

EVALUATION STUDY ON ASSET CREATED VERSUS FUND INVESTMENT UNDER MGNREGS IN MEGHALAYA

A FINAL REPORT



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The MGNREGA implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India is the flagship programme of the central government that directly touches the lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. This scheme/ Act was notified on 7th September 2005 and was the first of its kind in the world. It was brought under preview of an Act for rural employment at an unprecedented scale in order to provide employment when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate. The Act came into force on 2nd February 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. During 2009-10, it has been rechristened as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The Act aims at enhancing at least one hundred days guaranteed wage in a financial year to every one whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Survey, research and evaluation are an area of priority for the **Midstream Marketing & Research (MMR)**. The present study entitled “**Evaluation Study on Asset Created Versus Fund Investment under MGNREGS in Meghalaya**” is an effort to conduct a comprehensive assessment in terms of assets creation vs the fund investments during last five years along with social acceptability & social impact of the scheme across the study districts.

I am grateful to Directorate of Programme Implementation & Evaluation, Govt. of Meghalaya for sponsoring this study. Especially, I wish to thank Director (Programme Implementation & Evaluation), who was the spirit behind the present study and has given valuable inputs/view on important aspects of the study and extended wholehearted support and encouragement. I would also like to thank other concerned officials of the Directorate of Programme Implementation & Evaluation for their co-operation during the course of study.

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Sanjay Pandey
(Director)

ABBREVIATIONS

AE	:	Assistant Engineer
AEC	:	Area Employment Council
APL	:	Above Poverty Line
BDO	:	Block Development Officer
BEC	:	Block Employment Council
BPL	:	Below Poverty Line
BNRGSK	:	Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra
DEC	:	District Employment Council
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
JE	:	Junior Engineer
MoRD	:	Ministry of Rural Development
MGNREGA	:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MIS	:	Management Information System
PO	:	Programme Officer
PPS	:	Population Proportionate to Size
PRI	:	Panchayati Raj Institution
RWP	:	Rural Works Programme
SIRD	:	State Institute of Rural Development
SC	:	Schedule Caste
ST	:	Schedule Tribe
SWOT	:	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity & Threat
ToT	:	Training of Trainers
ToR	:	Terms of Reference
VEC	:	Village Employment Council

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND:

The high growth rate of the Indian economy, in the recent years has failed to generate adequate “decent” employment for the labour force. A major element in the policy for poverty reduction in India has always been to undertake targeted programmes to generate employment and livelihood for poor people. The first instance of a wage employment programme on an organized national scale in the country can be traced back to 1961, when the Rural Works Programme (RWP) was started in selected districts to generate employment to the poor in the lean season. A series of wage employment programme have followed this programme. In an attempt to improve upon the weakness of the previous programmes, the Government of India launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) following enactment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) by Indian Parliament in 2005.

The Act came into force on 2nd February 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. During 2009-10, it has been rechristened as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The Act aims at enhancing at least one hundred days guaranteed wage in a financial year to every one whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address the cause of chronic poverty like draught, deforestation, and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. The process outcomes include strengthening grassroots process of democracy and infusing transparency in governance.

The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening decentralized and deepening process of democracy by giving a pivotal role to the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) concerning planning, monitoring and implementation. Unique features of the Act include, time bound employment guarantee within 15 days of demand, and incentive-disincentive structure to the state governments for providing employment as 90 percent of the cost for employment is born by the centre or payment of unemployment allowance at their own cost and emphasis on labour intensive works prohibiting the use of contractors and machinery. The Act also mandates 33 percent participation for women.

STUDY OBJECTIVE:

- Examine the systems and processes under the programme execution of various fields like registration of workers, issues of job cards, preparation of plans, execution of works, co-ordination with different agencies, fund utilization, pattern of monitoring, grievance redressal, social audit, etc.
- Examine the implementation of MGNREGS in improving employment opportunities and living conditions of the rural poor both in terms of qualitative and quantitative parameters.
- Assess the role of the programme in reducing poverty of rural poor and improving the nutritional standard of their families.
- To assess the survival of the assets, its usages, cost effectiveness and social acceptability.
- To assess the status of convergence with other rural development programmes.
- To assess the impact of following activities towards meeting the programme objectives:-
 - ❖ Water conservation and drought proofing
 - ❖ Land development including afforestation
 - ❖ Flood control/ protection measure, including drainage in water logged areas.
 - ❖ Rural connectivity's and other productive works for economic sustainability.
- To assess the impact of the programme in-terms of socio-economic well being of rural people.
- To identify the problems and deficiencies and gap at various level about the scheme and also to undertake SWOT analysis.
- To assess the role of VEC, AEC, BEC & DEC in the implementation of this programme.
- To put forward suggestions and recommendation for improving the efficacy and efficiency of the programme implementation.

METHODOLOGY:

To meet the objectives of the study, evaluation study involved a combination of quanti-quali study design. Quanti-study design comprises the techniques of sample frame designing, sampling procedure, universe and unit of analysis identification where as quali study design comprises the techniques of in-depth interview, FGDs, case studies, content analysis and process documentation.

GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE & SAMPLE SIZE:

During the execution of study in 2013, there were a total of 7 districts in Meghalaya and the same were covered. But now, there are a total of 11 districts including seven old one. It implies that there are the increase of four districts. These four districts were bifurcated from one each from East Garo Hills, West Jaintia Hills, West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills. Thus, in nutshell, the geographical coverage of the study at present may be treated as 11 districts. The details of geographical coverage under the study by blocks, VECs and beneficiaries have been depicted in the table given below:-

Sl. No.	Districts in 2013	Present Status in 2016	Blocks	VECs	Beneficiaries
1.	East Khasi Hills	East Khasi Hills	Khadarshnong	5	75
			Laitkroh		
			Mawkynrew	5	75
			Mawphlang	5	75
			Pynursla	5	75
2.	East Garo Hills	East Garo Hills + North Garo Hills	Samanda	5	75
			Songsak	5	75
			Dambo Rongjeng	5	75
3.	West Jaintia Hills	East Jaintia Hills + West Jaintia Hills	Laskein	5	75
			Amlarem	5	75
			Thadlaskein	5	75
4.	West Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills + South West Khasi Hills	Nongstoin	5	75
			Mairang	5	75
			Mawthadraishan	5	75
5.	South Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	Baghmara	5	75
			Gasuapara	5	75
6.	West Garo Hills	West Garo Hills + South West Garo Hills	Dadenggre	5	75
			Zikzak	5	75
			Betasing	5	75
			Rongram	5	75
7.	Ri Bhoi	Ri Bhoi	Umling	5	75
			Umsning	5	75
Total	7	11	21	105	1575

STUDY TOOLS:

Study tools were prepared after a thorough review of literature/ scheme related secondary information. Project input & process section was also prepared to capture the programmatic inputs delivered under the scheme. The questionnaire was finalized after the pilot testing & the same was sent to the client before final administration into the field. Following tools were prepared and administered-

- State Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- District Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- Block Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- VEC Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- Beneficiary Schedule

STUDY FINDINGS:

- With MGNREGA Act, getting passed in September 2005, the MGNREGA Meghalaya was implemented in the whole state in phased manner with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household opting for it. The MGNREGA, a demand driven scheme has its focus on works relating to water conservation & harvestings, drought proofing (including afforestation/ tree plantation), land development, flood-control/ protection and rural connectivity in terms of all weather roads.
- This scheme has been universalized and is operational in all the assigned 7 districts which at present have become 11 districts of the state. The scheme has been able to put money in the hands of poorest of the poor on a scale that is unprecedented. Over the consecutive financial years, a huge number of rural households have participated in this programme across the sampled district. The programme has not attracted only BPL families but also APL families. Wage payment to the tune of crores of rupees has been released to them, creating a multiplier effect and stimulating the rural economy.
- MGNREGA was able to dignify labour work in the villages, and provided purchasing power among the rural households. When these poor households spend this additional money, they create a demand for commodities. The

production of these commodities in turn, creates demand for capital, raw materials and workers. In Meghalaya, this multiplier effect is reflected in the increased investment in livestock and quality of education & health in the rural areas.

- The district administration has been focusing on the creation of durable assets with the allocation of huge investment under the MGNREGA. Over the financial years, VEC has been able to create footpath, C.C. Roads & Culverts, Afforestation, Water conservation works. In order to enhance rural water security the VEC had also constructed ponds and tanks in their villages.
- In order to ensure transparency, more than 90 percent the wage payment is being routed through the newly opened bank and post office account. A grievance redressal mechanism has also been established along with transparent material purchase norms.
- The muster roll were also readout in the VEC meeting in social audits conducted by reputed NGOs in all the villages. Social audit & labour budget planning at VEC level was found. The shelf of works to be taken up in the village was proposed by VEC, estimation was done by block office and technical & financial sanction was done at district level. No contractor or middleman were permitted and 100 percent implementation of works was executed by VECs. Among the new initiatives, Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra (BNRGSK) at the GPVs level was established, which functions as the MGNREGA office and village resource centers.
- The research team found that four major types of works were executed or implemented under the MGNREGA in across the all study districts. They more or less confirm to the list approved by the programme guidelines:-

Water Conservation

- Irrigation Channels
- Water Tank
- Water Storage Units
- Ponds
- Wells

Land Development

- Playground
- Protection Walls
- Land Terracing
- Construction of Sheds

Plantation & Afforestation

- Fruits Plantation
- Tree Plantation
- Tree Sapling Plantation

Road Connectivity

- Footpath Development
- Motorable Road Development

➤ Effective implementation of the MGNREGA in the district has led to ample employment for women. The scheme has raised both enthusiasm and expectation among women workers. They unanimously affirmed that it has enhanced their lives by helping them generate more livelihood option from their immediate surroundings by making work available to everyone, preferably women and aged. It was also stated that unlike MGNREGA, equal wage policy was not being followed in earlier schemes, making them an unattractive proposition. Besides this, with no guarantee of work being available regularly, these schemes were hardly popular amongst women. Breaking the social norm of “unequal wages” between men & women is an achievement in itself.

☞ A total of 49305 works under MGNREGA over the study reference periods of five years (2008-09 to 2012-13) have been taken up in the state. This figure also include the spill over works of previous years also. The share of spill over works in total work was reported to be 23 percent.

☞ Work completion ratio over the study reference period was reported to be 76 percent out of the total current year's sanctioned works whereas it was calculated to 63 percent after the inclusion of previous years spill over works in the current year's sanctioned works.

