of the scheme	Wage transaction through banks/post offices	MOU with the postal dept.	Name changed to MGNREGA

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

As the table 1.1 depicts, when the Act got first introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country in Feb 2006, it was proposed to extend to the remaining districts only after 5 years, after seeing the popularity of the Act. But in the next year itself the Act was extended further to 130 more districts & within a year after the Act got universalized by bringing the entire country under its horizon with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population & got soon named after Mahatma Gandhi (in Oct 2nd 2009) to make the Act more reachable to the masses and thus it became Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). In the context of Odisha all the tribal dominated districts were covered from the very beginning.

Map-1.1 MGNREGS in Odisha



1.3. Significance of MGNREGA

MGNREGA aims to achieve the objective as enunciated in the Article: 41 of the Indian Constitution- “giving citizens the right to work”. The Act is significant due to the following reasons:

- While the earlier wage employment programmes did not provide any guarantee of job, this Act provided guaranteed job. This guarantee for wage employment is now uniformed all over the country like never before.
- It is a development initiative, chipping in with essential public investment for creation of durable assets, without which the growth process can't be possible in the most backward regions of rural India.
- Almost all the previous programmes were allocation based rather than demand based. NREGA, which was launched in 2006, is considered to be unique from this stand point.
- The key element of MGNREGA is the provision of employment by the state to those people who are unable to find alternative employment, which provides a form of social safety net to the rural unemployment people.

- In other wage employment programmes, anyone can be engaged as labour while in MGNREGA only job card holders that apply for employment can be engaged as laborers.
- There is no time frame in other wage employment programmes but in MGNREGA, employment will be given within 15 days of demand, payment also within 15 days of work.
- In other wage employment programme the duration of employment is dependent on duration of work by implementing agency while in MGNREGA, a job card holder applies for maximum 100 days.
- The other key attributes of this Act are labour-intensive work, decentralized participatory planning, women's empowerment, work-site facilities and above all transparency and accountability through the provision of social audits and right to information. The use of information technology in this programme is considered to bring about greater transparency through intensive monitoring and faster execution. The payment of wages through bank and post office accounts is other innovative step that is likely to reduce fudging of muster rolls on the part of the implementing agencies since the actual payments are beyond their reach.

Thus MGNREGA is not only a welfare initiative but also a development effort that can take the Indian economy to a new prosperity.

1.4 . Goals of MGNREGA

Long-term objectives of the Act include:

- Enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household.
- Creating productive assets
- Protecting the environment
- Reducing migration
- Empowering rural women and the poor through the provision of a right-based law.

- Fostering social equity.
- To create strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing employment source, when other alternative are inadequate.

Thus MGNREGA has 3 distinct goals:

- ✓ Protective
- ✓ Preventive
- ✓ Promotive

It protects the rural poor from vulnerabilities by providing them demand based employment. It prevents risk associated with agricultural investment and forced migration of rural poor. It brings prosperity in rural economy via increased consumption demand. Thus MGNREGA can be considered as a growth engine.

1.5. Salient features of MGNREGA

(i) Right based-frame work

- All adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work have the right to demand employment.
- The GP after due verification will issue a job card.
- After verification, the GP will issue a job card (contain details of the member) to the household with photograph free of cost within 15 days of application.

(ii) Time bound guarantee of employment

- Employment will be provided by the GP within 15 days of work application, else unemployment allowance will be paid.
- A household may avail to 100 days of guaranteed employment in a financial year, depending on its need.

(iii) Permissible works

- Water conservation; drought proofing (including plantation & afforestation); flood protection; land development; minor irrigation.

(iv) Labour intensive works

- A ratio of 60:40 will be maintained between wage and material.
- Contractors/machinery is not permitted.

Payment of wages:

- Wages will be paid at the wage earners through their bank/post office accounts.
- Payment of wages to be made in every week and in any case not later than a fortnight.

(v) Decentralization

- Gram sabha (local community) will recommend works to be taken up.
- Gram panchayats will execute at least 50% of work.
- PRI will have a principal role in planning, monitoring and implementation.

(vi) Work site management and facilities

- Work should be provided within 5 km radius of the village.
- In case the number of children below the age of 6 years accompanying the women working at any site is 5 or more, provisions shall be made to assign one women worker to look after such children. The person assigned for this shall be paid the statutory minimum wage.
- Thus creche, drinking water, first-aid and shade are to be provided on the work sites.
- Timely measurement to be ensured.

(vii) Women empowerment

- At least one-third of the workers should be women.
- Equal wages will be provided to both men & women.

(viii) Transparency and Accountability

- Proactive disclosure of information.
- Social Audit by the Gram Sabha is compulsory.
- Regular monitoring at all levels.
- grievance redressal mechanism is to be set up.

(ix) Funding

100% wage cost is borne by Central Govt. 25% Material cost is borne by the State Govt. Unemployment allowance is borne by State Govt.

1.6. The Implementation Structure of MGNREGA

MGNREGA has a five-tier structure of implementation starting from GP at the bottom to the central government at the top.

1. Gram Panchayat (GP)

GP is the nodal agency at the bottom level that has the authority to select, design and implement 50% of the works. Selection of works, monitoring and supervision are done by the Gram Sabha (village council). GP has the responsibility to register households, issue job cards, receive applications for employment, provide employment and monitor the NREGA works.

2. Block Panchayat

The rest 50% may be undertaken either by the block Panchayat or the district Panchayat or both. Block Panchayat monitors and coordinates the plans and works at the block level. Computer updating of MGNREGA works, muster roll entries, etc is done at the block level under the guidance of the MGNREGA programme officer.

3. District panchayat:

District Panchayat, in addition to implementing non-mandatory works, coordinates MGNREGA activities at the district level. Besides, it has the responsibility to prepare both the district annual plan and the five-year perspective plan. These two plan documents are the bases which guide the implementation of MGNREGA at the village level. These documents are prepared at the district level in consultation with the GP and block Panchayats.

4. State Government

Next in hierarchy is the state government which acts as a facilitator in the flow of MGNREGA funds and helping in preparation of manpower. It has the responsibility to set up the State Employment Guarantee Council. The latter has the role to advise the government from time to time on MGNREGA implementation in the state. Besides, the council is also entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluation of the MGNREGA in the state.

5. Central Government

At the top of the hierarchy comes the central government. The Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi is the nodal agency for MGNREGA implementation. It has the responsibility to set up Central Employment Guarantee Council for receiving advice on MGNREGA implementation. It may also undertake independent evaluation and monitoring of the scheme. It has the responsibility to prepare the budget and disburse funds.

1.7. Decentralized planning & MGNREGA

MGNREGA is a unique Act which recognizes the legitimate role of Panchayats in addressing their fundamental duty as expressed in the 73rd constitutional Amendment of providing “economic development and social justice” in their area. The recognition of PRI as the principal agency of implementation under MGNREGA has opened up enormous opportunities for decentralizing development respecting local solutions to local people.

1.8. Review of Related Literature

Since the date of implementation of NREGS various social scientists have made attempt to study the impact of NREGS and also its implementation procedures. Sen et al (2009) attempted to measure the outcome of good governance practiced by Gram Panchayats (GPs) of West Medinipur district of West Bengal through the employment generated under NREGS. Data regarding different parameters related to core characteristics of good governance such as participation, transparency, accountability, effectiveness and

efficiency, equity was taken into consideration in this study. This study mainly gives importance on potential implementation of MNREGA needs adequate efficient governing body and motivation.

As per the Panchayat and Rural Development Dept. Report on the performance of NREGA in 2007-08, the average number of person days created per household in West Bengal was 25; whereas in the study area it is 19 clearly shows under performance. The average participation rate of 19% with maximum of 40% and minimum of 5% shows a good performance compared to 13.1% state average rate (WB Human Development Report 2004). Average women participation rate (22%) is rightly better than the overall participation rate; showing good equality among genders. Equity which states the equality of men and women in decision making procedure found statistically significant. Accountability also found significant and shows positive relation with the NREGS performance. This represents efficiency and effectiveness of Govt. plays a positive role in successful implementation of NREGS. More transparency will tend to increase person days creation. Likewise more participation, i.e. the attendance in Gram Sansad meeting the more average person days will be created. Thus, to conclude it, this study says increasing the performance of governing body (here GPs) can improve the NREGS performance, hence helps to reduce the poverty level.

Khan, Ullah and Salluja (2007) have discussed the direct and the indirect effects of NREGP on employment generation and poverty reduction in a local area. For this, a detailed survey was done in a poor agricultural village with 400 households, nearly 2500 people. The survey recorded income and expenditure levels by type of household including large, small and marginal farmers, agricultural labour etc. The survey also recorded production activities undertaken by the inhabitants.

This village study reveals that most people do not access the scheme, as they haven't heard of the programme. They would like a more proactive role of the panchayat in deciding the infrastructure to be constructed. Almost everyone wants more work from the

scheme and better facilities at the work place. There is enough evidence of fudging and mismanagement of records.

