

CHAPTER – I

INTRODUCTION

I. Introduction

Rural development is a process of change to reduce poverty, utilize creativity and knowledge of the people living in rural areas, through increased productivity in terms of increased production and productivity in the field of agriculture, rural industry etc., for the betterment of their lives. It is the crux of India's developmental strategy. The concept of rural development is a balanced and rounded one. It stands for the development of the rural society in all its facets - social, economic, institutional and administrative. Rural development programmes are designed to facilitate a multi-faceted growth of the rural poor by extending the benefits of development to them. It aims at the improvement of the living standards of the rural poor by providing opportunities to utilise their potential through their active participation in the process of goal-oriented change. Rural development also tends to reduce migration pressure on cities and towns. It also enables the use of human and natural resources in the rural areas and to reduce area-wise disparities.¹

¹ Ramesh K.Arora & Rakesh Hooja *Administration of Rural Development: Indian and Comparative Perspectives* (Jaipur, Arihant, 1994), pp 459.

Rural development programmes involve a number of projects which are aligned to one another so that they affect various facets of rural economic and social life. Therefore, rural development programmes attempt to bring about change in a wider area affecting a greater number of people. Ever since Independence, public and governmental interest in rural development has been growing rapidly and it is clearly visible that our policy-makers made a strong and serious commitment towards it. The government has initiated a number of programmes to solve the chronic problems facing villages in India.

Soon after Independence, efforts were initiated to improve rural economy which was virtually synonymous with agricultural development. It had been realised that rural development was much broader in scope than mere agricultural development and it was also recognized that development in agriculture was not a panacea for all ills and that development should not be confined only to a single area of change, however significant it may be. Therefore, if the strategy for rural development had to be made effective, a multi-pronged approach to rural problems was felt imperative. A package programme of rural development had to

be devised, a multi-dimensional approach taken up and multi-institutional efforts initiated.²

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was an important component of the development plan in India's Five Year Plan which was introduced in the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) with a view to bring about a household approach to the alleviation of poverty and to coordinate it with necessary rural development programmes. Hence, IRDP has been described as the single largest programme for providing direct assistance to the poorest amongst the poor in our Indian society. It was introduced as a major attempt to alleviate rural poverty. It sought to realize this objective by enabling the rural poor to acquire productive assets, from the assistance extended in the shape of loan and subsidy.

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Governments. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawaharlal Rojgar Yojana (JRY)

² Ramesh K.Arora & Rajni Goyal, *Indian Public Administration: Institutions and Issues* (New Age International Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1996, pp. 459-460.

1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)1993-99; Jawaharlal Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) from 2001; National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) from 2004 were national rural employment schemes. Among these, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

II. Concept of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

To achieve growth with equity and social justice, the Government of India (GOI) has been implementing specific poverty removal programmes since the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79). This direct attack on poverty was spear-headed by a two-pronged strategy of wage and self-employment programmes. Poverty alleviation and employment-generation programmes have been re-structured and re-designed from time to time to make them more effective. GOI's most recent initiative under the wage employment programmes is the launched of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which is also known by the name of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) on February 2, 2006. The main objective of

MGNREGS is to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the rural households by ensuring a legal right of at least 100 days of unskilled wage employment to willing adult members. As a safety net, this Act aims at creating a demand-driven village infrastructure, including durable assets, to increase the opportunities for sustained employment. Thus, MGNREGS supplements and broadens rural occupational choices besides regenerating natural resources.³

The MGNREGA promotes rural connectivity for all weather access including culverts and drainages wherever necessary, flood control and protection works including drainage in water logging prone areas, renovation of traditional water bodies including de-silting of tanks, development of land of weaker sections especially belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who availed the facility of housing scheme, irrigational canal, drought proofing including afforestation and tree plantation, water conservation and water harvesting and other works which are notified by the Central Government which promotes employment tied development works.⁴

³ K.K. Tripathy, *Rural Wage Implementation Challenges*, Kurukshetra, Feb 2013, pp12-15.

⁴ P.C. Sikligar, *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. LVIII. NO. 1, January-March 2012, pp 91-92.

MGNREGS is perhaps, an opportunity for rural India as it guarantees one of the crucial rights, right to work envisaged in the Article 41 of the Indian Constitution. Under the provisions of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), eligible households apply to the Gram Panchayat which, after due verification, issues the job card. Each district has to prepare a shelf of projects, which is done on the basis of priority assigned by the Gram Sabha. At least 50% of the works have to be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution. Social audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha. However, for the potential of MGNREGS to be realized, major interventions are required to enable Panchayats to fulfil their constitutional obligations to lead economic development and social justice in their areas and major reforms need to be initiated in its implementation.

(a) Review of Literature

The present scholar has undertaken review of the following literature pertaining to MGNREGS. Scholars, researchers and writers enriched the literature through their studies and writings. There is a tremendous increase in the number of publications, books and periodicals in developed and developing countries. The literature in any field is the foundation

upon which all future work will be built. The review of related literature is an essential aspect of research studies. A summary of the writings of recognized authorities and of previous research provides evidence to what is familiar with, what is already known and what is still unknown and untested. The effective research is based upon past knowledge, which helps to eliminate the duplication of what has been done and provides useful hypothesis and suggestions for significant investigations. The published literature is a good service for the investigators which helps to interpret the significance of its own results. Therefore the researcher has reviewed some of the literatures on the studies of MGNREGS in the following -

H.S Mehla and Lekha Mehla (2007), '*Rural Development: Concept and Strategies*' in Development Administration and Rural Development defined rural development as a process of enabling the villagers to fulfil their needs, especially physical, economic, social and intellectual and also gave importance to planning for the upliftment of the people living in rural areas.

Samik Shome (2011), in his article '*Techniques in Innovative Policy Making: Example of NREGA in India*' stated that the Act represents a normal approach to policy making and demonstrates the positive role government's can play in labour

market. The framework presented in this article best explains various facets of this remarkable policy and how Government can intervene in the labour markets and correct for imperfections.

Sudhir Vaidya (2009), *'National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)'* was based on an in-depth study of the NREGA with schemes and guidelines. In this book, the author stated that the NREGA is the political right of the people and no longer a programme of the Government and also stated that if this programme is fully implemented in all the districts, thousands of crores will be needed which may not create wealth but will be utilized within the country.

Sakligar P.C. (2012), *'Impact assessment of Wage Employment (MGNREGS): A study in Tripura'* mentioned the origin of the Act as well as previous poverty alleviation programme of the Government as a whole. The study found that MGNREGS could be improved by promoting convergence, and increasing employment whereas on the other side, minimizing the role of senior citizens, timely releasing of funds by enhancing supportive staff, offering effective social audit etc.

Kareemulla K (et. al.), (2009), *'Soil and Water Conservation Works through NREGS in Andhra Pradesh – An analysis of Livelihood Impact'* in Agricultural Economics

Research Review which stated that the scheme has brought down migration level and concluded that SWC through NREGS needed to be continued as they ensure livelihoods through wage incomes productive assets.

Pramathesh Ambasta (2009), *'Programming NREGS to succeed'* examined the programme of NREGS and said that for the flagship programme to be effective and successful, it has to be programmed carefully and suggested that a central anchoring agency like National Authority for NREGS may hold the password for unlocking the gates to let the necessary changes in the programme.

Tripathy K.K. (2013), *'Rural Wage Guarantee Implementation Challenges'* which highlighted the importance of the positive and direct correlation between timely payment of wages and registration of labour demand. The lower than expected labour demand in various States under MGNREGP was due to inordinate delays in wage payments. He further pointed out that timely wage payment depend largely on apt and well timed measurements of works.

Hariharan Ramachandran (2013), *'Creating Development Administrators - Lessons From Experience'* which stated that Reforms are not designed and implemented in a vacuum but in

relation to their objectives, in this case preparing India for a prominent role in the new globalised world economic order. The institution suggested to go beyond the recent reforms and invest heavily in governance is one such entity. Every state should create such a hybrid institution that combines the concerns of development with administration, concerns of the states with that of the Central Government, and theory with practice.

Rakesh Hooja and Parnami K.K. (2007), '*Development administration and Rural development*' defined rural development as a process of enabling the villagers to fulfil their needs, especially physical, economic, social and intellectual and also gave importance to planning for the upliftment of the people living in rural areas.

Rao S.N. (2012), '*Rural Development – Under Decentralized Governance*' was a compilation of 23 articles written by eminent development administrators and academicians. The focus of the book was multi-faceted growth of rural India. The author highlighted the Development Administration, Rural Development policies, programmes, rural institutions, the problems in implementation of RD programmes. Initially the Rural Development was identified with agriculture development but in course of time, the spectrum of rural

development was broadened and multi-dimensional approach was initiated to eliminate rural poverty.

Pakhuangte K.T. (2011), Handbook of MGNREGS, Mizoram discussed about a complete law relating to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Schemes with the latest amendment that included- The Mizoram Rural Employment Guarantee Rules, 2007, The Mizoram State Employment Guarantee Fund Rules, 2009, The Mizoram Grievance Redressal Rules, 2009 and, The Mizoram State Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, 2009.

Commendable though they are in their respective works, none of the above works has dealt with the implementation and working of MGNREGS in Kolasib District, Mizoram, hence the present study has been taken up.

(b) Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the present study are:

- 1) To study the origin, history and background of MGNREGS.
- 2) To understand implementation and monitoring mechanism of the Scheme at grassroots level.
- 3) To assess the benefits of the scheme in terms of employment and income which are provided to the beneficiaries.

- 4) To understand the implications and make suitable suggestions for strengthening the scheme.

(c) Research Questions

The proposed study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

- 1) What measures can be taken to improve the implementation of the scheme?
- 2) What is the measure to be adopted for redressal of grievances of the local people?
- 3) What are the major challenges faced in the implementation of the scheme?

(d) Area of the Study

The proposed research work has intended to study the implementation, working and problems of MGNREGS in Kolasib District, Mizoram. There are two Rural Development (RD) Blocks in Kolasib district. There are also as many as 47 villages within Kolasib district under the cover of Rural development. So, the present study will cover the history and origin of MGNREGS in Kolasib District of Mizoram particularly the implementation and working of MGNREGS. The study has also focused on the

problems and challenges faced by it and also possible solutions and suggestions for improvement in its working.

(e) Method of Data Collection

The work has been studied with the help of both primary and secondary data. Primary data have been collected through the use of structured interview schedule, questionnaire and observation method to obtain information from the Job Card holders from the ten (10) villages under study. From Thingdawl RD block, Serkhan, Kawnpui, Zanolawn and Thingdawl villages were selected and from Bilkhawthlir RD block, Diakkawn, College Veng, Saidan/Tuitha Veng, Rengtekawn, Vairengte and Bilkhawthlir villages were selected. Secondary data have also been collected from different sources such as books, magazines, articles, journals and government documents on the subject and related areas.

(f) Chapterisation

The entire study is divided into five Chapters.

The *first* Chapter is introductory one which deals with the basic meaning and importance of rural development and the role of MGNREGS in it. It also includes the concept of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, Review

of Literature, Objectives of the present study, research questions, area of the study and method of data collection. It also contains a brief profile of Kolasib District within which the present study has been carried out.

The *second* Chapter has traced the origin, historical background and the organizational structure of MGNREGS in India.

The *third* Chapter deals with the implementation and monitoring machinery of MGNREGS in Kolasib District and its organizational structure for implementation of MGNREGS introduced by the Central Government.

In the *fourth* Chapter, an attempt has been made to assess the role, functions and activities of MGNREGS in Kolasib District for rural development.

The *fifth* Chapter is a concluding Chapter which has brought out the summary and findings of the study. It has also made some suggestions for improvement of the organizational setup of MGNREGS in Kolasib District, the implementation of which would enable the district level machinery to implement the scheme in a more effective manner.

