



Corruption in MGNREGA: A case study of district Kulgam

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Abstract

The demonetization drive clearly exposed one thing: universalization of corruption is the most secular character of the nation where it cuts across the spheres of departments, regions, and even caste, creed, sex, community and everything. Corruption exists everywhere and in every department. It has not even spared the so called social welfare legislations and employment guarantee schemes. MGNREGA is one of such legislation which has become hub of corrupt practices. In District Kulgam, the Act was introduced in phase II in the year 2007. The launching of such a programme has generated a ray of hope for the poor rural people of the district in building a strong rural society for employment generation and creation of much needed village assets. So with this background the present study was an attempt to study the performance of MGNREGA programme in Kulgam district and its impact on the socio economic life of its rural people. Moreover the problems in the implementation of the scheme were also analyzed like; delayed payments, incomplete wages, non-allocation of extra compensation and unemployment allowance etc.

Keywords: demonetization, exposed, universalization, MGNREGA

Introduction

Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies. It undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life and allows organized crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish. This evil phenomenon is found in all countries—big and small, rich and poor, but it is in the developing world that its influence are more destructive. Corruption hurts the poor disproportionately by diverting funds intended for development, undermining a Government's ability to provide basic services, feeding inequality and injustice and discouraging foreign aid and investment. Corruption is a key element in economic under performance and a major obstacle to poverty alleviation and development.

India virtually lives in its villages. According to 2011 census, in India out of total population of 1.21 billion, around 833.1 million (nearly about 68.84%) people live in rural areas. In rural India agriculture continues to be the only avenue of employment. But due to its seasonal nature many farmers have to remain idle during the lean agricultural season. Industrialization and service sector can generate employment, but these are limited in rural areas. Thus this very nature of seasonality of agriculture and its low productivity combined with absence of alternative opportunities ultimately lead to higher incidence of poverty and rural unemployment in the rural sector. But in spite of lots of efforts of the government and various wage programmes, poverty levels and unemployment rate did not decline proportionately.

Realising this situation the Tenth five years plan aimed at generating quality employment opportunities to achieve a satisfactory rate of employment in the country. Therefore, the government of India launched a new employment generation programme namely Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2005.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is an innovative anti-poverty intervention of government of India guaranteeing 100 days of employment in a financial year to each of the registered household on demand. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is the first programme in India that has promised to provide the legal right to work. The main aim of this Act is to generate employment in rural areas. This would not only help in the eradication of poverty in rural areas but also help to arrest migration of rural people to the urban areas. Apart from this, there are several secondary benefits of Act in the form of women empowerment, childcare, creation of durable assets etc. It is no doubt a revolutionary project in the field of rural unemployment alleviation programmes because unlike other schemes, it provides a legal right and guarantee for employment for people living in rural India and a complete mechanism to ensure that right.

Hypothesis

The following is the hypothesis of the study

MGNREGA gives the rural people a guaranteed employment and an opportunity to create effective and useful economic assets in rural areas without any bias.

Objectives of the Study

1. To provide conceptual analysis, objectives and benefits of MGNREG Scheme.
2. To explore the operational performance of the MGNREG Scheme in the District Kulgam of Jammu and Kashmir.

Research Methodology

The present study involves doctrinal as well as non-doctrinal method. The doctrinal method includes an analysis of various Legislative provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and other anti-corruption laws. The researcher has

collected all the available data from various sources, *i.e.*, from primary as well as secondary sources on the subject. The primary data has been collected from the Legislative Enactments, Government Orders, Committee Reports and reports from the Government Officials. The secondary data has been retrieved from various books, articles, journals, manuals, newspaper cuttings and websites on the problems of Corruption.