Indian Institute of Technology, Madras, Chennai (2009), “*Evaluation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: In Districts: Cuddalore, Dindugal, Kanchipuram, Nagai, Thiruvallar, State: Tamilnadu*”:- This study generally reveals the impact of MNREGA in the state of Tamilnadu by taking 5 districts into account. In each districts 4 GPs were chosen.

This study shows many positive aspects of the programme. These are mainly:

- Villagers consider NREGA is promising to be a boon for improving rural livelihood.
- Provision of job within the village is very much encouraging to villagers.
- NREGA also ensured gender equality in rural Tamilnadu.
- The programme employed a very good proportion of scheduled caste and backward caste people.
- Involvement of SHG members improves people’s NREGS awareness and this is very important for future NREGS planning.
- Financial inclusion strategies like bank account opening and rural ATM for NREGS beneficiaries at four villagers of cuddalore block has resulted in multiplier effects of savings, financial safety etc.
- Registrations are open throughout the year.
- Most of the respondents perceived that payment were received within a week.

Dey, and Bedi (2010) studied the functioning of the NREGS between February 2006 and July 2009 in Birubham district, West Bengal. Their study reveals that in order to serve as an effective “employer of last resort”, the programme should provide more job days during lean season and wages should be paid in a timely manner. This study shows that, in Birubham, there is universal awareness about the NREGS, job card have been made available to all those who have applied and NREGS related information is well maintained and relatively accessible. But there are long delays in wage payments during

the first year of the programme, since then, the payment lag has declined and it is now in the range of 20 days.

Nayak, Behera, and Mishra (2008) conducted their study in 2 districts of Orissa mainly Mayurbhanj and Balasore. NREGA programme was first introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country. During the first phase itself, Mayurbhanj was selected along with other 18 backward districts of the state including KBK districts. The next phase, five more districts of Orissa were included under the scheme including Balasore. Mayurbhanj completed 3 years of NREGA implementation while Balasore has completed two. Both the districts are reported to have achieved certain goals and failed in others.

This study shows that the state as a whole as well as the two sample districts are well in certain physical and financial parameters like provision of employment to those who demand jobs and maintenance of wage and non-wage ratio. However their performance in certain other important parameters like utilization of funds and creation of demand for jobs is not very encouraging. While the target is to guarantee 100 days of employment to each household, not many households have achieved this target. According to this report well thought out effort is necessary to address these problems of NREGA in the state.

Dreze (2007) looks at the corruption in rural employment programs in Orissa and how this has continued in a NREGS as well. However, he believes that there is tremendous potential of NREGA in the survey areas. Where work was available, it was generally found that workers earned close to (and sometimes more than) the statutory minimum wage of Rs 70 per day, and that wages were paid within 15 days or so. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the rural poor, and there was evident appreciation of it among casual labourers and other disadvantaged sections of the population. There is the hope among workers that NREGA would enable them to avoid long-distance seasonal migration. Further, there is plenty of scope for productive NREGA works in this area, whether it is in the field of water conservation, rural connectivity, regeneration of forest land, or improvement of private agricultural land.

Mathur (2007) thinks that a system of regular and continuous flow of authoritative information is essential. There is room for the government to take up concurrent evaluations, more effective monitoring, time-series studies, and focused reports on critical aspects like minimum wages, muster rolls. To improve implementation, the government needs to solve problems, modify policy directives, and issue operational guidelines for the district, block and village levels. The government must take the lead, be proactive, mobilize institutions and groups, and use the media effectively. NREGS involves several lakh government officials, panchayat functionaries, elected representatives, NGOs and community groups. They play a critical role but had little preparation for the challenge. NREGS in fact is a program of national importance which has been marginalized. While the ministry of rural development is the nodal ministry at the centre, every relevant department and agency requires being involved.

Mathur (2009) states that in social audit undertaken in Andhra Pradesh, it was found that in certain villages, some people stated that they had not been paid for the work done. When comparisons were made of the payments as per the pass-book with the payment as per the job card, it was discovered that the job card did not contain the inner pages that record the work done by each person; the job card itself was incomplete. Earlier, several officials, Field and Technical Assistants and Mates admitted to irregularities and about Rs. 50,000 were returned.

Institute of Applied Manpower Research, Delhi (2009), "All India Report on Evaluation of NREGA, A Survey of Twenty Districts". This study is based on evaluation of the NREGS which assess its impact by taking 20 districts from Northern, Western, Southern and North-East region of India and 300 beneficiaries from each districts. This study reveals that in many districts, affixing of photograph on job cards is not followed and in some places the beneficiary paid money for getting it. Job card was not designed to have sufficient space for all the entries in detail. Many households did not get the work within the stipulated 15 days time of demand for work, neither were they paid any unemployment allowance. On the utility of maximum number of days of works, only small fractions of households could utilize more than 35 days of work, remaining still

lagging behind. The reason for non-utilization of maximum permissible 100 days of work is late starting of the scheme. In most of the worksites, excepting crèche, other facilities like shed, drinking water were provided. Due to the income generation through this scheme, the numbers of beneficiaries at the low earning level are reduced to nearly half in size. There is a rise of families who are spending more on food and non-food items.

1.9. Statement of the Problem

The literature review carried out above reflects that though some researchers have done study on NREGS most of those are confined to economic aspect only. It is not comprehensive. Very few people have emphasized on implementation aspects of NREGS. Social aspects are not much highlighted. The present study will discuss both implementation and the impact of NREGS in a tribal dominated village of Sundargarh district, Odisha. While studying the study will emphasis on following questions:

1. What extent MGNREGA has helped in sustaining the tribal livelihoods?
2. Does MGNREGA become successful in improving the living condition of the poor?
3. Does it promise job to the needy?
4. Does it successful in reducing migration?
5. Is it really a livelihood generating programme than wage-earning scheme?
6. Are the people really aware about MGNREGA work?
7. Is the Act properly implemented as per its rules?

1.10. Objective of the study

The main objectives of the present study are:-

- Understanding the implementation procedure of MGNREGA in the study village.
- Understanding the impact of MGNREGA on tribal livelihoods.

1.11. Conceptual Framework

While doing study it will reflect upon the various aspects of NREGS. It will develop a link among various factors like peoples' need, social and economic aspects. The concepts which are used in study are defined bellow as per the NREGA operational guidelines.

- **“Adult”** means a person who has completed his eighteenth years of age.
- **“Applicant”** means the head of a household or any of its other adult members who has applied for employment under the scheme.
- **“Household”** means the member of a family related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and normally residing together and sharing meals or holding a common ration card.
- **“Minimum wage”**, in relation to any area, means the minimum wage fixed by the State Govt. under section 3 of the minimum wages Act, 1948 for agricultural labourers as applicable in that area.
- **“Unskilled manual work”** means any physical work which any adult person is capable of doing without any skill or special training.
- **“Livelihood”** according to Carney (1998), “It is comprised of capacities, assets and activities required for means of living.”

1.12. Research Methodology

Universe of Study

The study was carried out in Western Odisha. However, the study area was confined to Santoshpur Gram Panchayat of Bisra Block in Sundergarh District. Using purposive sampling method the study area was selected. The village Santoshpur consists of three hamlets i.e Jaratoli, Pahadtoli and Militoli.

Sampling Procedure

For the selection of beneficiary respondents two stages were followed. In the first stage purposive sampling method was adopted for the selection of the study area.

In the second stage, for selecting the sample respondents, random sampling method was adopted.

Sample Size

A sample of 150 households including both job card holders and non-job card holders were selected. Here, non-job card holder households were selected to explore the reasons

for their non-participation in the MGNRES activities. Out of 150 households 68 households are not having job card.

Data Collection

Data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from all the stakeholders of NREGS. Questionnaire surveys with the different stakeholders engaged in NREGS in the study site were organised. Semi structured informal interviews also taken from selected households. Transect walk into the MGNREGS worksites were conducted to have firsthand experience on the MGNREGS works at the community level.

For gathering quantitative data household survey was conducted using the pre-tested schedules. Audio-Video accessories were also used for collecting data. The secondary data was collected from official records, policy documents, published reports of similar projects, journals and literature form social science discipline.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed in the backdrop of the project objectives. Quantitative data was tabulated and statistically analysed using SPSS software. Qualitative data was interpreted based on the information collected from the field.

1.13. Significance of the Study

The present study attempts to understand the implementation procedures of MGNREGS and its impact on tribal livelihoods in a tribal dominated panchayat of Sundergarh district, Odisha. This project focuses on the role of GP to generate sufficient employment opportunities, the procedures for registration, issuance of job cards, and application for employment. This would enable us to understand and examine the institutional mechanisms under which the entire programme is being implemented. The problems and prospects of MGNREGA can then be better understood and accordingly, necessary measures can be devised to make the programme realize its set objectives. The outcome

of the study will help in understanding the problem of implementation of the project. It will help in formulating the better policy and strategy for the future.

1.14. Chapterization

The first chapter deals with the introduction and literature review. It explains about the feature of NREGA. It also discussed the objective and methodology of the project. The second chapter deals with the implementation of NREGs in the study area. The third chapter deals with the impact of NREGS on livelihood. The last chapter provides a brief summary and conclusion.

