

**EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION ON MGNREGS IN LUNGLEI DISTRICT, MIZORAM**

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July, 2018

DECLARATION

I, *RTC.Lalremruata*, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to do the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that this thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other university/institute.

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This is to certify that the dissertation title '*Employment Guarantee and Rural Development: People's perception on MGNREGS in Lunglei District, Mizoram*' submitted by *Mr.RTC.Lalremruata*, Department of Social Work, Mizoram University for the award of Master of Philosophy in Social Work is carried out under my guidance and incorporates the student's bonafide research and this has not been submitted for award of any degree in this or any other universities or institute of learning.

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CONTENTS

Chapter		Page No.
	Declaration	i
	Certificate	ii
	Acknowledgment	iii
	Contents	iv
	List of tables	v
	List of figures	vi
	List of Abbreviations	vii-viii
I	Introduction	1 – 11
II	Review of Literature	12 – 21
III	Methodology	22 – 34
IV	Results and Discussions	35 – 65
V	Conclusions, Policy Implications and Suggestions	66 – 73
	Appendices	
	Bibliography	ix-xi
	Key Informant Interview Guide	xii
	Interview schedule	xiii-xiv

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page No.
1.1 Components of District Employment Guarantee Scheme Unit (DEGSU)	6
3.1 Distribution of Villages by Blocks in Lunglei District	23
3.2 Profile of the Villages	24
4.1 Available Fund Received From the State and Central Governments (In Lakhs)	36
4.2 Trends in Funds Utilization under MGNREGS in Lunglei District	36
4.3 Pattern of Expenditure in Lunglei District under MGNREGS	37
4.4 Infrastructure Development in Lunglei District under MGNREGS Works Taken up and Completed	38
4.5 Employment Generation in Lunglei District under MGNREGS	38
4.6 Wage rate under MGNREGS	39
4.7 Demographic Profile of Respondents	57
4.8 Social characteristics of respondents	58
4.9 Economic characteristics of respondents	59
4.10 Political characteristics of respondents	60
4.11 Livelihood Challenges	60
4.12 Background Characteristics and Livelihood Challenges: Spearman's rho	61
4.13 Infrastructure Required	62
4.14 Infrastructure Required: Spearman's rho	63
4.15 Infrastructural Development Projects Taken up under MGNREGS	63
4.16 Infrastructural Development Projects Taken up under MGNREGS: Spearman's rho	63
4.17 Perceived Benefits of MGNREGS	64
4.18 Perceived Benefits of MGNREGS: Spearman's rho	64
4.19 Constraints in the Utilization of MGNREGS	65
4.20 Unintended Consequences of MGNREGS	65

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	PageNo.
3.1 Social map of Vanhne	26
3.2 Social map of Pangzawl	26
3.3 Social map of Tawipui ‘S’	26
3.4 Social map of Mualcheng	26
3.5 Social map of TAWIPUI NORTH-I	27
3.6 Social map of RAWPUI	27
3.7 Social map of MUALTHUAM	27
3.8 Social map of THUAMPUI	27
3.9 Services and Opportunities map of VANHNE	28
3.10 Services and Opportunities map of MUALCHENG ‘S’	28
3.11 Services and Opportunities map of MUALTHUAM	28
3.12 Services and Opportunities map of PANGZAWL	28
3.13 Services and Opportunities map of THUAMPUI	28
3.14 Services and Opportunities map of TAWIPUI ‘S’	28
3.15 Services and Opportunities map of TAWIPUI ‘N’	29
3.16 Services and Opportunities map of Rawpui	29
3.17 Time Line of Vanhne Community	30
3.18 Time Line of Tawipui ‘N’ Community	30
3.19 Time Line of Rawpui Community	30
3.20 Time Line of Pangzawl Community	30
3.21 Time Line of Thuampui Community	31
3.22 Time Line of Mualthuam Community	31
3.23 Time Line of Tawipui ‘S’ Community	31
3.24 Time Line of Mualcheng ‘S’ Community	31

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAY	: Antyodaya Anna YOjana
APL	: Above Poverty Line
ASHA	: Accredited Social Health Activist
BCM	: Baptist Church of Misoram
BDO	: Block Development Officers
BJP	: BharatiyaJanata Party
BNRGSK	: Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra
BPL	: Below Poverty Line
CD	: Community Development
DEGSU	: District Employment Guarantee Unit
DEO	: Data Entry Operator
DPC	: District Programme Coordinator
DPO	: District Programme Officer
DRDA	: District Rural Development Agencies
EAS	: Employment Assurance Scheme
GO	: Government Organization
GP	: Gram Panchayat
ILO	: International Labour Organization
INC	: Indian National Congress
IRMA	: Institute of Rural Management Anand
KII	: Key informant interviews
LAD	: Local Administration Department
LDC	: Lower Division Clerk
MGNREGA	: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS Scheme	: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MHIP	: MizoHmeichheInsuihkhawm Pawl
MLA	: Member of Legislative Assembly
MNF	: Mizo National Front

MUP	: MizoUpa Pawl
NER	: North East Region
NGO	: Non-Governmental Organization
NREGA)	: National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
PA	: Programme Assistant
PCI	: Presbyterian Church of India
PHC	: Public Health Centre
PHH	: Priority Household
PO	: Programs Officers
PRI	: Panchayati Raj Institution
QDA	: Qualitative Data Analysis
RD	: Rural Development
SC	: Scheduled Castes
SGRY	: SampoornaGrameenRozgarYojana
SIRD	: State Institute of Rural Development
SJGSY	: Swarnajayanti Gram SwarojgarYojanaprogramme
SLMC&IAC	: State Level Monitoring Cell and Internal Audit Cell
SPSS	: Special Package for the Social Science
ST	: Scheduled Tribes
UPC	: United Pentecostal Church
VC	: Village Council
VEC	: Village Employment Council
VLAA	: Village Level Administrative Assistant
VMC	: Vigilance and Monitoring Committee
YMA	: Young Mizo Association

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The present study attempts to understand the implementation of MGNREGS and its impact on rural development in Lunglei District, Mizoram from an emic perspective.

Rural Development, according to the World Bank (1975), is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural area. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless. The World Bank and other international agencies and institutions placed emphasis on increasing production, raising productivity, increasing employment and mobilizing whatever land, labour and capital factors of production were available. At the same time, rural poverty and inequalities had to be reduced by development involving values and quality 'of life issues and the participation of the poor people in development activities and in decision-making. The central government has empowered Panchayati Raj institutions and other local-self-government to initiate and participate in development activities.

The population of India as per 2011 census was 1,210.19 million added 181.5 million to its population since 2001 with the rural population of 833 million constituting 68.83 per cent of the total population. Numerous policies and programs for rural development through employment generation, skill development, self-help groups, training, credit, infrastructure and community assets and marketing for rural population have been implemented. However, such policies and programs failed to produce the expected outcome due to fabrication and defective implementation.

1.1 Rural Development in Mizoram

Rural Development implies both the economic betterment of the people and ensuring a better quality of life. India lives in its villages and, therefore, the development of rural areas

have been among the central concerns of development planning since its initiation. The endeavour of Rural Development Department has been, apart from promoting infrastructure for improving productivity and social development in rural areas, to reach out by a frontal attack on rural poverty, through programmes of asset building, income generation and wage employment.

The origin of the Rural Development Department in Mizoram may be traced back when India gained independence in 1947. Mr S.K. Dey (1905-1989), who directed and steered the course of community development in the challenging, formative period of India's independence as Cabinet Minister of Cooperation and Panchayati Raj under the prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru, stressed that democracy cannot be practiced by a "galaxy of Government servants through long-distance control", and called for a democracy "traveling from the Parliament to the Panchayat.". The vitality of Dey prompted Jawaharlal Nehru to put him at the helm of Rural Development of independent India. He framed the Community Development Programme which ended in the birth of Community Development Blocks in 1953 all over the country.

A number of Community Development (CD) Blocks also came into existence in Mizoram, then known as the Lushai Hills District which was a part of the State of Assam. Each CD Block was led by a Project Executive Officer. These CD Blocks were engaged in a wide range of developmental works and the 'Community Development' programmes envisioned development in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, public health, social education, co-operation, communications etc. in selected areas.

In 1972, Mizoram achieved the status of Union Territory and more CD Blocks were created thus totalling 20 (twenty) CD Blocks. This period also saw many works under Community Development Project being re-allocated amongst newly created Departments. Community Development Project, then under the administrative control of the Deputy

Commissioner, was also placed under a new Directorate of Community Development. In 1983-1984, the name was changed to Rural Development Department. Presently, there are 26 (twenty-six) RD Blocks in Mizoram.

Today, the Department is led by a senior Cabinet Minister and is supported by a Parliamentary Secretary, who is a sitting MLA. There is a Secretary to the Government of Mizoram as the head of the Administrative Department i.e. the Secretariat. State Level Monitoring Cell and Internal Audit Cell (SLMC&IAC) is part and parcel of the Secretariat involved in the monitoring of works under the Rural Development Department. The Directorate is led by a Director who executes functions as the apex line department at the State level. State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) has been established at Kolasib. At the districts, there are the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) whose governing board is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner and has a full-time Project Director as well as Block Development Officer at the Block level.

According to the 2011 census, the rural population comprised of 47.89 per cent in Mizoram. Mizoram is comprised of 719 villages and 23 towns highlighting 19.47 per cent living below the poverty line. There have been numbers of employment generation and livelihood security promotion programs implemented with the benefits of rural people in the state. However, the impact of such programs and perception of rural people towards them have been inadequately studied. Poverty has always been an issue of socio-economic development. The sustenance of the economic development of the society is characterized by the level of development in rural areas to a great degree. Rural development highlight the level of development of a state as the rural community is the backbone of the society. Thus, the study based on knowledge of rural areas in the socio-economic sphere becomes essential. However, the livelihood pattern in rural areas highlights the prevalence of agriculture and irregular form of income.

1.2 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The changes of wage employment programs in its design to respond more effectively against poverty, the Central Government formulated the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in the year 2005. It is the leading program of the Government that directly touches the lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The demand-driven nature of the scheme enables cardholders to apply for work. The scheme is based on decentralized planning Village Employment Council as implementing agency at the village level. Hundred per cent is funded entirely by the Central Government in unskilled manual work and 75:25 for Central and State Government in the material component. With its legal framework and rights-based approach, MGNREGA provides employment to those who demand it and is a paradigm shift from former programs. Notified on September 7, 2005, MGNREGA aims at enhancing guaranteed wage employment in whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The scheme covered 200 districts in its first phase, implemented on February 2, 2006, and was extended to 130 additional districts in 2007-2008. All the remaining rural areas have been notified with effect from April 1, 2008.

The Goals of MGNREGS

- Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities.
- Livelihood security for the poor through the creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity.
- Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India.
- Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation.
- Strengthening decentralized, participatory planning through the convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives.

- Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Salient features of the Act

- Right based Framework: members of a willing to do unskilled manual work.
- Time-bound Guarantee: 15 days for the provision of employment, else unemployment allowance.
- Up to 100 days in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.
- Labour Intensive Works: 60:40 for permissible works; no contractors/machinery.
- Decentralized Planning of Gram Sabha to recommend works at least 50% of works by Gram Panchayats for execution Principal role of PRIs in planning, monitoring and implementation.
- Worksite facilities: Crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at work sites.
- Women empowerment: At least one-third of beneficiaries should be women.
- Transparency and Accountability: Proactive disclosure through Social Audits, Grievance Redressal Mechanism.
- Implementation: Under Sec 3, with the scheme. Under Sec 4, a scheme for providing not less than 100 guaranteed employment financial year to those who demand work.

1.3. Implementation of NREGA in Mizoram:

Before the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 was implemented in Lunglei District, SampoornaGrameenRozgarYojana (SGRY) had been implemented. An amount of 100 lakhs for works was made available by the Gov't of India at the very end of 2006-07 which was received by the first part of FY 2007-08. Implementation of NREGA, later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), was then started at the later part of 2007-08 after all necessary training was imparted at the official levels – District, Block and Villages. The general public was made

known about the implementation of the program through orientation training, workshops. Operational guidelines translated into local language prepared in the form of books were also distributed among them.

1.3.1 Implementation of NREGA at District Level:

The Deputy Commissioner designated as District Programme Coordinator (DPC) is doing the over-all co-ordination and supervision of the implementation of the programme at the district, and perform such other functions as and when assigned by the State Employment Council. Under the DPC, the Project Director and officers of DRDA are functioning as per designations given by the State Government as – Project Director as District Programme Officer (DPO), Accounts Officer as Accounts Manager (AM), Assistant Engineer as Work Manager (WM) and APO (M) as Grievances & Redressal Officer at the beginning of the implementation of the programme. But, later in 2011, District Employment Guarantee Unit (DEGSU) was constituted in the office of the Project Director, DRDA to assist DPC/DPO, DEGSU comprises of dedicated contract employees for the programme like APO, AM, WM, MIS Nodal Officer (MIS NO), Programme Assistant (PA), Lower Division Clerk (LDC), Data Entry Operator (DEO) and Ombudsman.

Table 1.1 Components of District Employment Guarantee Scheme Unit (DEGSU):

Sl.No	Designation	No. of Post
1	District Programme Officer/PD	1
2	Accounts Manager	1
3	Works Manager	1
4	Addl. Programme Officer	1
5	Account Assistant	1
6	Programme Assistant	3
7	Technical Assistant	1
8	Computer Assistant	1
9	VLAA	1
10	Data Entry Operator	1
11	LDC	1
12	Helper/Messenger	3
	Total	16

Convergence has been taken up with Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Environment & Forest and Soil and Water Conservation Departments. Works undertaken under Convergence includes Oil Palm plantation, Orange plantation, Papaya plantation, Banana plantation, Fishpond, Rubber plantation and Mulberry plantation.

1.3.2. Block Level Implementation:

The 4 (four) Block Development Officers (BDOs) and Sub-Divisional Officer (Tlabung) were designated as Programs Officers (POs) under MNREGA. POs are the principal authority for the planning and implementation of the program at the block level. The Program officers have been functioned under the direction, and control of the District Program Coordinator or Officer. Village Level Administrative Assistants, Computer Assistants and Account Assistants were engaged on a contract basis to assist the POs for implementation of the program. But since 2010, only 4 (four) BDOs are designated as POs and in 2009, Additional Program Officers (APO) are also engaged to assist the POs. Presently, there are 5875 job cards within Hnahthial RD Block.

1.3.3. Village Level Implementation:

As part IX of the constitution does not apply in Mizoram, the state government invested the corresponding responsibilities of Gram Panchayat (GP) in Planning and implementation of the program at village level to the Village Council, elected from time to time under the state government and the three Autonomous District Council of Mara, Lai and Chakma, at the beginning of the implementation. Later in 2009, another local body Village Employment Council (VEC) was formed to hold the power and responsibilities of GP instead of VC (*Published in Mizoram Gazette on April 28, 2009(A)*).

Executive Body of VEC comprising of the following members (*Vide Govt. of Mizoram RD Dept. notification Dt.20.03.2014*):

Chairman:	President of the Village Council
Vice Chairman:	To be Elected by VEC
VEC Secretary	: Secretary of the Village Council
Asst Secretary	: To be elected by VEC
Treasure	: Treasurer of the VEC
Financial Secretary	: To be elected by VEC
Members	: Other elected members of the Village Council

The executive body of Village Employment Council (VEC) is the principal authority for the planning and implementation of the program.

1.4. Overview of Literature

Employment Generation has been the focus of many policies and programs where rural development remains the center of focus in India. Meanwhile, much of the government's development programmes are wrapped up in the ideology of modernization (Haris, 1982).

Rural development is viewed as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people (World Bank, 2007), target oriented initiative (Ghosh 1967), Agricultural development (Harris, 1982), economic development, infrastructure and environment, housing and education (Tarchitzky 2015), improving rural service delivery, accessibility and mobility (Poster 2002).

Rural livelihood security is also defined in terms of protection against unfair or unjustified dismissals or employment security (ILO 1995, p.18) which has both subjective and objective elements (Standing, 1999, p. 168). Increase in unprotected informal activities (du Jeu, 1998) low purchasing power among rural people (Joydeep, 2013) is witnessed.

There are many studies which focus on implementation and effects of employment guarantee programs (Reli Group 2005; Verma 2006; Lalnilawma 2009) on the social-economic aspects of rural households (Meshram 2006) along with performance appraisal at district and state level (Kaliyamoorthy&.Kanagaraj 2006).

State level comparative studies on MGNREGS (IIM-Bangalore 2008; Dutta, 2009) and its impact on connectivity, migration and community assets development have been attempted. Studies on Implementation of MGNREGS at district and state levels (Shariff 2009) and performance of implementing body (Mathur 2009; Sailo 2015) have been reported. The impact of the program on household income and expenditure along with inclusiveness of beneficiaries have also been probed into (Singh and Nauriyal 2009; Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) 2010).

