

**INSTITUTIONAL AND GOVERNANCE CHALLENGES
IN SOCIAL PROTECTION:**

**DESIGNING IMPLEMENTATION MODELS FOR THE
RIGHT TO WORK PROGRAMME IN INDIA**

**IHD, New Delhi
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- The main objectives of the study are:
 - To identify critical issues in implementation of NREG
 - To analyse the role of institutions and implementation processes of NREG
 - To evolve an institutional framework for effective implementation strategy

Research questions

- How is the NREG doing in terms of its stated objectives in different parts of the country? What are the reasons for differences in the implementation of the scheme across the country?
- How are the current practices of NREG implementation perceived by various stakeholders such as the community, bureaucracy, and local political leadership? What are the institutional innovations at the field level ?
- What are the political, organizational and administrative constraints in implementation and how can they be addressed? and How do various dimensions of larger political processes, decentralization, administrative and bureaucratic reforms affect the implementation of NREG?

What are the appropriate institutional and governance structures and mechanisms for effective implementation?

Hypothesis / propositions

- Pronounced regional variations in the level of implementation and outcomes across states in the initial stage of the NREGS are results of differential institutional and delivery capacities of the local level bureaucracy and PRIs, mobilization of the civil society, administrative preparedness of the state and commitment and motivation of the political leadership and higher level bureaucracy.
- Convergence with other programmes like horticulture mission is likely to make NREG a better implemented programme

- Institutional (eg. Muster roll maintenance) and technical innovations (eg. geomatics in planning, implementation and evaluation) are critical in better implementation.
- Timing of public works and matching peak periods of work provision with lean periods of labour market demand are difficult but critical for implementation - Often peak agriculture period is mismatched with peak public works and lean labour market period with lean public works in monsoon period.
- Lack of administrative/institutional ability to identify and design projects may result in rationing the demand and reduced achievement of targeted employment creation.

Critical Implementation issues – Review of literature

- Wide variations in progress across states
 - Capacities of implementation apparatus and civil society participation, grass roots democratic processes identified as key engines for success

Violation of entitlements

- Institutional and knowledge gaps observed
 - Procedural lapses, lack of awareness at different levels
- Operational deficiencies
 - Lack of guidelines – varying interpretations of rules and procedures
 - Systematic building of institutional capacities missing at all levels

- Second generation issues
 - Quality of implementation
 - Equity and access to all
 - Planning and technical support at the field level for better projects
 - Type, Quality and productivity of assets
 - Distribution of benefits
 - Transparency safeguards
 - Wage calculations, payments, grievance redressal
 - Addressing higher demand in some areas – how ?
Innovations
 - Convergence with other programmes

Design and Sample

- Andhra Pradesh (Medak & Kurnool), Bihar (Gaya & Purnia) and Rajasthan (Tonk & Udaipur)
 - 2 districts in each state
 - 2 blocks in each district (4 mandals each in Andhra Pradesh)
 - 8 Panchayats in each block (16 villages in each district)
 - Approx 400 households (workers) in each state
 - Field work in progress

Field work design

- The focus is on ‘process dimensions’
- Qualitative and quantitative dimensions in implementation process attempted
 - Structured household surveys,
 - village schedule and
 - work site schedule
 - Focus group discussions with stakeholders
 - Workers & families, implementation functionaries, officials at the higher levels

Initial observations

**Based on FGD and interviews with key
Stakeholders**

Rajasthan

Coverage and Types of Works

- 6 Panchayats (villages) in Tonk District covered so far (it is a medium performing district)
- Types of works - road, water conservations – tank renovations
- 10-12 worksites observed

Work site conditions and process deficits

- Work site muster roll is found mostly in order – attendance discrepancies found in very few worksites
- However, job cards not being filled on a regular basis
- No facilities at the worksites (except water provision) found in many villages
- Junior Technical Assistant (JTA) takes measurements of work without informing any one and not in presence of workers or mate

Payments

- Delays in Payment is an issue
 - It is becoming a major issue in some villages
 - 120 workers agitated on a day of our field work in one village, demanding payment of their dues
 - Single person post offices in rural areas is also leading to delays – one post office to handle 2000-3000 accounts
 - Post office located at 8 KM away – cost of visiting post office (Rs.10-15 per trip)

Measurement related

- Delays in measurement and defective measurements appear to be problems at some worksites
 - For example, payments in the months of February and March 2009 paid now in one village
 - There were uniform payments to all groups of workers (5 member groups) – which may mean measurements are filled up routinely.