Chapter-II

Findings and Analysis

2.1. Introduction

Starting from 200 districts, the coverage of NREGA was increased to all the rural districts in the country. However, despite coming out of a countrywide struggle for enactment of EGA, the performance of the NREGA varies a lot across the states.

The major question raises how to implement the Act, which can give justice to the poor for whom the act was designed. To a certain extent, the effective implementation is consequent upon greater awareness and participation of beneficiaries and PRIs, since they have a greater role to play according to the Act. However, technicalities apart, effective implementation of the Act is also conditional on the effort of the state governments in ensuring effective implementation of the Act by doing away with the contractor system, simplifying the implementation design and above all, the political will to ensure its successful implementation.

The State like Odisha came to the notice after the Supreme Court's order for a Central probe into the diversion of funds and non-implementation of rural employment scheme, MGNREGA, in Odisha (Dec 14, 2010). Orissa recorded 21 days in 2006 and 8 days in 2007-8 per households. During 2009-10 only 995193 households have been given works out of more than 54 lakh job card holders in the state because only 1021008 households demanded work (Dreze, 2010).

As per a leading newspaper in Odisha (The Samaj, 23rd March) while during 2011-12 odisha govt has able to spent 64% of the NREGS fund allotted, it is around 94% in Sundargarh. However, while 3, 17,201 households in this district have registered under NREGS only 2162 households have received work for 100 days and 32,572 households have received less than 6 days of work. The remaining households never got any work. However, nobody is able to answer what for most of the households did not get any job and other very few days.

The present study which is confined to a Panchayat falls in Sundargarh district of Odisha. The sample used in the present study consists of 150 households including 82(54.7 %) job card holders and 68(45.3 %) non-job card holders of Santoshpur village. An analysis of the primary data collected from these households provides the following findings:

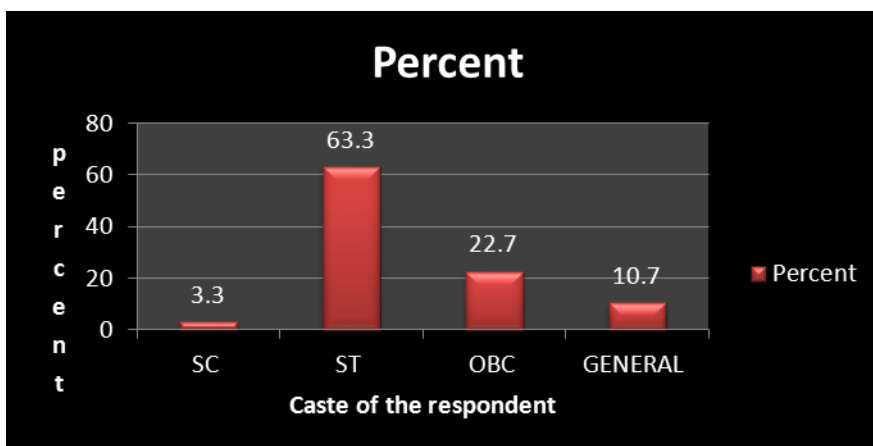
2.2. Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The sample households selected for the study cover households from various caste and ethnic communities.

2.2.1. Caste of the Respondents

Caste and ethnicity plays a major role in any kind of development project. The presence of various castes and ethnicity creates a heterogeneity situation, which stands as a hurdle in the process of implementation (Mishra, 2007).

Figure 2.1: Caste and Ethnicity of the Respondents



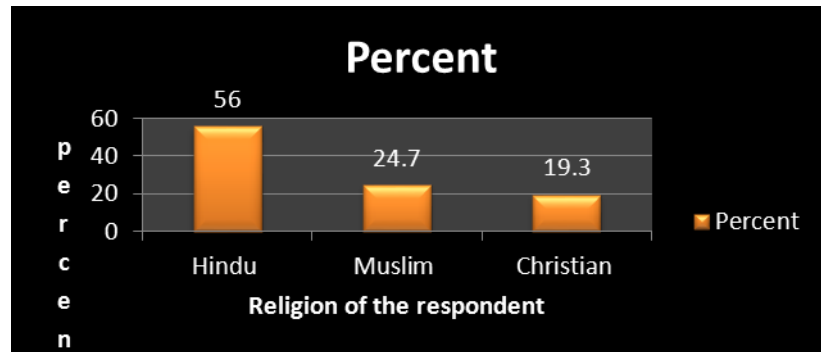
Source: Survey Data

The above figure shows that out of 150 households, majority (63.3%) of the households are belonging to ST population. The rest of the households distributed among OBC, SC and General Communities. They are respectively 22.7%, 10.7% and 3.3%. It reflects that the Studied Panchayat is numerically dominated by tribal communities.

2.2.2. Religion of the Respondents

Religion of the households plays a vital role in rural development. The ideological differences based on various religions influence the implementation process of any project.

Figure 2.2: Religion of the Respondents



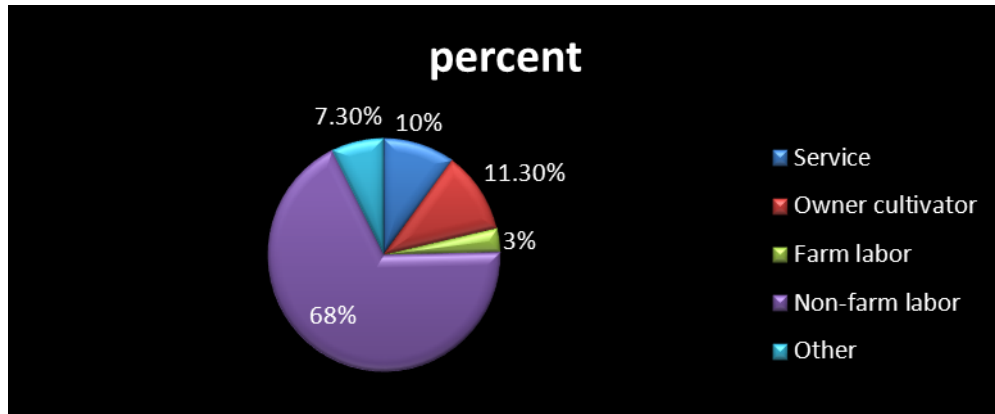
Source: Survey Data

The figure 2.2 shows that among the sample respondents, half of the households (56%) belonging to Hindu religion. The rest 24.7% are Muslims and 19.3% are Christians. Muslim communities are confining to the milltoli hamlet.

2.2.3. Main Source of Livelihood

All most all the households were depending on forest resources for their livelihoods. However, in course of time lots of change has seen. The intervention of various development projects, outsiders have brought a lost to the forest resources. It has disturbed the symbiotic relation between man and nature. The dependence of forest has gone down.

Figure 2.3: Main Source of Livelihood



Source: Survey

The majority of populations (68%) in Santoshpur village are involved in non-farm sector having poor economic status and livelihood insecurity (Figure 2.3). Among the non-farm laborers the number of STs (54.9%) and OBC (29.4%) are more in comparison to other castes.

2.2.4. Distribution of Job Card Holder According To Caste, Religion, Educational Qualification, Landholder and BPL Card Holder

The implementation of NREGA came with the introduction of Job card to the villagers.

Table 2.1: Distribution of job card holder according to caste, religion, educational qualification, landholder and BPL card holder

Caste	SC	ST	OBC	General		
	2.4%	68.3%	23.2%	6.1%		
Religion	Hindu	Muslim	Christian			
	58.5%	22%	19.8%			
Educational qualification	illiterate	Lower primary	Upper primary	High school	Inter mediate	Graduate
	50%	3.7%	28%	13.4%	4.9%	0%
Land holder	0-1 acre	2-3 acre	4-5 acre	Landless		
	36.6%	17.1%	3.7%	42.7%		
BPL card holder	BPL card holder	Non BPL card holder				
	35.4%	64.6%				

Source: Survey Data

The table 2.1 shows that among the job-card holders the majority (68.3%) is ST. Out of all job card holders 58.5% are Hindu, 50% illiterate, 42.7% are landless and 64.6% are non-BPL card holders.

Among the non-job card holders, the majority consists of STs (57.4%), illiterate (45.6%) and landless (41.2%). Thus, there is need for improvement, as maximum number of respondents in this village have not got job card till yet. Among the non-job card holders, many families are belong to the most vulnerable sections like women headed households, senior citizens and poorer sections while the rich, influential people, authorizing committee itself getting much benefits on the name of poor and unemployed youths.

2.3. Implementation of MGNREGA

2.3.1. Awareness

NREGA is distinctive for its unique vision to redefine avenues of providing employment opportunities to the deprived in rural India. But the possibility and efficient chances of employment largely comes with the better level of awareness as it marks the level of accessibility. This issue of awareness emerges one of the hindrances to the local community. It thus necessitates sufficient awareness amongst the intended beneficiaries regarding provisions like guaranteed days of employment, unemployment allowance, minimum wages, availability of complaint register, etc. However, the situation in this front is not very encouraging in the study area. As most of the worker respondents are illiterate and belong to the economically poor class, the extent of awareness about NREGA has emerged out to be a major concern in all the hamlets. Around 93% of the villagers are aware about the NREGS. Among them the majority are the STs (63.3%) and illiterate (48%). But workers' awareness on how to apply for job cards, awareness about minimum wages and demand for work was reportedly very low. Around 7% villagers are not at all aware about NREGS. Those who are aware about it out of them only 41% of the respondents are aware of the number of minimum days of employment guaranteed to each household under the scheme. Only 54% households in this panchayat are having job cards.