There is copious literature on rural wage employment, public works as well as employment security across the developing nations of the world. In the Indian context also there are many studies conducted at national, regional and state levels and beyond. However, a few research gaps could be noted in the literature.

Firstly, most of the studies have been conducted from the etic perspective while emic perspective and the perception and experiences of people have been by and large ignored. The people at grass root level participate in the rural development programmes and benefit from them. They are the rich source of information on the actual implementation of the programmes and their impact. This is often bypassed by the social science researchers and policymakers who use etic perspectives and believe that they know what to expect from people. Most studies have used quantitative methodology while the application of qualitative and participatory approaches is rare in this area. Further, the combination of qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods has rarely been attempted. The cultural domain analysis has not also been attempted.

Secondly, the studies on employment guarantee in the context of NER and Mizoram are very few (except). These studies have not deeply probed into the social dynamics of implementation of MGREGS or its impact on rural livelihood or infrastructure.

Thirdly, most of the studies on employment guarantee programmes focus on their impact on living conditions and livelihood of rural people. Hardly, we come across the studies on the role of these programmes in promoting infrastructure development at the village level.

Fourthly, most studies on MGNREGS in India have been made by economists, while social workers have not studied MGNREGS or employment guarantee. It is imperative for social workers to conduct in-depth interdisciplinary studies so as to effectively practice at a multi-level.

The present study addresses these research gaps in the context of Lunglei, a district located in the southern part of Mizoram state.

1.5. Statement of the Problem

Though Mizoram is one of the most urbanized states of northeast India, rural development is a priority area. Infrastructure development and livelihood promotion are the twin challenges before policy makers and social workers concerned with rural development in Mizoram. MGNREGS is a major boon to boost the rural infrastructure development and strengthening rural livelihood in Mizoram. However, there are not many studies on the actual implementation of MGNREGS and its impact as perceived by different stakeholders in the context of Mizoram or North East region of India.

In this context, the present study explores the role of employment guarantee programmes in promoting the goals of rural development at the village level from an emic perspective. The study tries to understand the process of implementation of MGNREGS at village level as well as the perception of people on the impact of MGNREGS on rural

infrastructure and rural livelihood. The study probes into the bearing of social and economic structural factors on the perceptions of people on MGNREGS. The study also seeks to understand the constraints in the implementation of MGNREGS and to suggest possible measures to enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGS in promoting rural infrastructure development and livelihood in Mizoram.

Chapter Scheme

The present study is presented in the following chapters.

1. Introduction.
2. Review of Literature.
3. Methodology.
4. Results and Discussion.
5. Conclusion and Suggestions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Review of literature is an important component of research as it helps in the formulation of research problem and designing of the research process. The chapter on the review of literature is organized into three sections viz., rural livelihood and infrastructure, wage employment programmes in India and MGNREGS.

2.1. Rural Livelihood and Infrastructure Development

Livelihood Security is defined as secure ownership of, or access to, resources and income-generating activities, including reserves and assets to offset risk, ease shocks and meet contingencies. Livelihood security has been the focus of many policies and programs where rural development remains the center of focus in India. Meanwhile, much of the government's development programmes are wrapped up in the ideology of modernization.

Deborah Fahy Bryceson, (2004) explores the concept of livelihoods, sustainability and poverty alleviation with reference to rural economy survey findings in sub-Saharan Africa, Policies in the international development policy arena during the last 20 years, and South Africa's rural history. Village case study evidence from various African countries indicates a decline in peasant commodity production, a surge in non-agricultural income diversification, a proliferation of multi-occupational households, accelerating rural class stratification and growing poverty. This paper explores the relevance and potential effectiveness of concepts of 'rural livelihoods', 'sustainability' and 'poverty alleviation' applied to the rural poor of sub-Saharan Africa. The concepts are considered in the light of current deagrarianising tendencies observed on the continent. A schematic attempt is made to dissect the various strands of thinking underlying the new concepts of sustainable livelihoods and poverty alleviation.

S.M. Mtshali (2002) conducted a descriptive study on 'Household Livelihood Security in Rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa' The main problem of the study was to

determine the role of the rural household in achieving livelihood security and the appropriateness of extension services in supporting and enhancing that role. The study aimed at answering questions on the relationship between rural household structure and livelihood security, the importance of gender and indigenous knowledge systems to the agricultural extension services in support of rural livelihood security, the role of agricultural extension in enhancing rural livelihood security and how agricultural extension services staff approached issues of gender and indigenous knowledge. However, the extension delivery services still use traditional top-down and gender-bias methods of technology transfer of agricultural and rural development knowledge. Consequently, extension services fail to reach the majority of the rural households with relevant information to enhance rural livelihoods. The main problems in rural areas of this province are illiteracy, unemployment, and poor infrastructure, lack of resources of agricultural production, such as land, capital, credit, appropriate technology, inputs, training, extension and markets. As a result, food insecurity is one of the major problems because households do not produce enough food to last until the next harvest. They also lack adequate cash income to buy food to enhance nutritional security. The extension services do not give adequate attention to the sustainable use of natural resources by rural household. The people's indigenous knowledge is not taken into consideration in planning and implementation of agriculture and rural development programmes. The extension services do not reach the majority of rural households because of a number of limitations. These include poor infrastructure, lack of transport, staff shortage and limited capacity to implement relevant policies.

Jorge Tarchitzky 2015 in his strategic plan and comprehensive framework for agricultural and rural sustainable development in Israel Identified the need to strengthen the rural community by diversifying rural economic basis while stabilizing and developing agriculture as well as the rural landscape by updating statutory and physical structure with

consideration to the environment. He found out that economic development, infrastructure and environment, housing and education should be the priority.

2.2. Wage Employment Programmes in India

Joydeep (2013) in his paper called rural employment in India state that increases in unemployment and low-income results in low purchasing power of the rural people, ultimately affecting their quality of life. The government has launched several schemes to generate employment, especially in the rural areas. However, unemployment in the rural areas has increased from 7.2% in the rural areas in 2000 has increased to 8.1% in 2010 (National sample survey). Thus he made a statement that it is imperative to generate employment in agriculture and industry in the country to feed the hungry poor of the rural areas. Agriculture is undoubtedly the lifeline of rural India and it is needed to make it more viable and profitable.

Resource and livelihood group (2005) In the process of analyzing the various reasons for the failure of anti-poverty programmes, the members of the Resource and livelihood group opine that these multifaceted forms of deprivation have to be viewed in a more broader way – as a denial of the basic right to a secure, sustainable, and dignified livelihood. There are several reasons behind the failure of the mainstream's approach to anti-poverty programs. One of the fundamental and important reasons behind the failure of poverty eradication programs relates to the problems in the conceptual core of the mainstream approach. The major gap in this concept, dominated by the 'economist' thinking, is the restricted meaning of the term 'poverty'. Accordingly, poverty is equated with "low income or lack of adequate income" and, it is assumed that, as a consequence of low income, people are not able to buy an adequate quantity of goods and services. In other words, it means that the households having a low income are not able to afford (to buy) the goods and services that are necessary for the fulfilment of basic livelihood needs. This results in a "low standard of living", which

is considered as "poverty". Households in the rural areas continuously face various economic, political, social, natural, and familial difficulties and threats. These difficulties and threats have adverse effects on their livelihoods, which directly affect the fulfilment of their needs and further result in making their livelihoods vulnerable. Therefore, the main objective should be to ensure the security of livelihoods against these threats. This would mean creating a situation in which the deprived households will be able to successfully deal with these threats and fulfil livelihood needs on a continuous basis.

A study by S. Alab examined the functioning of Rural Employment Programmes in Anantapur district, a drought-prone and backward one in Andhra Pradesh. According to the guidelines, the community works should be executed by the local village agencies such as village panchayats, parental/school committees and village development council that would ensure the full benefits of wages to the local workers and the quality of assets. This study revealed the exploitation of labour by the professional contractors and the problems faced by the first generation contractors. It recommended that the inclusion of NGOs in the implementation of the programmes would ensure the flow of benefits to the deserving target groups in full; simultaneously, the process would motivate, organize and strengthen the grassroots level machinery. The participation and coordination of the beneficiaries, GOs, NGOs and Rural Development could help manufacture the required materials.

Singha and Kabra (2007) in their case study of Mizoram's infrastructure development highlighted these as major obstacles: Transport and communication, Power, Problems of the landslide, Long Rainy Season, Hilly terrain, and problems of finance. The study has also found the money allocated for infrastructure development by the Government of India to Mizoram is spent primarily on meeting the expenditure on salaries, office expense and other unproductive expenses of the employees.

While emphasizing the need for employment generation programmes in the realm of poverty alleviation, Verma (2006) brought out a publication on "Rural Poverty Alleviation and Employment." He pointed out that unemployment is still on the increase and that the benefit of growth has failed to percolate down to the poor people especially in rural areas. He further stressed that economic growth sector is required. In addition to this access to basic minimum services and direct state intervention in the form of targeted anti-poverty programmes, including the provision of subsidized food-grains too is important.

V. Meshram (2006) in his study SJGSY with the objective to know the association between socio personal attributes and attitude of the beneficiaries. He found out that age, caste, family, economic motivation, contact with development agency, mass media exposure and material possession does not have an effect on the attitude and beneficiaries of SJGSY while Education has a great effect. Swarnajayanti Gram SwarajgarYojanaprogramme has changed the attitude of the vulnerable groups among the rural people particularly SC/STs and it is because of increasing income and employment of more days in a year in dairy and farming.

Lalnilawma (2009) in his study of the impact of employment assurance scheme in Mizoram states that the EAS was successful in employment generation however it does not serve the objective of providing wage employment for all rural poor in times of greatest needs. Projects carried out in the study areas included: i) Construction of link roads (new construction, widening and improvement etc), ii) Soil & Water Conservation (afforestation, water points, sunken ponds, spring water resources, boulder embankment, check dam etc); iii) Minor irrigation; iv) Construction of Anganwadi and Primary School Buildings; v) Others (construction of playground, community hall, work shed/vocational training centre and suspension bridge etc.). The unequal remuneration in terms of payment of wages was found to be Rs. 60 & 70 for women and Rs.80 for men

against the statement of the guidelines because of the general assumption that women are considered to contribute less labour as compared to their counterparts to their men in the same kind of work.

2.3. MGNREGS

Dreeze and Lal (2007) based on their studies on NREGS in Rajasthan concluded that this state stands first in terms of employment generation per rural household under this scheme. They stated that in 2006-07 the average rural households in six "NREGA Districts" of work for 77 earning nearly Rs.4,000 in the process. This was held by them to be an unprecedented achievement in the history of social security in India. Disadvantaged sections of the population, they further added, are the main gainers of the programme benefits. They also found that the share of women in NREGA employment to be about two thirds in Rajasthan, and that of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe households to be as high as 80 per cent. In this way, this Act contributes to social equality and economic redistribution. These figures, they stated, are based on official data released by the Ministry of Rural Development, but they are fully consistent with independent reports, as well as their own experience from

IIM-(Bangalore) in the year 2008 study in Andhra Pradesh & Karnataka covering four districts so as to make an appraisal of the various processes & procedures of MGNREGA programme. The report emphasized the need for capacity building, more awareness generation & strengthening of the demand process of the programme. In conclusion, that the MGNREGA programme has been in the districts of Andhra to the districts of Karnataka.

Dutta, (2009) quick appraisal of MGNREGA in Dangs (Gujarat) and Jalpaiguri (West Bengal) and interactions of the community increased due to the impact of rural connectivity works. Migrations also get limited to only one member of a family during the slack season due to more availability of work locally. The studies also indicated that even though people

are not well aware of works carried out in their village under MGNREGA, improvement in water availability has been observed by them.

In a social audit undertaken on MGNREGA in Andhra Pradesh, Mathur (2009) found that in certain villages, some people had not been paid for the work done. A comparison made between payments as per the pass-book with the payment as per the job card, it was found out that the job cards did not contain the inner pages that record done by each person the job card itself was incomplete. Separate discussions were held with the sarpanch who revealed that they were intense to make certain that no any irregularity takes place in their villages.

Shariff (2009) studied seven northern states to have an overview of outreach and benefits of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. Future of NREGA, he stated linked to the exquisite nationwide goal to strengthen and broad base decentralization of local governance. He also held that (i) there are wide variations amongst the states not only at the level of decentralization but also in the capacity to implement such a large scheme and (ii) lack of convergence amongst relevant government departments and functionaries though NREGA has the potential to address both sustenances of income and enhancement of the social welfare of households in rural areas.

Singh and Nauriyal (2009) assessed the impact of MGNREGA in three districts of Uttarakhand. They held that the activities of MGNREGA to be of the extent of 10-20 per cent (and hence no employment levels) & a marginal migration and indebtedness. Increase in consumption also marginally the sample households. The indicated that lack of procedures and weak Panchayati Raj Institutions were the reasons for the low performance of MGNREGS in the sample districts.

Impact of the economic the rural studied by Venkatesh (2009). He opined that the MGNREGA is especially important in terms of mitigating the on a large scale. He also

discussed some of the key problems in the implementation of MGNREGA and effectively implemented, a livelihood of the poor are visible. The author also recommended removal of the ceiling of 100 days of work and implementation of Act in true spirit as it has become a lifeline for millions of Indians who have been left out in the cloud by high economic growth.

A report by Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) (2010) revealed that MGNREGA has provided income to families without any discrimination between men and women and also the programme has a high participation rate for women. Report further elaborated that the programme has enhanced food security unemployed and average has a positive impact on livelihood. , however, cautioned that the states need to guarantee for the assets created under MGNREGA.

Bordoloi(2011) studies on the impact of MGNREGA on wage differentials, migration & on its different processes & procedures” districts of Assam. The author holds that the scheme does not show a significant impact on migration because it was still incapable to meet up the demands of workers. Positive side stated that MGNREGA did reduce gender discrimination regarding wages as a majority of the beneficiaries perceived that the assets created under this scheme as beneficial for them.

Jain & Singh (2013) studied the impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on the touchstone of social security & found that no doubt the programme has vast scope & impact on the livelihood security of the rural poor's but Government should strictly discourage educated people to do unskilled labour under MGNREGA. They further added that because of the provision of minimum wages under local people unskilled manual work & rather has led to their migration.

Addressing the challenge of unemployment in rural areas of the country is central to the development of the rural sector for ameliorating the economic condition of the people (Tomar&Yadav, 2009). Ghosh (2008) stated that MGNREGA will prove to be an extremely

cost-effective way of increasing employment, directly and indirectly, reviving the rural economy, providing basic consumption stability to poor households and improving the bargaining power of rural workers.

Ngurthanzuali (2015) stated that MNREGS has wide reach of targeted beneficiaries, timely and regular payment of wages and increase in consumption. However, there exist the irregularity of social audit, Use of machinery, the opportunity of making fake job card and tampering of muster roll (19150 job cards for 14053 households), limited nature of work, low level of awareness and negative impact on work culture.

There is copious literature on rural wage employment, public works as well as employment security across the developing nations of the world. However, a few research gaps could be noted.

Firstly, most of the studies have been conducted from the etic perspective while emic perspective and the perception and experiences of people have been by and large ignored. The people at grass root level participate in the rural development programmes and benefit from them. They are the rich source of information on the actual implementation of the programmes and their impact. This is often bypassed by the social science researchers and policymakers who use etic perspectives and believe that they know what to expect from people. Most studies have used quantitative methodology while the application of qualitative and participatory approaches is rare in this area. Further, the combination of qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods has rarely been attempted. The cultural domain analysis has not also been attempted.

Secondly, the studies on employment guarantee in the context of NER and Mizoram are very few (except). These studies have not deeply probed into the social dynamics of implementation of MGREGS or its impact on rural livelihood or infrastructure. Thirdly, most of the studies on employment guarantee programmes focus on their impact on living

conditions and livelihood of rural people. Hardly, we come across the studies on the role of these programmes in promoting infrastructure development at the village level.

Fourthly, most studies on MGNREGS in India have been made by economists, while social workers have not studied MGNREGS or employment guarantee. It is imperative for social workers to conduct in-depth interdisciplinary studies so as to effectively practice at a multi-level. The present study addresses these research gaps in the context of Lunglei, a district located in the southern part of Mizoram state.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to present a review of studies on rural livelihood, infrastructure development and employment programmes. The major gaps in the literature also have been highlighted. In the next chapter, the methodological aspects of the present study are presented.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In the earlier chapter, the review of literature is presented and a few research gaps are highlighted. In the light of them, in this chapter methodological aspects of the present study are presented. This chapter is presented in two broad sections. The first section is devoted to present the geographical and socio-economic setting of the district and the villages studied. In the second section, the various aspects of the methodology are presented

3.1. The Setting

The setting of the present study is presented in two subsections. In the first section, the physical, economic and social features of the Lunglei district are briefly described. In the second subsection, the physical, economic and social features are described.