For empirical study, field survey has been conducted in District Kulgam of Jammu and Kashmir. For the selection of the sample multistage sampling technique was followed. There are eleven Block Offices across the district. At the first stage, the district was divided into five zones such as North, South, East, West and Middle. Then in the second stage, from each zone one Block has been selected purposively (on the basis of highest population) *i.e.* from North zone Frisal Block was selected, from South zone Devsar Block was selected, from East zone Qaimoh Block was selected, from West zone Menzgam Block was selected and from Middle zone Kulgam Block was selected. As per the provisions of MGNREGA, the Panchayat is the prime authority in the implementation of the scheme, therefore at third stage, from the above selected Block Offices, the Gram Panchayats (GP) having the largest population was selected for the study. From Frisal Block, Brazloojagir GP, from Devsar Block, Watoo B GP, from Qaimoh Block, Wanpora GP, from Menzgam Block, Koril GP and from Kulgam Block, Shurathjagir GP were selected. At the final stage, from each GP fifty MGNREGA beneficiaries *i.e.* fifty job card holders were selected.

Therefore, for five Blocks total number of sampled beneficiaries were two hundred and fifty representing the whole district.

Implementation of Mgnrega

To overcome the problems and deficiencies of the earlier wage employment programmes, Government of India took a historic step by enacting the *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)* in 2005 by merging Swarnajayanti Gram RozgarYojana (SGRY) & National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) for providing livelihood security to rural unemployed. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is a commitment made by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government in its Common Minimum Programme that directly touches the lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the first tangible commitment to the poor. The scheme aims at providing employment as a source of income by ensuring their dignity. Thus it is considered a unique scheme, which provides them Right to Work, enshrined in the Constitution under directive principles of state policy ^[1]. In this sense the scheme was supposed to be the most unique scheme after independence as it provides them statutory right to employment. And the government has a statutory obligation to provide employment to every rural household in a financial year. The MGNREGA empowers the working class. It is also an unprecedented opportunity to built the foundations of social security system in rural India, revive village economies, promote social equity and empower rural labourers. It is a

demand-driven programme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work by wage-seekers. The MGNREGA in principle, provide legal guarantee of work and hence it is a milestone in the way of Right to Work and in practice it is a manifestation of the Right to Life ^[2]. The main aim of the Act is to provide livelihood security in rural areas by providing work to them.

Since the legislation of NREGA in the year 2005, the Programme was implemented in 200 most backward districts of the country in February 2006. In the year 2007, 130 more districts were brought under NREGA and within a year the Act got universalized by bringing the entire country under its horizon. The Programme was renamed as MGNREGA in October 2009.

The Act is significant for strengthening decentralized democracy like Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Autonomous Council (AC) for the implementation of the scheme and thus tries to bring change in village infrastructure. In the district where PRIs are not available, Autonomous Council or Village Development Councils or similar administrative mechanisms perform the responsibility of implementing the scheme. MGNREGA has the potentiality to transform the geography of rural poverty by providing guaranteed wage employment to its jobseeker. The World Bank in its World Development Report 2014, termed it a “stellar example of rural development”. Ministry of Rural Development of India mentioned that NREGA supports the achievement of three of Millennium Development Goals namely Goal 1-eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, Goal 3-promotes gender equality and empowerment of women and Goal 7-ensure environmental sustainability.

Objectives of the Scheme

The main objective of MGNREGA is: “To enhance livelihood security of the rural households by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work”. The other objectives of the scheme are:

1. To provide employment opportunity to the vulnerable groups when there is no alternative source of employment.
2. Alleviation of India’s acute problem of unemployment and poverty.
3. Creation of durable and productive assets in villages to strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor.
4. Reduction of distressed migration from rural to urban areas.
5. Protection of environment through various activities like drought-proofing and flood management in rural India.
6. Empowerment of rural women through the provision of right-based law by providing them the opportunity to work and earn independently.
7. It aims to strengthen decentralized and participatory planning.
8. It promotes inclusive growth.
9. It aims at transforming the rural economy and development.

¹Part IV, Article 39 (a) and Article 41, Constitution of India.