The procedural and implementation aspects of NREGA have never been free from confronting some basic challenges like general awareness, understanding policy nitty-gritty, sufficient access etc. Having given the socio - economic background of the respondents, the structural issues such as transparency, maintenance of documents and accountability were difficult things to actualize from the workers' point of view. When asked whether beneficiaries knew about the time span of getting employment from the date of the submission of applications under the NREGA, only 20 per cent respondents revealed that they were aware of any such guidelines like to get employment within the 15 days from the date of application for jobs

2.3.2. Source of information:

Table 2.2:Source of getting information on MGNREGS	
Source of information	percent
panchayat office	71.3%
media-radio	.7%
neighbour	17%
any other	4.0%
NA	7%

Source: Survey Data

The major source of information for the villagers regarding MGNREGS is PRIs including Sarapancha, Gram Sathi and GP officials. Around 71.3% of the villagers claimed that they informed about MGNREGS from GP office which indicates that GP officials playing a significant role in spreading information on MGNREGS. However, the GP has not played any major role in proper implementation of this project. It has confined itself mostly in spreading the message about job card. Even not in distributing the job cards in an ethical procedure.

Provisions for safeguard of transparency and accountability are incorporated into the Act and also in the NREGA guidelines. For instance the NREGA guidelines require muster rolls to be available in the Panchayat office and also at work sites. This can go a long way to preventing corruption in wage payments, since it makes the muster rolls available for public scrutiny and social audit. But the reality is somewhat else.

Interestingly, a large section of the respondents (40.7%) across panchayat report that they hardly see notifications in advance regarding the NREGS meetings. This perhaps indicates that notices are not widely circulated by the panchayat. The place and mode of notification may also cause hindrance. This is so because the notifications are generally put in the government offices and villagers hardly visit these offices. They visit such offices only when they desperately feel to do so. Further, most of the job seekers being illiterate do not have the ability and inclination to read the notification even when it is written in vernacular language. This is likely to restrict not only the job-seekers' participation in the scheme but also incorporation of their needs and views in works.

2.3.3. Mismanagement of Job Cards

Majority of households (84.14%) expressed that they got their job cards without waiting for much time and without unnecessary visits to GP office while 15.86% claimed that they had to run many times to GP office even Block office for getting job cards. Some interesting things were found in the initial days during 2006. It was revealed that few villagers first got employment without card and after working some days, got their job card at the work place. Bribe was also taken from Govt. employees, rich families, by the Sarapanch, Gram sathi and GP secretary in order to give one or two job cards to a single household. Not only that but also there is religion and street biasness and favoritism seen in case of getting job card. Some of the Muslim women claimed that as the Sarapancha is belonging to ST community he has ignored their demand for card in many times. However due to interference of Block Development Officer few of them got the card.

“After complaining through the member of Disha office, BDO came to our village and at last we got our job cards,” Said Sabina Khatun(35 years), a women from Muslim community. She also said, they faced some trouble in getting their payment for which they had to do strike/dharna at BDO office”.

As per the MGNREGA guideline, affixing of photographs on job cards is mandatory without any charge. However, not a single job card found with photograph in the field. There is also manipulation of job cards by the panchayat secretary and Gram Sathi for which in most of the job cards, entries were either fake or blank. With respect to average

days of employment provided to the households, it is 50 man days according to muster roll, while according to job card entries and labor statement it is 60 and 15 respectively.

Sobha Tanti (40 years), a woman from SC community, had worked for 15 days and was paid for those number of days, but in her job card, 60 days of work mentioned. Likewise (28 years) Baber Ansari, has worked only for 15 days but there was entry of 72 days in his job card. It shows that this system is highly corrupted. No officials are worried about the poor tribal. Regarding the job card updating, no such initiation is being taken by GP.

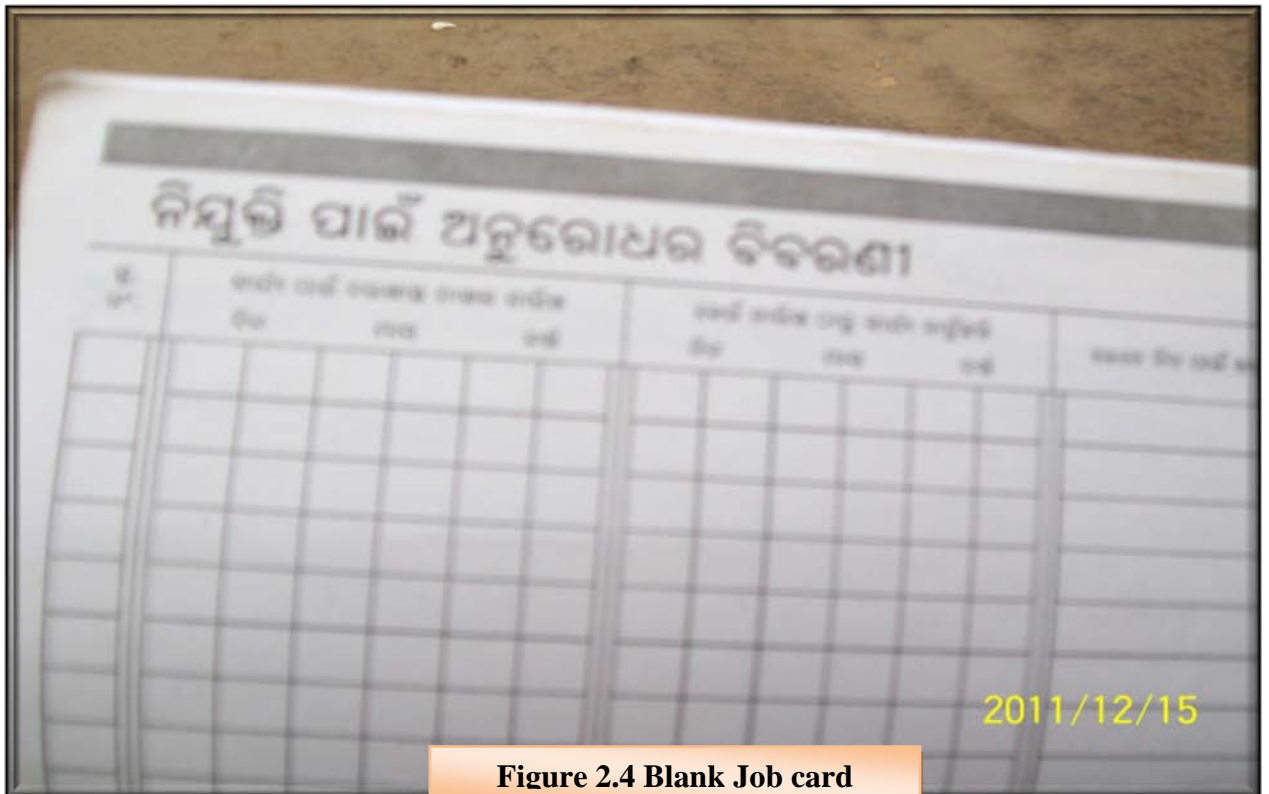


Figure 2.4 Blank Job card

While large majority of the job card holders reported that they keep the cards in their own custody, few respondents (20%) have reported that their cards are normally kept in the custody of the ward members or sarpanchs or gram sathis. This may largely be due to the

ignorance of the job-seekers on custody of the cards. It is also giving an opportunity for officials to manipulate.

2.3.4. Faulty Design of Job Cards

The main purpose of job card was to enable MGNREGA laborers to “verify their own employment and wage details”. But there is no such column to mention about “wage paid” in the job card issued in this area, for this it is impossible to verify from the job card, the wages paid to an MGNREGA worker.

2.3.5. Application for Employment

The average number of respondents applied for employment is very low in the study area (23.17%). Those who applied for job are mostly non-tribal beneficiaries and among them not a single person got unemployment allowance. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is low demand for employment in the study area. The poor tribal have not much courage to go to the GP office and claim for job. Still most of them feel that the job they used to get through MGNREGS is nothing but mercy of sarapanch. Even in some cases it was found that those who are really needy of those cards have not received the cards. Whereas few villagers who are working in public sectors have taken job cards and are not at all applying for job. Thus among the job card holders 82.93% of people have worked under MGNREGA while 17.07% haven't worked. During the field work it was observed that these households are giving their cards to other households for getting benefits through them.

Regarding employment, respondents shared that they have not availed complete 100 days in a year. Even in last five years nobody got 100 days of employment. The villagers of Santoshpur gram panchayat worked under MGNREGS for around 15 days in last five years. Only 10% households received around 50 days of works in last five years.