3.1.1. Profile of Lunglei District

The District is situated on the southern part of the State having the international border of Myanmar on the eastern side and Bangladesh on the Western side. It has a geographical location of Latitude 22.30N-23.18N and Longitude 92.15E-93.10E. The district is mainly hilly except a small part of the low lying area along the western belt. Varied in altitude from 500-1500 meters, the hills are running in the north-south direction.

The climate is moderately hot in summer and cold in winter with a large rainfall of about 200mm. Hills are covered with green forest with valleys and rivers. The rural inhabitants are habituated with shifting cultivation in addition to horticulture like plantain, orange, and oil palm. Tea plantation is occasionally seen at places and large teak wood plantation.

The District has four blocks viz. Lunglei, Lungsen, Bughmun, and Hnahthial. As per 2011 census, the population of the district is 1, 61, 248, out of which 92,675 live in rural area and 68,752 live in urban area. The population growth rate over the decade 2001-2011 was

17.64 with the population density of 36 per sqkm. NH54 and another road called World Bank Road travels through the district making district headquarters Lunglei and many other roadside blocks and villages well communicable to Aizawl, the state capital.

On the whole 183 villages are distributed across the four blocks of the Lunglei district viz., Lunglei, Lungsen, Hnahthial, and Bunghmun(see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Distribution of Villages by Blocks in Lunglei District

SI No.	Name of Blocks	No. of Villages	Percent
1	Lunglei	63	34
2	Lungsen	61	33
3	Hnahthial	25	14
4	Bunghmun	34	19
	Total	183	100

Source: DRDA, Lunglei.

3.1.2. Profile of Sample Villages

The sample villages were selected from two blocks within the district which were core and peripheral to the district headquarters. Eight sample villages were selected based on socio-economic development indicators with the criteria of most developed and least developed villages.

The geographical location of the selected sample dispersed across the district. The villages can be divided into three major areas adjacent to Serchhip district in the northern part, Lawngtlai district in the southern part and adjoining the district headquarters Lunglei.

The village profile highlighted that majority of the sample villages were established in the pre-insurgency period. Diversity in the number of households and population was witnessed ranging from 132-554 households and 412-3072 in terms of population. The dominant religion was Christianity where different denominations were present in each village. A huge gap of differences in terms of the numbers of health care services Centre exists despite initiatives taken up by the government in this area. However, the number of population is regarded as the main factor behind these differences. Educational institution

ranges from primary school to higher secondary school where only three villages out of eight villages have established a higher secondary school. Recreational activities and recreational places were highly inadequate. Agricultural marketing places were less though agriculture is the main source of income in these villages. A notable fact from the profile reveals less number of job card than the actual number of households in the sample villages.

Table 3.2. Profile of the Villages

Particulars	Village Development							
	Low			High				
	Mualthum	Thuampui	Mualcheng S	Tawipui N-1	Rawpui	Pangzawl	Vanhne	Tawipui S
Establishment	1876	1900	1892	1980	1973	1810	1810	1975
Household	315	111	170	132	190	554	202	340
Population	1500	412	910	702	1200	3072	870	1500
Anganwadi Centre	5	2	4	2	5	5	2	5
MRB	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Primary School	4	1	1	1	2	5	1	2
Middle School	2	1	1	1	2	3	1	1
High School	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
HSSS	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1
Soil Dept Quarter	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Ah & Vety	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Sub Centre	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Tourist Lodge	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
PHC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
No. of Job Card	299	110	164	128	182	0	195	346
Forest Quarter	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
Supply godown	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Market Shed	1	0	0	2	1	1		1

Source: Village Council Presidents

3.1.3. History of Villages

The establishment of the sample villages occurred during the eighteen hundreds to the latter part of the nineteen hundreds. The differences in terms of incidents that took place in villages were confirmed. However similarities in regards to the construction and provision

of road, electricity, health care services and education despite variation in regards to years. The common incident that took place in every village which leads to the establishment of new villages and changes in the shape and size of the existing villages was ‘**Sawikhawm**’ which was a method employed to put the people into a cluster. The villages share a common history in a very brief context because the insurgency is the major incident that affects all villages in the area. At the same time, differences are confirmed in terms of more detailed and smaller incidents such as the time and duration.

3.1.4. Physical features and community infrastructure

There is a huge difference among villages in terms of the geographical area and assets owned at the community level. The differences could be seen in terms of the ownership, quantity, and availability of community infrastructure like the public urinals, educational institution, health care centers, water storage, sanitation, the banking system, recreational places as well as the distribution of population within each village. The physical features like the availability of internal as well as external transportation, the location of government and non-governmental offices are highlighted with great differences. The overall assessment state that, despite the differences similarities can be found in terms of inadequacy of such infrastructure, poor quality of maintenance and difficulty in access.

3.1.4. Access to services and opportunities

The sample villages have an access to basic health care services and education in their community where services and facilities provided are regarded as inadequate by the community people. In terms of education, only three out of the eight villages have the institution with post matriculation ie., a Higher Secondary School. The transaction of information between researcher and respondents highlighted that the health facilities are effective only for acute illness despite the establishment of PHC in some villages. All the

villages, though some government department branches are established, need to access the offices at least at the block level. All the villages were linked with road transportation. All the villages are facing problems in regards to access to the services designed and opportunities provided for them. With the introduction of MGNREGS with its mode of payment, access to the banking system is considered to be the major problem since most of the villages were distant to the nearest bank.

Social Maps of villages

Figure 3.1. Social map of Vanhne

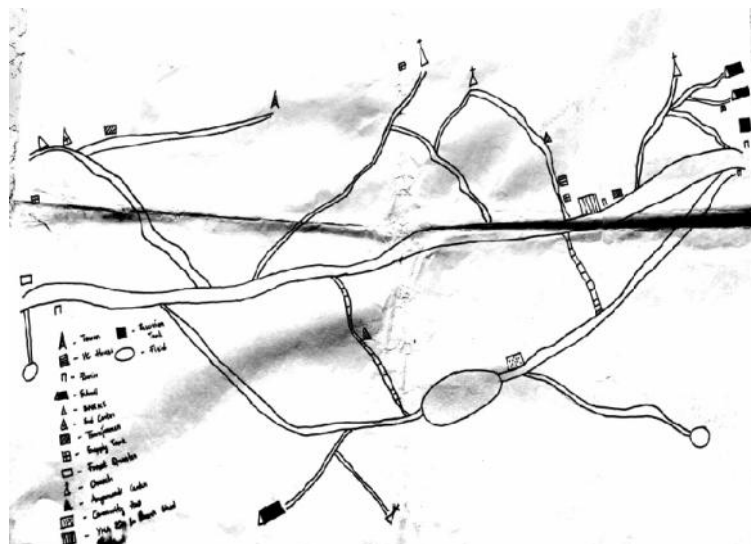


Figure 3.2. Social map of Pangzawl

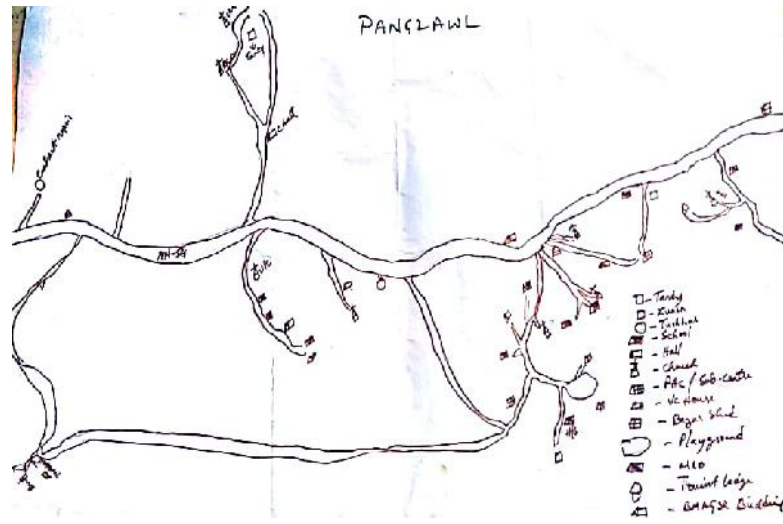


Figure 3.3. Social map of Tawipui 'S' 'S'

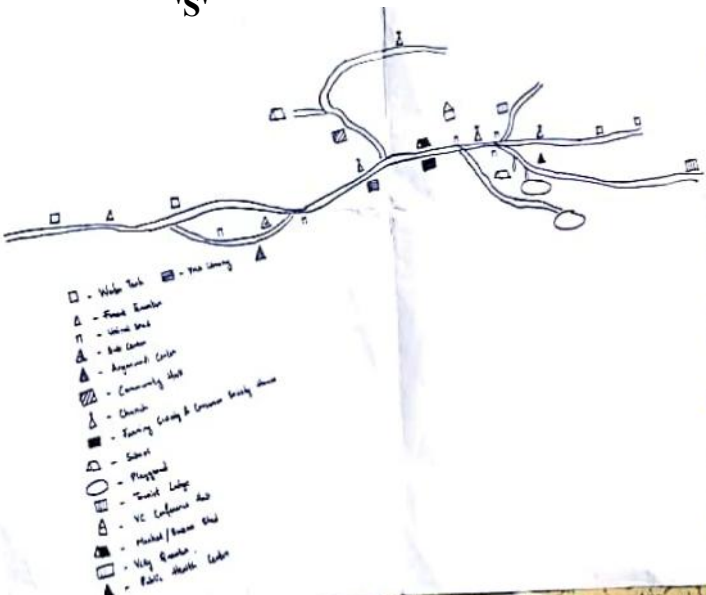


Figure 3.4. Social map of Mualcheng

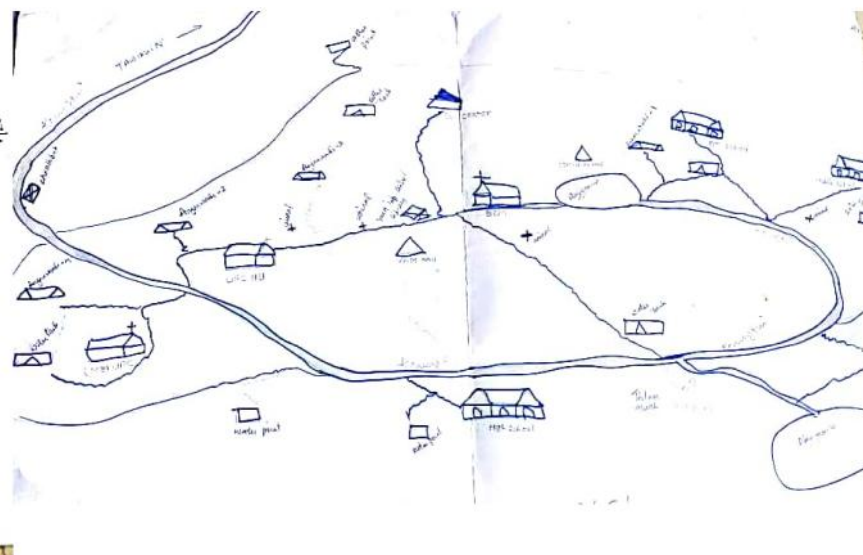


Figure 3.15. Services and Opportunities map of Tawipui N

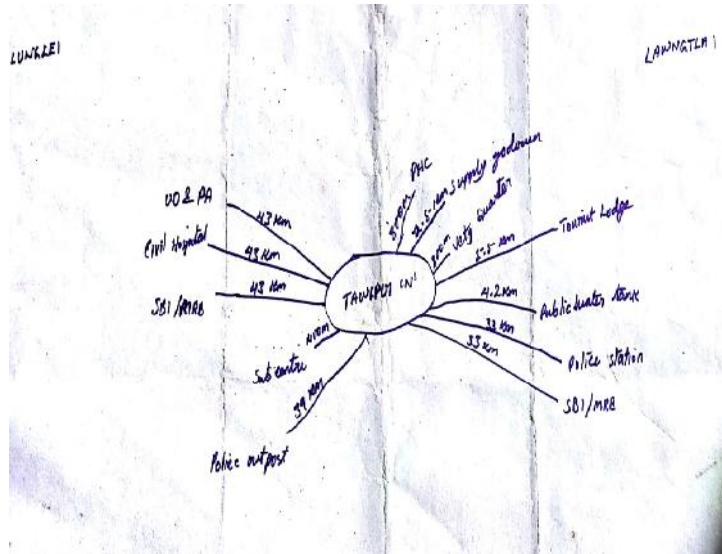
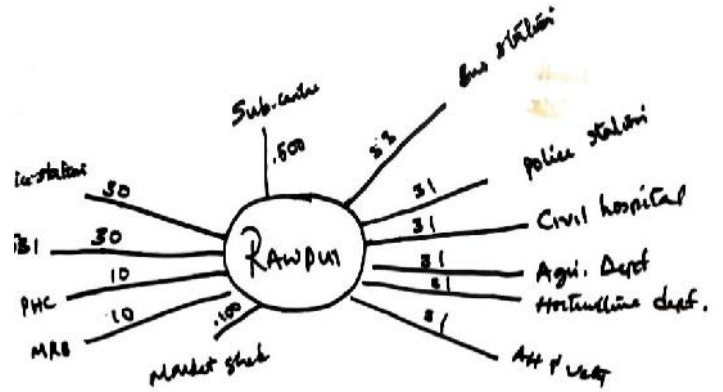


Figure 3.16 Services and Opportunities map of Rawpui



Timeline of Villages

Figure 3.17 Time Line of Vanhne

TIME LINE VANHNE COMMUNITY	
Khawñ dñi Kurn	- 1810
United Pentecostal Church dñi	- 1859
Kawung laih tan / Moton luh hmasat lun	- 1954
Samih Khawm	- 1968
Baptist church of Mizonam dñi	- 1969
Primary, School dñi	- 1970
middle school dñi	- 1971
High school dñi	- 1975
Electricit reit	- 1978
Khawñ hñi atanga incun	- 1978
Twi connection reit	- 2005-

Figure 3.19 Time Line of Rawpui

TIME X LINE RAWPUI COMMUNITY	
Khawñ dñi	- 1975
Moton luh	- 1972
Yma dñi tan	- 1973
Baptist Church of Mizonam dñi	- 1975
United Pentecostal church	- 1980
Primary school	- 1980
middle school	- 1983
Electricit supply reit Kurn	- 1975-
sub - centre	- 1985
PHC	- 1987
Water Connection	- 1983
Community Hall	- 2010
High school dñi	- 2002

Figure 3.18 Time Line of Tawipui 'N'

TIME X LINE TAWIPUI 'N' COMMUNITY	
Khawñ dñi	- 1980
Kawung laih	- 1975
Moton luh	- 1975
Black top	- 1974
School dñi	- 1980
Bianñi dñi	- 1980
Electricit reit	- 1983
Sub centre	- 1985-
PHC	- 1987
Forest complex	- 1988
AH & Vety	- 1990
Twi connection	- 1996
supply godown	- 2011
Yma Library	- 2012
Community Hall	

Figure 3.20 Time Line of Pangzawl

TIMELINE - PANZAWL	
1810	DIN TAN KUM
1953	PANZAWL A MOTOR LUH (POD ROAD)
1967	PANZAWL A KHAW SADI KHAWM
1972	N.H. 54 A CHHAK THLAR KUM
1965	N.H. 54 LAH TAN KUM
1964	Y.M.C.A. DIN TAN KUM
1991	MIZORAM NULA HMEHTA CHAWGVUNGI RUM
1971	PO PHAWA KUM
1992	BAPTIST KOLLEJ DIN TAN KUM
1980	CHAWGVUNGI PARK SIAM KUM
1960	FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT SIAM TAN KUM
1969	VOLLY BALL TOURNAMENT SIAM TAN KUM
1983	HOCKY TOURNAMENT SIAM TAN KUM
1944	HMECHHE HOCKY SIAM TAN KUM
1963	PS DIN TAN KUM
1968	MIS DIN TAN KUM
2009	H/S DIN TAN KUM
1975	H/S DIN TAN KUM
2001	H/S DIN TAN KUM
1972	ELECTRIC POWER NEIH TAN KUM
1980	DAM DAWI IN NEIH TAN KUM
1980	PANZAWL KHAW SUB TAN ARA A PHAN KUM
	SHETIN SUPPLY NEIH TAN KUM
	ANGAWADI CENTRE NEIH TAN KUM

Figure 3.21 Time Line of Thuampui

TIME LINE
THUAMPOI COMMUNITY

Kham din Kum	-	1900
Kawng laih tan / Moton luh hmasat ber	-	1955-
United Pentecostal church din	-	1959
Sawih Khamun	-	1968
Baptist church of Mizoram din	-	1970
Primary School din	-	1976
Middle School din	-	1976
High School din	-	1979
Electricist neih	-	1980
Khamkhui ateng a insawm	-	1980
Tui connection neih	-	2006

Figure 3.22 Time Line of Mualthuum

TIME x LINE
MUALTHUAM COMMUNITY

Khamdin	-	1896
Kawng laih	-	1954
Moton luh tan	-	
Black Top	-	1986
Electricist neih	-	1983
Water supply	-	1992
School din	-	1941
P & E Department	-	1992
Industry centre	-	1990
Forest complex	-	1984
Jerusalem market	-	2012
SS sub station	-	2017
Supply godown	-	1970
YMA Library	-	1968
Sub - Centre	-	1986
AMB Vety	-	1992
Sawih Khamun	-	1968
High school	-	1973
Middle School	-	1969

Figure 3.23 Time Line of Tawipui 'S'

TIME x LINE
TAWIPUI 'S' COMMUNITY

Kham din	-	1975-
Kawng laih	-	1973
Moton luh	-	1973
Black Top	-	1974
School din	-	1975
Biakin din	-	1975-
Electricist neih	-	1979
Sub - centre	-	1983
PHC	-	1985-
Forest complex	-	1987
AMB Vety	-	1987
Tui connection	-	1990
Supply godown	-	1995-
YMA Library	-	2010
Community Hall	-	2011
Play ground	-	2013

Figure 3.24 Time Line of Mualcheng 'S'

TIME x LINE
MUALCHENG 'S' COMMUNITY

Kham din	-	1892
Play ground	-	1908
Biakin din	-	1912
School din	-	1988
Sawih Khamun	-	1966
Middle school	-	1973
Electricist supply	-	1979
sub - centre	-	1983
YMA Hall	-	1999
YMA Library	-	2002
Kawng laih	-	2006
Moton luh tan	-	2006
	-	2015-
Community Hall	-	2016

3.2. Methodology

The methodology is presented in terms of objectives, research questions and research design in the following sub-sections.