- ☞ As high as 98 percent work completion ratio was observed in East Garo Hills followed by South Garo Hills (96 percent), West Jaintia Hills and West Garo Hills.
- ☞ A total of 770.57 lakh person days employment have been generated in the state over the, study reference period of five years (2008-09 to 2012-13).
- ☞ Overall, a total of 15.32 lakh households in the state over the time of span of five years have been given employment in the state. STs Community have got a large share of 94 percent in total employment generation.
- ☞ The performance of East and West Garo Hills were found remarkable with respect to employment generation over the study reference period.
- ☞ Total available funds under the MGNREGS over a period of study reference period (2008-09 to 2012-13) was calculated to be Rs. 164617.59 lakh where 66 percent amounts out of total available funds were invested for the completion 85 percent works in the running financial years only over a period of five years. Remaining 34 percent finances were carried forwards to the respective next financial years with 15 percent spill over works.
- ☞ State has successfully created durable assets in the form of irrigation canals, ponds, check dam, ring well and water harvesting structure, which was found sustainable in nature.
- ☞ This programme has succeeded in providing social protection in terms of livelihood security to the rural people. In addition, it has provided basic income security in the form of wage payment and due to that, their chronic poverty level has been slightly improved.
- ☞ Analysis findings also portrays a good picture of work completion ratio. A total of 85 percent works were completed in current financial years of study reference period with an investment of 66 percent amount of the total availability. It indicates about best cost effective management. Remaining works and finances were spilled over and carried forwards respectively to the next financial years.
- ☞ MGNREGA works and assets created over the study reference period of five years have the potential to benefit rural communities by improving land productivity and connecting remote villages to inputs and outputs market and thus fund invested under the scheme seems to rational.
- ☞ Majority of assets under the scheme were observed productive and useful on the ground owing to good planning and execution at the micro level. However, there is need to give more emphasis on plantation works.
- ☞ As per the community perception, the best performing assets under the MGNREGA includes, irrigation canals, ponds, check dams, ring well, roads, over bridge & footpaths.

SUGGESTIONS:

Planning Level:

- As MGNREGA is a demand driven programme, issuing a job card to all families wherever there has been a demand raised is commendable. There perhaps could be a possibility to make this facility available online.
- Once the financial inclusion is completed there would be greater synergy in convergence with other programmes, especially in the areas of infrastructure development and income generation. It would further enhance the profile of the programme in this convergence executed and works get planned in such a way that they dovetail with the financial year.
- The bottom up planning approach of MGNREGA as executed through the VEC needs more technical support as the profile of the programme increases. Thus, it would be of immense help if the long-term perspective plan document is made available of VECs to help them plan better their individual work plans.

Management Level:

- The workers also reported in many instances that there was a delay in the receipt of the payment. This was despite the workers having accounts in the post offices and wherever possible in banks. The possible reason for the delay is identified at the level of post offices not being accustomed to perform the banking operation and thus funds transfer being delayed. We suggest consider a mobile banking unit to take care of this problem till the banks are streamlined to facilitate electronic transfer up to the village levels.
- The initiative to create an MIS of the programme as well as the material costing software are path breaking steps that need to be emulated across the length and breadth of the MGNREGA. The state must lead in that aspect.

Execution Level:

- The MGNREGA programme in Meghalaya has evolved a model execution. The uniqueness of this execution lies in its synergy with the people through the council on one hand and the complementary support of the administration on the other.
- Some villages are not accessible by motorable road or any other mode of transport. The materials have to be carried head load and the cost becomes high. The programme implementing agency at village level has to bear the cost from material component thereby affected the quality of work.
- Maintenance of assets constructed under MGNREGA, which is not included in the guideline, which affects the sustainability aspects of created assets.
- There are certain villages that have their own headman & also recognized by the local authority council but the lists were not recognized as a census village. Under

MGNREGA, only census villages are included as VECs. As such, these VECs were deprived of complete assistance from the village where they have been tagged. The major affected villages are those in the Border areas with Assam.

- There is need to provide speedy internet connectivity at village & block level to ensure smooth functions of MIS. Frequent changed of village secretary was also observed as the problem.
- In almost majority of districts, most of the men are not attracted to the MGNREGA work because of low wage payment of work compared to other jobs in urban areas. Hence, most of the men move towards urban areas in search of work.
- There is need to give more emphasis on the component of durability of works/assets at the time activity selection.
- IEC activities under the MGNREGS need to be strengthened to motivate both male and female folk for active participation in the programme.

Assets Sustainability & Funds Investment:

- Huge amount has been spent to create the assets at village level. There is need to make a “maintenance fund” from the allocated amount. This could be used as a revolving fund to take care of the expenditure required for regular up keep of the asset.
- Inclusion of “maintenance plan & maintenance fund” should be made mandatory at the time of submission of asset creation plan.
- An awareness campaign should be carried out at the VEC level to stress upon the importance and necessity of asset durability and maintenance.
- It was observed during the field visits that a total of 49,305 works have been approved under the MGNREGA over a period of five years (2008-09 to 2012-13). Of these, 41963 works have been taken up in the respective financial years and remaining 7342 works have been spilled over to next financial years. It implies that, state has succeeded to complete 85 percent of the total approved works in the running financial years whereas 15 works have been spilled over to next financial years.
- It was evident from the findings that state has spent a total of 66 percent available fund to complete 85 percent of total approved work in the running financial year and most of them were found useful for both the community and individuals. It was observed many productive assets have been created on the ground owing to good planning and execution. However, there is need for more focused implementation with regards to plantation activities under drought proofing category to ensure the sustainability of created assets against the investment of funds.

CHAPTER - 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND CUM CONTEXT OF STUDY:

India is a country of villages and about majority of villages have very poor economic condition. In Meghalaya, a large percentage of population still lives in rural area. Indebtedness, unemployment, unproductive expenses, low level of productivity, lack of adequate basic needs and minimum services are very common problem of the villages of Meghalaya.

The high growth rate of the Indian economy, in the recent years has failed to generate adequate “decent” employment for the labour force. A major element in the policy for poverty reduction in India has always been to undertake targeted programmes to generate employment and livelihood for poor people. The first instance of a wage employment programme on an organized national scale in the country can be traced back to 1961, when the Rural Works Programme (RWP) was started in selected districts to generate employment to the poor in the lean season. A series of wage employment programme have followed this programme. In an attempt to improve up on the weakness of the previous programmes, the Government of India launched the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) following enactment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) by Indian Parliament in 2005.

The Act was notified in 200 rural districts in its first phase of implementation (with effect from 2nd February 2006). In financial year 2007-08, it was extended to an additional 130 rural districts. The remaining districts were notified under MGNREGA with effect from 1st April 2008. Since 2008, MGNREGS has covered the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population.

In Meghalaya, MGNREGS was initially launched during 2006-07 in three districts and has further been extended to all 7 districts of the State during the study now it has been spread over 11 districts.. This scheme is being implemented in the State over a period of 7-8 years and thus Government of Meghalaya intended to undertake an evaluation study of the scheme to assess the involved input, process and outcome of the programme. Such type of study plays a vital role in providing feedback information

1.2 MGNREG SCHEME – A GENESIS CUM OVERVIEW:



order to provide employment when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate. The Act came into force on 2nd February 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. During 2009-10, it has been rechristened as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The Act aims at enhancing at least one hundred days guaranteed wage in a financial year to every one whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address the cause of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation, and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. The process outcomes include strengthening grassroots process of democracy and infusing transparency in governance.

The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening decentralized and deepening process of democracy by giving a pivotal role to the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) concerning planning, monitoring and implementation. Unique features of the Act include, time bound employment guarantee within 15 days of demand, and incentive-disincentive structure to the state governments for providing employment as 90 percent of the cost for employment is born by the centre or payment of unemployment allowance at their own cost and emphasis on labour intensive works prohibiting the use of contractors and machinery. The Act also mandates 33 percent participation for women. The key process in the implementation of Act are the following –

- The adult members of rural households submit their name, age, and address with photo to the gram panchayat.
- The gram panchayat registers households after making enquiry and issues a job card, which contains the details of adult members enrolled with his/her photo.
- Registered person can submit an application for work in writing (for at least 14 days of continuous work) either to panchayat or to programme officer.
- The panchayat/ programme officer will accept the valid application and issue dated receipt of application, letter-providing work will be sent to the applicant and displayed at panchayat office.
- The employment will be provided within the radius of 5 kilometers and if it is above 5 kilometers extra wage will be paid.
- If employment under the scheme is not provided within 15 days of receipt of the application, daily unemployment allowance will be paid to the applicant.

1.3 STUDY OBJECTIVE:

The present study on evaluation of Meghalaya MGNREGS was intended to conduct a comprehensive assessment in terms of assets creation vs the fund investments during last five years along with social acceptability & social impact, feedback from the stakeholders. To assess these major objectives, following specific objectives were studied:-

- Examine the systems and processes under the programme execution of various fields like registration of workers, issues of job cards, preparation of plans, execution of works, co-ordination with different agencies, fund utilization, pattern of monitoring, grievance redressal, social audit, etc.
- Examine the implementation of MGNREGS in improving employment opportunities and living conditions of the rural poor both in terms of qualitative and quantitative parameters.
- Assess the role of the programme in reducing poverty of rural poor and improving the nutritional standard of their families.
- To assess the survival of the assets, its usages, cost effectiveness and social acceptability.
- To assess the status of convergence with other rural development programmes.

- To assess the impact of following activities towards meeting the programme objectives:-
 - ❖ Water conservation and drought proofing
 - ❖ Land development including afforestation
 - ❖ Flood control/ protection measure, including drainage in water logged areas.
 - ❖ Rural connectivity's and other productive works for economic sustainability.
- To assess the impact of the programme in-terms of socio-economic well being of rural people.
- To identify the problems and deficiencies and gap at various level about the scheme and also to undertake SWOT analysis.
- To assess the role of VEC, AEC, BEC & DEC in the implementation of this programme.
- To put forward suggestions and recommendation for improving the efficacy and efficiency of the programme implementation.

1.4 STUDY AREA CHARACTERISTICS:

Meghalaya was formed by carving two districts from the state of Assam namely the United Khasi Hills and Jaintia Hills and the Garo Hills on 21st January 1972. Majority of the population in this state are tribals. The Khasi are the largest group, followed by the Garos, Jaintias, Koch, Rajbongshi, Boro, Hajong, Dimasa, Hmar, Kuki, Mikir and Nepali. According to 2011 census, there are a total 2,964,007 persons in the state. Agriculture and cattle rearing are the main occupation of the state. Female constitutes a total of 1,492,668 population of the total state. As of 2012, it is estimated there are 5782 villages in Meghalaya. Majority of population of Meghalaya are the follower of Christianity followed by Hinduism. Now, there are 11 districts in the state spread over three divisions named Jaintia Hills, Khasi Hills and Garo Hills. West Jaintia and East Jaintia districts came under Jaintia Hills where as East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, South West Khasi Hills and Ri Bhoi comes under Khasi Hills division. Garo Hills division consists North Garo Hills, East Garo Hills, South Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South West Garo Hills.

