

## **Grass Root Constrictions in Implementation of MNREGA in West Bengal**

**Shubhadeep Roy<sup>1</sup>, Baldeo Singh<sup>2</sup>, R. N. Padaria<sup>3</sup> and Neeraj Singh<sup>4</sup>**

### **ABSTRACT**

The study was conducted in two districts, Burdwan and South Dinajpur of West Bengal with 200 MNREGA beneficiaries and the MNREGA functionaries of block and village panchayat level as respondents to identify the major constrictions in the implementation of MNREGA at the grass root level. The major constrictions in the implementation as perceived by the beneficiaries were: incomplete list of adults in each household, delay in receiving job cards, wrong date or no date recorded on the work application, selection of a low priority or inappropriate work, favoring or discriminating against people in allocation of work, late payment of wages and various aspects of the programme carried out without people's involvement. The major constrictions as perceived by the MNREGA functionaries were shortage of manpower, huge paper work and long bureaucratic structure, financial inclusion in MNREGA, problem of power cut and morality of the people.

**Key Words :** Constrictions, Job card, Delayed payment, Evaluation, Low priority work, Inappropriate work, Discriminations, Favoritisms, Manpower, Financial inclusion, Skilled labour, Morality

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA), 2005, was operationalized in India from 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2006 is a result of long struggles of various social movements. The programme has started with the major objective of reducing chronic poverty from the country by guarantying atleast one hundred days of unskilled wage employment to the rural poor and create community assets so that the process of employment generation becomes sustainable. Central Government is making large public expenditure under MNREGA. In the 2009-10 budget, an allocation of ₹ 39,100 crore had been made for MNREGA, which was an increase of 144 per cent over the 2008-09 budget (₹16,000 crore). Many states particularly Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan are doing well with MNREGA. it has been observed that many states particularly, eastern and north-eastern states, the implementation of the programme is not moving in the right spirit. Several shortcomings and loopholes have been reported regarding its implementation. In this context, it is important to identify those constrictions, which are hindering the effective implementation of the programme. The present study was taken up to pin point the constrictions of effective implementation of the programme at the grass root and suggest improvement strategy.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The state West Bengal was selected purposively for

the study, because it is one of the states of India where MNREGA was first introduced. Two districts, namely Burdwan and Dakshin Dinajpur were selected randomly. From each of the districts, two blocks were randomly selected. Katwa-I and Katwa-II were selected from Burdwan district; and Gangarampur and Tapan were the selected blocks from Dakshin Dinajpur district. From each block, two Gram Panchayats (GP) were randomly selected and from each GP, one Gram Sabha (GS) was selected randomly for the study. The study was conducted in total eight Gram Sabhas. Twenty five beneficiaries from each of the eight gram sabhas were selected randomly. It accomplished a total of 200 MNREGA beneficiaries as respondents. After consultation with the experts and reviewing a vast volume of literature, an exhaustive list of constrictions regarding the implementation of the programme at grass root was prepared. Several constrictions were enlisted under the sub-headings namely, registration of the families, Distribution of Job cards, Receipt of work application, Selection of work to be taken up in Gram Panchayat, Allotment of work, Payment of wages and Evaluation of completed work.

The respondents were asked to respond to the constrictions on a three-point continuum ranging from most important, less important and least important constriction with the score of 3, 2 and 1, respectively. The mean scores for each of the constrictions were calculated and the constrictions were ranked. Open ended questions were asked to the MNREGA functionaries to point out the

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<sup>1</sup> Scientist, IIVR, Varanasi. <sup>2</sup> Former Jt. Director (Extension), ICAR-IARI, New Delhi, <sup>3</sup> Principal Scientist, Division of Agril. Extension, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi  
<sup>4</sup> Senior Scientist, IIVR, Varanasi (U.P.)