² Part III, Article 21, Constitution of India

Salient Features

1. **Registration:** People who are willing to do unskilled work under MGNREGA have to apply for the registration either in written form or orally to the Gram Panchayat (GP).
2. **Job Card:** After proper verification of the registered household, job card has to be issued.
3. **Application for work:** A written application for work is to be given to the Gram Panchayat or Block office which states the time & duration of work.
4. **Unemployment Allowance:** If the work is not provided according to the scheduled time i-e, within 15 days, unemployment allowance needs to be paid to the beneficiary.
5. **Provision of work:** Act envisages that:
 - a. work is to be provided within 5 kms radius of the village,
 - b. extra wages of 10% has to be paid for meeting additional cost on transport etc,
 - c. Worksite facilities such as crèche, drinking water and shade need to be provided, particularly to women.
6. **Wages:** Wages are to be paid on weekly basis (not beyond a fortnight) mandatorily through the individual/joint bank/post office account. Besides, there is a special provision for payment of equal wages to men and women. It is mandatory according to the guidelines of MGNREGA that at least 1/3rd of the beneficiary should be women.
7. **Planning:** The shelf of projects need to be prepared by the Gram Sabha. At least 50 percent of the works should be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution. Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have a major role in planning & implementation.
8. **Worksite Management:** A 60:40 wage & material ratio has to be maintained. Contractors & labour displacing machinery is strictly prohibited.
9. **Transparency & accountability:** It is desirable according to Act that:
 - a. all accounts & records are to be made available to any person who desires to have a copy of such records on demand after paying a specified fee,
 - b. social audit has to be done &
 - c. Grievances redressal mechanism have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process.

10. Funding

The Central Government bears the costs on the following items:

- The entire cost of wages of unskilled manual workers.
- 75% of the cost of material, wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- Administrative expenses as may be determined by the Central Government, which will include inter alia, the salary and the allowances of the Programme Officer and his supporting staff and work site facilities.
- Expenses of the National Employment Guarantee Council.

The State Government bears the costs on the following items:

- 25% of the cost of material, wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- Unemployment allowance payable in case the State Government cannot provide wage employment on time.

- Administrative expenses of the State Employment Guarantee Council.

Districts have dedicated accounts for NREGA funds. They have submitted their proposals based on clearly delineated guidelines so that funds may be distributed efficiently at each level, and adequate funds may be available to respond to demand. Under NREGA, fund releases are based on an appraisal of both financial and physical indicators of outcomes.

Challenges in MGNREGA because of Corruption

Major challenges experienced in the implementation MGNREGA are as follows:

- Un-realistic and improper planning at the GP level.
- Delays in wage payment.
- Fund constraints.
- Quality, durability and usefulness of assets.
- Low awareness of the Programme and less public participation.
- Lack of outcome based monitoring.
- Poor maintenance of records.
- Inadequate coverage of persons with disabilities (PwDs) and of women in some states.
- Lack of ICT (Information, Communication and Telecommunications) infrastructure.
- Inadequate capacity of functionaries.
- Lack of adequate number of technical staff.

Initiatives and Strategies

Over the last years, sincere efforts have been made by the Ministry to address the challenges of implementation. Some of the initiatives are as follows ^[3]:

- In order to emphasise the need to create productive and durable assets, it was, for the first time, that during the labour budget meeting for FY2016-17, the States took upon themselves the targets related to farm ponds/dug wells, vermin-compost, Aganwadi Centres, Individual Household Latrines(IHHLs)and road side plantations. As such, the States have targeted to construct 8,77,300 farm ponds/dug wells,10.39 lakh vermi compost units,6331Aanganwadi Centres,33 lakh IHHLs,49482 kilometres of road side plantations. Besides, there is considerable trust on individual asset creation like poultry, goatery and cattle sheds, soak pits etc and various kinds of Integrated Natural Resource Management works.
- Geo tagging and geo-referencing of all MGNREGA assets. On 24th June 2016, a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between the Ministry of Rural Development and National Remote Sensing Centre (ISRO) for carrying out this gigantic exercise in convergence.
- Reduction in delay of payments by strict monitoring of the processes involved and proper implementation and expansion of National Electronic Fund Management System. In 2016-17, over 60% payments are on time at present.
- Conversion of bank accounts to Aadhaar based payment accounts and efforts to universalise the same within the framework of the Hon'ble Supreme Court

³MGNREGA Performance Report, 27 june 2016 pdf, available at nrega.nic.in, accessed on 10-03-2018

orders. So far, Aadhaar numbers have been seeded into NREGA soft data base of around 7.05 crore workers and 2.86 crore workers (till date) have started getting their payments through Aadhaar Based Payment Bridge System (ABPS). The Government is making a sincere effort to ensure the conversion of all bank accounts of active MGNREGA workers into ABPS in the current Financial Year.

