

**REFLECTION OF MGNREGA ON RURAL
EMPLOYMENT, SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD AND
POVERTY ALLEVIATION: A CASE STUDY OF HANBAD**

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ABSTRACT

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005 legally enshrines the “right to work” and ensures 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. An important effective implementation of MGNREGA is the creation of awareness among rural people and other stake holders, particularly MGNREGA workers in respect of the scheme provisions as well as their rights and entitlements. IEC (Information Education and Communication) activities should aim at facilitating dissemination of right based provisions of the act to ensure that the workers know their right to demand wage employment and exercise their right by applying for jobs as per their need. The strategy also aims to create awareness among rural people and other stake holders with special focus on MGNREGA workers about various aspects of MGNREGA. The Jharkhand state MANREGA council has decided to increase honorarium paid to contract employees working for effective implementation of the central scheme. As per the on line reports received from State Government, 1.04 lakh schemes sanctioned for Rural Drinking Water Supply in the State, out of these 486 schemes are for piped water supply. As per on-line monitoring reports, the Government of Jharkhand has achieved 35.76% sanitation coverage and 60% of rural habitations have rural connectivity out of total number of habitations under rural road development plan respectively. Currently 24 District of Jharkhand are listed under MGNREGA, and Dhanbad is one of them. Dhanbad district is situated in the state of Jharkhand. As Dhanbad comes under coal bearing area the MGNREGA programme is less effective in these reasons but In spite of that the

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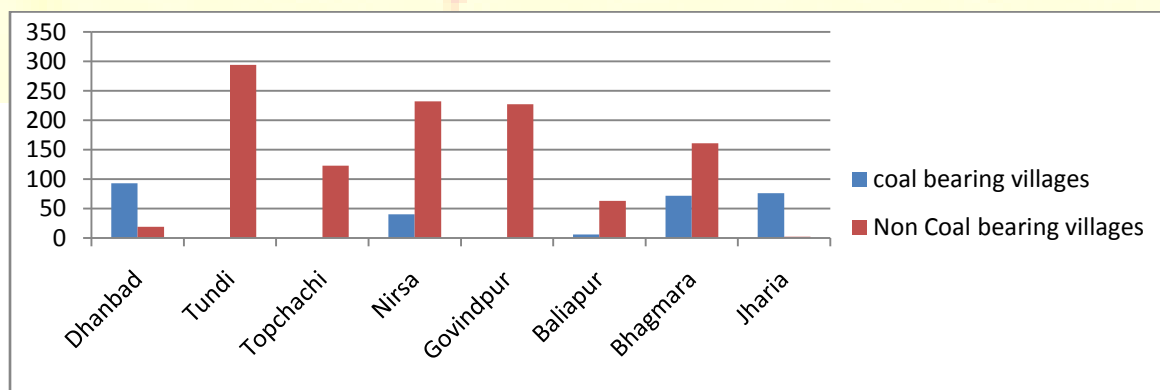
interior rural areas like Tundi etc are benefited through MGNREGA. Presently 0.6 lakhs active workers are there in Dhanbad district and 20.05 lakhs of active workers are there in Jharkhand State. Total No of HHs completed 100 Days of Wage Employment have increased from 2257 to 4663. Apart from rural employment it also results in assets creation through rural connectivity, wells and ponds.

Key words: MGNREGA, livelihood, employment, awareness.

Introduction

As unemployment breeds poverty and it is one of the most critical issues in the country. The MGNREGA aims at “enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country 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”. MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by Gram Panchayats (GPs). Under this the involvement of contractors is banned. Labour-intensive tasks like creating infrastructure for water harvesting, drought relief and flood control are preferred. Apart from providing economic security, rural employment, sustainable livelihood, poverty alleviation and creating rural assets, MGNREGA can help in protecting the environment empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity among others.

Graph1: showing Coal bearing and Non Coal bearing (villages) areas under MGNREGA in different blocks (Dhanbad District).



Sources: DRDA (Dhanbad)

The above graph shows the Coal bearing and Non Coal bearing (villages) areas under MGNREGA in the 8 blocks of Dhanbad Districts. As per the chart the Dhanbad block has the maximum coal bearing villages and Tundi, Govindpur and Topchachi has zero coal bearing area these three areas have maximum villages under non coal bearing area as per the graph above.