Meghalaya is predominantly an agrarian economy. Agriculture and allied activities engage nearly two-third of the total work force in Meghalaya. Agriculture in the State is characterized by low productivity and unsustainable farm practices, giving rise to a high incidence of rural poverty. Infrastructural constraints have also prevented the economy of the state from growing at a pace commensurate with that of the rest of the country.

The State is considered to have rich base of natural resources. Those include minerals such as coal, limestone, kaolin and granite among others. It has a large forest cover, rich biodiversity and numerous water bodies. The incidence of poverty in rural area of Meghalaya was reported as high as 55 percent (Planning Commission).

1.5 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY:

Report is organized in Chapters. Chapter 1 named Introduction consist general background, scheme genesis, study objectives, study area characteristics, study limitation and chapter organization. Chapter 2 deals with study design, methodology & geographical coverage followed by Chapter 3 as project process documentation. Chapter 4 named Asset creation versus fund investment under MGNREGA deals with a critical analysis on the study subject. Chapter 5 has been devoted for beneficiary's characteristics & perception analysis where as chapter 6 deals with the project impact, best practices and learnt lessons. The final chapter 7 consists the study findings based conclusions and suggestions.

1.6 STUDY LIMITATION:

Over all the study was completed in successful manner. However, few hindrances in the form of frequent bandh announced by militants and also by various organization for demanding separate state were found very problematic at the time of data collection. Due to which, data collection process has taken a long time especially in Garo Hills area. Besides, remote location of villages in dense area and poor accessibility was also countered at the time of field visits. Overall study was conducted smoothly.

CHAPTER - 2

STUDY DESIGN, METHODOLOGY & GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE

An attempt has been made under this chapter to describe the details on evolved study design & methodology. To meet the objectives of the study, evaluation study involved a combination of quanti-quali study design. Quanti-study design comprises the techniques of sample frame designing, sampling procedure, universe and unit of analysis identification where as quali study design comprises the techniques of in-depth interview, FGDs, case studies, content analysis and process documentation.

2.1 QUANTITATIVE STUDY DESIGN:

2.1.1 Identification of Universe, Sampling Frame & Unit of Analysis:

Stakeholders of this scheme both in terms of beneficiaries & functionaries of implementing agency at various level along with community people have been identified as the universe of the study. The list of beneficiaries by study sample places has been formed as the sampling framework. The unit of study analysis has been kept at household/ beneficiaries level.

2.1.2 Sampling Procedure & Sample Size:

2.1.2.1 Selection of Districts:

According to the ToR, all districts have been covered in the state to conduct the sample survey.

2.1.2.2 Selection of Blocks:

Selection of blocks under the study has been carried out by adopting PPS (Population Proportionate to Size) technique. Besides, block wise performance indicators have also been considered at the time of block selection. A total of 4 blocks from each East Khasi Hills & West Garo Hills, 3 blocks from each East Garo Hills, West Khasi Hills and West Jaintia Hills and two blocks from each South Garo Hills and Ri-Bhoi districts have been identified. A total of 21 blocks have been identified by covering 7 districts of the State at the time of study execution.

2.1.2.3 Selection of VEC:

Keeping in mind the diverse nature of study objectives, a total of 5 VECs from each block was selected by giving due weightage of geographical representation. Geographical representation of VECs was ensured by selecting one VEC from each direction and one from central (block headquarter). Thus, a total of 105 VECs were selected to conduct the study.



2.1.2.4 Selection of Household Beneficiaries:

A total of 15 beneficiaries from each VEC was selected by applying simple random sampling technique. Due care was given to make the beneficiaries sample representative with regard to study reference period (2008-09 to 2012-13). Purposive sampling technique was also used to make the wide coverage of activities carried out under the scheme. Thus, a total of 1575 beneficiaries were selected to conduct the study.



2.2 QUALITATIVE STUDY DESIGN:

2.2.1 Input, Process & Outcome Documentation:

This technique was applied to elicit information based on the secondary sources. An extensive review of the scheme was conducted to assess the various inputs, process and outcome related components.

2.2.2 In-Depth Interview:

In-depth Interview was carried out among functionaries of scheme implementing agency at various level to elicit the feedback on the various components of the scheme with the help of semi-structured schedule.



2.2.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs):

An attempt was made to organize the FGDs among the community people of sampled VECs to understand their collective responses on various aspects of the scheme/project.



2.2.4 Identification of Case Studies:

In order to assess the effectiveness of scheme, case studies were also explored based on changes taken place among the beneficiaries and community people after the implementation of the programme.

2.3 STUDY TOOLS:

Study tools were prepared after a thorough review of literature/ scheme related secondary information. Project input & process section was also prepared to capture the programmatic inputs delivered under the scheme. The questionnaire was finalized after the pilot testing & the same was also sent to the client before final administration into the field. Following tools were prepared and administered-

- State Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- District Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- Block Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- VEC Level Implementing Agency Schedule
- Beneficiary Schedule

2.4 GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE & SAMPLE SIZE:

During the execution of study in 2013, there were a total of 7 districts in Meghalaya and the same were covered. But now, there are a total of 11 districts including seven old one. It implies that there are the increase of four districts. These four districts were bifurcated one each from East Garo Hills, West Jaintia Hills, West Khasi Hills and West Garo Hills. Thus, in nutshell, the geographical coverage of the study at present may be treated as 11 districts. The details of geographical coverage under the study by blocks, VECs and beneficiaries have been depicted in the table given below:-

Sl. No.	Districts in 2013	Present Status in 2016	Blocks	VECs	Beneficiaries
1.	East Khasi Hills	East Khasi Hills	Khadarshnong Laitkroh	5	75
			Mawkynrew	5	75
			Mawphlang	5	75
			Pynursla	5	75
2.	East Garo Hills	East Garo Hills + North Garo Hills	Samanda	5	75
			Songsak	5	75
			Dambo Rongjeng	5	75
3.	West Jaintia Hills	East Jaintia Hills + West Jaintia Hills	Laskein	5	75
			Amlarem	5	75
			Thadlaskein	5	75
4.	West Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills + South West Khasi Hills	Nongstoin	5	75
			Mairang	5	75
			Mawthadraishan	5	75
5.	South Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	Baghmara	5	75
			Gasuapara	5	75
6.	West Garo Hills	West Garo Hills + South West Garo Hills	Dadenggre	5	75
			Zikzak	5	75
			Betasing	5	75
			Rongram	5	75
7.	Ri Bhoi	Ri Bhoi	Umling	5	75
			Umsning	5	75
Total	7	11	21	105	1575

List of sampled VECs by block and district has been annexed in annexure-2.

2.5 STUDY EXECUTION:

Experienced and qualified investigators were recruited for the primary data collection work. Preference was given for the recruitment of local investigators who were acquainted with the socio-geographic background of the project area and also fluent in local language.

The field investigators were groomed rigorously for interview on the semi-structured research tools developed for the study. In addition, they were trained for recording the true response through organization of two days training programme. This training programme has covered need, scope & objectives of the study, sampling procedure, sample size, detail briefing on structured & semi-structured tools with the help of projector, mock interview and clarification on doubts. The investigators have also been supervised and monitored closely during the field operation by the field coordinator and supervisor.

2.6 QUALITY CONTROL:

The quality of data ensures the degree of valid and reliable findings and conclusions. Thus, keeping in mind the importance of the aspect, it was necessary to exercise measure to control sampling and non-sampling errors during the survey. The sampling errors were controlled by adhering to the procedures for selecting the sample as mentioned under the sampling technique. However, the non-sampling errors such as investigators bias was controlled by quality recruitment of investigators, proper training and close monitoring of field operation.

2.7 DATA PROCESSING & ANALYSIS:

Once the data collection process was over, data was re-scrutinized and entered into the computer. The data was processed and analyzed with the help of SPSS software. Tabulation of data was carried out for variables identified. The analysis plan was kept simple and easy to comprehend by common readers. The analysis plan has also been made in relative as well as absolute form in the simple cross tables under different relevant categories/ heads.

The numerical analysis wherever necessary has also been supplemented with graphical analysis too for effective transmission of factual information. Disaggregated analysis on various identified indicators have also been done by caste, religion, marital status, disability and BPL status.

CHAPTER – 3

PROJECT PROCESS AND PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION

As the matter of fact, the MGNREGA Act is an important step towards realization of the right to work. It is also expected to enhance people's livelihood on a sustained basis. The choice of works seek to address the cause of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion. Effectively implemented, the employment guaranteed under the Act has the potential of transforming the geography of poverty. MGNREGA implementation involves participatory planning and implementation of scheme through (i) proactive role of village council, (ii) rigorous and continuous monitoring by way of social audit and (iii) involvement of ordinary people at the grassroots level. It also aims at (i) generating productive assets, (ii) protecting the environment, (iii) empowering rural women and (iv) arresting rural-urban migration. In the backdrop of above given background, this chapter attempts to assess the involved project process in terms of inputs, process and outcomes (physical as well as financial).

3.1 PROJECT INPUT & PROCESS DOCUMENTATION:

3.1.1 Structure of Implementing Organization:

Since Meghalaya is having a special category and part IX of the Constitution does not apply to it, the MGNREGA envisaged a provision where by the state can mandate local councils/ authorities to undertake corresponding responsibilities of PRI institutions. MGNREGA scheme in Meghalaya has formed voluntary bodies at different level named VEC, AEC, BEC & DEC for the implementation of MGNREGA work.



Village Employment Council is constituted at the level of each village consisting male & female heads of each household in a village. The VEC is equivalent to gram sabha and thus it is vested with the power and functions of the gram sabha as envisaged in the MGNREGA Act.

AEC has been constituted at the cluster level which comprise the villages with a radius of 3-4 km. AEC consists at least one VEC. The AEC consists three elected representatives from VEC. The total numbers of AEC should be as high as 20 and 30 percent of the member should be women. AEC members elect one chairperson and a secretary in the presence of P.O. AEC is equivalent to gram panchayat and it executes/ supervises the MGNREGA works through the representatives of VECs. The AEC also selects the community coordinators to assist them in their functioning. Community Coordinators work as Rozgar Sahayak and performs duties with regard to secretarial assistance in maintaining books and accounts. They have been provided training before deploying to actual work under the MGNREGS.

The third stage is the formation of BEC (Block Employment Council) at the block level. The main work of BEC is to finalize and approve the block level plan, which consists of consolidated shelf of project to be taken up in the block in addition to performing other activities assigned by districts and state council. Twenty five percent of the total entitled allocation of works are identified by the BEC and implemented with the help of VEC.