- Approval of indicative allocation of labour budget of States taking into account the percentage of deprived households, percentage of landless and casual manual labour using Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) data, and the past performance of the State. This is a departure from the earlier methodology of arriving at the States labour budget for the year, based on performance alone.
- Plans to engage around 4000 Barefoot Technicians (BFTs) on the ground during the current financial year.
- Providing for skill development of MGNREGA workers for placement based employment under DDUGKY (Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana), self-employment under RSETIs (Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes) and capacity development and provision for promoting multiple livelihoods.
- Steps for strengthening social audit systems through proper operationalization of Social Audit Units (SAUs), training of SAU personnel with support from NIRD (National Institute of Rural Development) & PR (Panchayati Raj) and conducting of Social audits through village social auditors/concurrent social audit by involving the women self-help groups and other community organisations. The development of a training curriculum for the staff of Social Audit Units, State Resource Persons, District Resource Persons, Block Resource Persons and Village Resource Persons is underway.
- Addressing the critical areas of implementation on the ground which include updating of job cards, maintenance of proper records at the GP and Block level including Asset Registers in all GP offices, job cards in the custody of MGNREGA workers, maintenance of muster roll at the work site, timely measurements and generation of FTO etc, are other priorities of the Ministry.
- Organisation of exposure visits like Inter State Exchange Programme (ISEP) which provides a good peer group learning opportunity. The first ISEP was organized in Rajasthan from 17th to 19th June 2016, wherein 11 states had participated. The second ISEP was held in Meghalaya from 29th June to 2nd July, 2016 wherein all North Eastern States, j&k, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand had participated. Government

is also proposing to organize the third Inter State Exchange Programme to Andhra Pradesh for studying the ways and means to combat delay in payments for representatives of those States who have registered maximum delays at the national level.

- Setting up of more Cluster Facilitation Teams (CFTs) in states like Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and other drought affected regions.
- Strengthening the monitoring systems and field supervision mechanisms in the Ministry.
- The first Common Review Mission of all Rural Development Programmes was undertaken in May 2016

The department of Rural Development is continuously trying to improve the implementation of MGNREGA Programme in partnership with the States and UTs. The Government is making sincere effort to hold the Programme responsible for durable assets and for generation of sustainable livelihoods. By addressing fund flow, technical supervision, transparency and community ownership issues, MGNREGS would strive to provide sustainable livelihoods for the poor households with timely payment of wages for work on demand for these households. Through a thrust on development of skills, the programme is also attempting to reduce the unskilled household's numbers and raise incomes of the poor.

Implementation of Mgnrega in District Kulgam

Kulgam is not so socio economically forward District of Jammu and Kashmir. Most of its people depend on agriculture for livelihood. But agriculture is seasonal and being a flood prone district, floods may occur anytime and can cause severe damage to the crops. Therefore launching of wage employment programme like MGNREGA is truly the need of the hour for poor people. In Kulgam district, the Act was introduced in phase II in the year 2007. The launching of such a programme has generated a ray of hope for the poor rural people of the district in building a strong rural society for employment generation and creation of much needed village assets. MGNREGA programme has been implemented with the purpose of providing relief to the rural poor as it is an additional source of employment & income in the study area. The Act has played a vital role in providing the employment, generating the person's days in thousands to secure the livelihood in selected rural area. It has also emphasized on creating certain assets to develop the rural infrastructure. However, it has been found that there are so many obstacles in the way of its performance, like; delayed payments, incomplete wages, non-allocation of extra compensation and unemployment allowance and above all in implementing the scheme in all aspects.