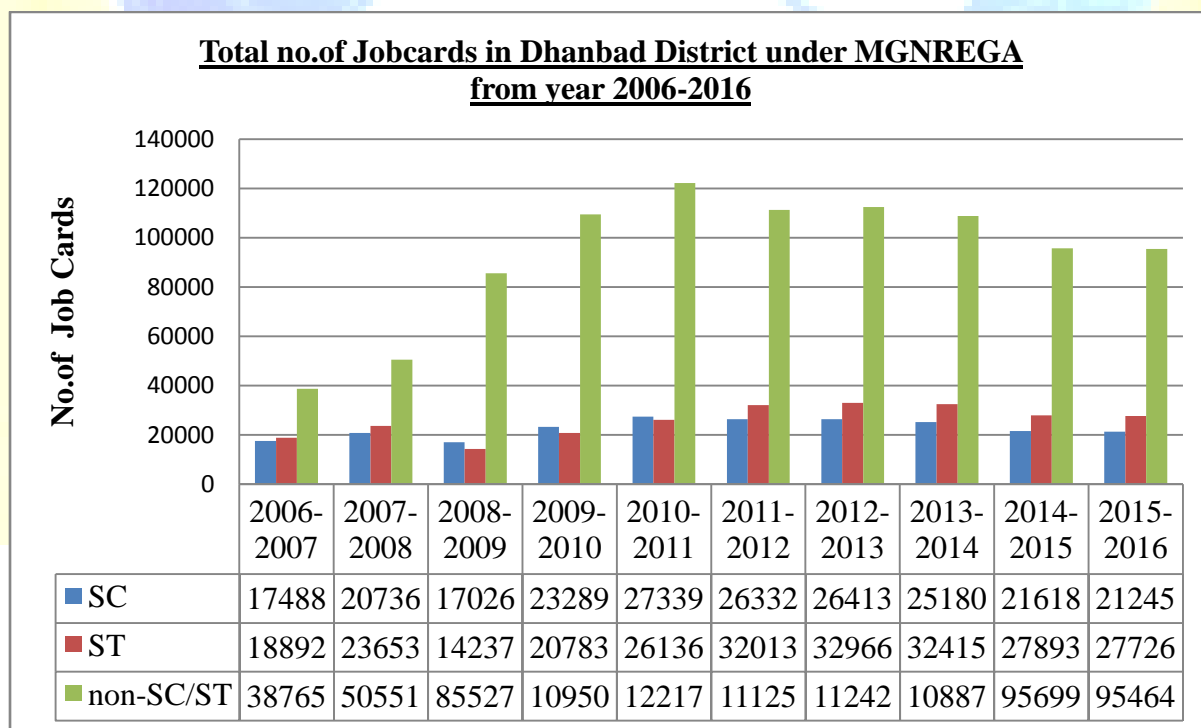
Status of MGNREGA in Dhanbad district

Starting from 200 districts on 2nd February 2006, the MGNREGA covered all the districts of India from 1 April 2008, and Dhanbad situated in Jharkhand State is also one of them. Dhanbad district is situated in the state of Jharkhand and lies between 23°37'3" N and 24°4' N latitude and between 86°6'30" E and 86°50' E longitude. The district covers an area of 2509.5 sq. km. with total population of 19,49,526 (1991). Administrative set-up of the district includes eight (8) development blocks, twelve (12) police stations and 1370 villages. Dhanbad, Jharia, Katras, Sindri, Gomoh, Govindpur, Baliapur, Nirsa, Kumardubi, Chirkunda, Dumarkunda, Panchet and Mython are the urban centre of the district. The Dhanbad district consist of 8 blocks of Dhanbad district namely Baghmara, Baliapur, Dhanbad, Govindpur, Jharia, Nirsa, Topchanchi & Tundi. The district comprises of 157 number of panchayats and 1052 no. of villages. The total population of the Dhanbad district as per the 2001 census is 23, 97,102. Rural population is 11, 41,744 and Urban population is 12, 55,358. The density of population is 1167 person per sq. Km. Dhanbad district lies in the mid eastern part of Jharkhand state. The present study is imperative in view of the developing and upliftment of rural people and providing them employment through MGNREGA, and its impact on the alleviation and upliftment of the rural people of Dhanbad after its implementation. The Jharkhand state as well as Dhanbad both are blessed with huge natural resources.

The MGNREGA achieves twin objectives of rural development and employment. The MGNREGA stipulates that works must be targeted towards a set of specific rural development activities such as: water conservation and harvesting, a forestation, rural connectivity, flood control and protection such as construction and repairs of embankments, etc. Digging of new tanks / ponds, percolation tanks and construction of small check dams are also given importance. The employed are given work such as land leveling, tree plantation, etc. First a proposal is given by the panchayat to the Block office decides whether the work would be

sanctioned. MGNREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Govt. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana 2 (SGRY) from 2001, National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) from 2004 were national rural employment schemes. Among these, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with MGNREGA in 2005. MGNREGA aims to ensure livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The graph below shows the number of families Completed 100 Days of wage employment under MGNREGA in Dhanbad District in ten years.