DEC is the authority for planning and implementation of the scheme at the district level. DRDA works as the DEC. DEC main activities consists approval of district employment guarantee scheme plan, which covers consolidated blocks employment guarantee plan, its own proposal formation and executions, and liasioning with other line department's proposals. DEC also vested with the responsibilities of reviewing the scheme implementation, supervision & monitoring of projects taken up at the level of districts and blocks besides performing other assignments assigned by the state council.

3.1.2 Implementation Procedure:

Under this section, an attempt has been made to assess the step-by-step procedure involved in the implementation of MGNREGA scheme in the districts.

3.1.2.1 Preliminary/ Preparatory Procedure:

This stage includes the activities like demarcation & formation of VECs/AECs, identification of human resources and stakeholders at village and block level for implementation of the programme. Training/capacity building and sensitization programme at different level were also conducted among the stakeholders of the programme. Infrastructure support like computers, photocopies, and printers and other basic requirements/ inputs were provided to the blocks/districts. Besides, worksite facilities like first aid, drinking water etc. were also given to the VECs. Since the state government has vested the responsibility to the villages (census villages) as the authority/responsibility in implementation of MGNREGA known as Village Employment Councils (VECs) to perform as the Gram Sabha and Area Employment Council (AEC) as the gram panchayat. Therefore, the detail basic data's were also collected. Detail basic data includes following components –

- Name of the villages (to be census village)
- Demarcation of AEC & VEC
- Name of HHs & adult members of the villages
- Coding of VEC following the state, district, block, village & household
- Name of financial institution (bank/post office)

Above given indicators were compiled at block, district & state level accordingly. To cover the aspect of MGNREGA as per the guideline, NGOs were also involved. Selected NGOs representatives were sent to SIRD for ToT (Training for Trainers) and subsequently they were deployed at block and village level for imparting training workshop and awareness programme. Media were also involved for awareness generation of the scheme. IEC components were made available at all stakeholders at block & village level.

3.1.2.2 Planning, Registration, Issuance of Job Cards & Selection of Activities:

Planning and implementation of works under MGNREGA has been planned at the VEC level. Works that were selected by VEC was done in transparent manner by people's participation in village darbar meeting. The annual plan was decided and approved and minutes of meeting were endorsed to the block office by village

secretary and headman. The consolidated annual action plan of the block covering all VECs plan was prepared and submitted to the BEC/DEC for approval. The block technical officials like AE/JE were also sent to the proposed worksite at village level to inspect the feasibility of proposed work with regard to asset creation, durability and sustainability.

The job card is the key document that records workers entitlement under MGNREGA. Following activities were carried out to ensure the access of job card to each willing households –

- A door-to-door survey was conducted in each gram panchayat to identify the eligible household for registration work.
- The households who applied for the job card were issued photographed job card in village darbar in the presence of village secretary and headman.
- Job card were issued free of cost and within the timeframe.

3.1.2.3 Execution of Work:

It was BDO, who issued the work order along with plan and estimates to all the VECs for commencement of work. Work order for the commencement of work was issued, once the proposed work was approved by the competent authority. The payment of wages and material are paid to the account of the VECs based on the muster rolls and



vouchers dully verified and countersigned by the block gram sevaks, junior engineer, village headman and village secretary. At present, wages of labourers are being paid mostly through banks and post offices. In places where no banks and post offices facilities are available, the disbursement of wages to the job card holders were made in cash by the VEC in the VEC assembly.

3.1.2.4 Details of Funds Flow Pattern:

It was observed that districts prepare the consolidated labour budget demand and work demand for every financial year to the Government of India through the state

government. After the approval of the budget by the Govt. of India, the state communicates the same to the districts and the same were communicated to all the BDOs. Funds released to the district by central & state government goes to the BDO as the first installment. The second installment of fund received from central & state government released to the BDO subject to the achievement and performance of the work. There is also a provision about the refund of money from the block, in case block is not performing and same allocation diversified to those performing BDOs. The release of fund by BDOs to the VECs depends on the performance.

3.1.2.5 Grievance Redressal Mechanism & Monitoring:

Every complaint received from beneficiaries/ common people heard at village darbar, if the case is not resolved at VEC level, then it goes to block, district and at state level. MGNREGA works are monitored at three levels namely GP, block and district. At GP level, responsibility of programme monitoring has been assigned to gram sevaks. They monitor the works in terms of quality of work & physical verification of job cardholders at the worksites. PO, APO, TA and JE are the responsible person to monitor the MGNREGA works at block level with regard to work quality in reference of specified guidelines. Monitoring committee has also been setup at district level. District's monitoring officials goes to villages and at worksites to inspect the work carried out by the VECs and as well as at block level.

3.1.2.6 Mechanism of Social Audit:

There is a provision of NGOs involvement for social auditing of the programme. NGOs prepare the social audit calendars in the consultation with respective block official of the districts. Social audit calendars are sent to the district for approval. Approved calendars are uploaded at the MIS site at both block and district level. Audit teams visits to the VECs as per the prescribed schedule. Audits findings and action taken are documented and same documents are uploaded at the MIS site for views & policy makers.

3.2 PHYSICAL PERFORMANCE DOCUMENTATION:

As the matter of fact, MGNREGA was initiated by the Government of India to provide employment during the time of lean period and distress. When there are lack of employment opportunities in agriculture and non-agriculture sector, people tend to adopt negative coping mechanism like taking loan, compromising with food, education and health, and many more, this



leads to multiple problem. Therefore, this programme was started to provide social protection interms of livelihood security to the rural people. It is implemented in all the districts of state. This section deals with the analysis on few important physical indicators of the programme i.e. number and types of work takenup & number of employment generated.

3.2.1 The State/ Districts Scenario about Physical Works:

This section deals with the analysis of few important physical indicators of the programme for the study reference period of five years from 2008-09 to 2012-13. Details have been presented in below table:-

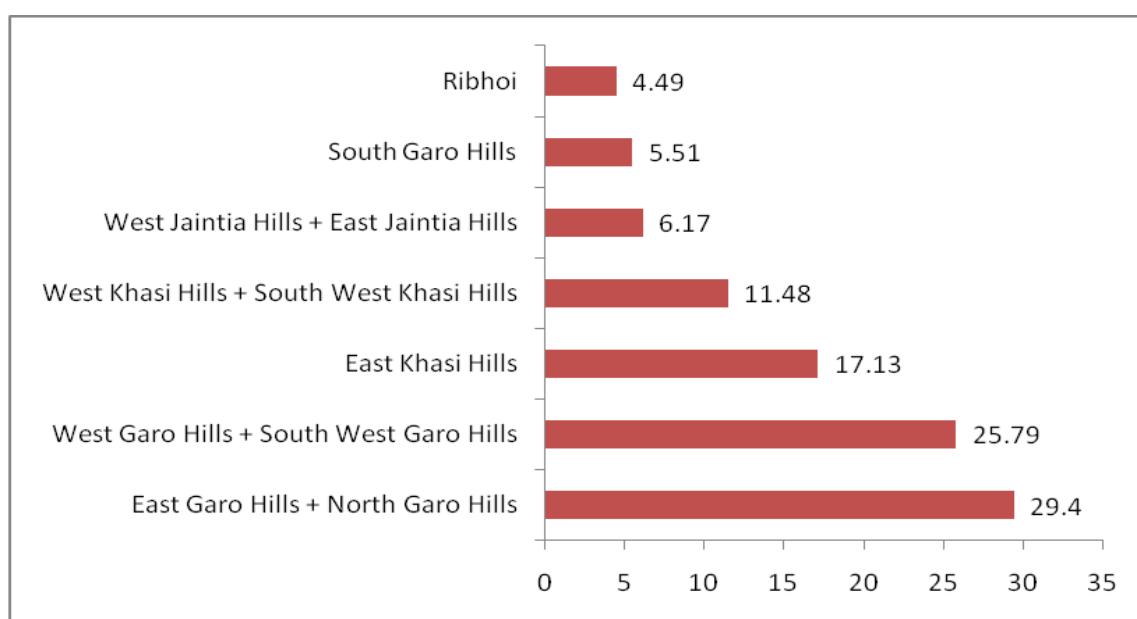
Table 3.1
Total Physical Works Taken up Over the Study Reference Period

Sl. No.	Districts	Extended Districts at Present	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	District Total	Percentage share of Districts
1.	East Khasi Hills		997	1480	2047	1995	1927	8446	17.13
2.	East Garo Hills	North Garo Hills	1540	3346	2981	3731	2899	14497	29.40
3.	West Jaintia Hills	East Jaintia Hills	324	719	731	734	538	3046	6.17
4.	West Khasi Hills	South West Khasi Hills	82	683	1821	1883	1194	5663	11.48
5.	South Garo Hills		472	526	804	473	443	2718	5.51
6.	West Garo Hills	South West Garo Hills	422	1239	3482	3927	3650	12720	25.79
7.	Ribhoi		389	177	375	634	640	2215	4.49
Total State			4226	8170	12241	13377	11291	49305	100.0

Number of works are carried out across the state keeping in mind the potential demand of the people and particular area. Statistics given in above table 3.1 indicates that a total of 49,305 works were taken up in the state across different districts over the study reference period of five years (2008-09 to 2012-13). Table 3.1 also depicts the districts share in total works taken up in the state. As high as 29.4 percent of the total state works have been taken up in East Garo Hills followed by 25.79 percent works in West Garo Hills, 17.13 percent works in East Khasi Hills and 11.48 percent works in West Khasi Hills. The lowest share of works in state total was reported in Ribhoi (4.49 percent) followed by South Garo Hills (5.51 percent) and in West Jaintia Hills (6.17 percent).

Figure 3.1

District Wise Share of Works Taken up in the State Over Study Reference Period



Further, an attempt has also been made to assess the types of work taken up by the states and districts over the reference years of the study. Statistics given in table 3.2 depicts that on an average 12 types of works have been taken by state in MGNREGA. As high as 17 types of works have been taken up in East Garo Hills followed by 16 types of works in West Garo Hills and 14 types of works in West Khasi Hills. Around 9 types of works under MGNREGA have been reported in both East Khasi Hills and South Garo Hills. Overall, the category of works under the MGNREGA in the state includes rural connectivity, water conservation & water harvesting, land development,

drought proofing, flood control and protection, renovation of traditional water bodies, micro irrigation, playground, a forestation & fisheries.

