

MGNREGA schemes implementation in Assam disappointing!



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Daya Nath Singh 18 June 2012 21088 views

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a revolutionary Act of the Government of India with tremendous potentiality of eradicating unemployment situation in the country. On February 2, 2006 first phase of NREGA implementation was started in 200 districts of the country in which seven districts of Assam were also incorporated. In the year 2007, the second phase of NREGA had started where five districts of Assam were also included. The third phase started on April 1, 2008 where remaining 14 districts of Assam came under the purview of the Act. Hence, at present all the districts of Assam are implementing the provisions of MGNREGA.

On March 31, 2012 Assam completed sixth year of MGNREGA implementation. Under this Act any rural family is guaranteed to provide at least 100 days unskilled employment at minimum wage in a financial year. A survey by the North East Social Trust (NEST) and a few other voluntary organizations of Assam monitoring the impact of this Act and implementation during last couple of years has found the result very disappointing. For the financial year 2011-12 NEST carried out an intensive research on the basis of the Governments Data to find out the implications of the Act in the state.

It was found that 43,69,372 households in the state were provided job cards, whereas 17,98,372 households only were able to get job in the year 2011-12. It means, 58.84 percent households with job cards did not have any opportunity of working in this scheme during this period. Out of those who worked under this scheme 73 percent of them got employment for less than 30 days in the whole year. During the whole year Assam could provide 100 days employment to only 1.04 percent job card holders.

Total number of house hold provided 100 days employment in the year was 45,490. Kokrajhar district could provide highest number of 100 days employment to 23,216 households, whereas in North Cachar Hills district not even a single household could complete 100 days employment.

Nagaon district recorded second lowest 100 days employment provider by providing only 115 households (0.05 percent job card holders) with 100 days employment.

No registration have taken place In 12 panchayats of Assam across seven blocks of five districts. Twelve panchayats of Chirang districts have no demand of work. These panchayats are spread in two blocks of the districts, namely Manikpur and Borobazar.

To meet with the current requirement of job card holders 47 panchayats of Assam do not have any ongoing work across 15 blocks of three districts. Assam's 33 blocks have violated the norms of Labor material ratio. And 591 numbers of works in these blocks have spent 41 to 60 percent as material cost. 106 number of works have spent 61 -80 percent of the fund on materials and 26 numbers of other works have spent 81 -100 percent of the project cost on materials only.

In the year 2011-12, Assam could complete 9,970 numbers of projects by creating equal numbers of Rural Assets. Sonitpur district could complete highest 2,163 numbers of work , whereas Chirang and Nalbari districts bottomed the list by completing 1 and 7 works respectively in the whole year.

Out of ten categories of works approved in the MGNREGA , 62 percent of works were competed only under Rural connectivity and drought proofing types. Only 19 works of Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra was completed in Assam.

In Assam, 51,964 number of works are running behind schedule, out of which 48,013 number of works are delayed by more than three months. 3,094 number of registered households in Assam are not given job cards even. Besides,2,443 job card holders have not been paid the unemployment allowances.

The programme officer in 207blocks of the state are not doing enough to prepare Shelf of Projects (SoP) and get them duly approved. As a result 1,622 number of panchayats out of total 2,645 do not have any approved work under MGNREGA schemes.

Based on the last three years research NEST has suggested to keep Shelf of Projects approved and ready for implementation in each and every panchayat of Assam and appoint full time programme officers in each block of the state solely to take care of MGNREGA activities in respective blocks.

It has suggested to provide due unemployment allowances immediately and also make sure that the job cards are received by the registered households of the state. The job demand placing procedure should be citizen friendly, preferably, job card holders should be able to place job demands through SMS also and it should be directly reflected in the MGNREGA online MIS. More emphasis should be given on categories of work like flood control, irrigation canals and providing irrigation facilities to SC/ST/IAY/LR. In each Gaon panchayat, Anchalik Panchayat and Zila Parishad level immediately projects on Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra construction proposals prepared and implemented, the NEST suggested.

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