III. Kolasib District- One of the Eight Districts in Mizoram State

Mizoram,⁵ perching on the high hills of North Eastern corner, is flanked by Bangladesh on the west and Myanmar on the east and south. It has an area of 21,087 Sq. km. and a 630 km. long international boundary. The Tropic of Cancer runs through the heart of Mizoram. Two sister states of Manipur and Assam border it on the north while Tripura lies in the north-west. Under the British Administration, Mizoram was known as Lushai Hills District. In 1954 by an Act of Parliament the name was changed to Mizo Hills District. In 1972, when it was made into a Union Territory, it was named Mizoram. With the signing of the Peace Accord between the Union Government and the Mizo National Front in 1986 and consequent upon the passing of the 53rd Constitution Amendment Bill, Mizoram became the 23rd state of the Indian Union on 20th February 1987. Mizoram has single chamber legislature consisting of 40 members. The territory has 8 district, 23 sub-division, 26 rural development blocks and 3 autonomous districts and 786 Village Councils. The total population as per 2011 census is 1097206 where as 555339 are male while 541867 are female. About 50.37% live in rural area.

⁵ *Detailed Project Report of IWMP, kolasib-1*, 2010, pp 22-23 , prepared by Block Development Officer , Bilkhawthlir Rural Development Block, Kolasib District, Mizoram

Literacy percentage is 91.33 per cent and it ranked the second highest all over India⁶.

Kolasib District is one of the 8 (eight) districts of Mizoram. The name of the district has been given after the name of its administrative headquarters- Kolasib-which is situated to the north of Aizawl District. Kolasib⁷ was initially created as the centre of Tribal Development Block on the day of the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation in 1957 and was manned by Project Executive Officer (PEO). It was later upgraded to be administered by the Area Administrative Officer (AAO). When Mizoram was elevated to a Union Territory in 1972, Kolasib was upgraded as the headquarters of Sub-Division manned by Sub-Divisional Officer (Civil) on 5th May, 1975.⁸ Being the seat of administration for more than three long decades, the present status of the District was created by the Government of Mizoram following the trifurcation of Aizawl District in 1998. Kolasib District is situated in between 23° - 5' to 24° - 35' North Latitude and 92° - 3' to 93° East Longitude. It is bounded by Cachar District and Hailakandi District, Assam on the north and north west respectively, on the south and east by Aizawl District, Mizoram and on the south west by Mamit District, Mizoram.

⁶ <http://www.census2011.co.in/census/state/Mizoram.html> accessed on 3.12.2013

⁷ *Report of IWMP, Kolasib-1*, 2010, (prepared by Block Development Officer, Bilkhawthlir Rural Development Block, Kolasib District, Mizoram), pp 25-27.

⁸ http://www.indianetzone.com/147/kolasib_district.htm accessed on 10.11.2013

The location of Kolasib District occupies an important site as it is the main stream of road communication from other states to Mizoram. National Highway No.54 passes through the middle of the district from north to south direction. The only rail head in the state is located at a place in Kolasib District called Bairabi. The only centre for Military Counter Insurgency & Jungle Warfare School in the country, which is the largest and well known to the whole of Asia as well as in the world, is located at Vairengte within Kolasib District.

(a) Climate

Kolasib District comes under the tropical monsoon climate zone of India. It experiences direct impact of monsoon. The average annual rainfall is approximately 197 cms. Except in low lying valley, the temperature fluctuation is low and the climate remains moderate throughout the year. Winter extends from November to February with temperature ranging between 12°C to 23°C. March to May comprises a short summer, during which the temperature varies between 20°C to 30°C with valleys hotter and humid while the hill tops are cooler and pleasant.

(b) Area and Population

The total area of the district is 1,472.12 Sq. km. of which 70% of the total area of the District is under Forest cover. Total

number of villages in the district is 47, four sub-towns namely - Kawnpui, Bualpui, Bairabi, Vairengte and one full-fledged town, Kolasib. The total number of population in the District as per Census 2011 is 65,960 where as 34,562 are male while 31,398 are female⁹.

c) Occupation

About 75% of population entirely depends upon agriculture and allied activities. The District itself seems to be self sufficient from the product of wet rice cultivation and shifting cultivation as the District covers low lying areas which is highly potential area of Agriculture in Mizoram. The soil is found suitable for a variety of crops.

(d) Administrative Divisions

For the purpose of general and development administration, the district has been divided into 3 (three) Sub-Divisions viz. Kolasib Sadar, Vairengte and Kawnpui and 2 (two) Rural Development (R.D) Blocks, i.e. Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir. In all, there are 47 villages in the district.

Under Thingdawl R.D Block, there are 17 villages which are ⁻¹⁰

⁹ *Census 2011 detail of Kolasib*, Directorate of Census operations in Mizoram, 2013

¹⁰ As per the current Record maintained by Thingdawl RD block, Kolasib District.

- | | | |
|------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| (1) Bualpui | (2) North Chaltlang | (3) Zodin |
| (4) North Hlimen | (5) Kawnpui South | (6) Lungdai |
| (7) Bukpui | (8) Kawnpui North | (9) Zanolawn |
| (10) Hortoki | (11) Serkhan | (12) Nisapui |
| (13) Khamrang | (14) Thingthelh | (15) Thingdawl |
| (16) Lungmuat | (17) Mualkhang | |

Under Bilkhawthlir R.D Block, there are 30 villages which are-¹¹

- | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| (1) Bairabi | (2) North Thinglian | (3) Phainuam |
| (4) Builum | (5) Bilkhawthlir North | (6) Pangbalkawn |
| (7) Venglai | (8) Bilkhawthlir South | (9) New Diakkawn |
| (10) Phaisen | (11) South Chhimluang | (12) Rengtekawn |
| (13) Saipum | (14) College Veng | (15) Diakkawn |
| (16) Tumpui | (17) Hmar Veng | (18) Saihapui K |
| (19) Project Veng | (20) Saihapui V | (21) Buhchangphai |
| (22) Saiphai | (23) Vengthar | (24) Bukvannei |
| (25) Meidum | (26) Vairengte I | (27) North Chawnpui |
| (28) Vairengte I | (29) N. Chhimluang | |
| (30) Saidan/Tuitha Veng | | |

In Mizoram, Bairabi village is the only area where communication by railway (the only rail head) is available. This makes Kolasib District as one of the most important districts in terms of trade and commerce and transportation, etc.

¹¹ As per the current Record maintained by Bilkhawthlir RD block, Kolasib District.

IV. Conclusion

Evidently, this chapter has thrown light on the concept and importance of rural development for the improvement of the living standards of the rural poor by providing opportunities to them to actively participate in the process of goal oriented change. The Government of India has initiated a number of schemes and programmes to alleviate the conditions of the rural poor. One of these schemes and programmes is MGNREGS which was launched on 2nd February, 2006, with the aim of creating a demand driven village structure to increase the opportunities for sustained employment. The main objective of this MGNREGS is to provide a legal right of at least 100 days of unskilled wage employment for the enhancement of livelihood security of the rural households. The people residing in 47 villages Kolasib District are also blessed with this scheme.

CHAPTER – II

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF MGNREGS

I. Introduction

In September 2005, India's parliament enacted a remarkable piece of Legislation - the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), later renamed Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This Act recognizes employment as an entitlement of the citizens of India and thus clearly defines the obligation of the Central Government and the different States' Government - obligation to provide, in each year, 100 days of wage employment at a stipulated minimum wage to all rural households whose members are seeking or willing to do unskilled manual work. Employment scheme under MGNREGA – which shall be henceforth referred to as MGNREGS – was launched in 200 poorest districts of the different States in India during 2006-07 and extended to another 130 districts during 2007-08.¹²

Since 2008-09, MGNREGS has been implemented in all the 600-odd non-urban districts in the country. Special wage

¹² http://planningcommission.nic.in/plans/mta/11th_mta/pdf/12_Rural_Development_-_DCH_Final_30...accessed on 13.11.2013

employment schemes for rural areas, of course, are not new in India; a variety of such schemes has been implemented since 1960. What is new in MGNREGS now is that implementation of a special wage employment scheme on certain specified scale is a binding obligation for the government. Thus, MGNREGS represents, simultaneously, an explicit recognition by the government of its responsibility for ensuring availability of adequate employment for all workers and an explicit acknowledgement of the fact that the growth process in the country has been failing to generate adequate employment opportunities and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future. The stated objectives of MGNREGS include not just creation of a social safety net for the vulnerable groups by creating a fall-back employment option but also stimulation of growth of the rural economy through a strengthening of the resource base in agriculture so that the second of these objectives can be achieved. The Act specifies a list of permissible works that can be undertaken for the purpose of providing wage employment under MGNREGS. These include¹³ water conservation and harvesting, building of irrigation works and canals, renovation of traditional water bodies (e.g., de-silting of tanks), land development, flood

¹³ *MGNREGA, 2005 Operational Guidelines 2013*, 4th Edition, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

control and protection works, and improvement of 'rural connectivity' (i.e., building of all-weather roads within rural areas). Whether and to what extent MGNREGS succeeds in stimulating growth of the rural economy remains to be seen. What is certain is that MGNREGS will have the effect of substantially increasing the money incomes of the rural poor. Thus, one effect of MGNREGS, it might be thought, will be a decline in rural poverty. Another less obvious effect will be macroeconomic; the MGNREGS-induced growth of money incomes of the poor should alter the pattern of effective demand in the economy and could conceivably affect the pace of economic growth.

With its spread to over 626 districts across the country, the flagship programme of the UPA Government has the potential to increase the purchasing power of rural poor, reduce distress migration and to create useful assets in rural India. It can foster social and gender equality as 23% workers under the scheme are Scheduled Castes, 17% Scheduled Tribes and 50% women.¹⁴ In

¹⁴ <http://news.biharprabha.com/2013/03/govt-raises-minimum-wage-limit-in-mgnrega-to-rs-135/>. Accessed on 11.11.2013

2010-11, 41 million households were employed on MGNREGS worksites.¹⁵

II. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was passed by the Lok Sabha on 23rd August 2004 and was signed by the President of India on 5 September 2005.¹⁶ The Central Government will bear the entire cost of wages for unskilled manual workers, 75 percent of the cost of material including wages for skilled and semi-skilled workers and 6 percent of the total cost for meeting expenditure under administration.¹⁷ Administration will include, *inter-alia*, the salary and allowances of Programme Officers and their supporting staff and work site facilities. The State Government will bear 25 percent of the cost of material including wages for skilled and semi-skilled workers, unemployment allowances and Administrative expenses of the State Employment Guarantee Council. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) was renamed Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

¹⁵ <http://news.biharprabha.com/2013/03/govt-raises-minimum-wage-limit-in-mgnrega-to-rs-135/>. Accessed on 11.11.201

¹⁶ *International Journal of Physical and Soial Sciences*, Vol 2, issue 6, June 2012, p 254

¹⁷ Dr. K.V.S Prasad, *Performance of MGNREGA : An overview*, p 101, 2012

Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in October 2, 2009.¹⁸

Table 2.1: Time-Line of MGNREGA¹⁹

August 25 th , 2005	NREGA enacted by legalization
September 5 th , 2005	Assent of the President
September 7 th , 2005	Notified in the Gazette of India
February 2 nd , 2006	Came into force in 200 districts
April 1 st , 2007	113 more districts were notified
April 1 st , 2008	Notified in the remaining rural districts
October 2 nd , 2009	Renamed as MGNREGA also known as MGNREGS

The Table 2.1 depicts that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is an Indian job, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The Act received assent of the President on September 5, 2005 and was notified in the Gazette of India on September 7, 2005. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act/ Scheme (MGNREGA/MGNREGS) on 2nd October 2009. The Act was legalized and notified in 200 districts in the first phase with effect from February 2nd 2006 and then extended to an additional 130

¹⁸ Government of India, *MGNREGA Operational Guidelines, 2008*, (3rd edition), Ministry of Rural Development.