Table 3.2
Types of Work Carried out by State/ Districts under MGNREGA over Study Reference Period

Sl. No.	Districts	Extended Districts at Present	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	District Average
1.	East Khasi Hills		8	8	10	11	11	9
2.	East Garo Hills	North Garo Hills	18	18	17	15	20	17
3.	West Jaintia Hills	East Jaintia Hills	11	13	13	12	9	11
4.	West Khasi Hills	South West Khasi Hills	8	16	16	15	16	14
5.	South Garo Hills		9	8	9	11	10	9
6.	West Garo Hills	South West Garo Hills	13	13	19	18	18	16
7.	Ribhoi		7	5	8	8	8	7
Total State			11	12	13	13	13	12

It has been observed that, state has focused on land development, rural connectivity, water conservation, drought proofing, micro irrigation and various other works permissible under the guideline. The focus on water and land development may increase the land productivities in future and people of the state may move from wage employment to sustainable livelihood in their own villages.

3.2.2 State/ Districts Scenario about Work Completion and Progress:

As the matter of fact, emphasis has been laid out in the guideline that, all the required feasibility assessment of selected/ approved work should be carried out in advance. Still, at times the works are not found to be appropriate for the concerned area and it gets abandoned in between due to some or the other technical problems. An attempt under this section, has been made to assess the work completion scenario of MGNREGA over the study reference period in the state. Data given in table 3.3 depicts the progress of works in the state and in districts over the study reference period 2008-09 to 2012-13.

Table 3.3
Status of Physical Progress and Work Completion Ratio Over the Reference
Period (2008-09 to 2012-13)

Sl. No.	Districts	Extended Districts at Present	Previous Year Spill over work	Total works spill & current	Total works taken up in current year	Work completion in current year	Spill over work to next financial year	Work completion against current sanction & previous spill	Works completion against only current taken up	% of spill over work against total works
1.	East Khasi Hills		2157	6289	4923	2734	2705	32%	55%	32%
2.	East Garo Hills	North Garo Hills	74	14423	14445	14239	72	98%	99%	0.49%
3.	West Jaintia Hills	East Jaintia Hills	1066	1980	3019	1603	1426	53%	53%	47%
4.	West Khasi Hills	South West Khasi Hills	1010	4653	4044	2592	1360	46%	64%	24%
5.	South Garo Hills		0	2718	2602	2602	116	96%	100%	4%
6.	West Garo Hills	South West Garo Hills	2853	9867	10296	6715	5060	53%	65%	40%
7.	Ribhoi		182	2033	1153	395	775	18%	34%	35%
Total State			7342	41963	40482	30880	11514	63%	76%	23%

It can be seen from the above table 3.3 that state has taken up a total of 49,305 works under MGNREGA over the study reference period of five years i.e. 2008-09 to 2012-13. The total work taken up by state includes the figures both previous year spill over works and current years approved works. Out of the total, state has taken up 40482 works in current financial year over the study reference period, which works out to be 82 percent of the total works. Further, data presented in above table 3.3 also indicates that a total of 30880 works have been completed in the respective current financial years of the study reference period, which works out to be 76 percent of the total current years taken up works and 63 percent of the total approved works including previous spill over works.

Further district wise performance with respect to work completion performance was found highest in East and South Garo Hills with 98 and 96 percent respectively followed by West Jaintia Hills and West Garo Hills with each 53 percent of work completion performance. District wise performance of works details and performance has been given in annexure-3. Further data given in above table also depicts the quantum of spill over works for the next financial years. A total of 11,514 works over

the five years of study reference period were observed as the spill over works out of total 49305 works in the state, which works out to be almost 23 percent of the total works. Different districts were having different reasons for the incompleteness and spill over to next financial years. However, in majority of cases it was due to irregular location of funds and late execution of the works. **Sameeksha** which is an Anthology of Research studies in MGNREGA also quotes that completion rate of works, just as in case of quality of assets, is dependent on districts/ state specific implementation of the scheme and is affected by poor planning, lack of technical support, irregular flow of funds and delayed payments.

3.2.3 State/ Districts Scenario on Employment Generation:

This programme is meant to provide employment to all needy and marginalized section of the society. Districts have made their own mechanism to mobilize marginalized sections and provide them with work opportunities. MGNREGA has provided basic income security to a large number of beneficiaries. The details related to generation of employment under MGNREGA in the state over the study reference period of five years have been depicted in table 3.4 given below:-

Table 3.4
Performance on Employment Generation (in Lakh Man Days)

Sl. No.	Particulars	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total State
1.	Total Person Days Generated	86.31	148.48	199.81	161.66	174.31	770.57
2.	Person days generated for SC	0.39	0.77	0.75	1.07	1.15	4.13
3.	Person days generated for ST	81.75	139.7	188.84	151.9	161.77	723.96
4.	Person days generated for women	35.69	70.08	87.76	67.24	71.58	332.35
5.	No. of household provided employment (in lakh)	2.24	3.0	3.46	3.30	3.32	15.32

Statistics given in above table 3.4 depicts that state has created a total of 770.57 lakh person day's employment over the study reference period of five years. Overall, 15.32 lakh households of the state have been given employment in a duration of five years. The share of ST population in total employment generation of state was reported around 94 percent followed by others and SC (0.53 percent). A total of 43.13 percent women have also been benefited over the study reference period out of the total employment generation. This is a remarkable achievement of MGNREGA in the state.

Further, district wise analysis has also been provided in table 3.5 given below on the NREGA performance about employment generation. As per the data of 2012-13, both East Garo Hills & West Garo Hills districts have generated a total of 50.22 and 55.54 lakh person per days employment respectively followed by East Khasi Hills (25.22 lakh man days), West Khasi Hills (15.78 lakh man days), Ribhoi (13.71 lakh man days) and Jaintia Hills (11.26 lakh man days). The share of ST population in total employment generation was recorded highest in East Garo Hills, East Khasi Hills, South Garo Hills and in West Khasi Hills. East Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and West Khasi Hills have reported highest share of women in the employment (>50 percent). The details have been portrayed in below given table:-

Table 3.5
District Wise Performance on Employment Generation

Sl. No.	Districts	Person days in lakh	SC%	ST%	Women%	Average per HH	Total HH worked (in lakh)
1.	East Garo Hills	50.22	0.05	98.86	30.41	96.3	0.52
2.	East Jaintia Hills	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
3.	East Khasi Hills	25.22	0.26	98.72	59.39	43.93	0.57
4.	Jaintia Hills	11.26	0.06	97.13	56.51	31.89	0.35
5.	North Garo Hills	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
6.	Ribhoi	13.71	0.31	97.43	45.33	41.58	0.33
7.	South Garo Hills	2.57	0.49	98.27	32.88	23.58	0.11
8.	South West Garo Hills	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
9.	South West Khasi Hills	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
10.	West Garo Hills	55.54	1.79	80.35	34.97	51.61	1.08
11.	West Khasi Hills	15.78	0.0	99.99	53.81	43.75	0.36

CHAPTER – 4

ASSET CREATION AND FUND INVESTMENT UNDER MGNREGA IN THE STATE

4.1 SUMMARY INSIGHT:

The MGNREGA scheme is not merely about transferring cash to people in rural area rather it is about creating durable assets that will ultimately lead to a reduced dependence of people on MGNREGA. The assets created under the MGNREGA can be broadly classified into two categories. One, assets created on individuals land and second, assets created on community land. As per the Act, state has undertaken broadly 8 major types of work and under each category of work, they have taken various activities to create an assets both on individual and on community land. An attempt in this section, has been made to assess the creation of assets in the state under MGNREGA and thereof magnitude of funds invested over the study reference period of five years i.e. 2008-09 to 2012-13.

4.2 ASSETS CREATION BY NATURE OF WORK IN THE STATE:

As the matter of fact, a large sum of public money are being invested under MGNREGA scheme. Leveraging these investments towards sustainable asset creation and livelihood generation requires well structured planning & inter sectoral convergence. Since planning of MGNREGA is decentralized and there is certain degree of flexibility with funds, works can be planned/structured and executed as per local requirement. MGNREGA thus has also become significant entry point for convergence with other development programme. Further MGNREGA is a significant legislation in many ways. Unlike earlier employment scheme, it is demand driven. It guarantees employment for the poor in crisis. It is to trigger labour intensive growth for the economy through asset creation that guarantees mainstream employment. It is tool



of transmission of the economy from labour surplus to labour using economy. It has two components, the cash transfer and the creation of productive assets relevant to local needs.

The table 4.1 given below depicts the nature of assets creation in the state by their category of works.

Table 4.1
Nature of Assets by Category of Works

Sl. No.	Types of Work	Nature of Assets Creation
1.	Water Conservation & Harvesting	Tanks, Ponds, Small Checkdam etc.
2.	Drought Proofing & Plantation	Afforestation, Tree Plantation etc.
3.	Flood Control and Protection	Drainage, Embarkments etc.
4.	Land Development	Plantations, Land Leveling, Terracing, Play Field etc.
5.	Micro Irrigation Works	Irrigation Canals
6.	Provision of Irrigation Facility Land owned by	SC, ST and Beneficiaries of Land Reforms
7.	Rural Connectivity	Construction of Road, Footpath, Footbridge etc.
8.	Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies	Desalting Tanks, Ponds, Old Canals, Traditional Water Bodies etc.
9.	Any Other Activity Approved by Ministry of Rural Development	Drinking Water facilities, Ring well, BNRGSK etc.

It can be referred from the above table that the state has executed nine categories of works where they have created several assets in the forms of tanks, ponds, check dam, tree plantation, drainages, embarkments, land leveling, canals and roads/ streets/ footpaths. Besides, they have also created assets for individuals and at community level.



In order to understand the importance of assets created on individual land, we discussed with the community people. It was informed that MGNREGA has helped in creating the assets on the land of individuals in the form of land leveling, terracing, check dam and mini irrigation facilities etc. which other wise would have been very difficult for individuals to create. Because there is need to develop assets in individual land, we found the assets created on STs Individuals land; those were also found very useful to the rural people.

4.3 ASSETS CREATION vs. FUND INVESTMENT:

Creation of sustainable assets that strengthen the livelihood resource base of rural areas is one of the key objectives of MGNREGA. Since the starting of study reference period 2008-09, till 2012-13, state has approved a total 49,305 works under the MGNREGA in across the districts. Out of total approval, 41963 works were taken up (85 percent) to execute over the



five years of study reference periods and the same was completed in their respective financial years whereas a total of 7342 works were spill over to next financial years (15 percent). It implies that almost 85 percent works in the state were completed in the running financial years whereas 15 percent works were carried forwards to next financial years. Analysis findings portrait a good picture of work completion ratio. At other hand, state had the total available funds of Rs. 164617.59 lakh under the MGNREGA over a period of five years whereas Rs. 108710.65 lakh (66 percent of the total availability) were spent in the implementation of works. It implies that, a total of 66 percent of the available fund was invested to complete 85 percent works/ assets creation. It indicates a cost effective management of MGNREGA implementation. Majority of works/assets created in the state across the districts were related to water conservation, flood control, irrigation, drought proofing, renovation of traditional water bodies, land development, micro irrigation and rural connectivity. As such a scale, MGNREGA works and assets creation over the period of five years had the potential to benefit rural communities by improving land productivities and connecting remote villages to inputs and output markets and thus fund invested under this scheme seems to be prudential/ rational.