3.2.1. Objectives

The following are the objectives of the present study.

1. To identify the people's perceptions of infrastructural needs and livelihood challenges of the villages from an emic perspective.
2. To understand the impact of MGNREGS on rural infrastructure from the perspectives of people.
3. To understand the impact of MGNREGS on living conditions and livelihood security from the perspectives of people.
4. To identify the constraints in the implementation of MGNREGS.
5. To suggest measures for enhancing the effectiveness of MGNREGS in promoting rural livelihood and infrastructure development.

3.2.2. Research Questions

To provide focus to the above objective the following specific research questions have been raised in the context of Lunglei district in Mizoram.

1. What are the livelihood challenges faced by the rural people?
2. What are the infrastructural needs of the rural people?
3. How does the program implement at village level?
4. How far are the MGNREGS guidelines suitable to the context of Mizo villages?
5. How far the works carried out under MGNREGS match the livelihood challenges of rural people?
6. What are the institutional constraints to the implementation of the program at village level?

7. How does the program benefit the rural communities and households?
8. How far the program meets the infrastructural needs of the villages?
9. Are there any unintended consequences of this program?
10. How are the popular perceptions of the impact of the program mediated by their socio-economic and political background?

3.2.3. Research Design

The study is exploratory in its design. It was based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods. Abstract of Village Survey (2011-12) published by LAD (Local Administration Department), Government of Mizoram and Office records of DRDA (District Rural Development Agency) constitute the secondary data.

3.2.3.1. Sampling

Unit of the study is the village and all the villages in Lunglei district constitute the population of the study.

Secondary data related to all villages in Lunglei district is collected from LAD. A multi-stage random sampling procedure was used to select blocks, villages, and respondents.

The first stage is the selection of blocks. Out of four blocks in Lunglei, one block proximate to the district headquarters and one block distant to that was purposively chosen. In the second stage, eight villages were chosen based on the available indicators of development. Eight villages from both most developed and least developed category of villages were chosen based on the indicators of socio-economic development. The third stage is the selection of respondents. For the selection of respondents, quota sampling method was used to select the respondents from the villages. A total of 120 sample was selected from eight villages- Pangzawl, Mualthuam N, Rawpui, TawipuiN, Tawipui S, Thuampui, Mualcheng S and Vanhne. The sample size for the survey is 64 where 40 respondents from

the high level of village development and 24 respondents from villages with the low level of development were selected. A total number of 40 samples are included in Focus Group Discussion and 8 Key Informants from both high and low level of village development with a total of 16 Key Informants constitute the sample

3.2.3.2. Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

The study is based on primary data collected through qualitative and participatory methods. Semi-structured interview schedule, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and PRA techniques such as social map, services, and opportunities map and timeline were employed to collect the data. Collection and sought information on the socio-economic information, livelihood challenges, the infrastructure required and impact of MGNREGS.

The primary data collected through a semi-structured interview schedule was processed with the help of MS Excel. Quantitative was analyzed using SPSS while qualitative data was analyzed with the help of QDA miner and Visual Anthropac (Borgatti. 1996). Visual Anthropac was used to analyze the free listing data collected with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule. To analyze the data percentages, ranks, cross tabulation and Smith's salience were used.

In this chapter, an attempt has been made to present the setting of the present study and also the methodological aspects. In the next chapter, the results and discussion are presented.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The studies on employment guarantee and rural development in general focus on the perception of rural people on the implementation, physical and financial performances and its impact on the infrastructural development of villages and livelihoods of the households. In this chapter, results of the analysis of secondary as well as primary data are discussed. This chapter is presented in three sections. The first section is devoted to present the financial and physical achievements of Lunglei district under MGNREGS. In the second section, the results of the analysis of qualitative data collected through key informant interview with the village leaders on the actual implementation of the MGNREGS and its impact at the community level are presented.

4.1. Performance of Lunglei District under MGNREGS

The performance and expenditure of funds under MGNREGS till 31st March 2016 in Lunglei district are highlighted below.

Financial Performance

Financial performance under MGNREGS in Lunglei district is categorized into receipt and expenditure. They briefly highlight the amount of total fund received along with the share of both the state and central government. The fluctuation of the amount of fund is witness though job card holders are increasing every financial year. The opening balance has declined every financial year except for 2009-10 and 2011-12 and variation in the central share is witnessed while the state share is reduced. The availability of the amount of fund is also continuously changing. The category of expenditure is divided into unskilled wages, Material (Including Skilled & Semi- Skilled wages) and administrative cost Expenditure on the

unskilled wages is significantly higher than Material, Including Skilled & Semi- Skilled wages, and administrative cost because the scheme primarily focuses on unskilled manual work.

Table 4.1 Available Fund Received From the State and Central Governments (In Lakhs)

Financial Year	Opening Balance	Central Share	State Share	Interest Receipt	Total Funds Available
2007-2008	127(12.0)	902.18(84.9)	30.57(2.9)	2.682(0.3)	1,062.43(100)
2008-2009	35.762(0.8)	4,190.15(88.4)	487.02(10.3)	25.092(0.5)	4,738.02(100)
2009-2010	51.2(1.3)	3,693.26(93.1)	221.55(5.6)	2.236(0.1)	3,968.25(100)
2010-2011	50.04(0.8)	5,698.81(90.3)	538.093(8.5)	23.379(0.4)	6,310.32 (100)
2011-2012	169.18(2.4)	6,284.98(89.8)	512.581(7.3)	31.236(0.4)	6,997.98 (100)
2012-2013	46.262(0.9)	4,459.43(87.9)	534.031(10.5)	35.312(0.7)	5,075.04 (100)
2013-2014	42.32(0.9)	4,684.67(94.9)	198.31(4.0)	11.243(0.2)	4,936.55 (100)
2014-2015	0.2(0.0)	2,088.92(100.0)	0(0.0)	0.78(0.0)	2,089.90 (100)
2015-2016	0.56(0.0)	5057.53(95.1)	252.698(4.8)	6.23(0.1)	5,317.02 (100)

Source: District Rural Development Agency (Lunglei) report.

Table 4.2 Trends in Funds Utilization under MGNREGS in Lunglei District

Financial Year	Available	Utilised	Utilisation %
2007-2008	1,062.43	1027.668	96.73
2008-2009	4,738.02	4686.823	98.92
2009-2010	3,968.25	3918.21	98.74
2010-2011	6,310.32	6141.142	97.32
2011-2012	6,997.98	6951.715	99.34
2012-2013	5,075.04	5032.715	99.17
2013-2014	4,936.55	4936.545	100
2014-2015	2,089.90	2089.33	99.97
2015-2016	5,317.02	5317.02	100

Source: District Rural Development Agency (Lunglei) report

Table 4.3 Pattern of Expenditure in Lunglei District under MGNREGS

Financial Year	Unskilled Wages	Material (Including Skilled & Semi- Skilled wages)	Administrative Cost	Total
2007-2008	975.598(94.9)	0(0.0)	52.07(5.1)	1027.67(100)
2008-2009	3,962.48(84.5)	552.285 (11.8)	172.061 (3.7)	4686.82(100)
2009-2010	2,785.24(71.1)	900.97(23.0)	232(5.9)	3918.21(100)
2010-2011	3,605.61(58.7)	2,187.49(35.6)	348.04(5.7)	6141.14(100)
2011-2012	4,300.60(61.9)	2,516.22(36.2)	134.891(1.9)	6951.72(100)
2012-2013	3,910.54(77.7)	817.676(16.2)	304.502(6.1)	5032.72(100)
2013-2014	4,047.15(82.0)	666.6(13.5)	222.8(4.5)	4936.55(100)
2014-2015	1,321.38(63.2)	662.87(31.7)	105.08(5.0)	2089.33(100)
2015-2016	4479.16(84.2)	574.82(10.8)	263.04(4.9)	5317.02(100)

Source: District Rural Development Agency (Lunglei) report.

Physical Performance

The physical performance is categorized into employment generation and works taken up and completed. Employment generation focus on the cumulative number of household provided, cumulative numbers of person-days generated and the number of employment provided which were constantly changing. It highlighted the fluctuation in the number of employment provided to the beneficiaries. The differences in the amount of fund received are considered to be the main cause.

Works taken up and completed within the district includes rural connectivity, any other work, land development, Water conservation, renovation of traditional water bodies and water harvesting, works on individual land and BNRGSK representing the nature of work taken up for every financial year. At the initial stage, rural connectivity and land development are highly prioritized. The present nature of work gives importance to work on individual land and water conservation apart from the formerly prioritized works.

Table 4.4 Infrastructure Development in Lunglei District under MGNREGS
(Works Taken up and Completed in No.)

Financial Year	Rural Connectivity	Land Development	Water conservation and water harvesting	BNR GSK	Other Works	Total
2007-2008	25(7.1)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	(0.0)	329(92.9)	354(100)
2008-2009	227(93.8)	15(6.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	242(100)
2009-2010	210(77.8)	60(22.2)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	270(100)
2010-2011	50(33.1)	20(13.2)	25(16.6)	56(37.1)	0(0.0)	151(100)
2011-2012	321(79.9)	15(3.7)	20(5.0)	46(11.4)	0(0.0)	402(100)
2012-2013	223(89.2)	0(0.0)	25(10.0)	0(0.0)	2(0.8)	250(100)
2013-2014	210(65.2)	110(34.2)	2(0.6)	0(0.0)	0(0.0)	322(100)
2014-2015	148(11.3)	989(75.8)	5(0.4)	102(7.8)	61(4.7)	1305(100)
2015-2016	271(9.8)	1117(40.4)	123(4.5)	0(0.0)	245(8.9)	2763(100)

Source: District Rural Development Agency (Lunglei) report.

Table 4.5 Employment Generation in Lunglei District under MGNREGS

Financial Year	Cumulative No. of Households Provided Employment	Cumulative No of Person-days Generated (In Lakhs)	No. of days Employment Provided
2007-2008	31,905	2.02	28
2008-2009	33,569	36.032	111
2009-2010	33,910	27.04	80
2010-2011	33,469	31.821	100
2011-2012	33,338	33.338	100
2012-2013	33,357	28.753	75
2013-2014	33,756	27.345	78
2014-2015	34,621	7.773	23
2015-2016	36,137	33.775	72

Source: District Rural Development Agency (Lunglei) report.

Payment of Wages and Trends in Wage Rate:

Payment of wages under MGNREGS must be done only through Bank or Post Office account. However, the areas without a bank or post office could establish Payment Committee with the acknowledgment of Central Government.

The amount of wages under MGNREGS has been revised for ninth times:

Table 4.6 Wage rate under MGNREGS

Year	Wage Rate(Rs)
2007-08	110
2008-09	110
2009-10	103
2010-11	110
2011-12	129
2012-13	136
2013-14	148
2014-15	170
2015-16	183
2016-17	188
2017-18	194
2018-19	194

Source: District Rural Development Agency (Lunglei) report.

4.2. Leaders Perception on MGNREGS and Its Impact

Key informant interviews (KII) are a qualitative interview with a selected group of individuals or informants who are considered to be knowledgeable in providing primary information in regards to a particular topic.

KIIs were conducted using Key Informant Interview Guide among Village Council members and People’s representatives who are also members of Village Employment Council (VEC). A total number of sixteen Key Informant Interviews were conducted in eight villages with two informants from each sample villages. The following subsections summarise the results of the analysis of KIIs.

4.2.1 Community Infrastructure and Livelihood

Findings from key informants across eight villages indicate the major infrastructural requirements revolves around infrastructure in terms of agriculture and allied economic activities as they are the main sources of income. Water and sanitation constitute the top priority in each village where public water channel, water storage, water point and renovation of traditional water bodies remain the center of focus. Public urinal, public toilet, and

bathroom and side drain are regarded highly required where construction of side drain is the only work taken up so far under MGNREGS. The focus is extended to education and healthcare services in the community where three out of eight villages provide the salary of teachers working in Higher Secondary School established solely by the community respectively. Health care services in terms of establishment and improvement of the existing health care centers like sub-center and PHC including the strengthening of ASHA are inadequate. The recreational centers and facility playground, indoor stadium, volleyball court etc. are highly inadequate in the sample villages, especially among youth. Public information system, the safety, and security of the community are important areas.

Livelihood challenges faced in the community are mainly in terms of the sources and livelihood activities focus on agriculture and other economic activities with no significant difference as compared to the infrastructure required in this area. Majority of the population in the sample villages are dependent upon agriculture for their livelihood. Transportation of agricultural products requires agricultural link road where many of their product gets damaged using the traditional form of transportation such as head load leaving the farmers or cultivator with a great loss despite the number of efforts given as well as production. Even after transportation, marketing of agricultural products to become a serious issue with price drop forcing the farmers to sell at a cheap rate or not sell at all. Thus, agriculture becomes the major source of livelihood with less profit since other forms of income in the manual sector is rare and irregular. However, few carpentry and handloom dependents are found with issues in terms of either raw materials and equipment or both. Challenges in education, healthcare services, banking, safety, security etc. are shared as issues relating to livelihood as well as infrastructure.

4.2.2 Planning under MGNREGS at the village level

Planning is an integral part of the effectiveness of MGNREGS at the village level. The collaboration at the village level and block level ensure and carry out the most suitable plan for village development prior to the community people.

4.2.3 Participants in the planning process

In general, planning has been carried out by Gram Sabha meeting to determine the nature of work (projects) and its location. Different villages undergo different processes with the participants which vary. The participants in the planning are mainly Village Employment Council, VLA and community people called Gram Sabha. A rare occurrence where VMC participate in the planning was found through their main role is to monitor. The organization of Gram Sabha meeting is sometimes an issue where many community people do not acknowledge the importance of finding it less productive to spend time in a meeting than engage in their personal work.

4.2.4 Selection of Projects under MGNREGS

Decentralization of power is an important aspect of MGNREGS giving the people decision making power in the process of moving from a traditional top-down approach to a bottom-up approach. The scheme empowers the people by giving power through Gram Sabha meeting. The selection of project/work is based on the priority given by Gram Sabha meeting where the community people decide the most suitable projects under the scheme for their community. The final decision was submitted to block level as the final work proposal.

4.2.5 Selection of location/sites of the project

The selection of project location differs but Gram Sabha is an apex body deciding the location of the project in each village. Projects having importance at community level such as

internal link road, rural connectivity etc. is decided in the meeting. Household related projects like fish pond, contour, dug out pond and other works under work on individual land are mainly planned using the notification given by the Village Employment Council. The VEC notify the community people on available projects under work on individual land where interested households are informed to submit their names to the VEC. A list is made from the submitted names for each available projects which are again submitted at block level after finalization.

