

Chapter-10 Auxiliary Objectives

10.1 Empowerment of rural women

The work guarantee under the Act also provides opportunities to generate productive assets, protection of environment, empowerment of women, reduction of rural-urban migration and foster social equity etc.

In Hailakandi district, no female Mate (out of total 124) was engaged for supervision of works under the schemes during the entire period of implementation. In Cachar also, only 23 mates were females (out of total 326). The numbers of female Gram Rozgar Sahayaks (GRS) were three in Hailakandi and nine in Cachar district. In none of the test checked GPs under Kamrup district, female GRS was engaged. Thus, the objective of empowering rural women remained largely unachieved.

10.2 Protecting the Environment

(a) Afforestation drive along National Highways

The MoRD, GoI suggested (February 2011) that all the State Governments and Union Territories should consider launching an afforestation drive along National Highways within the norms and procedures under MGNREGS.

Scrutiny of records revealed that the SEGC or the State Government had not yet (April 2012) initiated any plan for launching an afforestation drive along National Highways separately or through convergence of other rural development programmes with MGNREGS. The reasons therefor were not on record.

(b) Plantation

Scrutiny revealed that in the districts of Cachar, Chirang, Darrang, Hailakandi, Kamrup and Lakhimpur, the plantation works were neither handed over to any organisation nor was any effort made for taking up maintenance work of saplings planted under the scheme. In the test-checked Chirang district, 13 Plantation works at an expenditure of ₹67.14 lakh were done during 2008-09 to 2010-11 but none of the plantation schemes was successful due to non-maintenance of saplings in subsequent years resulting in wasteful expenditure of ₹67.14 lakh. Similarly, in two road side plantation work done under Chapai GP of Paschim Mangaldai Block under Darrang district in 2008-09 and 2010-11 at a cost of ₹5.26 lakh, the plants did not survive for want of maintenance resulting in unfruitful expenditure to that extent.

Again, in one block under Hailakandi district, Plantation work done for ₹12.50 lakh (125 numbers IBS @ ₹10,000 each) in 2010-11 was not successful due to non-maintenance of saplings leading to almost 'zero' survival.

Thus, aggregate wasteful expenditure amounted to ₹84.90 lakh and the significant auxiliary objective of improving the quality of life by reducing pollution and global warming through plantation of trees was not achieved.

10.3 Rural-Urban Migration

One of the aims of the scheme is also to stop migration of rural poor to urban areas (for job) by providing job regularly against their demand.

The position of Job Cards issued and jobs demanded by the job seekers in respect of the following 10 test-checked districts during 2007-12 are given in Table-27.