¹⁹ Compiled from various reports on MGNREGS.

districts in the financial year 2007-2008 out of it 113 districts were notified with effect from April 1st 2007, and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh were notified with effect from May 15th 2007. The remaining districts have been notified under MGNREGS with effect from April 1st 2008. Thus, the MGNREGS covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population.

(a) Salient features of the Scheme

The salient features of the Scheme are:²⁰

- (1) **Right based Framework:** For adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work.
- (2) **Time bound Guarantee:** 15 days for provision of employment, else unemployment Allowance.
- (3) Up to 100 days in a financial year per household, depending on the actual demand.
- (4) **Labour Intensive Works:** 60:40 wage and material ratio for permissible works; no contractors/machinery.

²⁰ http://www.ni.nrega.c.in/net_nrega/forum/2_MGNREGA.pdf accessed on 11.11.2013.

(5) **Decentralized Planning**

(a) Gram Sabhas to recommend works

(b) At least 50% of works by Gram Panchayats for execution

(c) Principal role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in planning, monitoring and implementation.

(6) **Work site facilities:** Crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade provided at worksites.

(7) **Women empowerment:** At least one-third of beneficiaries should be women.

(8) **Transparency & Accountability:** Proactive disclosure through Social Audits, Grievance Redressal Mechanism.

(9) **Implementation:** Under Sec 3, States are responsible for providing work in accordance with the Scheme. Under Sec 4, every state government is required to make a scheme for providing not less than 100 days of guaranteed employment in a financial year, to those who demand work.

(10) **Funding**

(a) Central Government - 100% of wages for unskilled manual work, 75% of material cost of the schemes including

payment of wages to skilled and semi-skilled workers.

(b) State Government - 25% of material including payment of wages to skilled and semi-skilled workers cost, 100% of unemployment allowance by State Government.

(b) Non Negotiable

- 1) Only Job Card holders to be employed for MGNREGS works.
- 2) To provide employment within 15 days of application.
- 3) No contractor.
- 4) Task to be performed by using manual labour and not machines.
- 5) Muster rolls to be maintained on work sites.
- 6) Proactive disclosure of information.
- 7) Wage payments to be through accounts in banks/post offices.
- 8) Wage material ratio - 60:40.
- 9) At least 50% of the works in terms of cost under a Scheme to be implemented through GPs.

(c) Natural Resource Regeneration and impact on agricultural productivity

(i) The works undertaken through MGNREGS give priority to activities related to water harvesting, groundwater

recharge, drought-proofing and flood protection. Its focus on eco-restoration and sustainable livelihoods will lead over time, to an increase in land productivity and aid the workers in moving from wage employment to sustainable employment. Almost 80% works relate to soil and water conservation. MGNREGS works by their very nature place stress on increasing land productivity, recharging groundwater and increasing water availability.

(ii) Recent amendment of the Act to permit MGNREGS works on individual land of small and marginal farmers who constitute 89% of the farming community, in addition to the individual land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY land reform beneficiaries will augment the impact on agricultural productivity and household income.

III. Initiatives taken by the Ministry of Rural Development

In order to address constraints like timely measurement of works, preparation of shelf of works, and delays in wage payments, the Ministry has taken the following initiatives:

(a) Timely measurement of works

Recognizing the need for adequate human resource for timely measurement of work, the Ministry took the following initiatives:

All activities required to process payment of wages must invariably be completed as per timelines given in the circular of the Ministry dated 29th October 2010. This includes; closure of muster on 6th day, Monthly Balance to be brought to appropriate authority on 8th day or before and so on. Penal provision (Sec 25 of the Act) should invariably be invoked for delays.

A flow chart with time schedule has been suggested to the States as follows:

- (i) Closing of muster roll by 6th day after start of the work.
- (ii) Bringing muster roll measurement book by 8th day.
- (iii) Entry of muster roll in MIS and generation of pay orders by 9th and 10th days.
- (iv) Submission of pay order at the Block post office/bank, generation of information wage slip transfer of pay order at the

village post office/bank within 11th and 12th day.

(v) Deposit of wages in the account of wage earners 13th day.

(vi) Entry of disbursement of wage into MIS within 16th day.

As mentioned in operational guideline,²¹ there are Mates/Barefoot Engineers who would work under the guidance of the Technical Assistants to help out with the technical surveys and readings, worksite layouts and maintenance of technical records.

Executive instructions on deployment of personnel: The Ministry has issued a circular on recruitment of personnel within this 6%. The circular recommends recruitment of 1 (one) Panchayat Development Officer in select Panchayat, 1 (one) technical assistant for every 6000 Households.

(b) Timely Wage Payment

(i) The Ministry is also instructing the states to operationalise the BC model and report regularly on progress. The states are to identify unserved areas for BC model and discuss with banks. The Ministry has also issued executive instructions for appointment of BC system.

²¹ Section 6.4.4 of the NREGA Operational Guidelines, Op.cit.

(ii) Many Post Offices do not keep adequate cash amount. Ministry has issues instruction to State that the District Administration should place adequate amounts with all the post offices to facilitate payment.

(iii) District Administration should facilitate transport and security for carrying cash.

iv) Alternate Institutions like SHG Federations, Large-sized Adivasi Multipurpose Societies (LAMPS), Non-Scheduled Commercial Banks and Private Banks like Cooperative Bank, Regional Rural Bank (RRB), Gramin Banks etc., of proven track records and others could be authorized to act as BCs.

(v) Pending complete roll out of BCs/Post offices, alternative arrangements such as mobile banking etc., should be provided.

(c) Social Audits

Social Audits enable the rural communities to monitor and analyze the quality, durability and usefulness of MGNREGS works as well as mobilize awareness and enforcement on their rights. Social Audit is an important tool

by which the people can improve and devise strategies to enhance the quality of implementation of MGNREGS. The Ministry has accorded utmost importance to the organization of Social Audits by the Gram Panchayats and issued instructions to the States to make necessary arrangements for the purpose. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Audit of Schemes Rules, 2011 have been formulated and shared with States/ UTs for Action.

(d) Work on individual land permitted under MGNREGS

Amendment of the Act to permit MGNREGS works on individual land of small and marginal farmers who constitute 89% of the farming community, in addition to the individual land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY land reform beneficiaries will augment the impact on agricultural productivity and household income. The following works can be taken up –

Irrigation facility - Construction of Dug well, Farm ponds, Tanks, Ground water recharge structure, Construction/lining of water courses/ Irrigation channel etc.

Land development facilities construction of contour/graded bund, land levelling and shaping, reclamation

of saline/alkaline land, construction of drainage channels, waste land by transporting silt from nearby tank, development of waste land/ fallow land.

Horticulture, Plantation - all activities related to horticulture including nursery raising.

(e) District Level Ombudsman

District Level Ombudsman for effective grievance redressal: The Ombudsman will be appointed by the State Government on the recommendation of the selection committee. Ombudsmen will be well-known persons from civil society who have experience in the field of public administration, law, academics, social work or management. Ombudsman will be an agency independent of the central or state government. The Ombudsman will receive complaints from MGNREGS workers and others on any matters, to consider such complaints and facilitate their disposal in accordance with law.

(f) Leveraging MGNREGS for sustainable development through Convergence

In view of the inter-sectorality of MGNREGS, the

need to create durable assets and improve livelihood security and the common target groups of certain development programmes with MGNREGS, the Ministry has developed and disseminated convergence guidelines with different Schemes and specific programmes viz., Indian Council of Agricultural Research, National Afforestation Programme and other schemes of the Ministry of Forest & Environment, Schemes of the Ministry of Water Resources, PMGSY (Department of Rural Development), SGSY (Department of Rural Development), Watershed Development Programmes (Department of Land Resources, Ministry of Rural Development), Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and schemes of Ministry of Agriculture. These convergence initiatives have been documented and shared among States.

The main objective of MGNREGS is to protect rural households from poverty and hunger. MGNREGS can also serve other objectives: Generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering Women, reducing rural urban migration and fostering social equity among others. Thus MGNREGS is not just an employment scheme; it is a tool of economic and social change in rural areas.

(g) Conditions for Adults to Apply

The MGNREGS offers hundred days of work to unemployed families in rural areas. The two conditions for the adults of a household to apply are:

1. They must be living in a rural area.

2. They must be willing to undertake unskilled manual labour for which they would receive the minimum wage. The details that need to be furnished are their name, age and address. These are submitted to the Gram Panchayat, which issues the household their job card, which contains details of adult members of the household. All registered members of the household are then entitled to a maximum of 100 days employment for the entire household in a given financial year. Applicants who are provided with employment are informed in writing, by means of a letter sent to the address given in the job card and by a public notice displayed at the Panchayat Offices at the district, intermediate or village level. As far as possible, the work site is to be within a five kilometre radius of the applicant's village - in case it is not, it must be provided within the Block and the labourers must be paid 10% of their wages as extra wages to meet the additional travel and living expenses. Facilities of safe drinking water, periods of rest, first-aid box

with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work being performed are to be provided at the work site. In case the number of children below the age of six years accompanying the women working at any site is five or more, provisions shall be made to depute one such woman to look after the children. She will be paid the wage rate. The wages are to be paid within 14 days. Working hours are from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a lunch break from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m.

(h) The Officials responsible for implementing the MGNREGS are:

(1) The District Programme Coordinator who is the Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat or the Collector of the District.

(2) The Programme Officer-a person who is not below the rank of Block Development Officer. The Programme Officer shall be responsible for matching the demand for employment with the employment opportunities arising from projects in the area under his jurisdiction.

(3) The Gram Panchayat, which shall be responsible for identification of the projects in the Gram Panchayat area to be

taken up under a Scheme as per the recommendations of the Gram Sabha and the Ward Sabhas and for executing and supervising such works. The Gram Panchayat shall make available all relevant documents including the muster rolls, bills, vouchers, measurement books, copies of sanction orders and other connected books of account and papers to the Gram Sabha for the purpose of conducting the social audit.

(4) The Gram Sabha shall monitor the execution of works within the Gram Panchayat and conduct regular social audits of all the projects under the Scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat.²²

IV. MGNREGS' Goals

The MGNREGS would strive to attain the following goals:²³

- a) Strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing a fall-back employment source, when other employment alternatives are scarce or inadequate.

- b) Growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy. Through the process of providing

²² http://www.nrega.nic.in/net_nrega/forum/2_MGNREGA.pdf. accessed on 11.11.2013.

²³ Government of India, *MGNREGA, Operational Guidelines 2013*, (3rd edition), Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India, New Delhi.

employment on works that address causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion, the Act seeks to strengthen the natural resource base of rural livelihood and create durable assets in rural areas. Effectively implemented, MGNREGS has the potential to transform the geography of poverty.

(c) Empowerment of rural poor through the processes of a rights-based Law.

(d) New ways of doing business, as a model of governance reform anchored on the principles of transparency and grass root democracy.

Thus, MGNREGS fosters conditions for inclusive growth ranging from basic wage security and recharging rural economy to a transformative empowerment process of democracy.