Discrimination

- SC families are sent to far off work sites and upper caste families are engaged at near by work sites (nexus between upper caste households and field worker)

Relevance of works

- Work demand is there – all castes are seeking work - upper caste families are also seeking for work
- Works are found to be very relevant for villages (ex. roads – helped in controlling occupation of fallow lands)
- Improvement of water bodies undertaken in the year 2007
- Forest related work has also been undertaken in some villages

Impact

- Reduction in migration
- Families got approx. 80 days or more work during last one year
- Rural wages have increased

Officials view

- Demand management is a problem
 - work is not available as per the demand – more workers – less number of works
 - Managing labour giving them work is becoming a problem (limited shelf of projects)
 - No comprehensive village planning undertaken to identify works
 - Political involvement is also there – for ensuring more works to be given (especially roads)

Andhra Pradesh

8 villages covered so far

Works

land development (bunds, silt application on lands), development of water bodies, forestry, road connectivity

Weekly works allotted ; measurements taken and wage calculated based on piece rate works

(SC, ST, BC lands), each land owner land estimated 2/3 acres

Job seekers

- Most households in village participate – SC& ST, Backward classes – mostly small farmers and agri.labour
- Some cases of delay in allocation of work found – workers wait for officials to call them for work (design and planning done by officials)
- No new works opened even when there is high demand - (rotation of workers is adopted as strategy for demand management)
- Workers are formed into groups - each group given work for one week – (rationing of work)
Workers seek work through orally requesting officials and village head – they wait for the call from 'mate', field officer or sarpanch (village head)

Work site related

Not all facilities found in the field (tent, water, first aid, etc)

Water – workers bring by themselves – no separate person engaged (piece rate work is also a reason);

Works measured on weekly basis

No technical design or planning found in execution of works (especially water and land related works)

Officials

Found trained mate (leader of group of workers) and field worker in all the villages
practical problems in measurements found
– technical personnel found heavy workload

Not able to supervise the work; take measurements on time – leading to delays

APOs found work load is very high –
participate in gram sabha – field checking
– payment supervision etc

Payments

Work is given to group of workers

Delays in payment found – mostly due to the work load of field functionaries and at post offices

Very few instances of misappropriation or falsifying muster rolls found (vigilance is very strong)

Wages

Per day payment for each worker came up to Rs. 90. No discrimination in wage payment found

Impacts

Migration is in control- previously many people used to go (up to 100 persons – now 20/25)

Upward movement of Wages

Bihar

- Workers primarily comprises of SCs and OBCs
- Most works taken up under NREG – roads, water conservation
- Entire district had only 20 ongoing worksites; attributed to a number of reasons –
 - stopping release of funds for new works while following the election code of conduct
 - Unfavourable climate to do hard labour etc.

Work Site issues

Facilities are missing

- Job card information is updated on regular basis – however basic information is missing on some of the job cards
- Some workers have paid extra money to secure a job card

• Job Seekers

- Some what low awareness among workers about the programme, particularly its various provisions
- Mate usually appointed from among the labourers (as leader of group) to assist field assistant in filling muster rolls and data entry
- Vigilance and monitoring committee members (7-9) elected from gram sabhas

Wages

- Delays in payment of wages found – workers demand daily payments due to such delays
- Discrepancies found in few cases in actual payment and what is entered in the job cards

Each worker has one post office account – delays at post office are also found

- Piece rate work is allotted to family – sometimes this leads to exclusion of widows/ women headed households – instances found
- Works are not regular and this is leading to workers moving out of villages to district headquarters in search of work (for rickshaw pulling etc)
 - Demand is not being met – again the reason is lack of planning and shelf of projects

Officials

Massive understaffing for implementation of NREG found – some dedicated staff appointed only in 2007

- One Junior Engineer and one Junior Technical Assistant for the entire block
- Programme officer, field assistants, Junior engineer, Tech Assistants given training at time of induction
- Delays in salary payments of NREG implementation staff found (especially field assistants) and it is also low wage (Rs.2000)

By way of summary

- Overall positive impact
- Entitlement deficits
 - Work site facilities
 - Demand for work, payment delays
- Process deficits
 - Lack of institutional structures in many places
 - Mismatch between requirements and deployment of dedicated staff
 - Low capacities of implementation machinery
 - Comprehensive planning for works is lacking

Proposed Plan

- Data analysis and First report Sept 09
- Dissemination and advocacy w/s – Sept 09
- Pilot ‘action research’ to build local capacities on planning for NREG – Aug09-Dec09. (in one Panchayat)-concurrent process documentation
- Sharing workshop of pilot initiative – Jan 2010
- Second round of field survey Feb 2010.
- Final report and dissemination – June 2010

Scope for action research

- We observed in the current works – no appraisal or planning process and focus remained on no. days employment generated and wages related issues (processes)
- The need for technical support identified during our discussions with farmers
- Capacity of the programme to improve productivity of resources (soil quality, water availability ground water, improving barren lands, afforestation – cultivability of land)
 - It requires technical support and closer coordination with other line departments (convergence)
 - We did not find such a processes in the field
- This brings us to the idea of developing an action research component in the study
- It helps us to document improvement affected on the resources
 - Farm improvement
 - Water bodies regeneration and development

Proposed process

- Facilitate technical support for comprehensive village resource development plan as part of NREG works
 - Undertake works according to the plan
 - Documentation (baseline and impact measurement)