During field visit and assets verification process, it was observed that many productive assets have been created on the ground owing to good planning and execution at the micro level. However, there is need for more focused implementation with regards to afforestation and plantation activities with regard to the creation of durable and sustainable assets under MGNREGA. Further, an attempt was made to assess the return as investment on the built assets. Investment on the asset includes the initial cost of the structure. During the study we selected best performing assets in the sample place and sought, the perception of community on the use of assets with respect to fund invested. As per the community perception, the best performing assets under the MGNREGA included the water related assets (i.e. irrigation canals, ponds, check dams, ring well and water harvesting) and it was observed that RoI was positive because these assets were found to be more productive useful among the communities. It was also reported that, assets i.e. micro-canal system & land development works, fish ponds & tanks and approach roads seems to have the highest rate of return compared to all other MGNREGA works.

Further, it was also told by communities that with renovation, water is available in these canals for up to maximum period in a year and this has allowed the farmers to provide additional watering for their crops/ horticulture. Factors like, the types of work being undertaken, technical design and the geological differences in areas of implementation are also crucial to determining the average recovery cost. Inter- district variation was apparent in the state. Public assets created in East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills were observed to be better than their counter part in terms of use and economic benefits generated. Perception based survey findings have also shown a positive response on the usefulness of created assets for both at individual and community level. The table 4.2 given below illustrates the creation of assets and fund investments by state over the study reference period of five years (2008-09 to 2012-13).

Table 4.2
No. of Assets vs. Fund Investment over the Study Reference Period (2008-09 to 2012-13)

Sl. No.	Districts	Extended Districts at Present	Total Approved Works	Works Taken up	Works Spill over to Next FY	Total Available Grants (in lakh)	Amount Invested	Carried over to Next FY
1.	East Khasi Hills		8446	4923	2157	35022.76	18947.04	9423.01
2.	East Garo Hills	North Garo Hills	14497	14445	74	43030.53	37011.93	4092.27
3.	West Jaintia Hills	East Jaintia Hills	3046	3019	1066	12204.98	9747.8	2457.17
4.	West Khasi Hills	South West Khasi Hills	5663	4044	1010	17675.45	9023.21	3028.56
5.	South Garo Hills		2718	2602	0	6036.97	5352.7	684.27
6.	West Garo Hills	South West Garo Hills	12720	10296	2853	33826.35	23495.75	6238.40
7.	Ribhoi		2215	1153	182	16820.55	5132.22	7432.28
8.	Total		49305	40482	7342	164617.59	108710.65	33355.96

CHAPTER – 5

BENEFICIARIES CHARACTERISTICS & PERCEPTION ANALYSIS

An attempt has been made under this chapter to describe the background characteristics of MGNREGA beneficiaries in terms of socio-cultural aspects. Besides, distribution of beneficiaries by category of work has also been analyzed. Further, this chapter also describes the perception of beneficiaries on various issues related to the scheme. Major issues related to the scheme includes component like registration, job cards, norms of application of works, transparency in selection and implementation of work, wage payment and SWOT analysis of the programme.

5.1 SOCIO-CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BENEFICIARIES:

5.1.1 Background Characteristics of Sampled Beneficiaries:

Data presented in below given table shows that majority of beneficiaries in all across the study districts of Meghalaya belong to scheduled tribe category and most of them were found from the Christian community. Majority of beneficiaries (94 %) were found married. A total of 62 percent beneficiaries in the study sample were found as BPL and 38 percent beneficiaries as the APL category. Below given table shows the district wise analysis.



Table 5.1
Background Characteristics of Sampled Beneficiaries

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Social Group								
SC	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
ST	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
OBC	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Gen.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Religion								
Hindu	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Muslim	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sikh	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Christian	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Marital Status								
Married	95.7	92.6	94.6	95.1	92.7	92.4	95.7	94.1
Unmarried	2.7	4.6	3.4	2.8	5.7	6.1	2.2	3.9
Widow	1.2	1.7	0.3	1.5	1.1	0.8	1.6	1.2
Separated	0.4	1.1	1.7	0.6	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.8
Physically Disable								
Yes	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4
No	99.6	99.8	99.9	99.4	99.6	99.7	99.5	99.6
Economic Status								
BPL	56.7	62.1	51.4	60.2	59.8	67.2	71.3	61.2
APL	43.3	37.9	48.6	39.8	40.2	32.8	28.7	38.8

5.1.2 Beneficiaries by Category of Work:

Majority of beneficiaries (35 %) have been benefited under the rural connectivity followed by 19 percent beneficiaries from water conservation and water harvesting and almost 11 percent each from the works related to land development/afforestation and flood control & protection works. As high as 51 percent beneficiaries of West Khasi Hills have got the benefit from rural connectivity followed by West Jaintia Hills (42 %), East Garo Hills (35 %) and 33 percent from Ri Bhoi district. Below given table shows the district wise analysis.

Table 5.2
Sampled Beneficiaries by Category of Work

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Water conservation & water harvesting	20.9	25.6	12.8	15.8	14.8	17.4	27.3	19.3
Drought proofing	5.8	3.8	2.5	10.2	6.4	13.1	11.5	7.6
Micro Irrigation work	4.2	5.6	9.6	13.7	5.9	7.5	8.6	7.9
Provision of irrigation facility to SC/ST beneficiaries	2.7	0.0	0.0	1.8	3.2	1.7	0.0	1.3
Land Development/ Afforestation	10.9	4.9	10.5	17.3	12.9	11.6	10.8	11.3
Flood Control & Protection	15.7	9.5	13.7	8.2	12.7	12.3	8.3	11.5
Rural Connectivity	28.3	50.6	42.3	33	34.8	26.6	31.7	35.3
Others Activity Approved by MoRD	11.5	0.0	8.6	0.0	9.3	9.8	1.8	5.8

5.2 BENEFICIARIES PERCEPTION ON PROGRAMME COMPONENTS:

5.2.1 Beneficiaries Perception on Registration Related Issues:

Majority of beneficiaries in the study districts have opined that a detail list by VEC was prepared in the villages, followed by organization of meeting in gram sabha for registration and verification. Besides a substantial proportion of beneficiaries have also stated that registration of beneficiaries under the scheme is an ongoing process.



Below given table shows the district wise analysis.

Table 5.3
Beneficiaries Perception on Registration Related Issues

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Preparation of List by VEC for Registration	94.2	97.5	96.1	95.8	93.5	97.2	94.8	95.5
Organization of Special Meeting for Registration	98.5	96.4	97.2	94.8	93.4	96.2	95.1	95.9
List of Registered Households Read out for Verification during the Meeting	96.1	94.2	93.7	92.1	90.6	92.2	91.2	92.8
On-going process of Registration in the Village	97.2	96.4	92.1	96.7	94.8	96.7	94.7	95.5

5.2.2 Norms of Application & Issues Related to Job Cards:

This section presents the perception of beneficiaries on the norms involved to procure the benefits under the scheme. Analysis given in below table reveals that majority of beneficiaries (92 %) in all across the study district have stated their satisfaction on the procedure involved about the preparation, updation & issuance of job card with respect to transparency. At other hand 91 percent beneficiaries have also revealed about the procurement of job card within one month from the date of registration. Eighty-four percent beneficiaries have also revealed the non- procurement of acknowledged receipt of application.

Table 5.4
Beneficiaries Perception on Norms of Application & Issues Related to Job Cards

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Preparation, Issuance and Up-dation of Job Card in Transparent Manner	94.3	91.7	89.2	92.8	96.3	91.9	90.4	92.4
Issuance of Job Card with in one month of registration	92.4	87.2	91.5	92.7	94.7	90.3	88.6	91.0
Free Issuance of Job Card	98.5	99.4	97.2	99.1	98.7	98.9	99.4	98.7
Non Issuance of dated receipt for application of work	80.4	72.9	85.4	88.7	85.2	86.7	85.3	83.5
Availability of work within 15 days of demand	85.7	79.3	80.2	84.5	82.6	83.7	84.9	82.9

5.2.3 Transparency in Selection & Implementation of Work:

Majority of beneficiaries (91 %) in across the districts have revealed the organization of VEC meeting for the selection of works to be undertaken under MGNREGA. Almost 93 percent beneficiaries have also reported about the availability of signboard at work site and almost 94 percent have also reported about the availability of muster roll for public scrutiny. District wise analysis has been given in below table.

Table 5.5
Beneficiaries Perception on Transparency in Selection & Implementation of Work

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Organization of VEC meetings for selection of works	95.4	92.1	88.3	96.3	91.4	89.8	81.2	90.6
Publicity of work orders in VEC Meetings	90.2	82.7	81.3	86.8	84.5	81.5	79.3	83.7
Availability of sign board at work site	96.4	91.5	98.7	90.6	93.2	89.5	91.7	93.0
Availability of muster roll for public scrutiny	93.7	95.2	94.7	96.4	95.9	92.4	96.2	94.9
Use of machinery in execution of work	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

5.2.4 Perception on Wage Payment:

Analysis given in below table indicates that majority of beneficiaries (74 %) have stated about the payment of wages within 7 days and 93 percent beneficiaries have stated about the announcement of payment details in public places and payment was made through post office/banks. District wise analysis has been given in below table.

Table 5.6
Beneficiaries Perception on Wage Payment

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Payment made within 7 days	82.7	72.6	77.4	80.2	73.5	70.2	64.6	74.4
Wages paid at designated public place	93.4	95.7	90.1	93.6	92.8	93.7	90.9	92.8
Payment details read out loudly in public while making payments	96.2	91.3	92.7	95.3	94.7	90.2	89.4	92.8
Awareness on minimum wage rate	95.8	94.2	88.6	92.4	90.8	84.7	86.5	90.4

5.3 SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME:

As the matter of fact, the work taken up under the scheme is labour intensive resulting in creation of wage employment and durable asset creation like earthen link road, foot-path, dugout pond, fishery pond, water resources, plantation, retaining wall and RCC slab culvert. With the implementation of MGNREGA scheme in the villages, the residents are able to get employment in their own respective villages instead of going outside of their village in search of job. According to the villagers, this scheme has become a blessing to the VEC/society in terms of livelihood creation as well infrastructure development in their community. Almost cent-percent beneficiaries and community people in across the study districts have whole-heartedly accepted this scheme as the source of livelihood as well as a main tool to solve their problem.