V. Permissible Works

The intention of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is to provide a basic employment guarantee in rural areas. The Scheme indicates the kinds of works that may be taken up for this

purpose. As per Schedule I of the Act, the focus of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) shall be on the following works:²⁴

1. Water conservation and water harvesting.
2. Drought proofing, including afforestation and tree plantation.
3. Irrigation canals, including micro and minor irrigation works.
4. Provision of irrigation facility, plantation, horticulture, land development to land owned by households belonging to the SC/ST, or to land of the beneficiaries of land reforms, or to land of the beneficiaries under the IAY/BPL families.
5. Renovation of traditional water bodies, including de-silting of tanks.
6. Land development.
7. Flood-control and protection works, including drainage in waterlogged areas.
8. Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access. The construction of roads may include culverts where necessary and within the village area may be taken up along with drains. Care should be taken not to take up roads included in the PMGSY network under MGNREGS. No cement concrete roads should be taken up under MGNREGS. Priority should be

²⁴ *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, MGNREGS, (Permissible Works)*, Prepared and published by DRDA, Kolasib.

given to roads that give access to SC/ST habitations.

9. Any other work that may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government.

V. Conclusion

This chapter has exposed the origin and history of MGNREGS in India in general and in Kolasib District in particular. It is significant to point out that, since the passing of the relevant Act by the Lok Sabha on 23rd August 2004 and signed by the President of India on 5th September 2005, the Ministry of Rural Development has been taking initiatives to address constraints like timely measurement of works and timely wage payment, social audits, work on individual land permitted under MGNREGS, District level Ombudsman and Leveraging MGNREGS for sustainable development through Convergence. The salient features of the Act, *inter alia*, are: Right based framework, Time bound guarantee, Labour intensive works, Decentralized planning, Work Site Facilities, Women Empowerment, Transparency and accountability, Implementation and Funding. The Act has also laid down two important conditions for the adults of a household to apply for employment under the Scheme - (a) they must be living in rural areas and (b) must be willing to undertake unskilled manual

labour for which they would receive minimum wage. Moreover, the Act has clearly indicated the officials responsible for implementing the Scheme which include the District Programme Coordinator, the Programme Officer, the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha.

CHAPTER – III

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

MACHINERY OF THE SCHEME

I. Implementation and Monitoring Machinery of MGNREGS

According to the Legislation made by the Indian Parliament, MGNREGS has a five-tier structure of implementation starting from Gram Panchayati (GP) at the bottom to the Central Government at the top.²⁵

(a) Gram Panchayat (GP)

GP is the nodal agency at the bottom level which has been given the authority to select, design and implement 50% of the works for the socio-economic development of the unprivileged people at the grassroot level. Accordingly, the Gram Sabha has been empowered to make fair selection of works; monitoring and supervision of those works for the development of their village. Each of the GPs has been given the responsibility of registering households, issuing job cards, receiving applications for

²⁵ K.T. Pakhuangte, *Handbook of MGNREGS*, Mizoram, (2nd Edition), 2012.

employment, providing employment and monitoring the MGNREGS works. In Mizoram, where there is no Panchayati Raj system, the implementation of MGNREGS is carried out by the Village Councils. Even in Kolasib District of Mizoram, the Village Councils conveniently play the role of Gram Sabha in implementing MGNREGS.

(b) Block Panchayat

The rest of the works, that is, 50% of the whole works, may be undertaken either by the Block Panchayat or the District Panchayat or both. Block Panchayat monitors and coordinates the plans and works at the block level. Computer updating of MGNREGS works, muster roll entries, etc., is done at the block level under the guidance of the MGNREGS programme officer. Unlike in other parts of the country, in addition to their normal works, Village Councils have to play the role of Block Panchayat in the implementation of MGNREGS in Mizoram.

(c) District Panchayat

District Panchayat, in addition to implementing non-mandatory works, coordinates MGNREGS activities at the district level. Besides, it has the responsibility to prepare both the district annual plan and the five-year perspective plan. These two

plan documents are the bases which guide the implementation of MGNREGS at the village level. These documents are prepared at the district level in consultation with the GPs and Block Panchayats. However, in Kolasib District, the role of the District Panchayat is played by the Deputy Commissioner and Block Development Officers with the support of different Village Councils within the jurisdiction of Kolasib District.

(d) State Government

Next in hierarchy is the State Government which acts as a facilitator in the flow of MGNREGS funds and helping in the preparation of manpower supply for the schemes. It has the responsibility to set up the State Employment Guarantee Council. The latter has to play the role in advising the government from time to time on MGNREGS implementation in the state. Besides, the Council is also entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluating of the MGNREGS in the State.

(e) Central Government

At the top of the hierarchy comes the Central Government. The Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi, is the nodal agency for implementation of MGNREGS and is held responsible to set up Central Employment Guarantee Council for receiving

advice on MGNREGS implementation. In addition, the Central Employment Guarantee Council may undertake independent evaluation and monitoring of the scheme at each stage of implementation of the scheme. It is significant to note that this Committee has been given a very high responsibility to prepare the budget and disburse funds.

II. Organisational Structure of the MGNREGS in Kolasib District

The strength or weakness of any agency of machinery greatly depends on its organisational structure. So also is the case with the organisational structure designed for the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) which was implemented in Kolasib District with the objective of providing wage employment in rural areas, creating durable assets and ensuring food security.

Kolasib District is among the 3rd phase districts where MGNREGS became operational from 1st April, 2008.²⁶ The district is divided into two RD Blocks, viz. Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir. For the purpose of administrative conveniences and for better functioning of MGNREGS, the district has two (2)

²⁶ As per the current record maintained by DRDA, Kolasib District.

Programme Officers.²⁷ Besides, there are two (2) additional POs²⁸ to assist the two POs. With the implementation of MGNREGS, the District has been enlarging its canvas of development activities every year and also has been successful in making the scheme more and more need based and focused. The results could be seen as reflected in the physical achievement.

The non-negotiation principle in MGNREGS implementation in Kolasib District is the multi-layered responsibilities and accountability and yet the focal point is being the Gram Sabha or Adult Villagers and Village Councils.²⁹ The activities and implementation of the scheme are centred at the Village and the Block levels while coordination of activities is vested at the Block and the District levels. It will not be an exaggeration to assert that MGNREGS is implemented in every village within Kolasib District. The Deputy Commissioners are, at different points of time, designated as the District Programme Co-ordinators of the District and Project Director of DRDAs are designated as District Programme Officers to assist the District Programme Co-ordinator. BDOs/SDO (Civil) and Contract POs

²⁷ While collecting data, V. Lalruatlina from Thingdawl RD Block and T. Lalchhanhimi from Bilkhawthlir RD Block are the Programme Officers.

²⁸ The two Additional POs are Mina Lalhmingthangi from Thingdawl RD Block and J.L. Remruatfela from Bilkhawthlir RD Block.

²⁹ As per the current record maintained by DRDA, Kolasib District.

are Programme Officers under the scheme. The implementing agency at the district level is DRDA, at the Block level BDO is the Programme Officer (PO) and at the village level Village Council or Courts (VC) is the implementing agency. Identification of works is done by the Village Assembly (Gram Sabha), which are approved by the VC and put up to the BDO or PO as annual plan or shelf of works. The BDOs submit the Annual Plan for their respective Blocks to the DPC for approval as per the guidelines of the Act.

III. Works of Monitoring and Vigilance

The works of monitoring and vigilance are done at Village, Block, District and State levels. Following are the works of Monitoring and Vigilance at different levels within the district.

(a) Fund Release Pattern

The pattern of fund release under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is also similar to other schemes of the government. Both the Central and the State Governments are bound to release their share of fund to the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). The Agency on its part should release the funds given to them by Central and the State Governments to the Block Development Offices. The

Village Councils are the next tier in the hierarchy of transfer of the schemes. Lastly, the Job Card holders receive money from the Village Councils as per wage norms set by the schemes.

(b) Planning

In accordance with the prescription made by Chapter 4 of MGNREGS Guidelines, planning is done at the grass root level³⁰. Annual Shelf of Projects or Annual Work Plan (AWP) is prepared as per selection and approval of the Gram Sabha with technical estimate prepared by Technical Assistants. Sanctions are given to Village Councils through the Programme Officers based on the demand for work proposed by the Village Councils from the Annual Work Plan. The wage and material component ratio is maintained and checked from the proposal submitted by the Village Councils through the Programme Officers at the District level i.e., at the time of preparation of sanction order.

In Kolasib District, demand for work is taking up based on the labour projection. At the grassroots level, the Village Councils are assigned the tasks of formulating their respective calendars based on the work requirement period of the registered households. Usually, the working calendar has been based on

³⁰ Government of Mizoram, The Mizoram Rural Employment Guarantee Rule, 2007, (published by Rural Development Department), P3.

agricultural season since most of the households in Kolasib District depend upon agriculture and allied subjects. The demand basis for every month is as outlined below:³¹

(1) January – Clearance of jhum land by cultivators require money for employing labourers.

(2) February – For meeting school admission expenses.

(3) March – Jhum land will be burnt and commercial crops sown. Fund is needed before seeds are sown.

(4) April – To enable the cultivators to make necessary arrangements for sowing the main crop i.e., paddy.

(5) May – In order to spend 2/3 weeks in jhum land for first weeding provision for wage employment is a must.

(6) June – It is weeding period.

(7) July – During this month second weeding is required.

(8) August – Monsoon arrives making it impossible for farm work, other forms of employment is required. This is met by wage employment.

³¹ *Outline of Monthly Demand Basis* prepared by DRDA, Kolasib District.

(9) September – Provision for third weeding is required.

(10) October – Harvesting is done during this month, the fund required for transport of harvest from jhum land to their homes is provided using wage employment.

(11) November – As cultivation period is over for the year the villagers require work. Other forms of employment are a necessity.

(12) December – Majority of the population are Christians, to meet their needs for Christmas and New Year Festival wage employment is a must.

Therefore, as demand for 100 days wage employment was already made by the Job Card Holders in the Gram Sabha or adult villagers, the said body itself has arranged the number of days to be provided with employment for each month in advance. Therefore, the implementations of MGNREGS in Kolasib District, though appearing to be supply basis, is, in reality, purely demand driven.

(c) Job Cards and Documents

Job Cards are virtually the tickets for enjoying the benefits of the scheme. Without Job Cards, no one could be given an opportunity to receive benefits out of the Scheme. Following is the process of issuing Job Cards to the households in each village not only within the area of Kolasib District but also in other villages within the jurisdictions of other districts in Mizoram State. Even those officials responsible for the issue of Job Cards to the villagers should do their works efficiently.

Job Cards had been issued to all registered household who have applied orally through the Village Council. Necessary entry had been made like photograph of card holder and employment details. Job Card is kept by each card holder and duplicate copy is in the custody of Village Council concerned.

Table 3.1:

Number of Job Card Holders in Kolasib District (as on 2.12.2013)

Sl. No	Name of Block	No. of Villages	No. of Job Card
1	Thingdawl ³²	17	6349
2	Bilkhawthlir ³³	30	13962
Total		47	20311

The above table shows that there are 47 villages within Kolasib district under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and, while collecting data, there are as many as 20,311 Job Card Holders.

(d) Registers and Muster Roll

Different kinds of Registers, such as, Application Register, Job card Register, Employment Register and Assets Register, Muster Roll Register, Complaint Register, Works Register, are maintained as per instructions from the District Authorities by each Village Council.

³² As per the current record maintained by Thingdawl RD block, Kolasib.

³³ As per the current record maintained by Bilkhawthlir RD block, Kolasib.

Muster Roll is kept for each work with unique number for every work sanctioned and detail entry is made in the Muster Roll. The Village Councils, with the help of Village Level Administrative Assistance (VLAA) do entry in the Job card. All Muster Rolls are verified before payment to the executing Agency.

(e) Social Audit

Social Audit has been conducted once every six months regularly. All documents and Job Cards are made available to the public during Social Audit so that the public will have access to clear their doubts related to the scheme. The monitoring of Social Audit is online through the MGNREGS website (i.e., <http://www.nrega.nic.in>) wherein the data and follow-up action can be tracked down to the Gram Panchayat Level. Even in Kolasib District, Social Audit has been effectively used by the Job Card holders for finding out where the faults lie in course of the implementation of the scheme.

