

ASSET CREATION UNDER MGNREGA

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most important programme launched by the Govt. of India in 2005 with the basic principle to provide 100 days of guaranteed employment to the people in rural areas and also gave a legal right of work. Besides providing wage employment, the programme has also the provision for creation of assets of sustainable nature. It is in this context, a study has been conducted in district Rajouri of J&K state to examine the impact and durability of the assets created under MGNREGA. A few recommendations have also been made to further improve the quality of assets created under the programme.

Key words: Mgnrega, asset creation, Community assets, wage employment.

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Introduction

After independence, Govt. of India launched various programmes like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, Food for Work Programme, Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana whose aims were to create durable assets and to provide employment to the rural people. Though these programmes generated inadequate wage employment and suffered from various shortcomings like low allocation and utilization of funds, very low person days of wage employment provided per family, low rate of women participation and off course poor quality of durable assets etc. To overcome these shortcomings, the Govt. of India formulated the national rural employment guarantee act in 2005. Notified on September 7 2005, NREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security 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 day work. In 2009 the programme was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

MGNREGA in Jammu and Kashmir

The programme was extended to the state of Jammu and Kashmir on 12th May 2007, to be implemented in a phased manner from February 2, 2006 onwards. In phase-I it was introduced in 200 districts of the country including 3 districts of Jammu and Kashmir. After that it was implemented in additional 130 districts of country in phase-II in 2007-08 including 2 more districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The programme was then extended to all other remaining districts of the state from April 1, 2008 in phase III.

The table given below indicates the year-wise number of works completed under MGNREGA in J&K state.

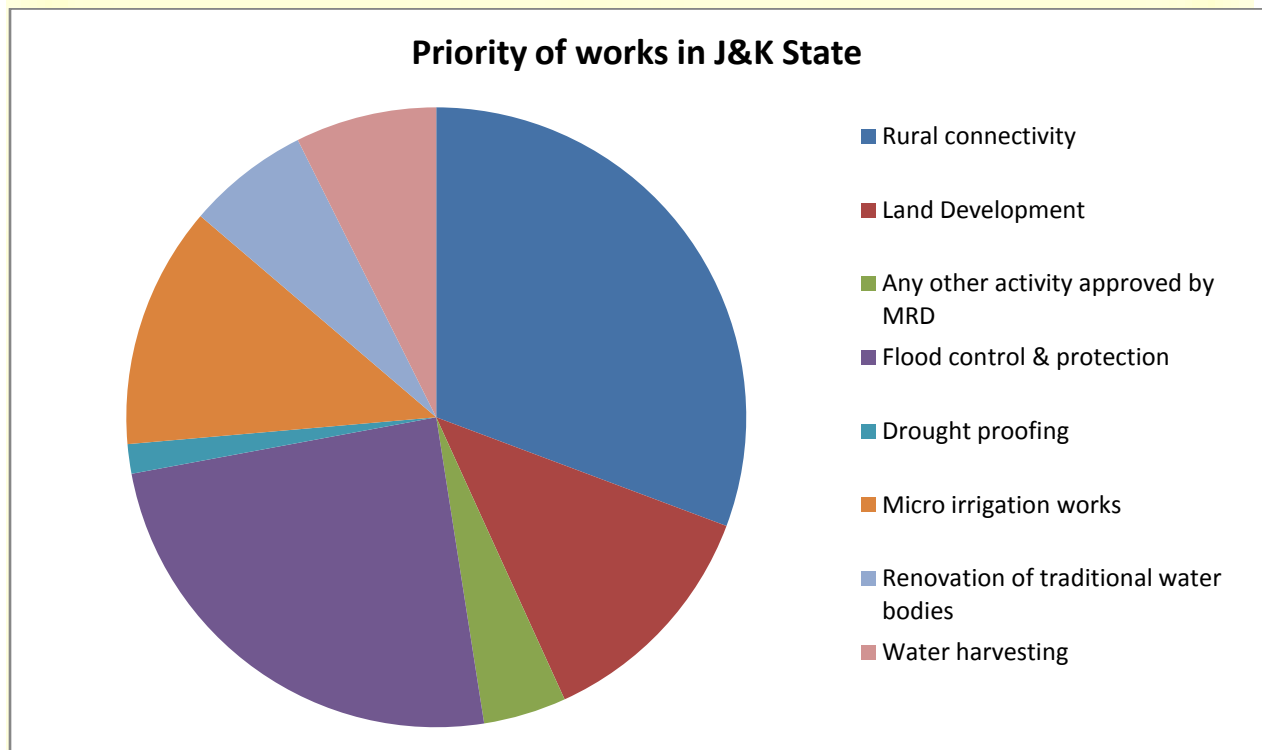
Table 1:

Types of works	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	Total
Rural connectivity	653	1047	2561	6398	11285	20184	28236	70364
Water harvesting	177	364	643	1991	3519	4650	5545	16889
Land development	258	674	818	2040	4510	7854	12489	28643
Flood control & protection	884	1626	1995	4405	8206	15766	23382	56264
Drought proofing	89	74	81	266	732	1406	875	3523
Micro irrigation works	141	300	642	2352	4664	8448	12393	28940

Renovation of traditional water bodies	45	99	255	1095	2099	3270	7770	14633
Any other activity approved by MRD	5	10	1	12	24	88	9780	9920
Total works								2,32,984

Source: MGNREGA Annual Report 2006-07 to 2012-13.

The above table gives details of the various types of works undertaken under MGNREGA in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Further this data has been shown/reflected in pie-chart below:-



It is clear from the above table & pie chart that on account of the geographical conditions of our state, rural connectivity and pacca works are understandably priority of rural areas in our state but in order to achieve MGNREGA objective of balanced and sustainable development more and more natural resources management based works need to be given priority. This will help redressing the cause of chronic poverty in rural areas by giving a fillip to the agricultural production.

MGNREGA and Asset Creation

The MGNREGA has twin objectives, the primary objective being providing guaranteed wage employment and the secondary objective is creating durable assets. The MGNREGA scheme does not only transfer cash to people in rural areas rather it also creates sustainable assets that reduces the dependence of people on MGNREGA. As per schedule 1 of the act, the focus of the MGNREGA is on the following works in order of priority as listed:

1. Water conservation and water harvesting.
2. Drought proofing, including afforestation and tree plantation.
3. Irrigation canals, including micro and minor irrigation works.
4. Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by households belonging to the SC/ST, or to land of the beneficiaries of land reforms, or to land of the beneficiaries under the Indira Awas Yojana.
5. Renovation of traditional water bodies, including de-silting of tanks.
6. Land development.
7. Flood control and protection works, including drainage in waterlogged areas.
8. Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access. The construction of roads may include culverts where necessary, and within the village area may be taken up along with drains.
9. Any work that may be notified by the central Government in consultation with the state Government.

In terms of implementation priority, the programme mandates that maximum emphasis should be on water conservation. In the state the first priority in identification of works has been given to rural connectivity by way of taking up of internal rural kaccha roads because of the peculiar geographical terrain of majority of the areas of the state.