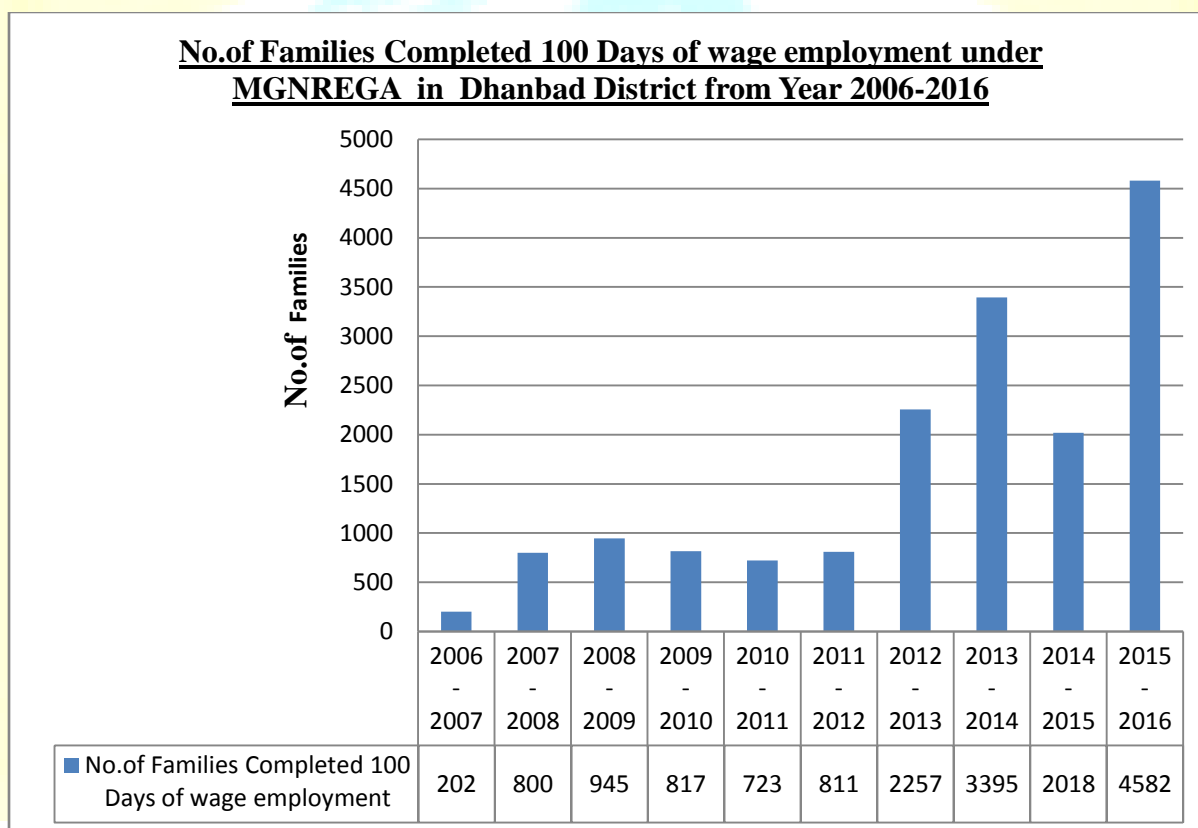
Graph-1: showing the Job Cards status in Dhanbad



Source: DRDA (Dhanbad)

In the above Graph-1 it shows the status of job cards that are being issued in the Dhanbad District from 2006-2016. i.e. ten years starting from MGNREGA implementation till now. During this ten years of MGNREGA the Job cards issued to SC have increased from 17,488 to 21,245 i.e. 82% .Job cards issued to ST have increased from 18,892 to 27,726 ,i.e. 68%. Job cards issued to Non SC/ST have increased from 38765 to 954644 i.e. 41 % only .This shows a great increase in employment status to the SC /ST in Dhanbad district in these years.

Graph -2: Families Completed 100 Days of wage employment under MGNREGA in Dhanbad District.