Village and Monitoring Committee have been constituted in each village which keeps close vigil on the works of implementing agencies and actively monitoring their activities. Similarly, District Level and Block Level MGNREGS functionaries perform their role in their respective jurisdictions

judiciously which include – Monitoring and Inspection of Job Card, Muster Roll, Registration, Conduct of Social Audit, Payment of wages, progress and quality of works.

(f) Training

All key agencies have been given proper trainings to enable them to discharge their responsibilities. These key agencies include Gram Sabha, Village Councils, Vigilance and Monitoring Committee, NGO's and those Department personnels involved in the implementation of MGNREGS. Trainings have been organized mainly through the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Kolasib, and District Coordinator in connection with rural developments works within the two RD Blocks in Kolasib District.

(g) Monitoring and Information System (MIS)

To enhance transparency and to ensure all MGNREGS information for public domain, MIS e-module had been made operationalised since the inception of the scheme and made viewable through the website - <http://www.nrega.nic.in>. In respect of MGNREGS, the implementation process is performed as per the instructions and guidelines of the Central and State Government to a large extent. The District Schedule of Rate set

by DRDA, Kolasib are being followed strictly. Transparency are maintained through awareness campaigns, Gram Sabhas or Adult Villagers, social audit and by displaying Citizen Information Board showing details of all the works performed at every village under Kolasib District. All the works had been selected by the Gram Sabhas or Adult Villagers and executed by the Village Councils in a transparent manner.

IV. Achievements under MGNREGS - An Assessment

There have been discernible physical and financial achievements under MGNREGS. The achievements so made have been touching the lives of many people constituting the unprivileged section of the people in Kolasib District. The following empirical data collected by the researcher from the field have proved the magnitude of success made under this Scheme within the district under study. Let us analyse the data relating to the physical and financial achievements made under MGNREGS each year starting from 2008-2009.

(a) **Physical and Financial Achievements during 2008-2009**

Table 3.2: **Physical and Financial Achievements during the year 2008-2009** (*Rupees in Lakhs*)³⁴

Employment provided to households	16,802
Person Days Generated ³⁵	4.609
SC's	-
ST's	4.56
Women	2.25
Others	0.05
Central fund received	526.21
State fund received	52.617
Total Availability	579.139
Total Expenditure	573.402

Table 3.2 shows that the total number of employment provided under the Scheme during 2008-2009 was 16,802 households in Kolasib District and person days generated was 4.609 lakhs. While the total availability of the fund from the Central and the State Governments was Rs. 579.139 lakhs, the expenditure incurred for the Job Card holders was Rs. 573.402

³⁴ Computed from the *Files on Physical and Financial Achievements under MGNREGS during 2008-2009* maintained by Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir RD Blocks.

³⁵ 'Person Days Generated' has been calculated by dividing the total available amount by 100 days and this outcome has further been divided by wage rate, i.e., Rs.110 per day per person.

lakhs. In course of the implementation of MGNREGS, the Authorities of Kolasib District made laudable performance and is adjudged the best in the whole of Mizoram. In short, the District Authorities could ensure 100 days' employment to all the Job Card holders.

(b) **Physical and Financial achievement during 2009-2010**

Table 3.3: **Physical and Financial achievement during the year 2009-2010 (Rupees in Lakhs)**³⁶

Employment provided to households	18704
Person Days Generated ³⁷	17.82
SC's	-
ST's	17.64
Women	9.12
Others	0.18
Central fund received	2364.47
State fund received	96.735
Total Availability	2476.472
Total Expenditure	2449.81

³⁶ Computed from the *Files on Physical and Financial Achievements under MGNREGS during 2009-2010* maintained by Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir RD Blocks.

³⁷ 'Person Days Generated' has been calculated by dividing the total available amount by 100 days and this outcome has further been divided by wage rate, i.e., Rs. 103 per day per person.

During 2009-2010, the Scheme could provide 100 days' employment to as many as 18704 households within the district and person days generated was 17.82 lakhs. The total expenditure was Rs. 2449.81 lakhs while the total availability of the fund from the Central and the State Governments was Rs. 2476.472 lakhs. The performance of the Authorities of Kolasib District in the implementation of MGNREGS is second to none in the whole of Mizoram. Briefly, the District Authorities could ensure 100 days' employment to all the Job Card holders. This indicates that the purchasing powers of the unprivileged section of the people in Kolasib District have been tremendously improved through the implementation of MGNREGS.

The table 3.4 below shows that during 2010-2011 financial years, the Scheme had provided employment to 19941 households and the person days generated was Rs. 18.903 lakhs. While the total expenditure was Rs. 2864.083 lakhs, the total fund available for the scheme from the Central and the State Governments was Rs. 3094.617. Truly speaking, the Authorities of Kolasib District made a good performance in course of the implementation of MGNREGS. Hence, in the whole of Mizoram, Kolasib District has been adjudged the best on the basis of its performance.

(c) **Physical and Financial achievement during 2010-2011**

Table 3.4: **Physical and Financial achievement during the year 2010-2011**_(Rupees in Lakhs)³⁸

Employment provided to households	19941
Person Days Generated ³⁹	18.903
SC's	-
ST's	18.66
Women	9.54
Others	0.24
Central fund received	2711.11
State fund received	337.894
Total Availability	3094.617
Total Expenditure	2864.083

. While other districts find it difficult to ensure 100 days' employment for the unprivileged sections of the people, the Authorities of Kolasib District could give 100 days' employment to all the Job Card holders within the length and breadth of the district. In short, the performance of Kolasib District sets an

³⁸ Computed from the *Files on Physical and Financial Achievements under MGNREGS during 2010-2011* maintained by Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir RD Blocks.

³⁹ 'Person Days Generated' has been calculated by dividing the total available amount by 100 days and this outcome has further been divided by wage rate, i.e., Rs.129 per day per person.

example for other districts in connection with the implementation of MGNREGS. Further, this laudable achievement is also conveying the message in other parts of the country that the District Authorities in Kolasib stand for the poor.

(d) Physical and Financial achievement during 2011-2012

Table 3.5: Physical and Financial achievement during the year 2011-2012 (Rupees in Lakhs)⁴⁰

Employment provided to households	18897
Person Days Generated ⁴¹	17.760
SC's	-
ST's	18.12
Women	9.24
Others	0.12
Central fund received	3577.18
State fund received	187.715
Total Availability	4013.615
Total Expenditure	3998.35

Table 3.5 shows that the Scheme has provided employment to 18897 households during 2011-2012 and the person days generated was 17.760 lakhs. The total availability of

⁴⁰ Computed from the *Files on Physical and Financial Achievements under MGNREGS during 2011-2012* maintained by Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir RD Blocks.

⁴¹ 'Person Days Generated' has been calculated by dividing the total available amount by 100 days and this outcome has further been divided by wage rate, i.e., Rs. 136 per day per person.

the fund from the Central and the State Governments was Rs. 4013.615 lakhs while the total expenditure was Rs. 3998.35 lakhs. The performance of the Authorities of Kolasib District in course of the implementation of MGNREGS is laudable and adjudged the best in the whole of Mizoram. Briefly, the District Authorities could ensure 100 days' employment to all the Job Card Holders.

(e) Physical and Financial achievement during 2012-2013

Table 3.6: Physical and Financial achievement during the year 2012-2013

*(Rupees in Lakhs)*⁴²

Employment provided to households	15745
Person Days Generated ⁴³	15.509
SC's	-
ST's	10.1
Women	2.68
Others	0.01
Central fund received	3037.61
State fund received	426.446
Total Availability	3499.091
Total Expenditure	3477.641

⁴² Computed from the *Files on Physical and Financial Achievements under MGNREGS during 2012-2013* maintained by Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir RD Blocks.

⁴³ 'Person Days Generated' has been calculated by dividing the total available amount by 100 days and this outcome has further been divided by wage rate, i.e., Rs.148 per day per person.

Table 3.6 shows that the number of employment provided under the Scheme during 2012-2012 financial years was 15745 lakhs and the person days generated was 15.509 lakhs. While the total availability of the fund from the Central and the State Governments was Rs. 3499.091, the total expenditure incurred upon was Rs. 3477.641 lakhs. The performance of the Authorities of Kolasib District in course of the implementation of MGNREGS is laudable and adjudged the best in the whole of Mizoram. Briefly, the District Authorities could ensure 100 days' employment to all the Job Card Holders.

V. Works taken up under MGNREGS in Kolasib District⁴⁴

Works to be taken up in Kolasib District were carefully identified based on the Guidelines on MGNREGS issued by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

(a) Construction of roads

It is primarily a wage component under MGNREGS providing ample employment to Job Card holders besides creating durable asset in terms of improving connectivity within the district and also increasing the settlement area of the villages.

⁴⁴ As per the current record maintained by DRDA, Kolasib district.

It provides easy access to farming areas thereby easing the transport of produce to the market.

(b) Water Harvesting Structures

As most villages are not equipped with piped water supply, rainwater is a major source of drinking water apart from local water bodies, which tend to dry up in winter. Under MGNREGS rainwater harvesting structures are planned for all the villages within the district. Work has commenced in some villages. Rainwater harvesting structure will be maintained by a separate committee under the guidance of the Village Council. They will undertake the maintenance and ensure equal distribution to the villagers.

(c) Drought Proofing

Drought proofing is undertaken in many villages under Thingdawl RD block by way of afforestation to cover degraded forest and barren land and tree plantation by way of grassland development and silvipasture, road and canal side plantation.

(d) Land Development

Land Development is undertaken in compact rural farming areas. Bench terracing, trenching, Wet Rice Cultivation are the

main land development activities taken up in these areas to increase cultivable area as well as conserving all the cultivable land available.

(e) Scope for Convergence

Kolasib district have initiated the convergence of MGNREGA with other Schemes of Government departments such as those dealing with agriculture and horticulture. Literature on this topic details several individual case studies and positive impacts of this approach. MGNREGS with its inter-sectoral approach opens up opportunities for convergence with different programmes. The aim of convergence is to optimize public investments made under existing Schemes through suggested ways of linking and steering them towards a common/shared recipient end, both physical (area, infrastructure, natural resource) and human (person, group, agency). MGNREGS is converged with IWDP in the identified IWDP cluster areas by way of construction of connectivity and land development. The same is planned for new projects under IWMP. It is also converged with NLUP by way of construction of connectivity and side drain.⁴⁵