MGNREGA in Study area

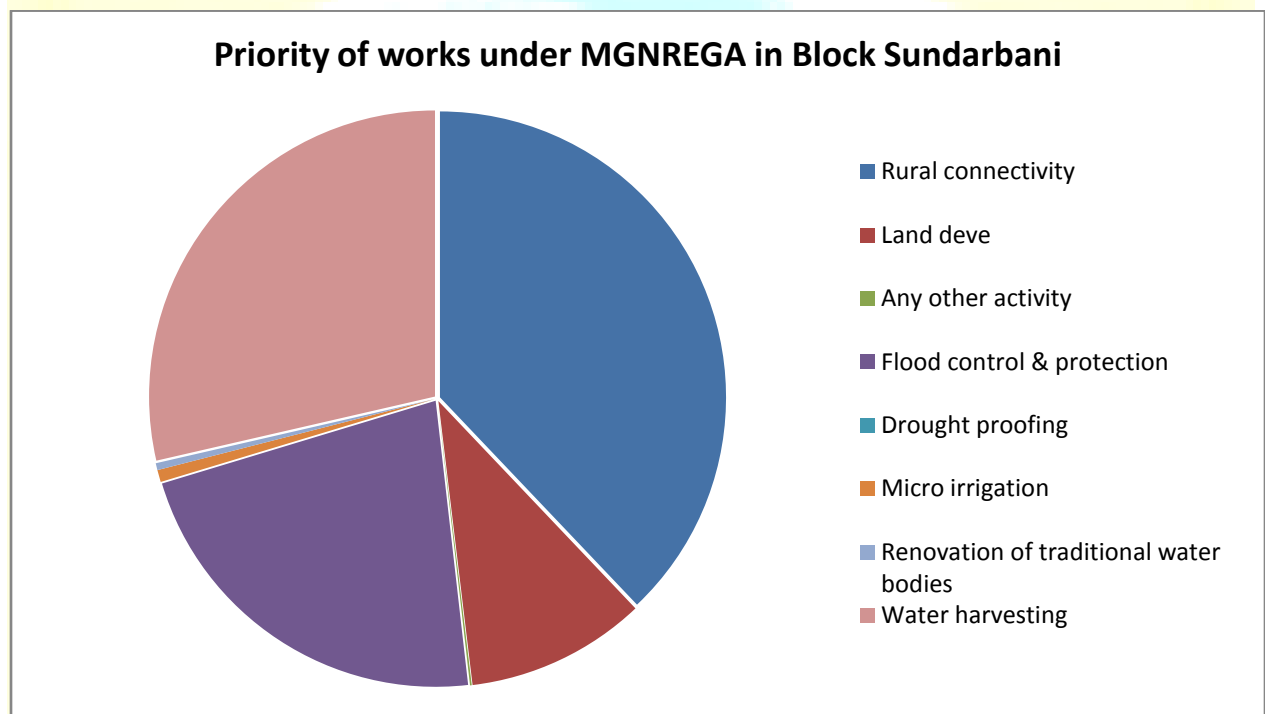
In district Rajouri MGNREGA was implemented in 2008 and was implemented in the study area I.e. block Sundarbani in 2010.

Table no. 2 gives an eye view of the different works completed in the study area I.e. block Sundarbani of Rajouri district from 2011-12 to 2013-14.

Table 2

Types of works	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	Total
Rural connectivity	26	225	136	387
Water harvesting	16	193	83	292
Land development	6	65	33	104
Flood control & protection	19	119	88	226
Drought proofing	0	0	0	0
Micro irrigation works	0	2	5	7
Renovation of traditional water bodies	0	1	3	4
Any other activity approved by MRD	0	0	1	1
			Total	1021

Source: www.nrega.nic.in



The above pie chart and table 2 shows the priority of works undertaken under MGNREGA. It further explains that priority has been given to rural connectivity.

Objectives of the study

1. To highlight the various types of assets created under MGNREGA in the study area.
2. To examine the impact of assets created under MGNREGA.
3. To find out the various issues and deficiencies of assets created under MGNREGA.

Methodology

The appraisal has been done in Block Sundarbani of district Rajouri of J&K state. The study is based on the secondary data which has been collected from various journals, articles and also from various websites of MGNREGA.

Impact of Asset creation under MGNREGA

The implementation of MGNREGA has lead to the development of block Sundarbani by creating sustainable assets under this scheme. The activity-wise numbers of works are shown in the table given below:-

Table 3: Activity-wise and panchayat-wise number of works in block Sundarbani from the year 2011-12 to 2013-14.