2.3.6. Poor Quality Of Works

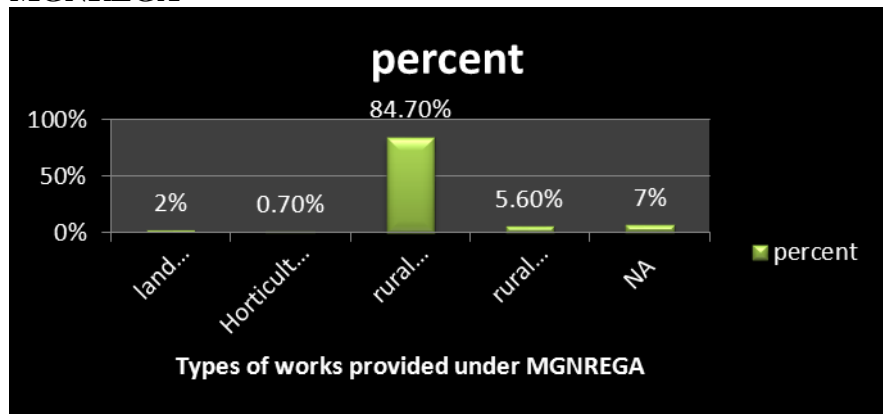
There is no proper execution of works. Hence, it is a matter of concern that throughout the GP, the approved works are not always publicly displayed. It was revealed by the

villagers that there was no Gram Sabha meeting regarding the activities of NREGS. Even maximum numbers of people are not aware about Gram Sabha meeting, which reflects non-participation of villagers or community in decision making. The villagers used to work in any work assigned by the contractor or Sarapanch. The internal understanding between contractors, Sarapancha and JE used to confine the work in paper only. Site account registers in respect of receipt and issue of materials to the work and Temporary advance register in respect of advance availed for payment of wages had not been maintained, despite their mandated requirement for departmental execution. MGNREGA guidelines permit execution of road projects providing all weather connectivity in rural areas. However, during field work it was observed that the road remain kutcha and incomplete and is not able to provide all weather access.

Drawing an example of village infrastructure a villagers said that the road which was constructed 2 year back through NREGA project has not meet the needs of villagers. The quality of road was so bad that it did not continue even for a year. The road is totally wiped out in last rainy season and now it is same as before.

2.3.7. Poor Planning And Lack Of Coordination Among Villagers And Official Members

Figure 2.5: Types of works undertaken in Santoshpur village under MGNREGA



The majority of population said that only road work has been undertaken in their Gram Panchayat which is incomplete due to conflicts among villagers as well as between

members of panchayat office and forest dept. Though, there was fund around Rs. 300000 came for watershed activities in 2010 but it was returned to Block office, as the work stopped before it starts due to above reason.

2.3.8. Payment of Wages

The data from the field reflected that there is huge irregularity in payment of wages. While only 28% of beneficiaries claimed that they received the wages within a month, the rest claimed that there is no certainty in getting wages. But they received it mostly after 2 months. The contractors were quite conscious while paying the wages. They used to delay in paying wages to those laborers who are illiterate and no voice. It is observed from the field that around 81% of the beneficiaries are not having the minimum wages fixed by the centre. While the MGNREGA guidelines permit equal wages for equal work, it is not happening in reality. As per the views of few villagers widow and old women are receiving lesser wages in comparison to men.

Sumitra Gauda, this woman already crossed 65 years, earned only Rs. 30 from MNREGA work for supplying water to workers. According to her, the Scheme from Govt. is good, but those who are taking in charge of it, are not implementing properly.

Now MGNREGA has become very organized. The bank accounts are opened in the name of the wage workers. The money is directly transferred to the accounts and there is no one in between. But in the study area, around 46.35% of the beneficiaries have not opened their account either in bank or in post office while 53.65% beneficiaries have account. It may be due to lack of interest or lack of awareness. According to some villagers, if there is regular work and regular payment, we will be interested to open account. Around 67.07% of the beneficiaries have received their wages directly through cash while 32.93% beneficiaries received their wages through account transfer. Reading out of the muster roll at the time of payment is mandatory under the MGNREGA. However, the situation is not very encouraging in this regard. All the respondents have pointed out that the muster roll is not read out.

2.3.9. Worksite Facilities

Any studies on MGNREGS would sound incomplete if it doesn't talk about worksite facilities. A proper working condition is a primary necessity for ensuring safety and efficient condition for workers which particularly in the case of women is much more important. According to MGNREGS guidelines, it is mandatory to have basic facilities such as safe drinking water, first-aid kits, shades, period of rest and also crèche facility. But it was observed during field work that except drinking water no other facilities were arranged near worksite. Even some respondents claimed that in some cases drinking water was also not available. While discussing worksite facilities like shade, some of the respondents claimed that the trees near to worksite were used and treated as shady shelters. Thus manipulation by the local implementing agencies and absence of any monitoring mechanism at the same time resulted in the creation of unsafe and sub-standard working conditions.

2.3.10. Compulsion of works on Workers

There is also compulsion on worker regarding work i.e. one cannot dig more than ½ chauka in a day. This compulsion has given injustice in getting minimum wage. While the present minimum wage is Rs.120/- per day half of the chouka work gives only RS. 70/-.

2.3.11. No Social Audit Held

The operational guideline detailed the procedure of Social Audit forums to be held by gram sabha on NREGA works on 6 months basis. But in this village Social Audit is never held. Even all most all the villagers are not aware about the concept of social audit.

2.3.12. Small Children are working Under MNREGA

As per the MNREGA guidelines, only adult members above 18 years who are interested to do unskilled work at the statutory minimum wage can work under MGNREGA. But in Santoshpur, small children are found to work under it. Thus, it fails to stop child labour which is one of its targets.

2.3.13. Names of dead people are there in the job cards:

There is no proper verification while allotting the job card also allotting the works. In some cases it was found that the ghosts have received job and job card. There are some incident found in field that the children are using job card of their father who is already dead. For example Jekria Tirkey(30 years), whose father is already dead is still using the card in getting job.

2.3.14. Redressal of Grievances

Redressal of grievances is an integral part of the NREG scheme. Majority of the respondents of the field do not know that there is provision for grievance redressal.

2.4. Profile of Non-Job Cardholder Households

Around 45% households are the non-job cardholders. This may be due to their lack of interest to work under the MGNREGS as they have greater mobility for alternative money making job opportunities even at a distance place. Among the sample non-job card holder households around 50% households have already applied for job cards. The waiting time after the applications for job cards as reported by the respondents vary between 5 to 24 months. The reasons for non-issuance of job cards may be due to several factors such as relative socio-political and economic strength of the households in the village, awareness level, close relationship with the PRI functionaries' etc. Those who have not applied for job cards may be due to lack of interest and awareness.

2.5. Role of Gram Sathi

To make the MGNREGS activities more vibrant Govt. of Odisha lunched the Gram Sathi scheme. In this scheme two persons in each village are recruited to assist the implementation of MGNREGA especially organize cardholders to start a job, write muster rolls, check measurement, payment of laborers etc. However, Gram Sathi in this panchayat is not trained and aware about the policies.

2.6. Role of Sarpanch in MGNREGS

The sarpanch is the most important agent of implementation of the MGNREGS as he/she works at the local level with the help of Gram Sathi and Village Level Workers (VLW). As the GPs are authorized to spend 50% of the NREGA fund, the sarpanchs need to play a major role in this regard. They are involved in the planning, designing and implementation of NREGS. Awareness of the sarpanchs regarding different aspects of the scheme is thus crucial for its successful implementation. The observation from the field reveals that the Sarpanch is not much aware about the scheme. Julia Tigga, a tribal lady who is Sarpanch in this Panchayat is not much active and aware about NREGS. Her husband who acts as a contractor is misleading the entire programme. While distributing work and job cards he is taking care of those who voted for him. Even though he is well about some rules and regulations, he is not ready to share it among villagers.

From the above discussion it is conclude that the MGNREGS, which was introduced in giving justice to the common man, has failed in meeting the desired needs. The famous statement given by our former Prime Minister Mr Rajiv Gandhi that of the rupee spent for the development programmes in the rural areas only 15 paisa reaches in the beneficiary is absolutely true in this case. There is no denying that MGNREGA has turned to be a big pot for the intermediaries rather than true beneficiaries. Here, the real beneficiaries are the people in the chain who get the money for distributing to the poor tribal. They should be called the true beneficiaries. Thus, the implementation was done halfheartedly. There is an urgent need to remove the corruption in the delivery system. We have to work out a mechanism by which the MGNREGA wages reaches the workers directly.

Chapter-III

MGNREGA and Tribal Livelihoods

MGNREGS is the most significant scheme to uplift the overall quality of life of rural households. One of the major objectives of the scheme is the improvement of the income levels and enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household. However, the data from the field reflected that there is little impact of MGNREGA on tribal livelihoods. By comparing the annual income of beneficiaries before MGNREGA and after MGNREGA, it is found that there is increase of 28.52% in income of the beneficiaries. Like that there is increase of 47.42% in expenditure of the beneficiaries. Before the implementation of MGNREGA the villagers were generally spending 64.24% from their income while after the implementation of this scheme they are spending 73.69% of their income.