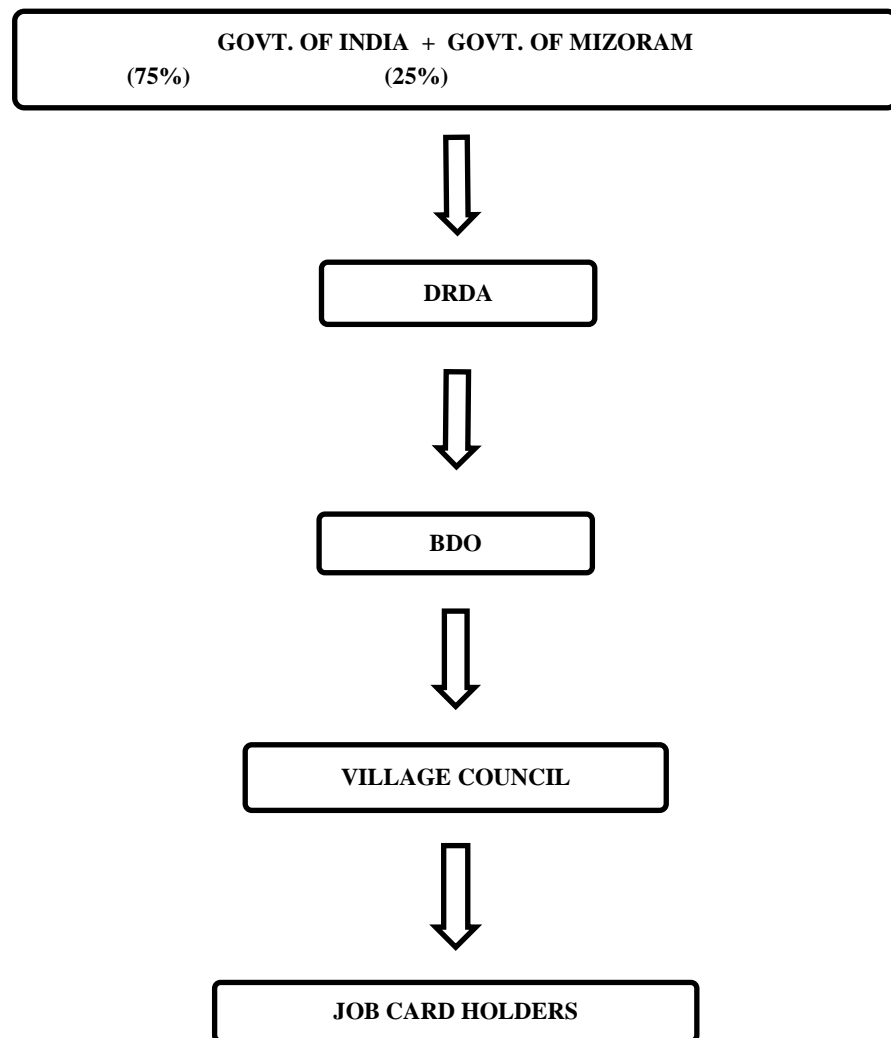
⁴⁵ As recorded by Rural Development Department, Thingdawl RD block, Kolasib district.

VI. Conclusion

In this chapter the structure and implementation of MGNREGS was given in detail, from the top level to the bottom level. The fund release pattern in Kolasib district and the works done were highlighted. The physical and financial achievements from 2008 - 2013 were given in detail.

Diagram 3.1: **Fund Release Pattern**

(Material Cost)



CHAPTER-IV

Results and Discussion

I. Introduction

In this chapter, the findings of the present research have been given in detail with the relevant data collected from the field that are shown in tables and explanations. It also highlighted the discussions on the points of the merits and demerits of the working of MGNREGS in Kolasib district.

II. Analysis of Questionnaires

The researcher prepared Questionnaires pertaining to the implementation of MGNREGS in Kolasib District and administered the following questions to the Job Card holders and the officials involved in the implementation of the Scheme.

1) The *first* question administered to the Job card holders was in relation to their educational qualifications. The researcher is of the view that the educational attainments of the Job card holders can be responsible for the success or failure of the MGNREGS. In Mizoram, those who completed High School Leaving

Certificate are accepted as educated. So, the researcher administered the question to the Job Card holders whether they completed Class X or not.

2) As there are some districts where 100 days' work could not be implemented, the scholar administered the *second* question to the Job Card holders in order to know from them whether the norm of 100 days' work has been fulfilled or not in Kolasib District.

3) *Thirdly*, the researcher administered a question for assessing the quality of supervision carried out by the Officers-in-Charge during the implementation of the Scheme in Kolasib District.

4) *Fourthly*, the researcher inquired about the mode of payment of wages to the Job Card holders by the Officers-in-Charge. It is pertinent to point out that payment of wages of the Job Card holders should be done through any recognised Banks nearest to them.

5) *Fifthly*, a question was administered with a view to knowing whether machines were employed at the worksite against MGNREGS guidelines.

6) *Sixthly*, the question was administered to the Job Card holders to explore whether there was good working climate for them to implement the Scheme.

7) So long as MGNREGS is intended to improve the purchasing powers of the rural poor, the researcher administered the *seventh* question to the Job Card holders to find out whether they could save their wages earned under the Scheme for the improvement of their purchasing powers to improve their living conditions.

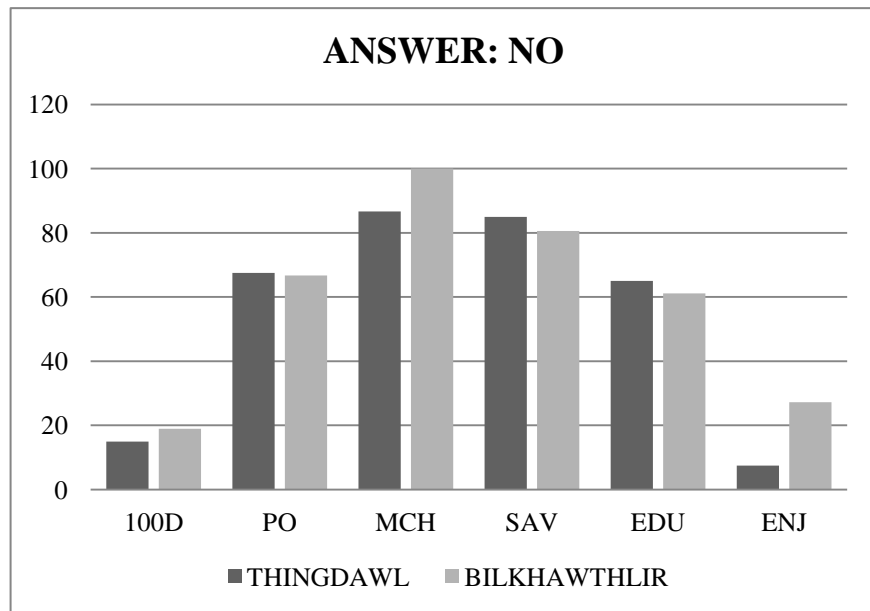
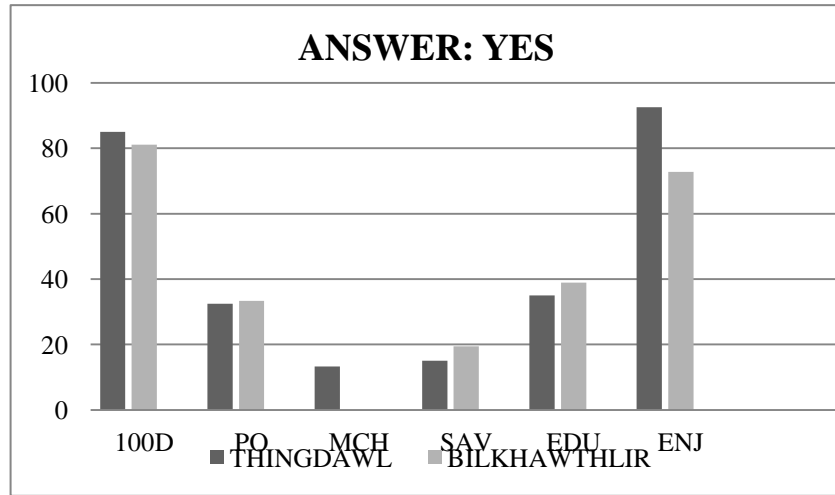
8) By way of finding out whether the implementation of the Scheme is profitable for the Government or not, the researcher again administered a question for comparing the wages earned by the Job Card holders per Day under MGNREGS and the Government of Mizoram, 2013.

III. Results

With the help of the above Questionnaire, the scholar has collected relevant data from the field through structured and unstructured Interviews. Graphical representation of the

responses of the interviewees from the two RD Blocks in Kolasib

District is shown below:



Let us analyse the data so collected from those Job Card Holders under MGNREGS in Kolasib District.

(1) Educational Background of Job Card Holders

With the realisation of the importance of the educational attainment of the respondents for establishing their level of understanding of MGNREGS, the scholar has collected data relating to their educational qualifications. The researcher, as stated above, is of the view that those beneficiaries completing at least HSLC would have better understanding of the Scheme than those who are under Matriculate. The following data will help us in understanding the background of the Job Card holders.

The table below shows that out of 300 Job Card holders from 10 villages under study, only 112 Job Card holders i.e. 37.3 percent of them completed at least HSLC and 188 i.e. 62.7 percent of them did not complete HSLC. Hence, it can be established that proper guidance from the Officer-in-charge to the Job Card holders can effectively work for the proper implementation of the Scheme in Kolasib District.

Table 4.1: **Educational Attainment of Job Card Holders**

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS	
		YES	NO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	12	18
	b) Zanlawn	9	21
	c) Serkhan	7	23
	d) Kawnpui	14	16
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	2	28
	b) College Veng	16	14
	c) Diakkawn	18	12
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	13	17
	e) Vairengte	10	20
	f) Rengtekawn	11	19
GRAND TOTAL			188

(2) Whether or not the norm of 100 days' work fulfilled

To know whether the main objective of MGNREGS, that is; to provide for at least 100 days of unskilled wage employment to deserving adult members, questionnaire had been conducted in different villages by taking 30 Job Card holders from each village under study. The following data will help us in understanding the extent of the fulfilment of the objective of MGNREGS

Table 4.2: **Completion of 100 day's work**

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS	
		YES	NO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	27	3
	b) Zanolawn	23	7
	c) Serkhan	26	4
	d) Kawnpui	26	4
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	25	5
	b) College Veng	28	2
	c) Diakkawn	24	6
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	24	6
	e) Vairengte	23	7
	f) Rengtekawn	22	8
GRAND TOTAL		248	52

Table 4.2 indicated that most of the Job Card holders completed 100 days work, 82.7 per cent of the Job Card holders under the study villages have completed 100 days work and 17.3

per cent did not. But in these villages, the Job Card holders completed 100 days worth of work in less than 100 days, and most of them received full wages worth of 100 days.

(3) Quality of Supervision done by the Officers-in-Charge

Since supervision by the Officer-in-Charge has been provided in the Scheme, the researcher is of the view that frequent visit by the Officer-in-Charge will result in better performance by the Job Card holders at the worksite. The intention of this particular study is whether supervision has been conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme and guidelines issued by the Government from time to time.

It has been observed from data collected that the Officer-in-Charge seldom visited the worksite as very few of the Job Card holders i.e., only 33 percent of the Job Card holders were aware of the officer who was in-charge of them while 67 percent of the Job Card holders were not aware of the Officer-in-Charge. The interaction with the Officer-in charge is frequented mostly in Diakkawn village of Kolasib district and the least interaction with the Officer-in charge is in Rengtekawn village which is also in Kolasib district.

Table 4.3: **Frequency of Interaction with Officers-in-Charge**

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS	
		YES	NO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	12	18
	b) Zanlawn	8	22
	c) Serkhan	9	21
	d) Kawnpui	10	20
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	5	25
	b) College Veng	13	17
	c) Diakkawn	16	14
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	8	22
	e) Vairengte	11	19
	f) Rengtekawn	7	23
GRAND TOTAL		99	201

(4) Mode of Payment of Wages

Since the Scheme made provision for payment of wages through banks or post office, the researcher has undergone a comprehensive study by questioning the Job Card holders from the study villages how they received their wages. The following data will help us in understanding how payment was made in the study villages.

Table 4.4: Payment of wages

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS		
		BANK	VC	PO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	20	10	-
	b) Zanlawn	-	30	-
	c) Serkhan	-	30	-
	d) Kawnpui	18	12	-
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	18	12	-
	b) College Veng	30	-	-
	c) Diakkawn	30	-	-
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	30	-	-
	e) Vairengte	25	5	-
	f) Rengtekawn	28	2	-
GRAND TOTAL		199	101	-

The payment of wages in cash was done mostly through banks or Village Council. The network of payment was

satisfactory and convenient for the beneficiary to collect their wages. But due to poor coverage of bank and post office accounts, 33.7 per cent of payment was made through VC at the time when data was collected. But from November 2013, all payments were made compulsory through banks⁴⁶.