4.2.6 Selection of beneficiaries

The selection of beneficiaries under MGNREGS is done through the provisions made in the operational guidelines. Each household in the community is eligible to apply for job card as job card holders are the only beneficiary under the scheme. The operational guidelines state that those who apply for job card must be Indian citizen with possession of Adhaarcard, ration card, voter's ID and personal bank account. Village Employment Council selected who met the criteria for application of job card after the community people themselves provide the essential requirements which are again moved to the higher level for processing.

4.2.7 Implementation of MGNREGS at the Village Level

The Village Employment Council is the apex body of implementation of MGNREGS at the village level. Implementation of MGNREGS is based on the work order issued from block level determining the type of project, Location/worksites and the number of working days. Work under MGNREGS is occasionally diverted regarding the location where such project is unsuitable or when the landowner is not willing under work on the individual land. The quality of work performed under MGNREGS is monitored and checked by the Vigilance and Monitoring Committee (VMC).

4.2.8 Suitability of Operational Guidelines

The operational guidelines under MGNREGS are considered unsuitable by the community people at village level. It was the perception of the village people that the guidelines are based on the mainland village community where conditions are totally different as compared to Mizoram context.

The existing work culture and provisions made in the operational guidelines are not in line leading to many negative adverse effects. The amount of expected working hour and the actual working hour are comparatively different. Use of machinery in difficult terrain was witnessed in each village despite the guidelines banned any form of inclusion of machine in any projects. The actual number of working days in the work order is hardly met where half or two third of the days of the work order is undertaken. It reveals that people get their wages even without completion of the expected working days and working hours. The scheme is considered to be demand-driven while it became supply based because of insufficient funding in the ground reality. Many informants stated that the mandatory payment of wages through the banking system compelled the villagers to travel a long distance to the nearest bank. This has resulted in waste of time and money.

4.2.9 Work, Worksite Facilities, and Wage Payment

The implementation of work at village level was carried out by VEC based on the work order received from block level where only job card holders can be the beneficiaries. The worksite facilities are rarely found and considered to be nonexistent. Findings indicate that worksite facilities are not requirements against the operational guidelines. It was considered that any individual who comes to work must not be exempted from work since many households tend to send the weakest member in their family. The sample villages are tied by a strong belief that individual must work to earn unless there is no other option in

manual labor under MGNREGS or not. The inclusion of the aged who are unable to work and bringing children to worksite are considered inappropriate not by the rules but morality.

The delay in payment of wages is considered a major problem in each village. The beneficiaries often wait for a month to get their wages affecting income and expenditure. The mode of payment which is deposited in the personal bank account is accompanied by difficulty in gaining access to the bank because of long distance and sharing of a single bank by many villages result in money and time wastage.

4.2.10 Impact of MGNREGS at the Village Level

The implementation of MGNREGS has both a positive and negative effect in the rural community. The increase in income and improvements in both livelihood conditions and infrastructure is accompanied by cultural and social adverse effect.

The main positive impact is based on income generation among rural communities where few households entirely depend on wages of MGNREGS to meet their daily needs. Improvements in the form of an increase in savings were not found rather spent their wage in the form of credit even before wage is received. The scheme still does not meet the needs of the community despite its contribution to the rural community. Works carried under MGNREGS to improve the infrastructural requirement are also still inadequate in the sample villages.

4.2.11 Impact of MGNREGS at the Community Level

The scheme has a great impact on the community infrastructural development. Works available under the scheme has been widely utilized by the community people themselves. Variation in the nature of work taken up by the people is seen at the village.

Land development

Land development is one of the major works which proves to be effectively utilized in the village. The renovation of an existing land or creation of new in the form of agricultural purpose is popular. Terracing is the most common one due to the topography of the village land. Like most other villages in Mizoram, the villages are surrounded by hills and valleys where cultivation in those areas become almost impossible. Some places are steep and rocky with low agricultural production so terracing is done in those land for increasing production and settled cultivation. However, the desired result is not yet achieved due to mixed farming.

Rural Connectivity

Rural connectivity is highly prioritized. Here, the existing link roads were renovated and new roads were constructed. After which those constructed roads are again transformed into paving for smooth and easy transportation. The villages have been renovating the existing link roads into paving and a number of new roads were constructed out of which some of them are still under construction.

Works on individual land

Since the scheme allows to apply for work on the individual land, rural households apply for work in their land. This kind of work is mainly for household benefits yet it provides wages for every job card holders in the villages. This applied to other aspects as well as long as the work is on individual land.

Any other work

The above mentioned are the major forms of work through the scheme in the villages. Apart from these, three villages out of eight villages established HSSLC where the salary of

the teachers was provided from the donation of village people from MGNREGS wages as per their choice.

4.2.12 Institutional Constraints

The Village council members along with one additional member from the people constitute the Village employment Council. The key informants felt the absence any major constraint in the functioning of Village Employment Council. However, the Village Council members felt that it is better to dissolve VEC handing over all the work to VC because virtually the village council does most of the work of implementation of MGNREGS. Vigilance Monitoring Committee (VMC) which was is established to monitor the works under MGNREGS has no funding so the members do not actively monitor the work. Hence the VC members felt the need for dissolution of VMC also.

4.2.13 Beneficiaries the Benefits of MGNREGS and Unintended Consequences

All the households in the community who met the criteria of the operational guidelines possess job card and become the beneficiary of the scheme. In terms of socio-economic status, AAY, PHH, and Non-NFSH ranging from the poorest, poor and non-poor in the rural community is the beneficiary as long as they are willing to do unskilled manual work.

In the perception of the leaders of the communities studied the scheme benefitted the rural community at both household and village level. Findings indicate that rural household improves their living conditions through additional income. It further improves the ownership of household assets for rural households directly through the increase in money holding and indirectly by making use of money earned other than MGNREGS. The face of the rural community is transformed under the scheme where internal link road and other community infrastructure were created and improved. Informants state that there are significant changes

and differences in comparison to before and after the implementation of MGNREGS in terms of community infrastructure.

Majority of informants mention that the implementation of MGNREGS effects the existing work culture in the rural community in Mizoram. People develop working culture where previously regular hour of working is considered heavy workload which the rural community people refer to as ‘**MGNREGS work culture**’ resulting into laziness. The organization of the traditional form of voluntary services called ‘*Hnatlang*’ is difficult and unique quality of Mizos called ‘*Tlawmngaihna*’ is depleted. Apart from that, the decrease in the amount of work, less effort and lack of sense of ownership/belongingness resulted in poor quality of work.

4.3. People’s Perception on MGNREGS

The core of this chapter is the perception of people on MGNREGS. To understand the people’s perception semi structured interview schedule was used. The collected data was systematically analysed with SPSS, Anthropic and QDA miner.

4.3.1 Profile of Respondents

The profile of respondents is divided into four sub sections such as the demographic profile, social characteristics, economic characteristics and political characteristics based the high and low level of village development.

4.3.1.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics were divided into Gender, Age group, Educational status, marital status, forms of family and types of family among the villages based on the high and low level of village development

There is a difference in the pattern of the distribution of persons by gender in both high and low develop villages. The high develop villages have a higher proportion of male population constituting two-thirds of the population (68%) over female population (33%) where the population distribution among low develop villages highlight higher female population (58%) over male population (42%) among the respondents. The overall distribution of gender across the sample highlights the dominant of the male population (58%) over female (42%).

Age is an important asset as it indicates the eligibility of a person in getting employment or work. Age group of the rural population plays an important role in determining the maturity and workforce in rural areas. The respondents were categorized into Youth (18-35), Middle Aged (36-59) and Elderly (60 and above). Based on these classifications, the majority of the population falls under middle-aged constituting 61% while youth comprised 14% and elderly comprised 25% of the respondents.

However, the sample age group differs between village developments. Middle-aged group constituted more than half of the respondents in high develop villages (55%) and more than two third of respondents in low developed villages (72%). Youth comprised less than one-fourth of the respondents in high developed villages (20%) and significantly low (4%) in low developed villages. Elderly comprises one-fourth of the respondents in both high and low developed villages (25%). The overall findings indicate that most of the respondents belong to the middle-aged group.

Educational status is a significant component which determines the social status and nature of work. Educational status was classified into Primary (1-5), Middle (6-8), high school (9-10), higher secondary (11-12), and UG (Graduate and above). More than one-third of the respondents (41%) attained a primary level of education, followed by middle (30%),

high school (22%), higher (5) and bachelor and above (3%). The primary level of education is dominant among high develop villages (43%) where a middle level is dominant among low develop villages (42%).

Majority of the respondents were married (80%). The percentage of married respondents were high in both high (78%) and low village development (83%). Unmarried category (15%) is seen only among high develop village and divorced (4%) only in low develop village. Widow (4%) is witnessed only in low develop villages and widower (8%) constitute the same in both high and low villages.

In terms of the type of family, the majority of the respondents were constituted by the nuclear family (95%). Nuclear family constitutes 93% in high develop villages and 100% in low develop villages. A small portion of 8% is found only among high develop villages.

All the respondents belong to a stable form of the family with a distribution of 100% in both high develop villages and low develop villages.

4.3.1.2 Social Characteristics

The social characteristics of the respondents include subtribe, clan, and denomination. Majority of the respondents belong to Lusei (83%) followed by Lai (6%), Ralte (3%) and other smaller sub-tribes. The Lusei sub tribe is distributed among high develop (88%) and low develop villages (75%). Lai sub-tribe were distributed with the variance of 3% among the high level of village development and 21% among the low level of village development. Other sub-tribes like Ralte (5%), Mara (3%) and Gurkhali (3%) were found only among villages with a high level of development.

The second indicator of social characteristics is the clan with a composition of a commoner and ruling clan. Majority of the respondents belong to a commoner in both villages with the high level of development (70%) and low level of development (96%)

which make up 80% of the total respondents. The respondents belonging to ruling clan are significantly lower than commoner with 30% in villages with the high level of development and 4% among villages with the low level of development with a total of 20% out of the total respondents.

Religion is important aspects of social characteristics and all the respondents belong to Christianity. The distribution of different denominations within Christianity differs. Respondents belonging to BCM constitute 75% and 83% in villages with a high level of development and low level of development with total respondents belong the denomination is 78%. UPC and Presbyterian constitute 15% and 5% in villages with the high level of development and 8% and 4% in villages with the low level of development. Other smaller denominations like Seventh Day Adventist constitute 4% only in villages with the low level of development and Salvation Army constitute 5% only in villages with the high level of development.

4.3.1.3 Economic Characteristics

The economic characteristics of the respondents were assessed based on socio-economic status and the main source of income or occupation. The criteria used for the identification of the socio-economic status is based on the criteria enforced by the Department of Food, Civil Supplies, and Consumer Affairs, Government of India.

The respondents belonging to Non-NFSA, previously called APL, constitute almost half of the respondents (41%) with the distribution of 40% and 42% in villages with the high level of development and low level of development. Out of the total respondents, 39% of the total respondents belong to PHH which was previously called BPL. The category of PHH is higher in villages with the high level of development (45%) as compared to villages with the low level of development (29%). A small number of respondents fall in the category of very

poor (AAY) with 20% in total and divided into 15% and 29% in villages with high level and low level of development.

The occupation of respondents highlight the livelihood conditions to a great degree which makes it an important component with respect to the economic characteristics. More than half of the total respondents belong to the category of a farmer as main occupation (70%). Farmer's percentage differs between villages with high (78%) and low level of development (58%). Respondents belong to both government employee and uncategorized (others) made the same percentage i.e. 11%. Government employee made up 13% and 8% in villages with the high and low level of development where others constitute 5% and 21% in villages with the high and low level of development.

4.3.1.4 Political Characteristics

The political aspects of the respondents help identify the level of participation in different Community-Based Organization and the dominant political party among the respondents. More than one-third of the respondents (41%) belong to the category of MHIP with a variation of 30% in villages with the high level of development and 58% in villages with the low level of development. It was followed by YMA with 38% in total with a division of 43% and 29% in villages with a high and low level of development. Respondents belonging to MUP constitute 25% and 13% in villages with the high and low level of development with a total of 20% from all the respondents. A few numbers of respondents who do not belong to these categories made up 3% only among villages with the high level of development making up 2% in total.

The domination of INC was found among the respondents with 55% which constitute more than half of the respondents. Respondents belonging to INC are distributed among villages with the high and low level of development with the variance of 58% and 50%. In

terms of political affiliation, respondents affiliated to MNF make up to 20% and 21% in both villages with the high and low level of development with a total of 20%. A smaller number of respondents affiliated to BJP made up 5% and 4% in villages with the high and low level of development scoring 5% in total. However, the respondents who do not have affiliation in any political party were found in both categories of villages with 20% in total with the difference of 18% and 25% in villages with the high and low level of development. They are mostly made up of a government employee and others who do not pay interest to the political party and refer to themselves as neutral.

4.3.2 Livelihood Challenges

Livelihood challenges faced by the rural community are an important variable in this research because it is a determinant of what problems are present in the community. The pattern and sources of livelihood could be identified as a result. It is an integral part to identify livelihood challenges in order to find out the effectiveness of MGNREGS. In this study, results indicate that the major livelihood challenges and agriculture are highly related in terms of production, transportation, and marketing. Irregular form of income and lack of a stable source of income is witnessed in a great degree. Though steps have been taken for the construction of water point and renovation of traditional water bodies, scarcity of water remain a big problem in the rural community. The village community also faced a serious problem in terms of financial capital, employment, materials, and marketing in the areas of handloom, marketing of livestock including dependency on both river and forest products as the main source of livelihood. However, agricultural link road remains the center of livelihood challenges since rural communities based their livelihood mainly on agriculture and its related activities. The overall pattern shows that major livelihood challenges faced in rural areas can be reduced to a high degree through improvement of agriculture and allied activities.

The background characteristics of livelihood challenges indicate that there is no significant differences in terms of village development among low and high develop villages, male and female, ruling party and other parties, and poor and non-poor regarding livelihood challenges. The perceptions of livelihood challenges in terms of gender do not differ among the high and low level of village development, political party, and social classes. In the same way, differences in political party and social classes do not show differences in perception. The overall finding proved that there are no significant differences in the perception of livelihood challenges as a result of differences in village development, gender, political party and social class.

4.3.3 Infrastructure Needs Perceived

Community infrastructure is an important component in the area of rural development. Respondents were asked the community infrastructure required by their community based on their perception. The result of the study revealed that a public urinal (50%) is still given the first priority which indicates that the rural community is aware at the same time lack resources to build them. Difficulty in gaining access to a bank (29.7%) is found out since payment of wages under MGNREGS was done through the personal bank account. The recreational place for youth like a playground (28.1%) is given importance having a high rate of salience. Water storage and link road score high as ever among infrastructure required among village community. Rural community realizes their needs in terms of health, sanitation and cleanliness (table), as well as the public safety like street light and police outpost including the public information system, are given great importance.

The infrastructural needs of the rural community are centered to agricultural link road. A significant relationship between livelihood challenges and the infrastructural requirement has been seen as they share similar major issue affecting all other problems. The

pattern shows that the perceived infrastructural requirement is based on the main source of livelihood i.e. Agriculture.

In general, the perception of the people regarding infrastructure requirement in the community does not differ in terms of village development, gender, political party and social class. Both the villages of the low and high level of development, male and female, ruling party and other parties and poor and non-poor highlighted similarities in terms of infrastructure required.

4.3.4 Infrastructural development projects were taken up under MGNREGS

The infrastructural development project undertaken based on the perception of the community highlight the level of awareness with regards to MGNREGS in the villages. Land development (100%) and work on individual land (100%) are undertaken in each sampled villages. Rural connectivity (25%) is less despite it was one of the highly prioritized infrastructures required at the community. Renovation of traditional water bodies (23.4%) is also very low though the scarcity of water is a serious problem. Other infrastructural development projects like dugout and farm pond (51.6%), contour (50%) and fish pond (45.3%) are highly related to livelihood.

The perception on Infrastructural development projects taken up under MGNREGS indicates that there is no significant differences in terms of village development among low and high develop villages, male and female, ruling party and other parties, and poor and non-poor. The perception of infrastructural development projects taken up under MGNREGS in terms of gender does not differ among the high and low level of village development, political party, and social classes. In the same way, differences in political party and social classes do not show differences in perception. The overall finding proved that there are no significant differences in the perception of Infrastructural development projects taken up

under MGNREGS as a result of differences in village development, gender, political party and social class.

4.3.5 Perceived Benefits of MGNREGS

The implementation and projects taken up under MGNREGS have certain impact among rural community. These benefits include infrastructural improvements and livelihood promotion. Since rural community is mainly based on agriculture in terms of livelihood, transportation of agricultural products (30%) and better transportation within the community (44%) rank the highest which act as the major benefits. Land development, contour, terracing etc. helps increase the quantity of agricultural production (23%). Link road within the community and other infrastructure like toilet, community hall, side drain etc. become great benefits for rural dwellers.