Source of expenditure	Before MGNREGA	After MGNREGA
Food	69.13%	59.29%
Clothing	7.68%	8.28%
Health	3.46%	3.57%
Cooking fuel	0.99%	1.24%
education	0.9%	1.2%
Transport	2.14%	2.63%
Social/religious function	3.95%	4.55%
Alcohol	1.91%	2.19%
Electricity bill	0.96%	2.83%
Phone bill	0.35%	2.55%
Agri.Equipments and seeds	2.36%	2.31%
Household assets	1.38%	2.04%
Recreation	0.27%	0.31%
Maintenance of House	4.52%	7.01%

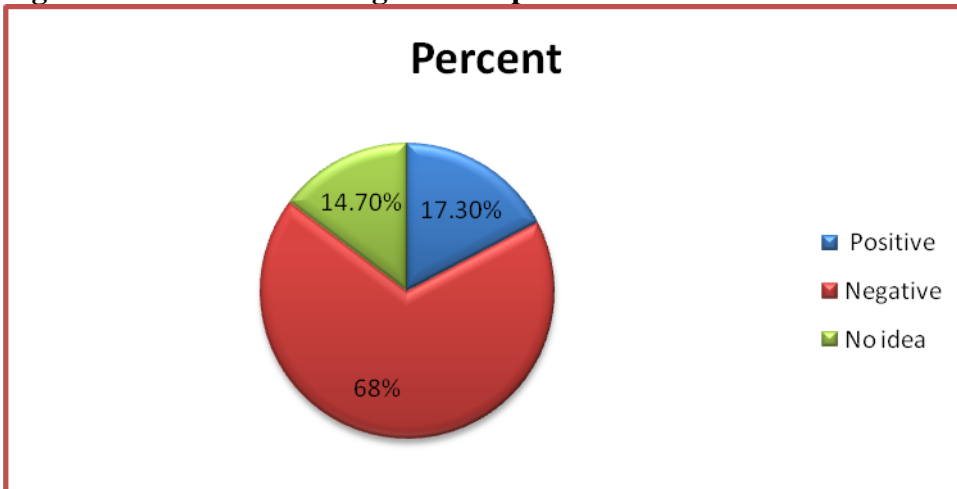
Source: Primary Data

The above data shows that due to change in income there is also change in expenditure. Generally the expenditure of villagers was more on food items. Around 69.13% of their expenditure used to go to food. But after the implementation of this scheme the expenditure on food items gradually shifted to non-food items which include both luxury

and necessity items. For this the expenditure on food items is gradually decreasing (59.29%) and on non-food items is increasing. This reflects that there is some impact on tribal livelihoods but this impact is considered as very little. This is because no proper and regular work which is the direct result of poor implementation.

On the issue of asset creation nothing much is observed from the field. Except road work no other works are being taken here. Recently some initiations have been taken by Sarapanch for the SC/ST land development. In all three hamlets including Jaratoli, Militoli and Pahadtoli, people had expressed their disappointments with MGNREGA works. Here, the following diagram shows that maximum numbers of respondents (68%) have the negative opinion on MGNREGA.

Figure 3.1: Positive and Negative Response on MGNREGA:



According to some villagers, whatever the poor gets from MNREGA work spends only to feed his stomach and also in alcohol for few days, nothing left for saving, clothing, and maintenance of house as well as children's education.

3.2. Impact on Migration

By securing livelihood, MGNREGA also mitigates seasonal/distress migration which has been a significant source of employment and income for a large proportion of rural population. But there are two types of risks associated with working under NREGS. First, in most of the cases, the wages are paid on piece rate basis and depending on his/her performance; a worker may get even less than the minimum prevailing market wage rate.

Second, as per the provisions under the scheme, a household should get minimum 100 days of employment. But, the GP fails to provide 100 days of employment to job seekers. Such limited and irregular supply of works restricts the job-seekers from working under NREGS. Regular employment opportunities also motivate many of them to migrate to other states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Nagpur, Raipur and Tata.

The above discussion reveals that though MGNREGA is a well thought-out legislation, a powerful tool in the hands of the common people to get their basic livelihood, but its poor execution deprives them from their basic rights. While the target is to guarantee 100 days of employment to each household, this GP has not achieved this target. The way in which MGNREGA should function is not happening in the study area. Job cards are not reaching the beneficiaries. The unemployment allowance for the failure to provide employment within 15 days of application as per the guidelines of MGNREGA was not followed. Though there is a little change in expenditure pattern of households but it fails to stop the flow of distress rural-urban migration, restricting child labour, alleviating poverty, and making village self-sustaining through productive assets creation as only incomplete road works being taken here. Therefore, a well thought out effort is necessary to address these problems of MGNREGA in this Gram Panchayat. To make the Act more effective for securing the desired objectives of rural poverty eradication and livelihood security, there is an urgent need to ensure citizen participation in all stages of the implementation process. A proper mechanism should be developed to check the corruption in distribution of job cards, assured timely payment of actual wage and substantial asset creation.

Chapter-IV

Summary and Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. It provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have an impact on reducing migration, restricting child labor, alleviating poverty, and making villages self-sustaining through productive assets creation such as road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc. For which it has been considered as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. But the success of this Act depends upon its proper implementation. Thus, the present project critically examined the implementation process of this programme and its impact on tribal livelihoods. Using a random sampling method, a total 150 households including MGNREGS beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries were selected. This field study was carried out during the period from 15th November to 31st December, 2011. Both close ended and open ended questionnaires were used to gather information from all the stakeholders in MGNREGS. Sarapanch, Gram Sathi and Nayab Sarapanch questionnaire were designed to elicit information at the GP level. Apart from group discussion individual household interaction was organized. Transect walk into the MGNREGS worksites were conducted to have firsthand experience on the MGNREGS works at the community level.

The Santoshpur Gram Panchayat (GP) is generally a tribal dominated area. Among the 150 households, the majority (63.3%) of the households are belonging to ST population. Likewise half of the households (56%) are belonging to Hindu religion. The rest 24.7% are Muslims and 19.3% are Christians. Muslim communities are confining to the Militoli hamlet. In this study area almost all the households (68%) are involved in non-farm sector having poor economic status and livelihood insecurity. Among the non-farm laborers the number of STs (54.9%) and OBC (29.4%) are more in comparison to other castes. Among the job card holder households the majority (68.3%) are ST. Out of all job

card holders 58.5% are Hindu, 50% are illiterate, 42.7% are landless and 64.6% are non-BPL card holders. Around 45% households are the non-job cardholders. This may be due to their lack of interest to work under the MGNREGS as they have greater mobility for alternative money making job opportunities even at a distance place. Among the sample non-job card holder around 50% households have already applied for job cards. The waiting time after the applications for job cards as reported by the respondents vary between 5 to 24 days. The reasons for non-issuance of job cards may be due to several factors such as relative socio-political and economic strength of the households in the village, awareness level, close relationship with the PRI functionaries' etc. Those who have not applied for job cards may be due to lack of interest and awareness.

The awareness level in the study area is not very encouraging. Around 93% of villagers are aware about the MGNREGS. But workers awareness on how to apply for job cards, awareness about minimum wages and demand for work was reportedly very low. Around 7% villagers are not all aware about MGNREGS. Around 71.3% of the villagers claimed that they informed about MGNREGS from GP office which indicates that GP official playing a significant role in spreading information on MGNREGS. However, the GP has not played any major role in proper implementation of this project. It has confined itself mostly in spreading the message about job card.

There is religion, street biasness and favoritism seen in case of getting job card. Bribe was also taken from Govt. employees, rich families by the Sarapanch, Gram Sathi and GP secretary in order to give one or two job cards to a single household. As per the MGNREGA guidelines, affixing of photographs on job cards is mandatory without any charge. However not a single job card is found with photograph in the field. There is also manipulation of job cards by the panchayat secretary, Gram Sathi for which entries were either fake or blank. There is no wage column to maintain about "wage paid" in the job card issued in this area. For this it is impossible to verify from the job card, the wages paid to an MGNREGA worker. The average number of respondents applied for employment is very low in the study area (23.17%). Those who applied for job are mostly non-tribal beneficiaries and among them not a single person got unemployment

allowance. However, this does not necessarily mean that there is low demand for employment in the study area. The poor tribal have not much courage to go to the GP office and claim for job. Still most of them feel that the job they used to get through MGNREGS is nothing but mercy of sarapanch. Regarding employment, respondents shared that they have not availed complete 100 days in a year. The villagers of Santoshpur Gram Panchayat worked under MGNREGS for around 15 days in last five years. Only 10% households received around 50 days of works in last five years.

MGNREGA guidelines permit execution of road projects providing all weather connectivity in rural areas. However, during field work it was observed that the road remain kutchha and incomplete and is not able to provide all weather access. The majority of population said that only road work has been undertaken in their Gram Panchayat which is incomplete due to conflicts among villagers as well as between members of panchayat office and forest dept. Though, there was fund around Rs. 300000 came for watershed activities in 2010 but it was returned to Block office, as the work stopped before it starts due to above reason. The data from the field reflected that there is huge irregularity in payment of wages. While only 28% of beneficiaries claimed that they received the wages within a month, the rest claimed that they received it mostly after 2 months. The contractors were quite conscious while paying the wages. They used to delay in paying wages to those laborers who are illiterate and no voice. While the MGNREGA guidelines permit equal wages for equal work, it is not happening in reality. As per the views of few villagers widow and old women are receiving lesser wages in comparison to men.