Table 1: Performance Report

State: Jammu and Kashmir District: Kulgam	As on 20-05-2018
Total No. of Blocks	11
Total No. of GPs	176
I Job Card	
Total No. of Job Cards issued [In Lakhs]	0.51
Total No. of Workers [In Lakhs]	1.46
Total No. of Active Job Cards [In Lakhs]	0.39
Total No. of Active Workers [In Lakhs]	0.83
(i) SC worker against active workers [%]	0.03
(ii) ST worker against active workers [%]	1.3

II Progress	FY 2018-2019	FY 2017-2018	FY 2016-2017	FY 2015-2016	FY 2014-2015
Approved Labour Budget [In Lakhs]	11	11	12	16.4	18.28
Persondays Generated so far [In Lakhs]	0	12.05	17.41	14.21	8.17
% of Total LB	0	109.52	145.06	86.64	44.69
% as per Proportionate LB	0				
SC persondays % as of total persondays	0	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05
ST persondays % as of total persondays	0	1.04	1.34	1.1	0.85
Women Persondays out of Total (%)	0	29.93	26.23	25.49	21.47
Average days of employment provided per Household	0	47.36	57.52	52.15	43.9
Average Wage rate per day per person(Rs.)	0	178.89	172.34	163.67	155.67
Total No of HHs completed 100 Days of Wage Employment	0	780	1,883	2,131	1,002
Total Households Worked [In Lakhs]	0	0.25	0.3	0.27	0.19
Total Individuals Worked [In Lakhs]	0	0.5	0.56	0.5	0.31
Differently abled persons worked	0	36	44	34	25
III Works					
Number of GPs with NIL exp	2	0	0	1	11
Total No. of Works Takenup (New+Spill Over) [In Lakhs]	0.02	0.05	0.08	0.09	0.08
Number of Ongoing Works [In Lakhs]	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.04	0.05
Number of Completed Works	11	3,650	3,545	5,491	2,491
% of NRM Expenditure (Public + Individual)	NaN	56.99	59.41	54.18	58.77
% of Category B Works	1.81	0.61	0.05	0.04	0.07
% of Expenditure on Agriculture & Agriculture Allied Works	NaN	57.03	59.54	54.2	58.89
IV Financial Progress					
Total Exp (Rs. in Lakhs.)	1,116.9	5,234.69	3,905.17	4,156.05	2,038.28
Wages (Rs. In Lakhs)	1,116.9	2,854.41	1,994.75	1,572.31	979.15
Material and skilled Wages (Rs. In Lakhs)	0	2,204.17	1,675.34	2,366.22	941.82
Material (%)	0	43.57	45.65	60.08	49.03
Total Adm Expenditure (Rs. in Lakhs.)	0	176.12	235.08	217.52	117.31
Admin Exp (%)	0	3.36	6.02	5.23	5.76
Average Cost Per Day Per Person (In Rs.)	0	427.6	252.92	278.15	238.36
% of Total Expenditure through EFMS	98.9	11.87	0	0	0
% payments generated within 15 days	0	10.87	0.94	2.74	1.93

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

Given the program's large size, high costs, and potential to contribute to rural development and poverty alleviation, an assessment of where it is succeeding and failing is very important. There are lots of deliberations on efficient and effective implementation of MGNREGA since its inception. The main challenge of MGNREGA is how to implement the scheme to give benefit to the weaker section of the society for whom it is meant for. The successful implementation of the scheme depends on the fact that the scheme should be corruption free. However, the State Government including the other implementing agencies needs to implement the scheme as transparently and effectively with a positive will to give its benefits to the maximum extent.

In the backdrop of this scenario and considering the hypothesis, the researcher conducted an empirical study so as to be acquainted with the performance of MGNREGA in order to find out that whether corrupt practices are there in its implementation. The universe of present study is District Kulgam of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The researcher being resident of District Kulgam, it was convenient for her to collect the data from this very District.

While collecting data the researcher opted for interview schedule method as a tool because almost all the sampled respondents were illiterate. The mode of selecting the respondents in each unit is random in order to evade any chances of bias in selection of those questioned. Amongst the respondents 94.4% were males and 15.6% were females. Among the respondents 52.80% belong to the age group of 40-50 years, 23.20% to the age group of 29-39, 15.60% to 51-61 and 8.40% to 18-28. The income of the respondents varies from Rs 2000-11000. 51.20% of respondents belong to the income group of Rs 4000-5000, 27.20% to Rs 6000-7000, 19.20% to 2000-3000, 2% to 8000-9000 and 0.4% to 10000-11000.