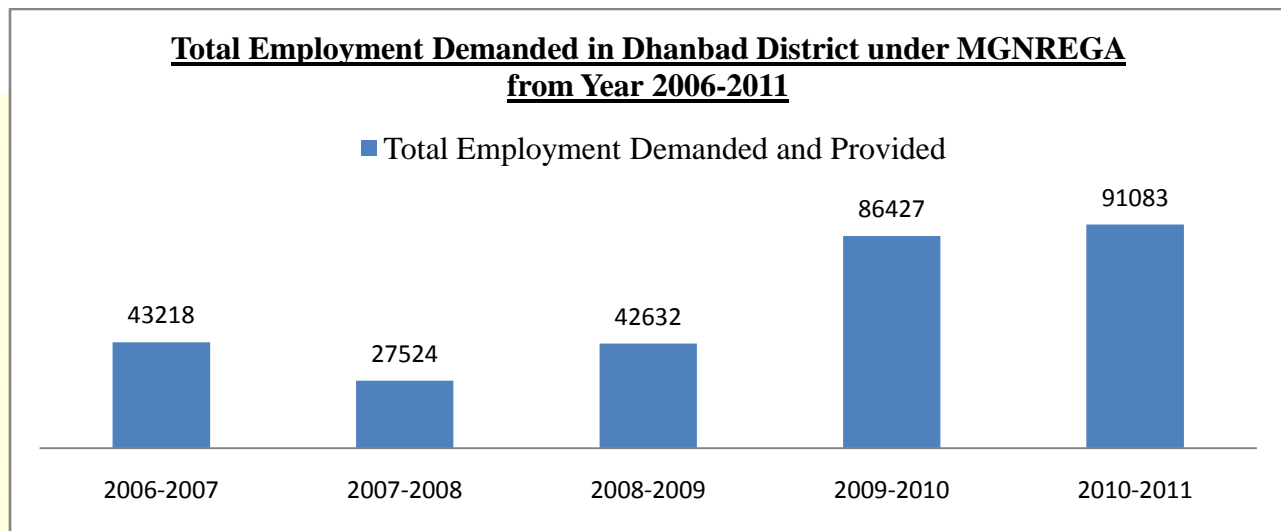


Source : DRDA(Dhanbad)

In the above Graph -2 its shows that in year 2006-2007 there are only 202 Families Completed 100 Days of wage employment under MGNREGA in Dhanbad District which goes up to 4582

families in year 2015-2016. The graph shows a sudden decrease but in 2011-2012 it initially goes on increasing till 2016 showing positive response to sustainable livelihood.

Graph -3 Reflection on Rural Employment in Dhanbad District through MGNREGA



In the above graph we see that the employment demanded in 2006-07 has increased from 43218 to 91083 in 2011 this indicates that there is a constant demand of work under MGNREGA in Dhanbad and it is also provided them, which reflects a positive growth in rural employment in Dhanbad .

Case Study of Rural people in Dhanbad

Case Studies of rural people of Dhanbad showing the reflection of MGNREGA on sustainable livelihood and poverty Alleviation. Case study related to MGNREGA works in the Dhanbad district where the MGNREGA programme not only help in rural development through sustainable development but also help in assets creation and improving living standard of the people in different blocks in Dhanbad district, case study of Birsa Munda park in Dhanbad, case study of Tundi block in Dhanbad district .

CASE STUDY: 1**BIRSA MUNDA PARK (in Dhanbad)**

Birsa Munda Park is one of the most attractive place nearby Dhanbad city which attracts people from all age groups. It has walkway, leisure areas, play areas toy train, various rides for children, Canteen and plants of different species spread over 21 acres of land. It was opened in the month of November 2009 and in four months time it has generated revenue of the tune of Rs. 12 lacs. Dhanbad did not have any park earlier. When it was thought of, we had only 21 acres of land locked barren land. With no land for approach road and fund for

Construction of park it was a distant dream for us. However, we were determined to develop a park in the district. MGNREGA offered us a great opportunity to begin with. We prepared a project report for park. Entire project was broken into components and mapping of these components were done with respect to the available schemes at the district level. Various components such as landscaping, plantation, earth cutting, road construction etc were taken up from MGNREGA with the total amount of Rs. 60.48 lacs. Very soon the barren land took an attractive shape and the greenery also came up. Local landowners offered their own land for approach road. Minimal Pucca works such as Bhul Bhulaiya, Lawn, 11 KVA electric

line, Main Gate, Ticket Counter, Guard Room, Boring and Water Supply etc. were developed from the limited fund of Rs.66.06 Lacs available with us at the district level from RSVY fund. Proposal for rest of the works such as Toy Train, Light, Generator, Rides for children, Canteen, boundary wall etc were made and sent to the Tourism Department which was readily accepted and amount of Rs.125.10 Lacs was sanctioned by the Department. Now this park is attracting more than five hundred people every day. It was an historical moment on 1 st Jan 2010 when ten thousand people gathered in the park to celebrate New Year in the newly opened park. Big rides for children such as dragon train, Mary go round, Columbus, giant wheel; striking cars etc are being installed by SHG's with the loan from bank under SGSY. Now construction of Sports Hostel for 34th National Games is in progress which will not only help in conducting sports events but also training/ workshop at the State and National level.