The overall perception of the people regarding the benefits of MGNREGS in the community does not differ in terms of village development, gender, political party and social class. Both the villages of the low and high level of development, male and female, ruling party and other parties and poor and non-poor highlighted similarities in terms of benefits of MGNREGS.

4.3.6 Constraints in the utilization of MGNREGS

Though MGNREGS prove to be a scheme that enhances rural living conditions and infrastructural development, there are some constraints in its utilization. The long process of job card application (75%) is rated highest among them. Many newly migrated and neo-local family constituting 18.8% fail to meet the requirements leading to inability in gaining benefits from the scheme. The felt needs of the community are often failed to be addressed since the proposed work order are altered at block level leaving the community think that the village level priority is not addressed. The period of issue of work order does not fall upon the power of the village community which leads to problems in terms of utilization of

MGNREGS when the issue of work order and working season (mainly agriculture) falls in the same time. A response of 9.4% state that the regular source of income and economic activities are effected leaving the people to work under MGNREGS.

4.3.7 Unintended Consequences of MGNREGS

MGNREGS have certain unintended consequences among rural community among which laziness (66.7%) is considered to be a big problem. The village community felt that quality of work (23.8%) and work culture (41.3%) are greatly affected. Many people tend to developed dependency (12.7%) on MGNREGS which over time leads to an increase in debts (9.5%). The operational guidelines were considered to be unsuitable (7.9%) for the rural community in Mizoram in terms of wage payment, amount of wage, worksite facilities, duration of work etc. The increase in money earning has the unexpected outcome where youth are drawn to substance abuse.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to present the results of analysis of secondary and primary data collected. In the next chapter, the summary of the findings are presented. The conclusion and suggestions of the present study are also presented in the last chapter.

Table 4.7 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Sl.No	Characteristic	Village Development		Total N = 64
		High n = 40	Low n = 24	
I	Gender			
	Male	27 (68)	10 (42)	37 (58)
	Female	13 (33)	14 (58)	27 (42)
II	Age Group			
	Youth(18 - 35)	8 (20)	1 (4)	9 (14)
	Middle(36 - 59)	22 (55)	17 (71)	39 (61)
	Old(60 and Above)	10 (25)	6 (25)	16 (25)
III	Educational Status			
	Primary	17 (43)	9 (38)	26 (41)
	Middle	9 (23)	10 (42)	19 (30)
	High School	11 (28)	3 (13)	14 (22)
	Higher Secondary School	1 (3)	2 (8)	3 (5)
	UG	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (3)
IV	Marital Status			
	Married	31 (78)	20 (83)	51 (80)
	Unmarried	6 (15)	0 (0)	6 (9)
	Divorced	0 (0)	1 (4)	1 (2)
	Widowed	0 (0)	1 (4)	1 (2)
	Widower	3 (8)	2 (8)	5 (8)
V	Type of family			
	Nuclear	37 (93)	24 (100)	61 (95)
	Join	3 (8)	0 (0)	3 (5)

Source: Computed Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 4.8.Social characteristics of respondents

Sl.No	Characteristic	Village Development		Total N = 64
		High n = 40	Low n = 24	
I	Sub-Tribe			
	Lusei	35 (88)	18 (75)	53 (83)
	Ralte	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (3)
	Hmar	0 (0)	1 (4)	1 (2)
	Lai	1 (3)	5 (21)	6 (9)
	Mara	1 (3)	0 (0)	1 (2)
	Gorkhali	1 (3)	0 (0)	1 (2)
II	Clan			
	Common	28 (70)	23 (96)	51 (80)
	Ruling	12 (30)	1 (4)	13 (20)
III	Denomination			
	BCM	30 (75)	20 (83)	50 (78)
	PCI	2 (5)	1 (4)	3 (5)
	UPC	6 (15)	2 (8)	8 (13)
	Seventh Day Adventist	0 (0)	1 (4)	1 (2)
	The Salvation Army	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (3)

Source: Computed Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 4.9. Economic characteristics of respondents

Sl.No	Characteristic	Village Development		Total N = 64
		High n = 40	Low n = 24	
I	Socio-Economic Status			
	AAY	6 (15)	7 (29)	13 (20)
	PHH	18 (45)	7 (29)	25 (39)
	Non-NFSA	16 (40)	10 (42)	26 (41)
II	Main Occupation			
	Farmer	31 (78)	14 (58)	45 (70)
	Government Employee	5 (13)	2 (8)	7 (11)
	Business	0 (0)	3 (13)	3 (5)
	Daily wage Laborer	2 (5)	0 (0)	2 (3)
	Others	2 (5)	5 (21)	7 (11)

Source: Computed Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 4.10. Political characteristics of respondents

Sl.No	Characteristic	Village Development		Total N = 64
		High n = 40	Low n = 24	
I	Village Organisation			
	YMA	17 (43)	7 (29)	24 (38)
	MHIP	12 (30)	14 (58)	26 (41)
	MUP	10 (25)	3 (13)	13 (20)
	None	1 (3)	0 (0)	1 (2)
II	Political Party Affiliation			
	INC	23 (58)	12 (50)	35 (55)
	MNF	8 (20)	5 (21)	13 (20)
	BJP	2 (5)	1 (4)	3 (5)
	None	7 (18)	6 (25)	13 (20)

Source: Computed Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 4.11. Livelihood Challenges

Sl.No	Livelihood Challenges	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Salience
1	Marketing of Agriculture Products	42.2	1.41	0.349
2	No Stable Source of Income	42.2	1.52	0.315
3	Agricultural Link Road	29.7	1.63	0.23
4	Scarcity of Water	23.4	1.4	0.197
5	Low Agricultural Production	10.9	1.71	0.082
6	Lack of Financial Capital	10.9	1.43	0.086
7	Lack of Employment	4.7	2.33	0.026
8	Marketing and Price Instability of Handloom Products	4.7	1.67	0.039
9	Subsidized Rate of Cotton	1.6	3	0.009
10	Poor Health Condition Leads To No Stable Source of Income	1.6	2	0.008
11	Subsidized Rate of Weeding Machine	1.6	4	0.006
12	Dependency On Forest Products	1.6	2	0.01
13	Marketing of Commercial Animal	1.6	3	0.005
14	Dependency On River Products	1.6	3	0.005

Source: Computed

Table 4.12 Background Characteristics and Livelihood Challenges: Spearman's rho

Sl.No	Variable	Village Development		Gender		Political Party		Social Class		Total
		Low	High	Male	Female	Ruling Party	Other Party	Non-Poor	Poor	
1	Low	1	.805**	.929**	.848**	.893**	.826**	.878**	.886**	.910**
2	High	.805**	1	.871**	.972**	.814**	.945**	.899**	.938**	.971**
3	Male	.929**	.871**	1	.838**	.876**	.857**	.809**	.964**	.937**
4	Female	.848**	.972**	.838**	1	.829**	.937**	.953**	.901**	.972**
5	Ruling Party	.893**	.814**	.876**	.829**	1	.697**	.890**	.815**	.869**
6	Other Party	.826**	.945**	.857**	.937**	.697**	1	.825**	.948**	.947**
7	Non-Poor	.878**	.899**	.809**	.953**	.890**	.825**	1	.810**	.924**
8	Poor	.886**	.938**	.964**	.901**	.815**	.948**	.810**	1	.968**
9	Total	.910**	.971**	.937**	.972**	.869**	.947**	.924**	.968**	1

Source: Computed

**P < 0.01 (2-tailed)

Table 4.13 Infrastructure Required

Sl.No	Infrastructure	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Salience
1	PublicUrinal	50	1.94	0.376
2	PublicToilet	29.7	2.84	0.156
3	Bank	29.7	1.58	0.257
4	Playground	28.1	2.17	0.186
5	PublicWaterStorage	26.6	2.35	0.166
6	InternalRoad	25	2.38	0.148
7	CommunityHall	18.8	2.25	0.138
8	AgriculturalLinkRoad	12.5	1.88	0.089
9	MarketShed	9.4	2.67	0.057
10	PublicInformationSystem	9.4	2.5	0.057
11	TelecommunicationTower	6.3	3	0.029
12	PublicBathroom	6.3	2	0.046
13	SideDrain	6.3	2.5	0.034
14	ReconstructionOfPHCBuilding	4.7	2.67	0.029
15	WaterPoint	4.7	1.33	0.045
16	WaterPumpHouse	4.7	4.33	0.021
17	WaterChannel	3.1	2	0.028
18	PoliceStation	3.1	2	0.02
19	Pavilion	3.1	1.5	0.026
20	PublicWaterPoint	3.1	1.5	0.023
21	UpgradeAh&VetyIntoDispensary	1.6	3	0.009
22	CemeteryHouse	1.6	7	0.004
23	StreetLight	1.6	9	0.002
24	InformationSystem	1.6	2	0.013
25	BasketballCourt	1.6	4	0.01
26	IndoorStadium	1.6	2	0.01
27	RecreationalCentre	1.6	4	0.006
28	ReconstructionOfSupplyGodown	1.6	5	0.003
29	ElectricitySub-Station	1.6	4	0.004
30	RenovationOfCommunityHall	1.6	2	0.014
31	RestHouse	1.6	5	0.003

Source: Computed

Table 4.14 Infrastructure Required: Spearman's rho

Sl.No	Variable	Village Development		Gender		Political Party		Social Class		Total
		Low	High	Male	Female	Ruling	Other	Non-Poor	Poor	
1	Low	1	.619**	.874**	.796**	.803**	.662**	1.000**	.619**	.885**
2	High	.619**	1	.770**	.843**	.784**	.770**	.619**	1.000**	.888**
3	Male	.874**	.770**	1	.692**	.872**	.646**	.874**	.770**	.897**
4	Female	.796**	.843**	.692**	1	.740**	.825**	.796**	.843**	.902**
5	Ruling Party	.803**	.784**	.872**	.740**	1	.502**	.803**	.784**	.864**
6	Other Party	.662**	.770**	.646**	.825**	.502**	1	.662**	.770**	.805**
7	Non-Poor	1.000**	.619**	.874**	.796**	.803**	.662**	1	.619**	.885**
8	Poor	.619**	1**	.770**	.843**	.784**	.770**	.619**	1	.888**
9	Total	.885**	.888**	.897**	.902**	.864**	.805**	.885**	.888**	1

Source: Computed

**P < 0.01 (2-tailed)

Table 4.15. Infrastructural Development Projects Taken up under MGNREGS

Sl.No	Project	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Salience
1	LandDevelopment	100	1.08	0.979
2	Work onIndividualLand	100	2.28	0.666
3	DugOut andFarmPond	51.6	4.55	0.16
4	Contour	50	3.66	0.242
5	FishPond	45.3	4.38	0.168
6	RuralConnectivity	25	2	0.188
7	Renovation ofTraditionalWaterBodies	23.4	2.73	0.105
8	Renovation ofCommunityHall	12.5	3	0.042
9	DugOutPond andFarmPond	4.7	3.67	0.013

Source: Computed

Table 4.16. Infrastructural Development Projects Taken up under MGNREGS: Spearman's rho

Sl.No	Variable	Village Development		Gender		Political Party		Social Class		Total
		Low	High	Male	Female	Ruling	Other	Non-Poor	Poor	
1	Low	1	.800*	.890**	.758*	.758*	.892**	.780*	.892**	.807*
2	High	.800*	1	.970**	.988**	.988**	.970**	.994**	.970**	.994**
3	Male	.890**	.970**	1	.945**	.945**	.988**	.957**	.988**	.964**
4	Female	.758*	.988**	.945**	1	1.000**	.958**	.982**	.958**	.994**
5	Ruling Party	.758*	.988**	.945**	1.000**	1	.958**	.982**	.958**	.994**
6	Other Party	.892**	.970**	.988**	.958**	.958**	1	.964**	1.000**	.976**
7	Non-Poor	.780*	.994**	.957**	.982**	.982**	.964**	1	.964**	.988**
8	Poor	.892**	.970**	.988**	.958**	.958**	1.000**	.964**	1	.976**
9	Total	.807*	.994**	.964**	.994**	.994**	.976**	.988**	.976**	1

Source: Computed

**P < 0.01 (2-tailed)

Table 4.17. Perceived Benefits of MGNREGS

Sl.No	Benefit	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Saliense
1	Better transportation within the community	44	1.5	0.34
2	Transportation of agricultural products	30	1.4	0.25
3	Increase agricultural production	23	2.1	0.14
4	Cleanliness of the community	22	1.2	0.20
5	Increase settled agriculture	19	1.3	0.17
6	Provide water for agricultural crops	19	1.6	0.15
7	Helps suffice the demand for water	9	1.2	0.09
8	Increase income	6	2.3	0.03
9	Proper sidedrain	6	2.3	0.03
10	Toilet for poor households	5	2.3	0.03
11	Increased production of fish	3	3.0	0.01
12	Marketing of agricultural products	2	4.0	0.01
13	Improved community hall	2	2.0	0.01

Source: Computed

Table 4.18. Perceived Benefits of MGNREGS: Spearman's rho

Sl.No	Variable	Village Development		Gender		Political Party		Social Class		Total
		Low	High	Male	Female	Ruling	Other	Non-Poor	Poor	
1	Low	1	.879**	.955**	.911**	.928**	.954**	.845**	.978**	.957**
2	High	.879**	1	.904**	.978**	.951**	.932**	.959**	.930**	.972**
3	Male	.955**	.904**	1	.891**	.897**	.959**	.836**	.965**	.967**
4	Female	.911**	.978**	.891**	1	.980**	.922**	.968**	.939**	.969**
5	Ruling Party	.928**	.951**	.897**	.980**	1	.893**	.927**	.948**	.960**
6	Other Party	.954**	.932**	.959**	.922**	.893**	1	.906**	.954**	.968**
7	Non-Poor	.845**	.959**	.836**	.968**	.927**	.906**	1	.864**	.922**
8	Poor	.978**	.930**	.965**	.939**	.948**	.954**	.864**	1	.982**
9	Total	.957**	.972**	.967**	.969**	.960**	.968**	.922**	.982**	1

Source: Computed

**P < 0.01 (2-tailed)

Table 4.19. Constraints in the Utilization of MGNREGS

Sl.No	Constraints	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Saliency
1	LongDurationOfIssueOfJobCard	75	1.27	0.664
2	LackOfKnowledgeOnApplicationProcess	18.8	1.25	0.172
3	InabilityToMeetTheRequirementsOf Newly Migrated	18.8	1	0.188
4	IssueOfWorkOrderDuringWorkingSeason	9.4	1.17	0.086
5	VillageLevelPriorityIsNotAddressed	1.6	2	0.008

Source: Computed

Table 4.20. Unintended Consequences of MGNREGS

Sl.No	Unintended Consequence	Frequency (%)	Average Rank	Saliency
1	Laziness	66.7	1.33	0.591
2	EffectWorkCulture	41.3	1.62	0.324
3	PoorQualityOfWork	23.8	2.07	0.142
4	DelayInPaymentOfWages	17.5	1.73	0.134
5	DependencyOnMGNREGS	12.7	3.38	0.045
6	IncreaseDebt	9.5	2.33	0.048
7	EffectMorality	7.9	2.8	0.044
8	TheGuidelinesNotApplicable	7.9	1.4	0.069
9	DifficultyInAccessToBank	7.9	2.4	0.055
10	UnsatisfactoryImplementingBody	6.3	2.75	0.032
11	IncompleteWorkInSomeProject	4.8	1	0.048
12	LackOfSenseOfBelongingnessOrOwnership	4.8	3	0.016
13	LowAmountOfWages	4.8	2	0.024
14	LessAmountOfWorkLoad	1.6	3	0.008
15	IncreaseSubstanceAbuse	1.6	2	0.011
16	ReduceOtherDevelopmentPrograms	1.6	1	0.016

Source: Computed

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present study attempts at understanding the perception of the rural people on MGNREGS and its impact at the village level in Lunglei district, Mizoram. The study employed the multimodal approach to collect data. It has employed primary and secondary data. Qualitative and participatory methods have also been used. In the last chapter, an attempt has been made to present the discussion on the results of data analysis. In this chapter, the salient findings, conclusion and suggestions are presented. Thus this chapter is organised into three sections highlighting the major findings, conclusion, and suggestion.

5.1 Major Findings

This section summarizes the findings of the analysis of primary and secondary data which are quantitative and qualitative in nature. This section is presented in six sections. The first section presents the socio economic context of the Lunglei district. The performance of MGNREGS in Lunglei district is described in the second section. In the third section, Community Infrastructure Requirements and Livelihood Challenges in the villages of Lunglei District were described. The fourth section presents Planning under MGNREGS at the village level in the context of Lunglei District. The fifth section present about the Implementation of MGNREGS. The last section presents the Impact of MGNREGS in the villages of Lunglei District.