Table 1: Sex ratio of respondents

Gram Panchayat	Male	Female	Total
Brazloo Jagir	48 (96%)	2 (4%)	50 (100%)
Wattoo B	43 (86%)	7 (14%)	50 (100%)
Wanpora	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)
Koril	45 (90%)	5 (10%)	50 (100%)
Shurathjagir	50 (100%)	0 (0%)	50 (100%)
Total	236 (94.4%)	14 (5.6%)	250 (100%)

Interpretation of Data

1. Age of respondents

Interpretation: In all the sample Development Block Offices, majority of beneficiaries (52.80%) belong to the age group of 40-50 years, followed by 23.20% beneficiaries to the age group of 29-39 years, then by 15.60% to the age group of 51-61 years and 8.40% to the age group of 18-28 years.

2. Monthly income of respondents

Interpretation: The monthly income of the respondents which presents that income of beneficiaries varies from 2000-11000 rupees. It has been seen that 51.20% beneficiaries belong to rupees 4000-5000 income group, followed by 27.20% of rupees 6000-7000 income group, 19.20% of rupees 2000-3000 income group, 2% of rupees 8000-9000 income group and then by 0.40% of rupees 10000-11000 income group.

3. Whether respondents have applied for registration for issuance of job card

Interpretation: As per the guidelines of MGNREGA people have to apply for registration to Gram Panchayat for issuance of job card. But the study found that only 66% of beneficiaries have applied for registration and remaining 34% didn't apply.

4. Has job card been issued by the GP

Interpretation: The study found that out of the total beneficiaries who have applied for issuance of job card only 78.80% beneficiaries are provided job cards and the rest 21.20% reported that their job cards are kept under the custody of GP members at the panchayat office or some middle men.

5. Is there any verification done before issuing job card

Interpretation: The response to the question that whether any verification is done by GP before issuing the job card as required under MGNREGA, only 43.60% respondents have reported positively. Rest 56.40% respondents reported that no verification was done while issuing job card to them.

6. Submission of any kind of fee or charge for getting a job card

Interpretation: The study found that 100% respondents reported that they didn't submit any kind of fee or other charges for getting job card.

7. Application for providing of employment under MGNREGA

Interpretation: The study shows that all the respondents have applied for providing of employment under MGNREGA.

8. 100 days' work in a year as guaranteed under MGNREGA

Interpretation: MGNREGA is a demand based scheme. If any registered job card holder demands for employment, then the concerned authority is legally bound to provide them 100 days of work in a year as guaranteed under the scheme. But the data shows that more than half i.e 55.20% of beneficiaries are not provided the complete 100 days of work and the numbers of days provided to them vary from respondent to respondent. Only 44.80% of respondents are provided complete 100 days of work.

9. Unemployment allowance in case GP failed to provide within 15 days

Interpretation: MGNREGA provides that if employment is not provided within 15 days from the receipt of application for employment then in that case unemployment allowance has to be paid to the jobseeker. The data revealed that 78% respondents are not provided such allowance. Only 22% respondents have received such allowance.

10. Casual check of job card and other antecedents at the worksite by the authority

Interpretation: The study found that only 64.80% respondents reported that casual check of job cards and their other antecedents at the worksite is done by the concerned authorities and 35.20% respondents still work without any such kind of casual checks.

11. Arrangement of worksite facilities like crèche, first aid, drinking water etc

Interpretation: MGNREGA guidelines specify that the state is obliged to ensure worksite facilities such as creche, drinking water, first aid and shade at worksites. But during the field study, 100% of the sample said that there are no such facilities provided to them in the worksite.

12. Extra 10% wage payment to bear transportation and living cost in case work is not provided within 5km radius of village

Interpretation: Moreover, the MGNREGA guidelines also specify that work must be provided to workers within 5 Km radius of the village. If not then extra 10% are payable to the workers to bear transportation and living cost. Data showed that 25.60% were provided job beyond 5 Km but no extra wage payment is made to them.

13. Payment of wages less than the amount due to workers

Interpretation: The field survey revealed that almost 33.60% respondents alleged that they are being paid less than the amount due to them after calculating the number of days for which they have worked.