(5) Whether Machine employed at the Worksite

The Scheme has prohibited the use of machinery at the worksite and all allotted works should be finished with man power only i.e. Job Card holders. The following data will help us in understanding the level of compliance with this particular provision by the Job Card holders in the villages under study.

Table 4.5: Use of machine at the worksite

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS	
		YES	NO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	0	30
	b) Zanlawn	0	30
	c) Serkhan	0	30
	d) Kawnpui	16	14
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	0	30
	b) College Veng	0	30
	c) Diakkawn	0	30
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	0	30
	e) Vairengte	0	30
	f) Rengtekawn	0	30
GRAND TOTAL		16	284

⁴⁶ As per the current record maintained by DRDA, Kolasib District

Only the study group in Kawnpui village admitted to using machine i.e. 5.3 per cent. The other villages i.e., 94.7 per cent denied the use of machine and did not report the use of machines. These villages may not have used machines during the time when data was collected but might have used at the initial stage of the implementation of the scheme.

(6) **Working climate**

The Scheme involves participation of the community at large that suits the sentiments of the local people. Congenial climate at the worksite may speed up the progress of the ongoing work. The following data will help us in understanding the working climate of the Job Card holders in the villages under study.

Table 4.6: **Enjoyment of work**

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS			
		Male		Female	
		YES	NO	YES	NO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	10	0	19	1
	b) Zanlawn	10	0	18	2
	c) Serkhan	10	0	19	1
	d) Kawnpui	8	2	17	3
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	9	1	18	2
	b) College Veng	9	1	13	7
	c) Diakkawn	7	3	5	15
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	10	0	18	2
	e) Vairengte	4	6	11	9
	f) Rengtekawn	8	2	19	1
GRAND TOTAL		85	15	157	43

Since the Scheme involves participation of the community, most of Job Card holder enjoyed the work allotted. 80.7 per cent of the Job Card holders under the study villages enjoyed it, and 19.3 per cent did not enjoy it. Here among the Job Card holders, 78.5 per cent of females and 85 per cent of males enjoyed the works allotted.

(7) Whether the Wages under the Scheme have been saved or not by the Job Card holders

The idea behind the Scheme was that it generated additional income for the rural poor. The intention of the scholar was to find out whether the wages under MGNREGS improved their savings or utilized whatever they received as wages.

Table: 4.7: **Saving capacity**

RD BLOCK	VILLAGES	ANSWERS	
		YES	NO
1. Thingdawl	a) Thingdawl	5	25
	b) Zanlawn	2	28
	c) Serkhan	1	29
	d) Kawnpui	10	20
2. Bilkhawthlir	a) Bilkhawthlir	2	28
	b) College Veng	5	25
	c) Diakkawn	8	22
	d) Tuitha Veng/Saidan	0	30
	e) Vairengte	20	10
	f) Rengtekawn	0	30
GRAND TOTAL		53	247

From the data that have been collected from the study villages, it was obvious that most of the participants or Job Card holders utilized whatever they received as wages. Only 17.7 per cent of the Job Card holders under the study villages were able to invest their wages and 82.3 per cent of the Job Card holders were unable to invest their wages

(8) Table 4.8: **Comparison of Wages per Day under MGNREGS and the Government of Mizoram, 2013**

LABOUR	In Rupees	
MGNREGS	148	
OTHER GOVT. WORKERS		SAVINGS
1) SCALE I	380	232
2) SCALE II	310	162
3) SEMI-SKILLED	250	102
4) UNSKILLED	220	72

Table 4.8 shows that while the wages under MGNREGS was Rs 148 per day, wages under the Government of Mizoram was much higher. Scale I workers were paid Rs 380 per day, Scale II workers were paid Rs 310, Semi-skilled Rs 250 and Unskilled Rs 220 per day.

Thus, from the data collected from the respondents, the findings of the present study maybe summarised as under –

(1) Due to lack of information and awareness on the part of the community, the grievances and the problems of the workers were not given much importance. Due to lack of awareness about the provisions of the Scheme, people are unaware of their basic entitlements under MGNREGS such as Job Cards, Minimum Wage Amount, and Unemployment Allowance. There is a widespread ignorance about how to avail unemployment allowance; sometimes even the officials deliberately do not give out this information as they fear punishment for not providing jobs and poor awareness not only leads to corruption but also to poor management of the scheme and thus the true potential of the MGNREGS is not being realized.

(2) The number of Job Cards issued does not tally with the actual number of Job Card holders. A detailed examination of the data suggests a strong possibility that a number of Job Cards are officially issued but not provided to the households which indicated that local officials are inflating the number of workers and pocketing the funds.

(3) There exists delay of payments for the work performed by the Job Card holders. Payment was sometimes delayed for

months which indicated that MGNREGS cannot be relied upon as an emergency fund to meet the current needs. Delays on wage payments are a huge disincentive for beneficiaries who seek employment under the scheme. It also dilutes the spirit of the Act that is meant as an instrument of social security for the poor.

(4) Most of the Job Card holders completed 100 days work, 82.7 per cent of the Job Card holders under the study villages have completed 100 days work and 17.3 per cent did not. But in these villages, the Job Card holders completed 100 days worth of work in less than 100 days, and most of them received full wages worth of 100 days.

(5) The study reveals that there was little contact between the Job Card holders and the Officer who is in charge of the Scheme. This indicated that the Officer in charge seldom visit the work site for supervision. Most of the Job Card holders are not aware of the Officer who is in charge of the Scheme. Through an interview with the Job Card holders in the selected villages, it has been observed that 67 per cent of the Job Card holders are unaware and only 33 per cent are aware of the Officer-in-charge.

(6) Though the work done should be supervised and invigilate regularly by the Officer in charge, it was seldom supervised and invigilate; the Job Card holders who are working sometimes are

not even aware that they are being supervised. Supervision was sometimes done by the VC.

(7) The payment of wages in cash was done mostly through banks or Village Council. The network of payment was satisfactory and convenient for the beneficiary to collect their wages. But due to poor coverage of bank and post office accounts, only 39.7 per cent of payment was through VC at the time when data was collected. But from November 2013, all payments are made compulsory through banks.

(8) Only the study group in Kawnpui village admitted to using machines. The other villages did not report of using the help of machinery. Maybe these villages must not have used machines during the time when data was collected but at the initial stage of the implementation of the scheme.

(9) Since the scheme involves involvement of the community, most of them enjoyed the work allotted. 80.7 per cent of the Job Card holders under the study villages enjoy it, and 19.3 per cent did not enjoy it. Here among the Job Card holders, 78.5 per cent of females and 85 per cent of males enjoyed the works allotted.

(10) Since most of the Job Card holders are very poor, they utilize whatever they received as wages. Only 17.7 per cent of the

Job Card holders under the study villages were able to invest their wages. This indicated that MGNREGS has obviously, increased the earning capacity of the rural people. But the spending pattern of the workers assumes significance because there is hardly any saving out of the wage earned from MGNREGS. Raw cash in the hands leads to non-purposive spending. In some cases, Men workers have the tendency of spending considerable portion of their earning from this scheme on drugs and liquor related products. Therefore, the chance of creating financial inclusion is missing and the idea of saving is wiped out of the minds of the beneficiaries and payment to the workers under MGNREGS is made in cash in many villages instead of through banks or post office accounts.

(11) There was no or little assessment for the requirement of the work allotted, so most of the works was clearing and construction of roads.

IV. Discussion

(A) Merits

i) **Need basis work** - Most of the works allotted in this Scheme were of great importance to the community. In this district, rural connectivity is of utmost necessity and was given due importance. Most of the works allotted were construction of quality all weather roads.

ii) **Better Output due to involvement of Community Labour** – The area where the works were allotted involves only Job Card holders from that same work site. As such, the Job Card holders are totally involved and there is feeling of ownership, thus the output is surely to increase.

iii) **Better Supervision** – Even though the POs are not involved much during the working hours or when works are in progress, the VC of that same community would act as supervisor. Thus, there is a congenial atmosphere between the workers and the supervisor. This kind of atmosphere is rare in other government works.

Sometimes, in some areas POs from DRDA staff would make an unexpected visit. Thus, knowing of such unexpected

visits, the workers do not waste much time during their working hours as compared to other government contract works.

iv) **Machine use** – Even though machines were required in some areas the workers would not employ machines as it is not under the provision of this Scheme. The workers would work harder and tried to tackle the problem as best as they could.

v) **Generation of Income** - Usually, most of the Job Card holders are engaged in agriculture, so their main source of livelihood is by selling their agricultural products, which is meagre. The MGNREGS thus generate additional income for them. The standard of living in these areas is much higher as compared to five years before the implementation of this Scheme. Even though most of the workers were not able to invest much of their earnings, some could. When we take into consideration their standard of living before, the 17.7 per cent who are able to invest is a remarkable achievement. The other 82.3 per cent who had used up all their wages were for covering their basic needs.

vi) **Assured Job** - This Scheme provides manual work even to unskilled labour who otherwise might not find income generating works. The literacy rate in this district was 93.50 in

2011.⁴⁷ This is much higher than the overall rate of Mizoram which is 91.33 per cent. But 62.67 per cent have not completed their matriculation, so most of the Job Card Holders were not employed in any income generating or other government jobs. This Scheme not only provides an assured job but also an assured income to this community.

vii) **Direct Payment of Wages, so the Scheme is highly favoured by the Workers** - Some of the villages under Kolasib district were difficult to penetrate and the network of banks and post offices is weak, so payment of wages is done mainly through Cash Payment Committee under VC. Since most of the job card holders are very poor, this direct wages payment is highly favoured by them.

viii) **Congenial Work Atmosphere as workers are from the same Community** - Since the workers were from the same community, there is congenial work atmosphere at the work site as most of the workers recognize each other. So, they work with full enthusiasm.

ix) **Involvement of women** - The predominance of woman in MNREGA works as compared to other government jobs is the

⁴⁷ *Census 2011 detail of Kolasib*, Directorate of Census operations in Mizoram, 2013

striking feature of this Scheme. The MGNREGS may not be women's empowerment programme, but all legislations have an intrinsic obligation of empowering the citizen and the community at large. This Scheme has significant achievements with regard to mobilisation of women wage workers, gender parity of wages and increased control over women's earnings.

x) **Good Investment** - It is a profitable investment for the Government especially in terms of cheap labour. The wage of the lowest category (unskilled) of Government servant w.e.f. August, 2013 is Rs. 220/day, whereas under this Scheme it is Rs. 148/day. Thus, the savings for the government is Rs.7200/labour in a year. In Kolasib district, there are 20311 Job Card holders. So, if we multiply 7200 with the total number of Job Card holders, the total savings for the government in a year is $20311 \times 7200 = \text{Rs. } 14,62,39,200/-$

(B) Demerits

i) **No Contact between the Job Card Holders and the PO (e.g. Fake Job Cards)** - There is no or little contact between the Job Card holders and the PO. Most of the job card holders were unaware of the Officer –in- Charge of them. This lack of contact and knowledge about the PO can create misuse of Job Cards,

wrong representation of the real card holders, and other such abuses of the salient features of the Scheme.

ii) **Awareness** - Due to lack of awareness about the provisions of the Act, people are unaware of their basic entitlements under MGNREGS such as Job Cards, Minimum Wage Amount, and Unemployment Allowance. There is a widespread ignorance about how to avail unemployment allowance; sometimes even the officials deliberately do not give out this information as they fear punishment for not providing jobs and poor awareness not only leads to corruption but also to poor management of the Scheme and thus the true potential of the MGNREGS is not being realized.