5.4 SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE SCHEME:

It was observed from the discussion that MGNREGA has ensured a strong social safety feelings among the rural people of Meghalaya. It has brought in significant income diversification in rural economics of the state. This inference is strongly established when we find that majority of beneficiaries belong to BPL category. As the matter of fact, the economics of the state is happened to be predominantly agrarian. The cultivation process in the state is traditional one and coupled with the shortage of irrigation facilities also creates problem in cultivation, resultantly the rural areas in these villages have a long spell of agricultural off season. Wage employment through MGNREGA has thus become a boon for the rural people of this state. Besides, this

programme has also ensured the promotion of women empowerment. The provision of equal wages for men & women in the Act.

Overall, the main strength of this scheme can be concluded in terms of livelihood creation for the vulnerable people and assets/ infrastructure creation for community development, due to this the living standard of community people have been enhanced comparatively. Besides, inclusion of social audit, transparency, accountability, participation and grievance redressal can also be treated as the strength of this programme, which ensure the smooth and transparent implementation of the programme.

At the other hand, timely release of fund to avoid delay of payment of wages and completion of project in time along with problem of banking/post office in remote areas as well as delay of payment by post office in view of clearing have been regard as the weakness of this programme, which needs attention at policy level.

In spite of these, MGNREGA has been the most effective programme in the state by which it has changed the socio & economic condition of the rural villages in the districts. Further, if some of the important issues are resolved then the programme will be more effective.

CHAPTER – 6

PROJECT IMPACT, BEST PRACTICES & LEARNT LESSONS

This chapter describes the impact of MGNREGA with regard to assets creation for community development, employment generation for sustainable livelihoods of the community people as well impact of the programme on other social-cultural components. Besides, an attempt has also been made to explore the best practices, project learning's and success stories to validate the study findings with actual position at grass root level.

6.1 IMPACT ON COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

It was observed from the discussion that construction of check dam cum washing platform and conservation dams, spring chamber, fishery ponds, drainage, footpath & protection wall have impacted positively among the community people of VECs in terms of infrastructure development in their villages which have a strong bearing on their day to day livelihood activities. Majority of respondents (83 percent) in all across the district have responded the impact of this programme in terms of creation of durable assets in the VECs.

Further data presented in below table indicates that 78 percent respondents have reported about the creation of the good quality of works/ assets in the VEC under MGNREGA. A total of 81 percent respondents have responded about the community people acceptability towards created assets under MGNREGA in their VECs. Further 85 percent respondents have reported about the increase of income and employment opportunities among community households because of MGNREGA works. 82 percent respondents have reported about the improved rural connectivities for the community people after the introduction of MGNREGA. A total of 79 percent respondents have reported about the improvement in the process of soil conservation in their catchment areas. Data given in below table presents the district wise responses of community people.

Table 6.1
Perception of Community People on Impact of MGNREGA

Particulars	Districts							Total
	East Khasi Hills	West Khasi Hills	West Jaintia Hills	Ri-Bhoi	East Garo Hills	West Garo Hills	South Garo Hills	
Created assets are durable	84.2	80.3	87.1	79.5	83.9	84.6	83.7	83.3
Good quality of work	81.8	73.9	83.4	72.9	75.4	81.9	76.3	77.9
Social acceptability of asset	89.1	80.2	79.3	80.5	76.2	79.5	81.6	80.9
Increased income & employment of the household	85.2	88.4	73.6	81.9	85.7	91.5	90.6	85.2
Reduced the migration	52.1	59.7	48.7	55.2	60.8	62.4	59.6	56.9
Impact on rural connectivity	85.1	89.2	94.1	79.3	86.7	95.4	92.2	88.8
Impact on water conservation	80.5	83.7	81.7	89.2	78.4	79.6	83.8	82.4
Impact on soil conservation	78.4	75.9	83.4	79.2	75.8	80.6	81.9	79.3
Impact on overall development of the village	85.2	80.7	83.2	89.4	78.4	83.5	85.7	83.7

6.2 IMPACT ON EMPLOYMENT GENERATION & INCOME:

One of the major objectives of this scheme was to improve the income level by providing 100 days of wage employment at prescribed minimum wage applicable in the state. Undoubtedly, this scheme has proved a boon for vulnerable community in terms of providing the employment in the study districts. Below given table presents the district wise creation of 100 days employment for the adult members of households. This section is trying to bring out the impact of the scheme on various important attributes, which contribute to the enhancement of quality of life such as (1) income levels before and after the scheme in vogue (2) shift in expenditure pattern on food items after income generation through the present scheme (3) expenditure pattern on non-food items before and after implementation of the scheme (4) acquisition of movable and immovable assets by the beneficiaries and (5) details of livestock creation prior to and after utilizing the scheme.

MGNREGA is the most significant scheme to uplift the overall quality of life of rural households by the way of increasing household's income. Annual income of the beneficiaries is categorized into four groups such as (1) less than Rs. 5000 (2) Between Rs. 5000 to 10000 (3) between Rs. 10000 to 15000 and (4) above Rs. 15000 but less than 20000. This grouping was done based on the feedback from the beneficiaries and after confirming that all the beneficiaries income levels are falling under Rs. 20,000 per annum. Data presented in below given table shows that there is shift in the income bracket of I , II,III & IV categories as selected above. The effect is clearly visible where there is a reduction of low income group with a substantial percentage.

Table 6.2
Impact of MGNREGA on Beneficiaries Household Income

Particulars	Districts														Total	
	East Khasi Hills		West Khasi Hills		West Jaintia Hills		Ri-Bhoi		East Garo Hills		West Garo Hills		South Garo Hills			
	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A
Less than 5000	65	55	60	45	68	50	70	55	59	42	75	58	66	48	66	51
5000 to 10000	18	25	20	28	17	25	15	22	19	27	12	22	18	28	17	25
10000 to 15000	12	15	11	16	12	19	9	13	11	17	9	14	10	15	11	16
15000 to 20000	5	5	9	11	3	6	6	10	11	14	4	6	6	9	6	8

B – Before, A – After

6.3 IMPACT ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC CULTURAL PROFILE OF COMMUNITY PEOPLE:

It was observed from the discussion that MGNREGA scheme has impacted on beneficiaries primary & secondary activities. Primary activities refer to the primary occupation of the workers like farming, agricultural labour, small business etc. Secondary activities are those activities that add to the income of the people besides their primary activities. By working in MGNREGA, the beneficiaries have been able to improve their primary & secondary activities because of their extra income and savings from MGNREGA.

Majority (76 percent) of beneficiaries have opined that they have been able to arrange their household's daily food requirements after working in MGNREGA. This scheme

has also impacted in-terms of financial inclusion & social empowerment. One of the stipulations of MGNREGA is that the payment for the work should be made through post office/ bank account and consequently majority of workers have opened their account in the banks/ post offices. This amply vindicates the fact that MGNREGA has been instrumental in bringing poor to the world of banking with organized financial institutions like post offices. This also enhances their level of confidence and acts as a source of social and economic empowerment.

MGNREGA has also provided a platform or forum for workers to gather at one place and helps in sharing various information regarding their village, block, state, country and surrounding environment, which helps in increasing general awareness of workers. Majority of workers/ beneficiaries have agreed that their information base has been increased because of MGNREGA. Women beneficiaries were of the opinion that they have been able to gather information on health related problems through interaction with their co-workers while working in MGNREGA. Majority of women felt that they have been able to access health facilities better after working in MGNREGA.

One of the significant objectives of the MGNREGA is to arrest out-migration of unskilled, landless labour force from the rural areas to urban areas by ensuring employment opportunities in their villages. It was observed during the discussion that there is a migration from the villages to the cities in search of jobs. It implies that migration to town or cities also prevails, however the quantum of outside migration has been reduced. Undoubtedly, the MGNREGA scheme has given impetus to these local bodies to generate work within the village framework by sustaining the local resources and creating irrigation, agricultural asset base within the village.

6.4 BEST PRACTICES:

It was observed during the discussion and interaction with project stakeholders that MGNREGA have ensured the inclusion of transparency, accountability, participation and redressal as the best practices in course of programme implementation of the study districts of the state. Maintenance of transparency throughout the process of implementation have provided a sense of security & assets ownership feelings among the community people. Key functionary of programme implementation are answerable

to the community people concern and also taken-up the responsibility of quality work in true spirit. Participation of concerned stakeholders have been designed properly under the scheme to ensure the collective efforts from beneficiaries and implementing agency side for the overall development of community people. A strong complaint redressal mechanism has also been developed to take up the drawbacks of the programme strictly, so that such type of things could not be repeated in the programme implementation.

Besides, monthly review meeting was also held at district level to review the performance of blocks & GPs/ VECs in terms of financial & physical achievement along with conduct of social audit, public hearing, training, workshops & grievances redressal.

Inspection of projects at VECs level is taken up from time to time by the block/ district/ state team as per the government instruction. Further partner NGOs have also been engaged by the district administration for facilitating social audit at the VEC level including sensitization, organization workshops, training on book keeping at VECs.

6.5 SUCCESS STORIES/ CASE STUDIES:

Under this section, an attempt has been made to explore the success stories cum case studies to validate the study findings at grassroot level real situation. Works/ area specific success stories have been presented in this section.

6.5.1 Construction of Dugout Pond at Thangbuli Village of West Jaintia Hills:

The construction of dug out pond under Thangbuli village under Amlarem block under MGNREGA measuring 3810.67 cubic meters was earmarked for Rs. 5.71 lakh during 2008-09. As per the guideline, 60 percent were spent on wage payment and 40 percent was spent on material component.

It was reported from the villagers that there were two ponds in the village for pisciculture and fish rearing way back in 1960s-1970s with a view to generate income/ fund for sustaining the school run by villagers to provide education to the resident children of village and surrounding areas. These two ponds had generated a lot of

income to sustain the school running cost till the school got recognized. Subsequently the village community then setup another school named Amwi secondary school in 1983 with the same source of income from the two ponds. However, due to heavy monsoon rain one of this pond got filled up with silt deposit which made the pond unsuitable for fishery rearing and required complete distillation and reconstruction. In the year 2002, the villagers passed a resolution to renovate/ reconstruct the pond, however due to big size of the pond and huge deposit of silt the same could not be achieved. Fortunately, a boon to village came with the introduction of MGNREGA and desalting of this pond was selected by VEC as the topmost priority project.

Above given statement clearly indicates a sense of social satisfaction among community people as whole and especially among elders after getting back the glory of silt deposited abandoned ponds under the NREGA scheme. Now community people have started thinking to adopt pisciculture and fishery activities for their additional livelihood.

The pond after full capacity of fish rearing would be able to product 10,000 Kg of fish per cycle. Convergence with fishery department has been finalized for supply of seedings free of cost, which will contribute more economic income to the village.