In the study area, around 46.35% of the beneficiaries have not opened their account either in bank or in post office while 53.65% beneficiaries have account. It may be due to lack of interest or lack of awareness. According to some villagers, if there is regular work and regular payment, we will be interested to open account. Around 67.07% of the beneficiaries have received their wages directly through cash while 32.93% beneficiaries received their wages through account transfer. Reading out of the muster roll at the time of payment is mandatory under the MGNREGA. However, the situation is not very

encouraging in this regard. All the respondents have pointed out that the muster roll is not read out. According to MGNREGS guidelines, it is mandatory to have basic facilities such as safe drinking water, first-aid kits, shades, period of rest and also crèche facility. But it was observed during field work that except drinking water no other facilities were arranged near worksite. Even some respondents claimed that in some cases drinking water was also not available. There is also compulsion on worker regarding work i.e. one cannot dig more than ½ charka in a day. The operational guideline detailed the procedure of Social Audit forums to be held by gram sabha on MGNREGA works 6 months basis. But in this village Social Audit is never held. As per the MGNREGA guidelines, only adult members above 18 years who are interested to do unskilled work at the statutory minimum wage can work under MGNREGA. But in Santoshpur, small children are found to work under it. Names of dead people are there in the job cards. Redressal of grievances is an integral part of the NREG scheme. Majority of the respondents of the field do not know that there is provision for grievance redressal.

Thus there is no denying that MGNREGA has turned to be a big pot for the intermediaries rather than true beneficiaries. Here, the real beneficiaries are the people in the chain who get the money for distributing to the poor tribal. They should be called the true beneficiaries. Thus, the implementation was done half heartedly. There is an urgent need to remove the corruption in the delivery system. We have to work out a mechanism by which the MGNREGA wages reaches the workers directly.

One of the major objectives of the scheme is the improvement of the income levels and enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household. While the target is to guarantee 100 days of employment to each household, this Gram Panchayat has not achieved this target. However, the data from the field reflected that there is little impact of MGNREGA on tribal livelihoods. By comparing the annual income of beneficiaries before MGNREGA and after MGNREGA, it is found that there is increase of 28.52% in income of the beneficiaries. Like that there is increase of 47.42% in expenditure of the beneficiaries. Before the implementation of MGNREGA the villagers were generally

spending 64.24% from their income while after the implementation of this scheme they are spending 73.69% of their income. Generally the expenditure of villagers were more on food items around 69.13% and less on other non-food items before implementation of MGNREGA. But after the implementation of this scheme the expenditure on food items gradually shifted to non-food items which include both luxury and necessity items. For this the expenditure on food items is gradually decreasing (59.29%) and on non-food items is increasing. This reflects that there is some impact on tribal livelihoods but this impact is considered as very little. This is because no proper and regular work which is the direct result of poor implementation.

The GP fails to provide 100 days of employment to job seekers. The limited and irregular supply of works restricts the job-seekers from working under NREGS. Regular employment opportunities also motivate many of them to migrate to other states like Gujarat, Maharashtra, Nagpur, Raipur and Tata. On the issue of asset creation nothing much is observed from the field. Except road work no other works are being taken here. Recently some initiations have been taken by Sarapanch for the SC/ST land development. In all three hamlets including Jaratoli, Militoli and Pahadtoli, people had expressed their disappointments with MGNREGA works.

MGNREGA is landmark legislation in the history of social security legislation in India after independence. Enacted after a successful struggle for a comprehensive employment guarantee law, this legislation is a partial victory towards a full-fledged right to employment. Though MGNREGA is a well thought-out legislation, a powerful tool in the hands of the common people to get their basic livelihood, but its poor execution, deprives the rural poor from their basic rights. The study reveals that despite numerous problems, MGNREGA is a program that has begun to make a difference in the lives of women. For example, women have started asserting their voices in the family matters and nature of spending money. Though, awareness still continues to be a stiff challenge, women in study area have become pro-active learners and participants in the schemes. Furthermore, it is popular among the workers, who routinely ask if more work could be made available to them under the MGNERGA, they would like to do. Clearly, there is a massive demand

for MGNREGA work, and the administration should respond to it by increasing the scale of employment. Both our executive leader and law maker should take due care that the scheme reaches the people who deserve it. Change should be made at ground levels in the system. Due care should be taken for effective implementation of the scheme.

Suggestions

- The success of the programme depends upon its proper implementation. Much of the pitfalls of MGNREGA implementation can be overcome if proper processes and procedures are put in place. Thus, there should be continuous efforts towards creating adequate awareness on different provisions of MGNREGS amongst the people. Creating awareness is necessary not only to motivate the people to work under the scheme but also to encourage them to participate in its planning and implementation.
- Efficient utilization of resources under the scheme requires bringing in transparency and accountability. Provision for social audit at the panchayat level on a regular basis can play a significant role in this regard.
- The leadership style should be democratic in nature. This will facilitate greater community participation, information sharing, expression of opinion by the rural mass, and development of social networks
- There is also the important role of the Govt. in implementation of MGNREGS. Thus the Govt. must take immediate steps to stop corruption in its implementation by which the MGNREGA wages reaches to the workers directly. We can surely ensure that the money goes to those who need it.
- There should be the ability and willingness of local Govt. and Panchayat to plan works and run the programmes effectively.
- A proper monitoring mechanism should be developed that can assured correct procedure in job card.
- Social Audit should carry out in regular interval.

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APPENDIX



NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, ROURKELA MNREGA and Rural Livelihood: A Case Study in Sundargarh District

Section 1: Demographic Information

- 1.1. Head of the Household (HH): _____
- 1.2. Name of the Respondent: _____
- 1.3. Respondent's Relation with HH: _____
- 1.4. Sex: _____
- 1.5. Marital status: _____ 1. Married, 2. Unmarried, 3. Divorce, 4. widow/widower
- 1.6. Educational qualification: _____
- 1.7. Caste: _____ 1. SC, 2. ST, 3. OBC, 4. General
- 1.8. Name of Sub caste/Tribe: _____
- 1.9. Religion: _____ 1. Hindu 2. Muslim 3. Christian 4. Others
- 1.10 a. Hamlet (in case not a revenue village) _____ b. Revenue village _____ c. Gram Panchayat _____, d. Tahsil _____, e. District _____
- 1.11. Main source of livelihoods: _____ (1) Service, (2) Owner cultivator, (3). Farm labour, (4) Non-farm labour
- 1.12. Number of family members: _____
- 1.13. Land holding: _____ (Acres) _____ (1) Landless, (2) Sharecropper, (3) Owner cultivator
- 1.14. BPL card holder: _____ 1. Yes, 2. No
- 1.15. Anthodia card holder: _____ 1. Yes, 2. No
- 1.16. Old age pension any body receiving at home: _____ 1. Yes 2. No
- 1.17. Have you received Indira Abasa: _____ 1. Yes, 2. No

Section 2: Implementation Related Information

1. Are you aware of NREGS? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No
2. If yes, from where you got Information? _____ A) Panchayat B) Media-radio C) Media-TV D) Media-newspaper E) Govt. Functionaries F) Friends G) Any other (specify) _____
3. Do you have Job card? _____ 1) Yes 2) No
4. If Yes, when you got it _____ (year mention)
5. Where you got it _____ 1) Panchayat office, 2) friend gave, 3) BDO, 4) any other
6. Did you face any problems in getting the job card? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No
7. What kind of problem you faced _____

8. How many job cards are there in your family _____ (Number)
9. If no, mention the reason _____

10. Do you have any idea who will issue this card _____ 1) Yes, 2) No
11. Mention the name of issuing authority _____ 1) Sarapancha, 2) GP secretary, 3) Grama sathi, 4) BDO, 5) Any other _____
12. Have you ever approached them for job card _____ 1) yes, 2) No
13. If yes, what was their reply: _____
14. If no, why you did not approach? _____

15. Are the job cards given freely? _____ -1) Yes, 2) No
16. If no, whom you paid _____ 1) Sarapancha, 2) Panchayat Secretary, 3) ward member, 4) Gram sathi, 5) somebody else (specify)
17. If you paid, what for you paid? _____
_____ Mention price (_____)
18. Whether photo of beneficiary exist on job card? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No
19. Have you ever received any work under this programme? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No
20. If yes, how many days in a year _____
21. If no, why _____