iii) **No Work Supervision** - The ongoing work were seldom supervised by the competing authority and the quality of work is not up to expectation. Not only was the work not supervised the work allotment was not systematically planned.

iv) **Machine use** – Most of the works allotted was at the initial stage wherein ground works were laid, and employment of machines is a must. But the provisions under this Scheme do not allow the use of any machinery.

v) **Delay in Payment of Wages** - There is delay of payment in wages that brings complaint from the Job Card holders. Delays on wage payments are a huge disincentive for beneficiaries who seek employment under the Scheme. It also dilutes the spirit of the Act that is meant as an instrument of social security for the poor.

vi) **No Training for the Matriculate** – There is no training for the 37.33 per cent who had completed their matriculation. The literate but unskilled wage workers could be trained as mates, technical assistants, social auditors and this would enable them to acquire new skills.

vii) **100 Days Short But Full Wages** - Since the Scheme provides hundred days of work, the Job Card holders must work hundred days with full wages. But it seems that some of the Job Card holders work less than hundred days but received full wages.

viii) **Cash Payment** - Some of the villages under Kolasib district were difficult to penetrate and the network of banks and post offices is weak, so payment of wages is done mainly through Cash payment committee. But the spending pattern of the workers assumes significance because there is hardly any saving out of the wage earned from MGNREGS. Raw cash in the hands

leads to non-purposive spending. In some cases, men workers have the tendency of spending considerable portion of their earning from this Scheme on drugs and liquor related products. Therefore, the chance of creating financial inclusion is missing and the idea of saving is wiped out of the minds of the beneficiaries and payment to the workers under MGNREGS is made in cash in many villages instead of through banks or post office accounts.

ix) **Gender Biased Work** - The works allotted sometimes require man's work. But since there is no distribution of work between man and woman, the work becomes burdensome for the female workers. Women friendly tools and technologies were not made available to women, to ensure the productivity on par with men.

CHAPTER – V

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

I. Summary and Findings

For poverty alleviation and for rural development, the mission of MGNREGS is to provide job on demand in order to ensure livelihood security and at the same time create durable assets to augment basic resources available to the poor. People of rural areas are entitled to employment under the Scheme, failing which the government is liable to pay an unemployment allowance within the stipulated time of 15 days. It has generated more employment for the rural poor than any other programme in the history of independent India. It has the potential to transform the lives of the rural poor not just by guaranteeing wage employment through creation of productive assets, but also by empowering the rural poor through improved governance in rural areas and enhanced capacity and responsiveness of the Panchayati Raj Institutions. To this end, the Scheme guarantees 100 days of manual employment at statutory minimum wage rates to any rural household to members willing to do unskilled manual work. The manual work needs to create sustainable assets

to the economy and infrastructural development of the village. This Scheme was introduced with the aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living in rural India, whether or not they are below the poverty line. Around one third of stipulated work force is women.

Notwithstanding the negative propaganda and the prominent report of corruption, MGNREGS stands apart from employment and poverty alleviation programmes in significant ways. It is the first national programme of consequence, which has woven transparency and accountability into the usual fabric of daily interaction of people with government. The cases of reported corruption have shocked the intelligentsia. The rural worker might often be the victim but will still offer critical support, not only because it has provided wage income, but also for facilitating disclosure, which helps identify and fight pilferage. In fact, in many cases, the workers themselves have exposed scams. MGNREGS gives an opportunity to break the feudally enforced silence of its victims. Through transparency and social audit measures, it allows anyone, anywhere to be part of the monitoring of the delivery system. The MGNREGS gives a further opportunity to realize the Constitutional sovereignty, the power of the people.

The implementation of MGNREGS in Mizoram started in Lawngtlai and Saiha Districts under Phase-I during the year 2006-07 and extended to Lunglei and Champhai Districts during 2007-2008. From 1st April 2008 onwards, the programme covered all the 8 (eight) Districts with the inclusion of the remaining 4 (four) Districts viz. Aizawl, Kolasib, Serchhip and Mamit Districts. Kolasib District is among the 3rd phase district where MGNREGS become operational from 1st April, 2008. The district is divided into two R.D. Blocks, viz., Thingdawl and Bilkhawthlir.

The implementing agency at the district level in Kolasib is DRDA. Jitendra Yadav, the Deputy Commissioner, is the present District Programme Coordinator assisted by the Project Director and Assistant Project Officer for the implementation of the Scheme within the district. At the block level, BDO is the Programme Officer assisted by Assistant Programme Officer and other clerical staff for implementing the Scheme. At the village level, Village Council or Courts is the implementing agency. With the implementation of MGNREGS, the Kolasib District has been enlarging its canvas of development activities every year and also has been successful in making the Scheme more and more need based and focused.

The funds received for this Scheme are shared between the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 75:25(material cost). Funds are released in two installments. However, the second installment is released by the Central Government only after the State Government met its matching share of the first installment. Failure to meet its matching share by the State Government could results in the delay of release of second installment by the Central Government.

Supervision of the work of the Scheme implemented by DRDA in Kolasib district is very essential. But in practice, effective supervision on the part of DRDA is not satisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation of works by BDO and VC rests with DRDA and can take actions for non-performance including cancellation of the project or withholding of funds. The DRDA only have financial control over the BDO and VCs and on many instances, they failed to comply with the instructions given by the DRDA. Besides, the DRDA in Kolasib district also fail to perform its duty in ensuring qualitative monitoring on regular basis.

It has been observed from the study that the awareness levels among the potential beneficiaries of the provisions of the Scheme, such as job cards, demanding work, unemployment

allowance etc., were still low. Most of the beneficiaries were ignorant of how to avail unemployment allowances and none of the beneficiaries demanded unemployment allowances till now. In this district, rural connectivity is of utmost necessity and was given due importance. Most of the works allotted were construction of new connectivity in the area. But the requirement of funds for constructions of roads could not be met under this scheme alone. So, some of the new roads were constructed under convergence with NLUP.

II. Suggestions

Bases on the study there are many shortcomings in the working and implementation of MGNREGS in Kolasib district for rural development and the following suggestions or recommendations have been made in order to improve the working of MGNREGS in Kolasib district. They are as follows:

1. Strict monitoring of their performance by VCs against specific outcomes should be ensured.
2. The system of continuous monitoring and evaluation at every stage of the programme has to be built in order to ensure quality. The BDO/Programme Officer should monitor all the works implemented at the village level, and also registration and issue of Job Cards and the timely payment of wages. The VC should

evaluate and check the employment provided to each person who has applied for work.

3. The Programme Officer should monitor all activities starting from planning to payment of wages and make sure that the Scheme is implemented in the District as envisaged in the Scheme.

4. The Government should evaluate the impact of the Scheme in the District to strengthen its implementation.

5. The limited role of VC in management of the Scheme is a critical issue in effective implementation of the Scheme. Due to lack of functionalities like planning and requirement of work, issue of wages, etc., they have become paralyzed and are not able to perform their roles and responsibilities.

6. Deployment of full time professionals dedicated to MGNREGS at all levels, but most importantly at block level is vital.

7. The Job Card holders should be aware of the legal provisions of the unemployment allowances provided in the Scheme. This limits their ability to fully benefit under the Scheme.

8. Households in Kolasib District should be aware that MGNREGS work can be demanded at any time during the year.

9. Awareness of any grievance redressal mechanism in the Scheme should be made known to the participants. Studies point out that it is necessary to strengthen grievance redressal systems to address issues of corruption as well as other process issues.

10. If the enthusiasm of the participants had been supported by an able, well-staffed administration, capable local governance institutions and leadership, the results would have been more positive.

11. Lags in the process and procedure have reduced the efficiency of asset sack of technical support to communities, on how to plan and when and where to start a work is also a key factor in non-completion of works. To adequately match the demand of work, prior assessment of the quantum of work likely to be demanded as well as the timing of this demand, is required. Concomitantly, a shelf of projects of works to be taken up in the year should be prepared to meet this demand. This matching of demand and supply of work is the process of planning under MGNREGS and is summed up as a Labour Budget for submission to the GoI for fund allocation at the beginning of the Financial Year.

The social development infrastructure is very weak and MGNREGS in convergence mode should take up construction of *anganwadis*, overhead tank, individual and community toilets in

SC/ST habitations and residential schools at *taluk* level. Part of the labour cost in the case of individual toilets may be met from MGNREGS wage bill.

12. A large number of works, particularly those related to water conservation, remain incomplete, either due to lack of technical support or awareness.

13. The convergence of MGNREGS with other Schemes of Government departments such as those dealing with agriculture and horticulture is not much, as positive impacts of this approach have been reported in other areas. As agriculture is their main source of livelihood, if this had been given more importance, it would give a more stable source of income in the long term. The rural connectivity should be integrated with PMGSY or other rural roads programmes to ensure creation of quality all weather roads. A different strategy has to be worked out to provide connectivity facility to all villages.

14. Frequent meetings and more participation at the community meeting convened for planning MGNREGS works for further implementation of the Scheme at the village level is a must.

15. To ensure transparency in wage payments and prevent misappropriations, the Government of India mandated that all MGNREGS wage payments should be made through banks or

post office accounts opened in the name of the worker. This will ensure better security and better access to credit.

16. Implementation of development schemes, like health, drinking water were still not covered much.

17. The literate youth as wage seekers should be provided with training and skills development for self employment such as brick making, mobile repairs, book keeping, and maintenance of muster roll to engage them in the MGNREGS activities.

18. Lighter and women friendly works like horticulture and nurseries may be provided not only for pregnant, lactating and aged women but also for all women groups. Women friendly tools and technologies should be made available to women, to ensure the productivity on par with men.

To minimize the vulnerability of widow, deserted and separated women, the household definition for MGNREGS job card must recognize them as separate household. Separate identification and job card for single as well as dependent women residing with family members, should be issued for their livelihood security. Flexibility in time of work could be thought specifically for women, as they are engaged in multi activities including household chores.

19. Almost all the Job Card holders under this district are under ST, so under the privileges enjoyed under SC/ST can be utilized, like in other skill training such as in construction work, vermin-compost production, horticulture and drip irrigation systems etc., and these trainings may be done in convergence with SC/ST development corporations and concerned line departments/agencies.

20. The rain water harvesting structure should be created under MGNREGS at free of cost for the SC/ST farmers while, at nominal charges for the other weaker sections to avoid further degradation of their lands and to restore their soil health. In case of ST farmers owning small holdings (less than half an acre) allowing each of them to have a farm pond may not be viable in which case, a group approach can be adopted sharing the land loss and benefits by the group. Further, these small holdings can be consolidated on a cluster approach and developed through cooperative farming or community farming mode. Depending upon the suitability, appropriate activities should be identified by professionals under MGNREGS so as to derive more benefit from such lands.

III. Conclusion

MGNREGS is primarily aimed at reducing poverty through generation of employment and enhancing the purchasing power in the hands of the rural poor. It is the flagship programme of the Government for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment. It generates demand for productive labour force in villages. It provides an alternative source of livelihood which aimed at reducing migration, alleviating poverty, and making villages self-sustaining through productive assets creation such as road construction, construction of Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) slab culvert and bridges, construction of water tanks, clearance of jungle for fire protection, soil and water conservation work, etc.

MGNREGS is a programme that has immense potential to improve the gap between urban and rural India leading to rural development and provides a stable income for the workers. The study reveals that despite numerous problems, MGNREGS is a program that has begun to make a difference in the lives of the rural inhabitants.. The present study is the first attempt in Kolasib district to look into the implementation and working of MGNREGS. These results suggested that the scheme has a significant impact on alleviating rural poverty. The findings and suggestions are hoped to have further policy implications for policy makers for years to come.