14. Delay in payment of wages

Interpretation: As per operational guidelines wages are to be paid on weekly basis (not beyond a fortnight) but study revealed that 88.80% of respondents said that there is delay in the payment of wages. They alleged that delay is not of months but of years and that too more than 3-4 years. The reason given by the respondents for such delay is mostly the commission demanded by the concerned authorities. Some respondents said that the non-availability of funds at the block level is also one of the reasons of delay.

15. Leakage of funds under the scheme

Interpretation: The field survey revealed that 76.80% respondents believe that there is leakage of funds under the scheme while the rest 23.20% don't think that there is such leakage.

16. Prevention of leakage of funds by making payment through bank/post office account

Interpretation: Majority of the respondents believe that payment of wages through bank/post office account has prevented the leakage of funds to some extent. However 45.20% reported that payment through bank/post office accounts doesn't make any change.

17. Equal payment of wages to men and women

Interpretation: The study revealed that 73.20% respondents believe that men and women are paid equally for their work done under the scheme, but 26.80% still believe that there is discrimination on the basis of gender.

18. Involvement of contractors and use of machinery

Interpretation: It is found from the surveyed people that most of the works related to land development, road construction, leveling of road etc. are done by using tractors whereas per guidelines there is prohibition of use of heavy machineries and contractors under the Act. But the study depicts that 72% of respondents revealed about the involvement of contractors and 70.40% of respondents reveal about the use of machinery at the worksite.

19. Availability of muster rolls for public scrutiny and fake entries in muster rolls

Interpretation: MGNREGA also provides for maintenance of transparency and accountability. The guidelines require that muster rolls should be read out publicly and also to be

available for public scrutiny in the Panchayat office and also at work sites. This will help in preventing corruption. But reality is something different. However, it can be depicted that 44.40% of the sample revealed that muster rolls are not made available for public scrutiny and it was found that 72% of the respondents believe that fake entries are being made in the muster rolls.

20. Participation in the Social auditing of projects done by GP and improvement in transparency and accountability under MGNREGA by such social auditing

Interpretation: The operational guideline emphasized on the procedure of Social Audit to be held by Gram Sabha on MGNREGA works. But in the research it was found that 22% of the beneficiaries have participated in social auditing of projects done by the Gram Sabha while remaining 78% beneficiaries have never participated. Out of 22% of the sample who participated, only 33.20% believe that there is improvement in transparency and accountability in the implementation of scheme by the process of social auditing.

21. Improvement in socio-economic status of beneficiaries

Interpretation: Although 59.20% of surveyed sample reported that their socio-economic status improved by working under MGNREGA, but there are still 40.80% of respondents who said that they didn't see any improvement in their socio-economic status by working under MGNREGA.

22. Satisfaction with the quality of work done under MGNREGA

Interpretation: Almost majority of respondents are satisfied with the quality of work done under MGNREGA, but 30.80% of respondents doesn't believe that quality of work done is satisfactory.

Data Analysis

The findings of the data analysis from the above data are as follows

- 66% of sampled respondents have applied for registration before the Gram Panchayat to avail the benefits of MGNREGA. This finding shows that there are still 34% of respondents who are unaware about such procedure.
- 78.80% of the sampled respondents are provided job cards and the rest 21.20% reported that their job cards are kept under the custody of GP members at the Panchayat Office or some middle men.
- Only 43.60% of the respondents agree that verification is done while issuing job cards. Rest 56.40% respondents reported that no verification was done while issuing job card to them. This leaves the scope to issue bogus job cards so that funds can be easily embezzled.
- 100% of respondents reported that they didn't submit any kind of fee or other charges for getting job card. This is the positive point in the implementation of MGNREGA.
- 100% of respondents agree that they have applied for providing of employment under MGNREGA. This result shows that people are in need of the employment in almost all the villages and they consider this scheme

as a means to earn their livelihood if transparently and effectively implemented.