-
22. Have you ever approached for any work_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
23. If yes, whom you approached_____ 1) Sarapancha, 2) Panchayat Secretary, 3) ward member, 4) Gram sathi, 5) somebody else (specify)
24. How many times you approached?_____
25. Have you given any written application to Sarapancha? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No
26. Whether panchayat issued dated receipt of written application (for work)_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
27. After how many days of written/verbal application you got employment_____ 1) Less than 15 days, 2) 15-30 days, 3) 30+ days, 4) No work at all.
28. Do you have any idea about the rules and regulation of NREGA?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
29. Whether got unemployment allowance, if demanded the work and it was not provided?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
30. If yes, how much you got_____
31. Have you ever demanded for unemployment allowance?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
32. If yes, what was their reply_____
-
33. If no, why you did not demand?_____ 1) No idea, 2) they will not listen, 3) will not give, 4) anything else (specify)
34. How regularly you used to get your wages?_____ 1) Regular, 2) Irregular
35. If irregular after how many days you used to get?_____ 1) One month, 2) 2 Months, 3) more than 3 months.
36. How much wage you used receive per day_____
37. How you receive your wage?_____ 1) cash, 2) check, 3) account transfer
38. Do you have opened an account in bank/post office relating to NREGA?_____ 1)Yes, 2) No
39. If no, why?_____ 1) No idea, 2) No body guide me
40. Have you spent any money while opening account?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
41. If yes, how much and for what, specify_____
-

42. Do they specify the wages and days you worked in your card_____1) Yes, 2) No
43. If yes, Do you cross check, whether the entry authority has entered the right thing or not_____1) Yes, 2) No
44. Do you feel they are entering wrong data in your card_____1) Yes, 2) No
45. If yes, have you complained_____1) Yes, 2) No
46. To whom you complain_____1) Sarapancha, 2) Panchayat Secretary, 3) ward member, 4) Gram sathi, 5) somebody else (specify)
47. What reply you got from the authority_____
- _____
48. Who used to enter this data in your card_____ 1) Sarapancha, 2) Panchayat Secretary, 3) ward member, 4) Gram sathi, 5) somebody else (specify)
49. If there is no entry, have you asked them_____1) Yes, 2) No
50. Do you have any idea about the NREGA activity in your village/Panchayat____1) Yes, 2) No
51. If yes, what type of activities/works undertaken in your village under MNREGA scheme? _____
- 1) Water conservation, 2) Drought proofing, 3) Flood protection, 4) Land development 5) Minor irrigation, 6) Horticulture, 7) Rural connectivity, 8) Any other_____
52. From where you got this knowledge? 1) Gram sabha meeting, 2) Panchayat office, 3) Sarapancha, 4) Panchayat Secretary, 5) ward member, 6) Gram sathi, 7) Friends, 8) by seeing, 9) somebody else (specify)
53. Did any gram sabha meeting held in your village was to decide the NREGA work_____ 1) Yes, 2) No, 3) Not aware
54. If no, then who used to decide the work_____1) Sarapancha, 2) Panchayat Secretary, 3) ward member, 4) Gram sathi, 5) somebody else (specify)
55. Describe the role of Panchayat in planning and implementation of NREGA works.
(Information from worker)

56. If you are not having any idea about NREGA activities, why_____ 1) No idea, 2) No time, 3) poor people who will listen, 4) staying outside, 5) No interest, 6) anything else (specify)
57. Do you know how much funds, your panchayat gets under MNREGA last few years_____ 1) Yes, 2) No, 3) No interest
58. If yes, please specify the following:
- a) 2006-07_____ (In Rs)
 - b) 2007-08_____ (In Rs.)
 - c) 2008-09_____ (In Rs.)
 - d) 2009-10_____ (In Rs.)
 - e) 2010-11_____ (In Rs.)
59. Whether work site is having the following given facilities_____
- 1) Crèche (if more than 5 children below the age of 6 years are present), 2) Drinking water 3) Shades, 4) Period of rest, 5) first-aid, 6) Any other (specify)_____
60. Do you have awareness about the accidental benefits under NREGA?__ 1) Yes, 2) No
61. Are you satisfy with the work measurement?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
62. If no, why (specify)_____
63. Whether you have a regular mate?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
64. Is the mate among from the workers?_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
65. How many members at a time getting job from one family_____ 1) One, 2) All, 3) depends on wishes of sarapancha, 4) any other_____
66. If not all, then who decides who will go to which work_____ 1) Head of house, 2) own, 3) Sarapancha, 4) any other
67. Is there any conflict among your family members in relation to who will go to which work? 1) Yes, 2) No
68. Are you aware the work you are doing is NREGA work or something else_____ 1) Yes, 2) No
69. What are the works you did in last five years under NREGA?
-

70. Have you worked under the same contractor for different works? _____

1) Yes, 2) No

71. Within how many KM you used to work under NREGA? _____ 1) In own village, 2) own Panchayat, 3) within 5 Km, 4) more than 5 KM

72. Whether you have worked more than 5 km away from your residence?

73. If yes have you got any extra wages? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No, 3) Not aware

74. Have you heard about social audit system? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No

75. If yes, is there any social audit committee in your village? _____

1) Yes, 2) No, 3) Not aware

76. Is there social audit held in NREGA activities in your village? _____

1) Yes, 2) No, 3) Not aware

77. If yes, mention the details (when, who were there and what was discussed)

(III) Impact Related Information

78. Do you feel is there any change in your income after working under MNREGA?

1) Considerably increased, 2) Increased somewhat, 3) Not increased & remains same, 4) Decreased

79. Are children attending school in your family? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No

80. If yes, what is the impact of MNREGA on their education? _____

1) No drop-out of children, 2) Change in decision for opting higher education, 3) No change.

81. How much wage you used to earn from farm and non-farm activities before NREGA?

_____ 1) 1000, 2) 2000, 3) 5000, 4) More than 5000, 5) less than 1000.

82. How much you earned from NREGA activities last year _____ 1) 1000,

2) 2000, 3) 5000, 4) More than 5000, 5) less than 1000.

83. State your annual income before NREGA? _____

84. State your annual income after NREGA? _____

85. Source wise annual household expenditure-before & after NREGA (% invest)

Sources of expenditure	Before	After	Sources of expenditure	Before	After
Food and other consumption items			Loan Repayment		
Clothing			Electricity bill		
Health			Phone bill		
Cooking fuel			Agri. Equipments and seeds		
Education			Household assets		
Transport			Recreation		
Social/religious function			Maintenance of House		
Alcohol					

(IV) Impact on migration:

Migration (Out Migration before & after NREGA)

Name	Sex	Type of migration (seasonal/permanent)	Reason for migration	Place where migrated	Types of engagement (pvt., Govt, Business)	Income/month at migration place	Amount remitted/month
Before NREGA							
After NREGA							

86. How many hours per day you had to work under MNREGA? _____

87. How much extra wage you are getting under MNREGA if compare with outside?

88. What is your priority of work and why?

- a) MNREGA works
- b) Other works

Why (specify) _____

Impact on savings:

89. Did you have any saving account with bank/post office before MNREGA? _____

- 1) Yes, 2) No

90. Have you started saving in banks/post office? _____

- 1) Yes, 2) No

91. What is your savings amount? _____

92. How much do you save per month? _____

93. Are you serving all your desires of your children? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No

94. Have you ever given your job card on the lease basis? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No

95. If yes, to whom and why (for what purpose)? _____

96. Do you feel NREGA has helped in rising your social status? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No

97. State the problems in NREGA? _____

1) Gender discrimination, 2) Problems with the work allotting authorities, 3) Problems with wages in time, 4) Problems with the working timing, 5) caste discrimination, 6) any others _____

98. Do you think due to MNREGA, the conditions of the poor in the village have improved? _____ 1) Yes, 2) No

99. Describe the main benefits occurring in your village due to MNREGA activities.

100. How the problems regarding MNREGA can be solved?

101. What is your opinion on MNREGA?

The End

Questionnaire for GP

1. State Name _____, District Name _____
2. Block Name _____, GP Name _____
3. Distance of GP from Block Hq _____
4. Name of main Respondent _____
5. Designation of Respondent _____
6. Sex of Respondent _____
7. Educational Qualification of Respondent _____
8. Caste of the Respondent _____
9. Occupation _____
10. Total Population of GP _____
 - BPL Households _____
 - SCs Households _____
 - General Households _____
 - Backward Castes _____
 - No. of Voters _____
 - Landless Households _____
 - No. of MGNREGA Job Card Holders in the GP _____

11. Fill up the following information about MGNREGA.

11.1. Fund Purpose Works (1.completed, 2. incomplete, and 3.ongoing)

2006-07

2007-08

2008-09

2009-10

2010-11

2011-12

11.2.

Records	Available (1.yes, 2.No)	Seen at Survey Time (1.yes, 2.No)	Record Updated (1.yes, 2.No)
Muster roll register			

Register of job card			
Employment register			
Works register			
Fund register			
Grievance register			

12. Work of Gram Sathi _____

13. Whether Gram Sabha meeting held on MGNREGA? 1. Yes 2.No.

14. How many people attended the meeting(see the record)_____

15. Is there any social audit committee in your village? 1. Yes 2.No.

16. Who did social audit? _____

17. What is the role of social audit committee in your village_____?

18. Describe the main benefits occurring in your village due to MGNREGA activities:

- Wage earner_____
- Empowerment of women_____
- Panchayat_____
- Poverty_____
- Worker migration_____

19. Describe the role of panchayat in planning and implementation of MGNREGA.

20. Describe the problems in implementation of MGNREGA.

21. How these problems can be solved?