The journey from barren land to development of Birsa Munda Park with the convergence of various schemes such as MGNREGA, RSVY, Tourism Department, SGSY etc. is a great journey. It has not only provided growth to the place but it has also created employment for the people along with recreational facilities. It's a dream came true for all of us. The park is unique in many aspects. Firstly, it has been developed with local initiatives with the convergence of various schemes. Secondly, it is only park not in Dhanbad but in Jharkhand offers multiple activities to people from all age groups. We are using our experience in replicating these activities by developing three more such projects namely (i) Lilory Sthan for religious cum recreational tourism, (ii) Dhokara as Children Park and (iii) Damodarpur as Mahatma Gandhi Jaivik Udyan in Dhanbad district. However, people having

experienced the development of Birsa Munda Park have offered their valuable land for construction of approach road. This successful endeavour of convergence will motivate others to develop such projects with the convergence of MGNREGA with other available schemes at the district level.

CASE STUDY: 2

Tundi Block (Dhanbad District)

The Tundi block of Dhanbad district does not come under coal bearing area although a large part of the area comes under rural area but it is high naxal area of Dhanbad and thus it was believed that MGNREGA would not prove to be effective in these areas but it was also justified by the works done under MGNREGA in this area. The people in this area are also interested in development works and like other blocks of Dhanbad district want to get developed. Seeing the fund that is available in MGNREGA, when the DFO Sanjeeb Kumar visited the Palamo panchayat of Tundi block then the residential people living there show interest in agriculture activities but they also complain about the lack of proper sources of cultivation of crops and there was not any proper and permanent source of work. As per the demand of the people and villagers the DFO have planned to construct a temporary drain for cultivation under MGNREGA. After that with the help of workers and labours construction of drain was started and in 5400 feet drain the water was also stored and used for agriculture purpose. In between the drains 54 "Hauz" is also made and as a result the water was properly stored and the agriculture

activities was also carried on by the local villagers and people living there who have participated in this project, after construction of this drain the people have cultivated more than 100 hector area and grows wheat etc. in the same agriculture land which was previously not being used for agriculture purpose for 20 years and this result in positive thinking towards MGNREGA and agriculture activities which comes as a boon to the farmers living there.

Conclusion:

The MGNREGA is the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The works which have been taken up under this act rejuvenate the natural resource base and address the causes of chronic poverty, such as drought, deforestation, soil erosion, floods, poor rural connectivity etc. In the year 2008-09 scheme has generated over 4 crore person days. Women constitute 48% of the work force, and 54% are schedule tribes and schedule caste. Over 23.28 crore works were under taken in the year 2008-09 of which 45% were water conservation, 20% were micro irrigation and 15 % were land development and 18% rural roads as reported by Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

Significant emerging trends in three years of implementation of MGNREGA have been evident from the increase in employment opportunities compared with earlier wage employment programmes, increase in minimum wages, stemming of distress migration, implementation of large number of works related to soil and water conservation, afforestation and plantation resulting in increased productivity. The potential of MGNREGA for strengthening the livelihood resource base is thus making itself manifest and there is a need to identify its linkages with other development initiatives so that their coordinated energies can be leveraged for sustainable development. Long term benefits and sustainable development are however possible only when multiple inputs converge and impact human life and its environment holistically. The ministry of rural development recognizes the need of convergence of various schemes for optimal utilization of resources for enhancing the productivity of natural resources and improving the quality of life. MGNREGA with its inter-sectoral approach opens up opportunities for convergence.

Recognizing the need to learn from work carried out under the MGNREGA in tribal dominated area, it was realized to conduct a systematic assessment of its effectiveness in the context of

sustainable livelihood support at community level. MoRD engaged the services of AFPRO for assessment of work implemented under MGNREGA in Chainpur Block, District - Gumla, Jharkhand with the following objectives;

- Technical value addition of works carried out under MGNREGA
- Identify opportunities for convergence of activities under schemes of various departments.
- Identify Capacity Building requirements of the community to bring the effectiveness of schemes.
- Assess the cost effectiveness and sustainability aspect of the works.

Thus the above case studies also show that if MGNREGA is properly implemented in right place with proper schemes then it can be also effective and useful to others and could be demanding with more employment and more works.

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