5.1.1. The Socio Economic Context of Lunglei District

The research highlight that there is a huge difference between villages with the high level of development and villages with the low level of development in terms of community infrastructure. However, similarities in the source of livelihood and perception on MGNREGS among the rural communities were found. The community people are aware of

the provisions in the operational guidelines and there is no difference in the perception between the leaders and commoners.

Majority of the respondents belong to Lusei tribe dominated by commoners in terms of numbers where less than one-third of the respondents belong to the category of ruling at villages with the high and low level of development. With regards to religion, all respondents belong to Christianity with a dominant denomination, Baptist Church of Mizoram (BCM), constituting more than three fourth in total.

In terms of economic condition, the study reveals that the majority of them belong to the category of poor. The main occupation and sources of livelihood are based on agriculture and allied activities with few other sources of income for an individual with vocational skills and government employee revealing the low rate of livelihood diversification among rural community. With respect to the political aspects, the majority of them actively participated in the Community Based Organization. The dominant political party is INC followed by MNF and very few of them belong to BJP where almost one fourth do not affiliate themselves in any political party.

5.1.2. Performance of Lunglei District under MGNREGS

Performance under MGNREGS in Lunglei District is divided into the physical and financial performance. The fluctuation in terms of fund received and decrease in the amount of state share have been witnessed. Trends in Funds Utilization under MGNREGS in Lunglei District shows that almost all the total fund received are utilized for the administration, implementation and monitoring of work taken up under MGNREGS. The pattern in fundutilization shows higher rankin unskilled manual work over Material (Including Skilled & Semi- Skilled wages) with the increase in the expenditure for every financial year. Infrastructure Development in Lunglei District under MGNREGS (Works Taken up and completed)shows that the focus is on rural connectivity in the early stage of implementation.

The increase in land development was witnessed since 2013. Employment Generation in Lunglei District under MGNREGS shows the increase in the cumulative number of households provided with employment and fluctuation in the cumulative number of person-days generated. The number of days of employment provided does not meet the actual number of hundred days of work in every financial year.

5.1.3. Community Infrastructure Requirements and Livelihood Challenges

The infrastructure requirements and livelihood challenges revolve around agriculture and its related activities as agriculture is the main source of livelihood in rural areas. Agricultural link road is centered to the challenges and requirements to improve the living condition among rural communities. Similarities in terms of requirements in terms of health care services, education, banking, security, communication and information within the community are prior to the people's perception. The implementation of MGNREGS bring forth the desired changes in improving rural community infrastructure and the livelihood through the provision of economic activities in rural areas. However, limitations have been witnessed in response to those challenges and requirements due to the unexpected decrease in the number of person day generated within each financial year including the low amount of wage.

5.1.4. Planning under MGNREGS at the village level

Planning under MGNREGS is done through Gram Sabha meeting mainly consist of community people, VLA and VEC. The projects and location of the projects are selected based on priority given by Gram Sabha meeting where all the job card holder are the member of Gram Sabha. The selection of the project is based on the topography of the community identifying a suitable location for each project available except for work on the individual land. The result of the meeting, after finalization, is submitted to block level for processing.

5.1.5. Implementation of MGNREGS

Village employment Council is the apex body for the implementation of MGNREGS at the village level. Implementation is solely based on the work order received from block level where diversion of work and location was found out. Majority of rural community have their perception that the operational guidelines of MGNREGS are not suitable to the cultural, social and economic context of rural areas in Mizoram. Despite the provisions in the operational guidelines, many villages make use of machinery due to difficult terrain. Findings indicate differences between the amount of work day in the work order and the actual number of working days. The absence of worksite facilities was found out, in fact, rural community people do not find the need for worksite facilities. The delay in payment of wages despite being deposited to personal bank account including difficulty in access to a bank for remote/isolated villages was confirmed.

5.1.6. Impact of MGNREGS

MGNREGS has both positive and negative impact in rural areas. The implementation of MGNREGS, though more efforts are still required, respond to challenges faced in terms of livelihood and infrastructure in rural areas. The increase in income, agricultural production, and transportation of agricultural products are the positive results. The construction and improvements of community infrastructure have contributed to infrastructural development in rural areas. However, unintended consequences of MGNREGS, based on the perception of rural people, contributed to laziness affecting work culture which in turn result into poor quality of work and less amount of working hours in a day which the people themselves call as '**MGNREGS work culture**'. It is believed by the rural people that the scheme affects the unique characteristics of Mizoram called '**Tlawmngaihna** (altruism)'. With the increase in income, increase in debt in the rural community was confirmed.

5.2. Conclusion

The rural people in Lunglei district unanimously realize the need for better livelihood opportunities and community infrastructure in their villages irrespective of their gender and class differences. Livelihood challenges faced in these villages are centered around agriculture and allied activities as a vast majority of them depend on agriculture. Rural dwellers who constitute half of the population in Lunglei district suffer from lack of stable and productive income generation activities. The community physical infrastructures have been inadequate which restrict their access to better education, healthcare, banking etc. However, the emic perspective of the people and leaders on the livelihood challenges reveal that the rural community's high dependency on agriculture and the need for increasing agricultural production. In their perception improved road connectivity and facilities for transportation of agricultural products is most important infrastructure requirements of them which would contribute to better marketing and increased income.

The introduction of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is a significant step to address the livelihood challenges and infrastructural requirements faced in rural areas of Lunglei. It actually enables an increase in income with the provision of a hundred days of employment in unskilled manual work. The increase in income led to an increase in the monetary transactions within each of the rural communities which in turn resulted in addressing livelihood challenges of different nature. The construction and maintenance of community infrastructure helps changing the face of the community for the better.

A few flaws in the operational guidelines hinder the effectiveness of the scheme because the Lunglei district is different in terms of its hill topography, culture and social practices as compared to the plain areas in India. Defective implementation at different levels, instability of work order, delay in payment of wages, difficulty in access to the banking

system and many other issues are faced in the implementation of MGNREGS. The mode of payment becomes an issue as rural areas are yet to be linked with the banking system and access to the bank is difficult for many people who live in isolated and remote villages which have no regular transportation.

Even though the scheme brings forth a number of positive benefits since its implementation, it also has a certain negative impact on the work culture of rural people in Lunglei district. The works carried out under MGNREGS tend to be poor in quality and the community people lack a sense of ownership though they are meant for their own wellbeing. The increase in the income also led to an increase in lavish spending and so household debts have increased. As a result some of the people become highly dependent on the scheme. Apart from which incomplete work and inconsiderate selection of project site are also reported as the unintended consequence of the implementation of the scheme. However, in the overall assessment of MGNREGS and its impact from an emic perspective reveals greater positive impact in both the types of villages at high and low level of development.

5.3. Suggestions

In the light of the findings and conclusion of the present study, suggestions for policy making and further research are put forth in the following two subsections.

5.3.1 Suggestions for Policy Implication

The following suggestions have been made for policy making and social work advocacy based on the findings from the present study.

The operational guidelines of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme have flaws in respect to rural areas in Lunglei District, Mizoram. The unsuitability of provisions made in the guidelines has been encountered in many areas from planning, implementation, issue of work order and mode of payment of wages. The availability of worksite facilities has been inadequately implemented in rural areas. Use of

machinery in areas of difficult terrain is common though it is against the operational guidelines. The policy planning focuses mainly on mainland rural areas where the situation of rural areas in the selected study areas is left out. Thus, the following suggestion has been made based on the findings of the study.

1. The mode of wage payment is done through personal bank account and resulted into the need for emphasis on financial inclusion where remote and isolate villages are provided with access to bank through the establishment of bank near the villages.
2. The inadequacy of worksite facilities is a major problem felt in by the people and leaders. Every effort shall be made to provide the facilities so as to protect the people in case of accidents and injury.
3. Revision of the operational guidelines of MGNREGS so as to permit the use of machinery is required because of differences in the topography of Mizoram. The use of machinery need be permitted wherever manual labour proves to be ineffective.
4. The duration of issue of job card needs to be continuously checked in response to wastage of time from the application to the actual time of issue of job card.
5. The work proposal submitted by the Gram Shabha should be considered and prioritized before issue of work order. The nature of work under MGNREGS should be flexible and transfer of power on selection of nature of work to the village people. Thus, it will enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGS in promoting livelihood and infrastructure development.
6. Strengthening the VMC by providing adequate financial incentives is needed to improve the quality of work taken up under MGNREGS. At present in most of the villages studied the VMCs are defunct.

7. The extensive education programmes shall be organized for the people to develop a sense of ownership on the community infrastructure created under the scheme. At present, such a sense of ownership is found lacking.
8. The diversity in the topography and culture in India necessitate the need for the revision of the operational guidelines to suit of the needs of people in different regions of the country. The traditional top down approach in policy formulation leads to failure in realization of its goals due to the variations in ecology, culture and economic contexts of different regions of the country.

5.3.2. Suggestion for Future Research

Social work research on this scheme has been inadequate where the economists are the main actors in this area. Livelihood and infrastructure development is an integral part of the scheme providing a wide scope for social work studies. Apart from studies in rural areas, there are inadequate studies on the employment guarantee scheme from a social work perspective. Social work practitioners and researchers may be encouraged to take up research projects on MGNREGS. In the context of Mizoram, a state level study of MGNREGS focusing on the inter district variations in Mizoram will provide a clear picture on the planning, implementation and impact of MGNREGS on rural livelihood and infrastructural development in Mizoram.

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Employment Guarantee and Rural Development: People's Perception on MGNREGS in Lunglei District, Mizoram

Key Informant Interview Guide *(Confidential and for research purpose only)*

Locality:

Date of Interview:
Time of Interview:

I. Personal Profile

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Education Status:
4. Position:
5. Organization:
6. Political Party Affiliation:

II. Community Infrastructure and Livelihood

1. What are the livelihood challenges/problems/difficulties of people in the village?
2. What are the infrastructural needs/problems of the village?

III. Planning under MGNREGS: Inclusive, Participatory and Effective?

1. How is the planning being carried out under MGNREGS at village level?
2. Who are participating in the planning process?
3. How the projects under MGNREGS are selected?
4. How is the location of the projects (sites) under MGNREGS selected?
5. How the beneficiaries under MGNREGS are selected?

IV. Implementation of MGNREGS

1. How is the MGNREGS implemented in your village?
2. How far the MGNREGS guidelines are suitable to the cultural, social and economic context of the rural areas of Mizoram?
3. How far the job cards, work, worksite facilities and wage payments are implemented?

V. Impact of MGNREGS

1. How far the works carried out under MGNREGS meet the livelihood challenges of rural people? How far the programme meets the infrastructural needs of the villages?
2. What are the institutional constraints in the implementation of the programme at village level?
3. How does the MGNREGS programme benefit the rural communities?
4. How does the MGNREGS programme benefit households?
5. Who benefits from the MGNREGS programme?
6. Are there any unintended consequences of this programme?

Employment Guarantee and Rural Development:

People's Perception on MGNREGS in Lunglei District, Mizoram

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

(Confidential and for research purpose only)

Schedule No.

Date:

Time:

I. Profile of the Respondent

- House No/ Veng :
1. Name of the respondent :
 2. Sex : 1. Male; 2. Female
 3. Age :
 4. Education qualification :
 5. Marital status :
 6. Form of family : 1.Stable;2.Broken;3.Reconstituted;4.Others(specify)
 7. Type of Family :1.Joint;2.Nuclear;3.Single
 8. Sub-Tribe : 1.Lusei;2.Ralte;3.Hmar; 4.Lai; 5.Paite
/Mara/Others(specify)
 9. Clan (Specify) : 1. Common; 2. Ruling (specify)
 10. Denomination :
 11. Primary Occupation :
 12. Socio-economic status: 1. APL; 2. BPL; 3. AAY
 13. Position(s) in Village Organization(s):
 14. Political Party Affiliation:
 15. What infrastructural assets do you think your community requires at present?

Sl.No.	Infrastructure/Facility/Amenity
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	

16.What are the main livelihood challenges faced by the households in your community?

Sl.No.	Livelihood Challenge
1	
2	
3	

17. Name the infrastructure development projects undertaken under MGNREGS in your village?

Sl.No.	Infrastructure Project
1	
2	
3	

18. How do these infrastructure development projects benefit the people?

Sl.No.	Benefits/Uses/Utility
1	
2	
3	

19. Who benefitted from the implementation of the MGNREGS?

Sl.No.	Socio Demographic/Economic Background of Beneficiary
1	
2	
3	

20. What are the difficulties experienced by people in benefiting from the MGNREGS?

Sl.No	Constraints/Difficulties/Limitations
1	
2	
3	

21. What are the unexpected consequences/problems of MGNREGS?

Sl.No	Constraints/Difficulties/Limitations
1	
2	
3	

Introduction

The present study attempts to understand the implementation of MGNREGS and its impact on rural development in Lunglei District, Mizoram from an emic perspective.

Rural Development, according to the World Bank (1975), is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural area. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless. The World Bank and other international agencies and institutions placed emphasis on increasing production, raising productivity, increasing employment and mobilizing whatever land, labour and capital factors of production were available. At the same time, rural poverty and inequalities had to be reduced by development involving values and quality 'of life issues and the participation of the poor people in development activities and in decision-making. The central government has empowered Panchayati Raj institutions and other local-self-government to initiate and participate in development activities.

The population of India as per 2011 census was 1,210.19 million added 181.5 million to its population since 2001 with the rural population of 833 million constituting 68.83 per cent of the total population. Numerous policies and programs for rural development through employment generation, skill development, self-help groups, training, credit, infrastructure and community assets and marketing for rural population have been implemented. However, such policies and programs failed to produce the expected outcome due to fabrication and defective implementation.

Rural Development in Mizoram

Rural Development implies both the economic betterment of the people and ensuring a better quality of life. India lives in its villages and, therefore, the development of rural areas have been among the central concerns of development planning since its initiation. The

endeavour of Rural Development Department has been, apart from promoting infrastructure for improving productivity and social development in rural areas, to reach out by a frontal attack on rural poverty, through programmes of asset building, income generation and wage employment.

The origin of the Rural Development Department in Mizoram may be traced back when India gained independence in 1947. Mr S.K. Dey (1905-1989), who directed and steered the course of community development in the challenging, formative period of India's independence as Cabinet Minister of Cooperation and Panchayati Raj under the prime ministership of Jawaharlal Nehru, stressed that democracy cannot be practiced by a "galaxy of Government servants through long-distance control", and called for a democracy "traveling from the Parliament to the Panchayat.". The vitality of Dey prompted Jawaharlal Nehru to put him at the helm of Rural Development of independent India. He framed the Community Development Programme which ended in the birth of Community Development Blocks in 1953 all over the country.

A number of Community Development (CD) Blocks also came into existence in Mizoram, then known as the Lushai Hills District which was a part of the State of Assam. Each CD Block was led by a Project Executive Officer. These CD Blocks were engaged in a wide range of developmental works and the 'Community Development' programmes envisioned development in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, public health, social education, co-operation, communications etc. in selected areas.

In 1972, Mizoram achieved the status of Union Territory and more CD Blocks were created thus totalling 20 (twenty) CD Blocks. This period also saw many works under Community Development Project being re-allocated amongst newly created Departments. Community Development Project, then under the administrative control of the Deputy Commissioner, was also placed under a new Directorate of Community Development. In

1983-1984, the name was changed to Rural Development Department. Presently, there are 26 (twenty-six) RD Blocks in Mizoram.

Today, the Department is led by a senior Cabinet Minister and is supported by a Parliamentary Secretary, who is a sitting MLA. There is a Secretary to the Government of Mizoram as the head of the Administrative Department i.e. the Secretariat. State Level Monitoring Cell and Internal Audit Cell (SLMC&IAC) is part and parcel of the Secretariat involved in the monitoring of works under the Rural Development Department. The Directorate is led by a Director who executes functions as the apex line department at the State level. State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) has been established at Kolasib. At the districts, there are the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) whose governing board is chaired by the Deputy Commissioner and has a full-time Project Director as well as Block Development Officer at the Block level.

According to the 2011 census, the rural population comprised of 47.89 per cent in Mizoram. Mizoram is comprised of 719 villages and 23 towns highlighting 19.47 per cent living below the poverty line. There have been numbers of employment generation and livelihood security promotion programs implemented with the benefits of rural people in the state. However, the impact of such programs and perception of rural people towards them have been inadequately studied. Poverty has always been an issue of socio-economic development. The sustenance of the economic development of the society is characterized by the level of development in rural areas to a great degree. Rural development highlight the level of development of a state as the rural community is the backbone of the society. Thus, the studies based on knowledge of rural areas in the socio-economic sphere becomes essential. However, the livelihood pattern in rural areas highlights the prevalence of agriculture and irregular form of income.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The changes of wage employment programs in its design to respond more effectively against poverty, the Central Government formulated the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in the year 2005. It is the leading program of the Government that directly touches the lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The demand-driven nature of the scheme enables cardholders to apply for work. The scheme is based on decentralized planning Village Employment Council as implementing agency at the village level. Hundred per cent is funded entirely by the Central Government in unskilled manual work and 75:25 for Central and State Government in the material component. With its legal framework and rights-based approach, MGNREGA provides employment to those who demand it and is a paradigm shift from former programs. Notified on September 7, 2005, MGNREGA aims at enhancing guaranteed wage employment in whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The scheme covered 200 districts in its first phase, implemented on February 2, 2006, and was extended to 130 additional districts in 2007-2008. All the remaining rural areas have been notified with effect from April 1, 2008.