GPs/ Villages	Activities under MGNREGA					
	Rural connectivity	Water conservation	Land development	Flood control	Renovation of traditional water bodies	Irrigation canals
Bhajwal	32	33	6	17	0	0
Bamblian	16	17	9	11	1	5
Changi kangrial	9	17	0	3	0	0
Channi	39	6	15	27	0	0
Devak	27	17	4	4	0	0
Hathal	43	28	10	34	2	0
Kangri	57	44	5	22	0	0
Marcholla	16	15	6	2	0	0
Nah	13	11	1	1	0	0
Nallah	30	5	4	17	1	0
Siot	8	2	1	5	0	0
Tala Tanda	8	12	1	5	0	0
Thangriote	19	10	16	18	0	2
Total	317	217	78	166	4	7

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

1. The above table shows the number of works undertaken in block Sundarbani under different categories. From the table it is clear that there are 317 roads connected under MGNREGA in different panchayats of block Sundarbani. Out of these a maximum no. of 57 roads constructed in panchayat Kangri and also a good no. of roads in other villages of the block which helps the people of that area to be connected with the towns and other parts of the district. This has helped the people of the area to be more mobile for different types of works.

2. Water conservation is another objective of the scheme in the state. From the table it is clear that 217 works has been undertaken under water conservation activity in different villages of the block like Bhajwal, Hathal, Bamblian and Kangri etc, out of which a maximum of 44 works of water conservation stands constructed in village Kangri. The impact of these works are quite visible in the area, as the people are benefited in the way that the shortage of water resources have been minimized and also the people are easily feeding their cattle's and also there will be good impact on crop production in the coming years.
3. MGNREGA has developed the lands in rural areas and has made it worth cultivable. It is expected that in next few years, production will increase.
4. Flood is one of the major area which has been minimized by the implementation of the programme in the block. Various flood protecting assets have been constructed in different villages namely Bhajwal, Hathal, Kangri and Thangriote etc under MGNREGA which have resulted that the lands and houses of the people have been protected in the villages of the block.
5. Water Springs (locally known as Bowli) are one of the main sources of drinking water in the villages like Bamblian, Hathal, and Nallah in the study area which have been renovated by the programme. The impact of these springs is that people are easily getting drinking water.
6. Various irrigation canals have been constructed in the various villages namely Bamblian, Thangriote etc which will have a good impact on the production of various crops in the block. Due to these canals the lands of the people are getting irrigated which will result in increase in production of crops.

Problems/ Issues of creating durable assets under MGNREGA

1. **Rates of material:** - The rates fixed by the government are far less than the prevailing market rates which become a reason that the assets created under the scheme are not so durable as the rates are high in the market.
2. **Ratio of 60:40:-** The scheme says that the ratio of 60:40 should be maintained which is not possible on the ground as far as Kaccha works are concerned.
3. **Mal-practices:** - It is one of the reasons that the assets created are of low quality.

4. **Lack of monitoring:** - There is no proper and regular system of monitoring the assets.
5. **Lack of skilled labour:** - In most of the works there is no use of any skilled labour which results in creation of non- sustainable assets.
6. **Topographical problem:** - Due to topographical reasons, sometimes proper monitoring is not possible.

Recommendations

To make the programme more successful, following recommendations may help the programme to be more productive.

1. Scheduled rates of materials should be increased so that the material can be easily purchased from the market.
2. The ratio of 60:40 should not be there in the scheme so far as kachha works are concerned.
3. More focus should be laid on creation of assets of permanent nature.
4. There should be more use of cements for durability of assets.
5. Earth works should be less as compared to the cemented works so that works under MGNREGA are not washed away by floods or rains.
6. Payments should be released on time so that people become interested in the programme.
7. Efforts to be made to control mal-practices.
8. There should regular checks by functionaries for better results.
9. There must be a Grievance redressal and monitoring cell in each block for proper supervision.
10. More use of skilled labour be made wherever it is required.
11. More focus should be on the community assets as compared to individual assets.
12. New types of works should be there in the study area like playing grounds etc so that the children in the area are benefited.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the study in block Sundarbani of district Rajouri indicates that there is a significant impact of assets created through MGNREGA on rural households. The productive value of assets created under the scheme could be enhanced further and make them more beneficial by regular monitoring activities. Officials/functionaries need to focus more on the community assets and also to enhance the ways and provisions for maintenance of these assets created under MGNREGA. Also the programme can be made more productive by the convergence with other programmes like PMGSY etc so that these areas can be developed more.

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