This pond renovation project has also provided 4900 man days of unskilled labour which include 3131 man days for women and it has helped a lot of the villagers in their times of employment crisis.



6.5.2 Construction of C.C. Foot Path/ Check Dams in Mawthungkper Village of West Khasi Hills:

Mawthungkper village is one of the villages in Mawthungkper G/S circle. This village is located at a distance of 13 KM from Nongstoin C & RD block. As far as implementation of MGNREGA projects are concerned, this VEC is very supportive. Under MGNREGA, this village has got sufficient check dams and drinking ponds which have solved the long listed problem



of water scarcity. Due to this facility their paddy fields crop production yields has been increased & villagers are feeling delighted both in-terms of food security as well as increased level of household income. More over there is an approach road from PWD road to Tadur (Kynshi river) via the heart of the village under MGNREGA. This road has increased the livelihood of the villagers as trucks are now able to carry sand from the kynshi river directly. Construction of footpath from Domawleing to Mawsadang in the village was implemented during 2012-13 and it is now completed. This footpath has eased the villagers especially during rainy season.

6.5.3 Retaining Wall & RCC Culvert at Sokhymphor VEC Under Khliehriat C & RD Block:

During the financial year 2012-13, the top priority of the VEC was construction of retaining wall and slab culvert at Kseh Khain one of the locality of Sokhymphor VEC. The main reason for taking up this project is due to presence of a rivulet in the road itself and this create problem to the villagers especially the students who have to go through that rivulet in order to reach their school. Most of the time students could not come to school on time and even stop coming to school when it is raining especially during summer season. The VEC wants to see that every nook and corner of the village should have proper connectivity and to make sure that from one end to other retaining wall and RCC slab culvert has benefited the students and the people at large. It has become a blessing to the people as it provided employment to the job cardholders and created durable assets to the village as a whole.

6.5.4 Construction of Earthen Cannel at Betasing Hajong Para VEC of South West Garo Hills:

Micro and small irrigation development works under MGNREGA results in increase in production as the farmers can adopt a double cropping pattern. Erratic monsoonal rains have been a source of woe to the farmers. A regular experience of this problem by the community people of Betasing Hajongpara VEC prompted them to take up the



construction of this form of irrigation canal through the MGNREGA fund. Now the farmers of the village have full access to providing water to their cultivated land even during the dry months. In other words, the villagers are not affected by the vagaries of monsoon. That there is no more water shortage for farming the arable land is a definite indication of the benefits accruing to the farmers in the area.

6.5.5 Improvement of Roads and Culverts:

This is the story of VEC named Baksapara of Zikzak C & R.D. block. This small village consists of a population of about 221, with job card registration of 66 households. The village shares an international boundary with Bangladesh. From the very beginning of the implementation of MGNREGA, the village



has been actively working for the development of the village. The implementation of the project of construction of road from Badorkura to Bildoba via Baksapara with 2 nos. of culverts and length of 1.8 KM for an amount of Rs. 409500 has become the lifeline for the villagers as the villagers can easily transport their commodities like areca-nut and other farm produce to the nearby market and it has also made it clear for the villagers to bring their needs to their door steps.

CHAPTER – 7

CONCLUSION CUM SUGGESTIONS

The MGNREGA, which was launched in 2005, is one of the most ambitious centrally sponsored scheme of independent India. Its scale and complexity continue to test the strength and creativity of India's public system in new & exciting ways. The main & immediate objective of the act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The above objective is overarched by a set of goals that are embedded in the framework of just social development, which includes social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing a fallback employment source and a growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy through strengthening the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets. Thus, as the MGNREGA act claims, this scheme fosters conditions for inclusive growth ranging from basic wage security and recharging rural economy to a transformative empowerment process of democracy. Under this section, an attempt has been made to present a brief conclusion of the scheme in Meghalaya along with suggestion for further improvement of the scheme.

7.1 CONCLUSION:

With MGNREGA Act, getting passed in September 2005, the MGNREGA Meghalaya was implemented in the whole state in phased manner with the objective of providing 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural household opting for it. The MGNREGA, a demand driven scheme has its focus on works relating to water conservation & harvestings, drought proofing (including afforestation/ tree plantation), land development, flood-control/ protection and rural connectivity in terms of all weather roads. This scheme has been universalized and is operational in all the assigned 7 district of the state. The scheme has been able to put money in the hands of poorest of the poor on a scale that is unprecedented. Over the consecutive financial years, a huge number of rural households have participated in this programme across the sampled district. The programme has not attracted only BPL families but also APL families. Wage payment to the tune of crores of rupees has been released to them, creating a multiplier effect and stimulating the rural economy.

MGNREGA was able to dignify labour work in the villages, and provided purchasing power among the rural households. When these poor households spend this additional money, they create a demand for commodities. The production of these commodities in turn, creates demand for capital, raw materials and workers. In Meghalaya, this multiplier effect is reflected in the increased investment in livestock and quality of education & health in the rural areas.

The district administration has been focusing on the creation of durable assets with the allocation of huge investment under the MGNREGA. Over the financial years, VEC has been able to create footpath, C.C. Roads & Culverts, Afforestation, Water conservation works. In order to enhance rural water security the VEC had also constructed ponds and tanks in their villages.

In order to ensure transparency, more than 90 percent the wage payment is being routed through the newly opened bank and post office account. A grievance redressal mechanism has also been established along with transparent material purchase norms.

The muster roll were also readout in the VEC meeting in social audits conducted by reputed NGOs in all the villages. Social audit & labour budget planning at VEC level was found.

The shelf of works to be taken up in the village was proposed by VEC, estimation was done by block office and technical & financial sanction was done at district level. No contractor or middleman were permitted and 100 percent implementation of works was executed by VECs. Among the new initiatives, Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra (BNRGSK) at the GPVs level was established, which functions as the MGNREGA office and village resource centers.

The research team found that four major types of works were executed or implemented under the MGNREGA in across the all study districts. They more or less confirm to the list approved by the programme guidelines:-

A Water Conservation

- A.1 Irrigation Channels
- A.2 Water Tank
- A.3 Water Storage Units
- A.4 Ponds
- A.5 Wells

B Land Development

- B.1 Playground
- B.2 Protection Walls
- B.3 Land Terracing
- B.4 Construction of Sheds

C Plantation & Afforestation

- C.1 Fruits Plantation
- C.2 Tree Plantation
- C.3 Tree Sapling Plantation

D Road Connectivities

- D.1 Footpath Development
- D.2 Motorable Road Development

Effective implementation of the MGNREGA in the district has led to ample employment for women. The scheme has raised both enthusiasm and expectation among women workers. They unanimously affirmed that it has enhanced their lives by helping them generate more livelihood option from their immediate surroundings by making work available to everyone, preferably women and aged. It was also stated that unlike MGNREGA, equal wage policy was not being followed in earlier schemes, making them an unattractive proposition. Besides this, with no guarantee of work being available regularly, these schemes were hardly popular amongst women. Breaking the social norm of “unequal wages” between men & women is an achievement in itself.

7.2 SUGGESTIONS:

Our concluding cum suggestion remarks are mix of field level observation, issues and concerns emanating from the same. These have been further categorized into those referring to planning, management, execution, assets creation & funds investment and impact on the community people.

7.2.1 Planning Level:

- As MGNREGA is a demand driven programme, issuing a job card to all families wherever there has been a demand raised is commendable. There perhaps could be a possibility to make this facility available online.
- Once the financial inclusion is completed there would be greater synergy in convergence with other programmes, especially in the areas of infrastructure development and income generation. It would further enhance the profile of the programme in this convergence executed and works get planned in such a way that they dovetail with the financial year.
- The bottom up planning approach of MGNREGA as executed through the VEC needs more technical support as the profile of the programme increases. Thus, it would be of immense help if the long-term perspective plan document is made available of VECs to help them plan better their individual work plans.

7.2.2 Management Level:

- The workers also reported in many instances that there was a delay in the receipt of the payment. This was despite the workers having accounts in the post offices and wherever possible in banks. The possible reason for the delay is identified at the level of post offices not being accustomed to perform the banking operation and thus funds transfer getting delayed. We suggest consider a mobile banking unit to take care of this problem till the banks are streamlined to facilitate electronic transfer up to the village levels.
- The initiative to create an MIS of the programme as well as the material costing software are path breaking steps that need to be emulated across the length and breadth of the MGNREGA. The state must lead in that aspect.

7.2.3 Execution Level:

- The MGNREGA programme in Meghalaya has evolved a model execution. The uniqueness of this execution lies in its synergy with the people through the council on one hand and the complementary support of the administration on the other.
- Some villages are not accessible by motorable road or any other mode of transport. The materials have to be carried head load and the cost becomes high. The programme implementing agency at village level has to bear the cost from material component thereby affected the quality of work.
- Maintenance of assets constructed under MGNREGA, which is not included in the guideline, which affects the sustainability aspects of created assets.
- There are certain villages that have their own headman & also recognized by the local authority council but the lists were not recognized as a census village. Under MGNREGA, only census villages are included as VECs. As such, these VECs were deprived of complete assistance from the village where they have been tagged. The major affected villages are those in the Border areas with Assam.
- There is need to provide speedy internet connectivity at village & block level to ensure smooth functions of MIS. Frequent changed of village secretary was also observed as the problem.
- In almost majority of districts, most of the men are not attracted to the MGNREGA work because of low wage payment of work compared to other jobs in urban areas. Hence, most of the men move towards urban areas in search of work.
- There is need to give more emphasis on the component of durability of works/assets at the time activity selection.
- IEC activities under the MGNREGS need to be strengthened to motivate both male and female folk for active participation in the programme.

7.2.4 Assets Sustainability & Funds Investment:

- Huge amount has been spent to create the assets at village level. There is need to make a “maintenance fund” from the allocated amount. This could be used as a revolving fund to take care of the expenditure required for regular up keep of the asset.
- Inclusion of “maintenance plan & maintenance fund” should be made mandatory at the time of submission of asset creation plan.
- An awareness campaign should be carried out at the VEC level to stress upon the importance and necessity of asset durability and maintenance.
- It was observed during the field visits that a total of 49,305 works have been approved under the MGNREGA over a period of five years (2008-09 to 2012-13). Of these, 41963 works have been taken up in the respective financial years and remaining 7342 works have been spilled over to next financial years. It implies that, state has succeeded to complete 85 percent of the total approved works in the running financial years whereas 15 works have been spilled over to next financial years.
- It was evident from the findings that state has spent a total of 66 percent available fund to complete 85 percent of total approved work in the running financial year and most of them were found useful for both the community and individuals. It was observed many productive assets have been created on the ground owing to good planning and execution. However, there is need for more focused implementation with regards to plantation activities under drought proofing category to ensure the sustainability of created assets against the investment of funds.