The Goals of MGNREGS

- Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities.
- Livelihood security for the poor through the creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity.
- Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India.
- Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation.
- Strengthening decentralized, participatory planning through the convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives.

- Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Salient features of the Act

- Right based Framework: members of a willing to do unskilled manual work.
- Time-bound Guarantee: 15 days for the provision of employment, else unemployment allowance.
- Up to 100 days in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.
- Labour Intensive Works: 60:40 for permissible works; no contractors/machinery.
- Decentralized Planning of Gram Sabha to recommend works at least 50% of works by Gram Panchayats for execution Principal role of PRIs in planning, monitoring and implementation.
- Worksite facilities: Crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at work sites.
- Women empowerment: At least one-third of beneficiaries should be women.
- Transparency and Accountability: Proactive disclosure through Social Audits, Grievance Redressal Mechanism.
- Implementation: Under Sec 3, with the scheme. Under Sec 4, a scheme for providing not less than 100 guaranteed employment financial year to those who demand work.

Implementation of NREGA in Mizoram:

Before the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 was implemented in Lunglei District, SampoornaGrameenRozgarYojana (SGRY) had been implemented. An amount of 100 lakhs for works was made available by the Gov't of India at the very end of 2006-07 which was received by the first part of FY 2007-08. Implementation of NREGA, later renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), was then started at the later part of 2007-08 after all necessary training was imparted at the official levels – District, Block and Villages. The general public was made

known about the implementation of the program through orientation training, workshops. Operational guidelines translated into local language prepared in the form of books were also distributed among them.

Implementation of NREGA at District Level:

The Deputy Commissioner designated as District Programme Coordinator (DPC) is doing the over-all co-ordination and supervision of the implementation of the programme at the district, and perform such other functions as and when assigned by the State Employment Council. Under the DPC, the Project Director and officers of DRDA are functioning as per designations given by the State Government as – Project Director as District Programme Officer (DPO), Accounts Officer as Accounts Manager (AM), Assistant Engineer as Work Manager (WM) and APO (M) as Grievances & Redressal Officer at the beginning of the implementation of the programme. But, later in 2011, District Employment Guarantee Unit (DEGSU) was constituted in the office of the Project Director, DRDA to assist DPC/DPO, DEGSU comprises of dedicated contract employees for the programme like APO, AM, WM, MIS Nodal Officer (MIS NO), Programme Assistant (PA), Lower Division Clerk (LDC), Data Entry Operator (DEO) and Ombudsman.

Convergence has been taken up with Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries, Environment & Forest and Soil and Water Conservation Departments. Works undertaken under Convergence includes Oil Palm plantation, Orange plantation, Papaya plantation, Banana plantation, Fishpond, Rubber plantation and Mulberry plantation.

Block Level Implementation:

The 4 (four) Block Development Officers (BDOs) and Sub-Divisional Officer (Tlabung) were designated as Programs Officers (POs) under MNREGA. POs are the principal authority for the planning and implementation of the program at the block level. The Program officers have been functioned under the direction, and control of the District

Program Coordinator or Officer. Village Level Administrative Assistants, Computer Assistants and Account Assistants were engaged on a contract basis to assist the POs for implementation of the program. But since 2010, only 4 (four) BDOs are designated as POs and in 2009, Additional Program Officers (APO) are also engaged to assist the POs. Presently, there are 5875 job cards within Hnahthial RD Block.

Village Level Implementation:

As part IX of the constitution does not apply in Mizoram, the state government invested the corresponding responsibilities of Gram Panchayat (GP) in Planning and implementation of the program at village level to the Village Council, elected from time to time under the state government and the three Autonomous District Council of Mara, Lai and Chakma, at the beginning of the implementation. Later in 2009, another local body Village Employment Council (VEC) was formed to hold the power and responsibilities of GP instead of VC (*Published in Mizoram Gazette on April 28, 2009(A)*). Executive Body of VEC comprising of the following members (*Vide Govt. of Mizoram RD Dept. notification Dt. 20.03.2014*):

- Chairman : President of the Village Council
- Vice Chairman : To be Elected by VEC
- VEC Secretary : Secretary of the Village Council
- Asst Secretary : To be elected by VEC
- Treasure : Treasurer of the VEC
- Financial Secretary : To be elected by VEC
- Members : Other elected members of the Village Council

The executive body of Village Employment Council (VEC) is the principal authority for the planning and implementation of the program.

Overview Of Literature

Employment Generation has been the focus of many policies and programs where rural development remains the center of focus in India. Meanwhile, much of the government's development programmes are wrapped up in the ideology of modernization (Haris, 1982).

Rural development is viewed as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people (World Bank, 2007), target oriented initiative (Ghosh 1967), Agricultural development (Harris, 1982), economic development, infrastructure and environment, housing and education (Tarchitzky 2015), improving rural service delivery, accessibility and mobility (Poster 2002).

Rural livelihood security is also defined in terms of protection against unfair or unjustified dismissals or employment security (ILO 1995, p.18) which has both subjective and objective elements (Standing, 1999, p. 168). Increase in unprotected informal activities (du Jeu, 1998) low purchasing power among rural people (Joydeep, 2013) is witnessed.

There are many studies which focus on implementation and effects of employment guarantee programs (Reli Group 2005; Verma 2006; Lalnilawma 2009) on the social-economic aspects of rural households (Meshram 2006) along with performance appraisal at district and state level (Kaliyamoorthy&.Kanagaraj 2006).

State level comparative studies on MGNREGS (IIM-Bangalore 2008; Dutta, 2009) and its impact on connectivity, migration and community assets development have been attempted. Studies on Implementation of MGNREGS at district and state levels (Shariff 2009) and performance of implementing body (Mathur 2009; Sailo 2015) have been reported. The impact of the program on household income and expenditure along with inclusiveness of beneficiaries have also been probed into (Singh and Nauriyal 2009; Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) 2010).

There is copious literature on rural wage employment, public works as well as employment security across the developing nations of the world. In the Indian context also there are many studies conducted at national, regional and state levels and beyond. However, a few research gaps could be noted in the literature.

Firstly, most of the studies have been conducted from the etic perspective while emic perspective and the perception and experiences of people have been by and large ignored. The people at grass root level participate in the rural development programmes and benefit from them. They are the rich source of information on the actual implementation of the programmes and their impact. This is often bypassed by the social science researchers and policymakers who use etic perspectives and believe that they know what to expect from people. Most studies have used quantitative methodology while the application of qualitative and participatory approaches is rare in this area. Further, the combination of qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods has rarely been attempted. The cultural domain analysis has not also been attempted.

Secondly, the studies on employment guarantee in the context of NER and Mizoram are very few (except). These studies have not deeply probed into the social dynamics of implementation of MGREGS or its impact on rural livelihood or infrastructure.

Thirdly, most of the studies on employment guarantee programmes focus on their impact on living conditions and livelihood of rural people. Hardly, we come across the studies on the role of these programmes in promoting infrastructure development at the village level.

Fourthly, most studies on MGNREGS in India have been made by economists, while social workers have not studied MGNREGS or employment guarantee. It is imperative for social workers to conduct in-depth interdisciplinary studies so as to effectively practice at a multi-level.

The present study addresses these research gaps in the context of Lunglei, a district located in the southern part of Mizoram state.

Statement Of The Problem

Though Mizoram is one of the most urbanized states of northeast India, rural development is a priority area. Infrastructure development and livelihood promotion are the twin challenges before policy makers and social workers concerned with rural development in Mizoram. MGNREGS is a major boon to boost the rural infrastructure development and strengthening rural livelihood in Mizoram. However, there are not many studies on the actual implementation of MGNREGS and its impact as perceived by different stakeholders in the context of Mizoram or North East region of India.

In this context, the present study explores the role of employment guarantee programmes in promoting the goals of rural development at the village level from an emic perspective. The study tries to understand the process of implementation of MGNREGS at village level as well as the perception of people on the impact of MGNREGS on rural infrastructure and rural livelihood. The study probes into the bearing of social and economic structural factors on the perceptions of people on MGNREGS. The study also seeks to understand the constraints in the implementation of MGNREGS and to suggest possible measures to enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGS in promoting rural infrastructure development and livelihood in Mizoram.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the present study.

1. To identify the people's perceptions of infrastructural needs and livelihood challenges of the villages from an emic perspective.
2. To understand the impact of MGNREGS on rural infrastructure from the perspectives of people.
3. To understand the impact of MGNREGS on living conditions and livelihood security from the perspectives of people.
4. To identify the constraints in the implementation of MGNREGS.
5. To suggest measures for enhancing the effectiveness of MGNREGS in promoting rural livelihood and infrastructure development.

Research Questions

To provide focus to the above objective the following specific research questions have been raised in the context of Lunglei district in Mizoram.

1. What are the livelihood challenges faced by the rural people?
2. What are the infrastructural needs of the rural people?
3. How does the program implement at village level?
4. How far are the MGNREGS guidelines suitable to the context of Mizo villages?
5. How far the works carried out under MGNREGS match the livelihood challenges of rural people?
6. What are the institutional constraints to the implementation of the program at village level?
7. How does the program benefit the rural communities and households?
8. How far the program meets the infrastructural needs of the villages?
9. Are there any unintended consequences of this program?

10. How are the popular perceptions of the impact of the program mediated by their socio-economic and political background?

Research Design

The study is exploratory in its design. It was based on primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through qualitative, quantitative and participatory methods. Abstract of Village Survey (2011-12) published by LAD (Local Administration Department), Government of Mizoram and Office records of DRDA (District Rural Development Agency) constitute the secondary data.

Sampling

The unit of the study is the village and all the villages in Lunglei district constitute the population of the study.

Secondary data related to all villages in Lunglei district is collected from LAD. A multi-stage random sampling procedure was used to select blocks, villages, and respondents.

The first stage is the selection of blocks. Out of four blocks in Lunglei, one block proximate to the district headquarters and one block distant to that was purposively chosen. In the second stage, eight villages were chosen based on the available indicators of development. Eight villages from both most developed and least developed category of villages were chosen based on the indicators of socio-economic development. The third stage is the selection of respondents. For the selection of respondents, quota sampling method was used to select the respondents from the villages. A total of 120 sample was selected from eight villages- Pangzawl, Mualthum N, Rawpui, TawipuiN, Tawipui S, Thuampui, Mualcheng S and Vanhne. The sample size for the survey is 64 where 40 respondents from the high level of village development and 24 respondents from villages with the low level of development were selected. A total number of 40 samples are included in Focus Group

Discussion and 8 Key Informants from both high and low level of village development with a total of 16 Key Informants constitute the sample

Data Collection, Processing, and Analysis

The study is based on primary data collected through qualitative and participatory methods. Semi-structured interview schedule, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and PRA techniques such as social map, services, and opportunities map and timeline were employed to collect the data. Collection and sought information on the socio-economic information, livelihood challenges, the infrastructure required and impact of MGNREGS.

The primary data collected through a semi-structured interview schedule was processed with the help of MS Excel. Quantitative was analyzed using SPSS while qualitative data was analyzed with the help of QDA miner and Visual Anthropac (Borgatti. 1996). Visual Anthropac was used to analyze the free listing data collected with the help of a semi-structured interview schedule. To analyze the data percentages, ranks, cross tabulation and Smith's salience were used.

Chapter Scheme

The present study is presented in the following chapters.

1. Introduction.
2. Review of Literature.
3. Methodology.
4. Results and Discussion.
5. Conclusion and Suggestions.

Conclusion

The rural people in Lunglei district unanimously realize the need for better livelihood opportunities and community infrastructure in their villages irrespective of their gender and class differences. Livelihood challenges faced in these villages are centered around agriculture and allied activities as a vast majority of them depend on agriculture. Rural dwellers who constitute half of the population in Lunglei district suffer from lack of stable and productive income generation activities. The community physical infrastructures have been inadequate which restrict their access to better education, healthcare, banking etc. However, the emic perspective of the people and leaders on the livelihood challenges reveal that the rural community's high dependency on agriculture and the need for increasing agricultural production. In their perception improved road connectivity and facilities for transportation of agricultural products is most important infrastructure requirements of them which would contribute to better marketing and increased income.

The introduction of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is a significant step to address the livelihood challenges and infrastructural requirements faced in rural areas of Lunglei. It actually enables an increase in income with the provision of a hundred days of employment in unskilled manual work. The increase in income led to an increase in the monetary transactions within each of the rural communities which in turn resulted in addressing livelihood challenges of different nature. The construction and maintenance of community infrastructure helps changing the face of the community for the better.

A few flaws in the operational guidelines hinder the effectiveness of the scheme because the Lunglei district is different in terms of its hill topography, culture and social practices as compare to the plain areas in India. Defective implementation at different levels, instability of work order, delay in payment of wages, difficulty in access to the banking

system and many other issues are faced in the implementation of MGNREGS. The mode of payment becomes an issue as rural areas are yet to be linked with the banking system and access to the bank is difficult for many people who live in isolated and remote villages which have no regular transportation.

Even though the scheme brings forth a number of positive benefits since its implementation, it also has a certain negative impact on the work culture of rural people in Lunglei district. The works carried out under MGNREGS tend to be poor in quality and the community people lack a sense of ownership though they are meant for their own wellbeing. The increase in the income also led to an increase in lavish spending and so household debts have increased. As a result some of the people become highly dependent on the scheme. Apart from which incomplete work and inconsiderate selection of project site are also reported as the unintended consequence of the implementation of the scheme. However, in the overall assessment of MGNREGS and its impact from an emic perspective reveals greater positive impact in both the types of villages at high and low level of development.

Suggestions

In the light of the findings and conclusion of the present study, suggestions for policy making and further research are put forth in the following two subsections.

Suggestions for Policy Implication

The following suggestions have been made for policy making and social work advocacy based on the findings from the present study.

The operational guidelines of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme have flaws in respect to rural areas in Lunglei District, Mizoram. The unsuitability of provisions made in the guidelines has been encountered in many areas from planning, implementation, issue of work order and mode of payment of wages. The availability of worksite facilities has been inadequately implemented in rural areas. Use of

machinery in areas of difficult terrain is common though it is against the operational guidelines. The policy planning focuses mainly on mainland rural areas where the situation of rural areas in the selected study areas is left out. Thus, the following suggestion has been made based on the findings of the study.

1. The mode of wage payment is done through personal bank account and resulted into the need for emphasis on financial inclusion where remote and isolate villages are provided with access to bank through the establishment of bank near the villages.
2. The inadequacy of worksite facilities is a major problem felt in by the people and leaders. Every effort shall be made to provide the facilities so as to protect the people in case of accidents and injury.
3. Revision of the operational guidelines of MGNREGS so as to permit the use of machinery is required because of differences in the topography of Mizoram. The use of machinery need be permitted wherever manual labour proves to be ineffective.
4. The duration of issue of job card needs to be continuously checked in response to wastage of time from the application to the actual time of issue of job card.
5. The work proposal submitted by the Gram Shabha should be considered and prioritized before issue of work order. The nature of work under MGNREGS should be flexible and transfer of power on selection of nature of work to the village people. Thus, it will enhance the effectiveness of MGNREGS in promoting livelihood and infrastructure development.
6. Strengthening the VMC by providing adequate financial incentives is needed to improve the quality of work taken up under MGNREGS. At present in most of the villages studied the VMCs are defunct.

7. The extensive education programmes shall be organized for the people to develop a sense of ownership on the community infrastructure created under the scheme. At present, such a sense of ownership is found lacking.
8. The diversity in the topography and culture in India necessitate the need for the revision of the operational guidelines to suit of the needs of people in different regions of the country. The traditional top down approach in policy formulation leads to failure in realization of its goals due to the variations in ecology, culture and economic contexts of different regions of the country.

Suggestion for Future Research

Social work research on this scheme has been inadequate where the economists are the main actors in this area. Livelihood and infrastructure development is an integral part of the scheme providing a wide scope for social work studies. Apart from studies in rural areas, there are inadequate studies on the employment guarantee scheme from a social work perspective. Social work practitioners and researchers may be encouraged to take up research projects on MGNREGS. In the context of Mizoram, a state level study of MGNREGS focusing on the inter district variations in Mizoram will provide a clear picture on the planning, implementation and impact of MGNREGS on rural livelihood and infrastructural development in Mizoram.

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