- 55.20% of respondents said that they are not provided complete 100 days of work and the number of days provided to them vary from respondent to respondent. This finding shows that concerned authorities receive whole amount of wages for complete 100 days but that amount doesn't reach to the beneficiaries as they are not provided work of 100 days.
- 78% of respondents reported that they are not paid any unemployment allowance if employment is not provided to them within 15 days of their application. It was observed that the remaining 22% of respondents who are being paid are having some kind of political affiliation directly or indirectly.
- 35.20% of respondents said that they work without any kind of casual checks as required by the Act. This finding shows that there is scope of hiring outsiders who work at lesser wages than guaranteed, thereby encourages the corrupt practices done by authorities themselves or their middlemen as alleged by so many respondents.
- 100% of the sample said that there are no such facilities provided to them in the worksite as are laid down in the MGNREGA Guidelines. Some of the respondents claimed that they used to carry drinking water where water is not easily available. This result shows that the funds meant for such facilities are utilized by the concerned authorities for themselves.
- 25.60% of the sampled respondents were provided job beyond 5 Km but no extra wage payment is made to them. The finding shows that this is another area where the concerned authorities are benefitting themselves at the cost of actual beneficiaries.
- 33.60% respondents alleged that they are being paid less than the amount due to them after calculating the number of days for which they have worked. It can be said that the authorities didn't left any chance to exploit the beneficiaries.
- 88.80% of respondents said that there is delay in the payment of wages. They alleged that delay is not of months but of years and that too more than 3-4 years. The reason for such delay is mainly the commission demanded by the concerned authorities and sometimes it is also the unavailability of funds in the department.
- 76.80% of respondents believe that there is leakage of funds under the scheme. This result shows that the funds provided for the beneficiaries by the Government never reach to them.
- 45.20% of respondents reported that payment through bank/post office accounts doesn't make any change in preventing the leakage of funds.
- 26.80% of respondents still believe that there is discrimination on the basis of sex as men and women are not paid equally.
- 72% of respondents reported that there is involvement of contractors and 70.40% reported about the use of machinery which is strictly prohibited under the Act. This finding shows that the contractors use the workers for withdrawal of the wage money and then keep a major portion from the money and gave a nominal amount to the workers. Even workers also do not complain as they think that they have received money at the mercy without working.

- 44.40% of the sampled respondents revealed that muster rolls are not made available for public scrutiny. During the study it was observed that not a single muster roll is found to be available at the worksite. And 72% of the respondents agree that fake entries are being made in the muster rolls.
- 78% of respondents reveal that they have never participated in social auditing conducted by the Gram Sabha. Out of 22% of the sample who participated, only 33.20% believe that there is improvement in transparency and accountability in the implementation of scheme by the process of social auditing.
- 40.80% of the sampled respondents said that they didn't see any improvement in their socio-economic status by working under MGNREGA. This result shows that one of the key objectives of the scheme is yet to be fulfilled.
- 30.80% of respondents believe that quality of work done is not satisfactory. This finding shows that poor quality of material is being used at the worksites because of which many works doesn't last long.

After evaluating the responses of the sampled respondents relating to the implementation of MGNREG Scheme and more particularly the existence of corrupt practices in the scheme, the researcher comes to the conclusion that majority of the respondents hold a strong opinion that corrupt practices does exist in the implementation of scheme. Extensive portion of respondents alleged that the blue eyed villagers or Panchayat Officials themselves registered the beneficiaries so that they can benefit out of it. They also reveal that no serious type of casual checkup is done at the worksite, which leaves the scope to issue bogus job cards so that funds can be easily embezzled. It can also be evaluated that there is scope of hiring outsiders who work at lesser wages than guaranteed, thereby encourages the corrupt practices done by authorities themselves or their middlemen. The result shows that people are in need of the employment in almost all the villages and they consider this scheme as a means to earn their livelihood if transparently and effectively implemented.

Keeping in consideration all the above facts, the researcher comes to the conclusion that the corrupt practices does exist in the implementation process of the scheme as it has failed to achieve its desired objectives. Hence the researcher's hypothesis stands disproved.

References

1. Part IV, Article 39 (a) and Article 41, Constitution of India.
2. Part III, Article 21, Constitution of India
3. MGNREGA Performance Report, 27 June pdf, 2016. Available at nrega.nic.in, accessed on 10-03-2018