Table-27
Position of job card holders and job demand

| Year | Name of the district | No. of Job Card holders | Nos. demanded job | Percentage of demand |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2007-08 | Cachar | 68,384 | 59,057 | 86 |
| | Hailakandi | 49,835 | 37,772 | 66 |
| | Goalpara | 1,53,045 | 91,032 | 59 |
| | Karbi Anglong | 1,84,884 | 1,76,000 | 95 |
| | Lakhimpur | 1,23,834 | 67,286 | 54 |
| | Darrang | 1,27,798 | 93,242 | 73 |
| 2008-09 | Cachar | 1,22,634 | 1,05,349 | 86 |
| | Hailakandi | 89,186 | 89,186 | 100 |
| | Kamrup | 1,90,570 | 32,976 | 17 |
| | Jorhat | 74,698 | 57,302 | 77 |
| | Dibrugarh | 57,694 | 28,478 | 49 |
| | Goalpara | 1,55,521 | 83,870 | 54 |
| | Karbi Anglong | 1,84,884 | 1,78,161 | 96 |
| | Chirang | 84,017 | 78,962 | 94 |
| | Lakhimpur | 1,38,001 | 76,241 | 55 |
| Darrang | 1,37,960 | 1,07,778 | 78 | |
| 2009-10 | Cachar | 1,72,639 | 84,996 | 49 |
| | Hailakandi | 89,554 | 87,305 | 49 |
| | Kamrup | 1,95,334 | 52,661 | 27 |
| | Jorhat | 97,028 | 38,025 | 39 |
| | Dibrugarh | 1,13,259 | 31,899 | 28 |
| | Goalpara | 1,60,561 | 77,519 | 48 |
| | Karbi Anglong | 1,84,884 | 1,35,756 | 73 |
| | Lakhimpur | 1,71,503 | 65,918 | 38 |
| | Darrang | 1,46,835 | 39,166 | 27 |
| Chirang | 1,05,042 | 79,250 | 75 | |
| 2010-11 | Cachar | 1,88,908 | 53,879 | 29 |
| | Hailakandi | 1,17,532 | 72,032 | 61 |
| | Kamrup | 1,95,340 | 62,768 | 32 |
| | Jorhat | 99,769 | 35,462 | 36 |
| | Dibrugarh | 1,17,231 | 48,811 | 42 |
| | Goalpara | 1,59,420 | 80,333 | 50 |
| | Karbi Anglong | 1,84,884 | 1,17,622 | 63 |
| | Chirang | 1,07,403 | 46,708 | 43 |
| | Lakhimpur | 1,71,956 | 64,165 | 37 |
| Darrang | 1,50,098 | 57,201 | 38 | |

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------|---------------|----------|--------|----|
| 2011-12 | Cachar | 1,86,469 | 50,812 | 27 |
| | Hailakandi | 1,19,928 | 61,795 | 51 |
| | Kamrup | 1,96,284 | 43,320 | 22 |
| | Jorhat | 1,03,131 | 39,928 | 39 |
| | Dibrugarh | 1,21,050 | 31,537 | 26 |
| | Goalpara | 1,54,098 | 71,346 | 46 |
| | Karbi Anglong | 1,84,884 | 94,082 | 50 |
| | Chirang | 1,08,103 | 41,745 | 39 |
| | Lakhimpur | 1,66,814 | 44,757 | 27 |
| | Darrang | 1,50,565 | 55,254 | 37 |

Source: Information furnished by concerned DRDAs of selected districts.

Demand for job by the job card holders came down in each district gradually every year with few exceptions. However, the number of job card holders showed an increasing trend in eight out of 10 selected districts. In Goalpara district there was little decrease in two years and the number of job card holders remained almost unchanged in the remaining years. The reason for such reduced number of job seekers was not on record. Audit, however, observed that lack of generation of employment, comparatively low wage rate than the market rate, delay in payment of wages and non-payment of unemployment allowance/compensation etc., made the workers unwilling to work under MGNREGS.

Further, in Chirang district, almost all the adult male rural poor job seekers of villages along the Indo-Bhutan Border namely in Malivita, Tukrajhar, Deosri, Hatisar, Santipur VCDCs, preferred to take up work in Bhutan where wages were paid at higher rates ranging between ₹250 and ₹300 (Indian currency) against the prevailing MGNREGS wage rate of ₹130 per day.

In the same district, at least one adult male member per household of the selected 15 VCDCs (more than 210 beneficiaries out of 300 beneficiaries interviewed) migrated to urban area for better employment opportunities with higher daily wages.

This trend of decreasing number of job seekers against increased number of job cards is indicative of the fact of rural to urban migration of rural workers, which frustrated one of the objectives of the scheme, *i.e.*, to prevent such migration.

Conclusion

The auxiliary objectives of protecting the environment, empowering rural woman and controlling migration of rural people were not effectively achieved as envisaged in the implementation Guidelines.

Recommendation

A separate action plan with time lines would need to be put in place by the State to monitor the extent of fulfillment of the auxiliary objectives of the Scheme. The problems of the workers also need to be looked into and steps taken to motivate them to work under MGNREGS to avoid migration for job.