

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

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

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- The main objectives of the study are:
 - To identify critical process issues in implementation of NREG
 - To analyze the role of institutions and implementation processes of NREG
 - To evolve an institutional framework for effective implementation strategy

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.

- 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

Field Study Design and Sample

- Andhra Pradesh (Medak & Kurnool)
- Bihar (Gaya & Purnia)
- 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 480 households (workers) in each state

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 Household Survey, FGD
and Interviews with Key
Stakeholders**

Social profile of sample

- About 50 per cent of sample households belonged to SC and one third belong to OBC in all the three states (total sample AP:480 hh, Bihar 482 and Rajasthan 481)
- In Andhra Pradesh and Bihar, maximum sample beneficiaries belonged to Scheduled Castes (44.58% and 69.29% respectively), while in Rajasthan, maximum sample workers belonged to OBCs (34.93%).

Economic background

- Majority of the sample NREG beneficiaries were either landless (40.82%) or marginal land holders (44.84%). Bihar enjoyed maximum landless beneficiaries – 80.08% of sample beneficiaries.
- In Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, there were a greater number of marginal farmers (66.94% and 48.13% respectively).

Some Process Dimensions

- **Possession of job card**
 - Overall 74.36% of households had job cards
- **Expenditure for making Job Card**
 - 22 per cent reported incurring expenditure
 - Bihar (50.12%) and Andhra Pradesh (2%).
 - Amount (avg.) spent on job card Rs. 48 ; Amount (avg.) spent on Photograph Rs.25
- **Status of the Job Card**
 - Complete entries made – 26%
 - Some entries made - 39%
 - Entries not made – 34% (Bihar 56.9%, Andhra Pradesh 46.3%)
- **Seeking work – made application**
 - Rajasthan 90%
 - Andhra Pradesh 70.5 %
 - Bihar 20% (about 40% do not know that they need to seek work)
(applications for work mostly oral and informal)
 - No receipt for work application - Rajasthan 77%, AP 83%, Bihar 93%

- **Average NREG working hours a day**
 - Approx. 6 hours (Bihar 7.61 hours)
- **Signing of Muster Rolls**
 - Muster rolls signed on a weekly basis by nearly all sample workers in Andhra Pradesh; in Bihar and Rajasthan, nearly half the sample workers did not sign official muster rolls at all.
 - Majority of respondents in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan said that they marked their attendance twice daily
 - In Bihar in most cases attendance was marked only once in a day, in an informal notebook
- **Recording of days worked and payment details in Job Cards**
 - Details regarding days worked mostly noted accurately in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan
 - Almost two third of the sample respondents in Bihar said this information was recorded inaccurately.
 - Across states, the practice of recording details of payment in job cards in front of the workers not followed – for about 77% sample workers in both Bihar and Andhra Pradesh and close to half the sample workers in Rajasthan.

Wages

- Paid based on measurement
- Received within 15 days (86% Bihar; 70% AP; Rajasthan 75% received wages after a month's delay)
- All received through banks/post office (AP, Rajasthan); 48% in Bihar paid in hand – given by staff

Institutional arrangements

- 44 per cent respondents reported NREG discussed at Gramsabha
- 40 per cent reported NREG works decided at the Gram Sabha

Qualitative Observations

Rajasthan

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

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

Relevance of works

- Work demand is there – all castes are seeking work - upper caste families are also seeking work
- Works are found to be very relevant for villages (eg. 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 – workers also demand for more than 100 days of work
 - Managing labour and 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

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's land estimated $2/3$ acres

Job seekers

- Most households in village participate – SC & ST, Backward classes – mostly small farmers and agricultural 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

- Trained mate found (leader of group of workers) and field worker in all the villages
- Practical problems in measurement; technical personnel found to have heavy workload- not able to supervise the work, take measurements on time – leading to delays
- APOs found work load 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
- Very few 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 not updated on regular basis – basic information is missing on some of the job cards
- Some workers have paid extra money to secure a job card

Job Seekers

- Somewhat 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
(e.g. passbooks mentioning Rs. 1513 for week's payment and workers receiving Rs. 900)

Works

- Works are not regular – limited quantum and duration of work and this is causing workers to have to move 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, lack of funds released

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)
- No travel allowance/ vehicle allotted to officials to oversee and supervise works
- Request to make NREG positions permanent rather than contractual to impart dignity
- Sometimes NREG functionaries given other non NREG works (preparing of BPL lists, election duty etc)

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

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); Post office in charge of handling other payments such as widow pension, IAY handouts and so reluctant to take on NREGS work as well
 - In Bihar, the wait for money to be transferred to banks is often too long and many respondents said they would prefer to be paid daily wages