

Chapter-14 Impact of the scheme

14.1 Impact

The scheme envisaged that State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) should frame broad guidelines for evaluation studies and develop its own evaluation system in collaboration with the services of the technical resource support system and review evaluations conducted by other agencies. As per the scheme, the evaluation studies should also throw light on particular innovations in planning, monitoring or implementation. The findings of the evaluation studies should be used by SEGC, the District Panchayats and other institutions for initiating corrective actions.

The SEGC, however, had neither framed any guidelines/developed any evaluation system in collaboration with the services of the technical resource support system nor did conduct any evaluation studies by engaging any third party even after the end of sixth year¹ of implementation of the scheme. As a result, the State Government is neither aware of the shortfalls/bottlenecks of the implementation nor in a position to assess the impact of the scheme on individual household, labour market, migration cycle and efficacy of the assets created.

The Performance Audit of the scheme for the years 2007-08 to 2011-12, however, revealed that the State Government has failed to ensure the primary objective of livelihood security to each rural population by providing 100 days guaranteed employment in a year. During the last five years, 100 days employment could be provided to only 3.54 lakh workers against the demand from 88.15 lakh households due to improper and ineffective planning without any strategy to create long term employment generation opportunities. This was coupled with non-utilisation of funds optimally, non-transparent process of registration and issue of Job Cards and non-payment of unemployment allowances/compensation to eligible workers etc., under the scheme. Besides, there were inadequate Capacity Building opportunities at grass root level and failure to carry out intensive IEC programmes over the years for awareness generation among the beneficiaries being the other areas of weakness in scheme implementation. The State Government also failed to achieve the target of secondary objective of creating durable assets to enhance livelihood of the rural poor in future for the reasons of not following the provisions of the Act and NREGA Works Field Manual. There was inadequacy on the part of the State Government regarding adoption of economy measures in procurement of materials and maintenance of proper accounts. There were deficiencies in targeted inspections, lack of vigilance, inadequate checking of Muster Rolls and lack of transparency in maintaining records etc., leading to suspected misappropriation/doubtful expenditure/fraudulent payment aggregating ₹3.40 crore detected in audit during the test-check of records, the details of which are indicated in Paragraph numbers 5.12

¹ Implementation of the scheme started from 2006-07 in Assam.

(₹205.15 lakh), 7.8 (b) (₹35.82 lakh), 9.1.10 (₹56.22 lakh), 9.1.11 (₹36.62 lakh) and 12.3.3 (₹6.08 lakh) respectively. The auxiliary objectives of protecting the environment, empowering rural women, fostering social equity and controlling migration of rural people were not effectively achieved. The deficiencies in conducting Social Audit and redressal of grievances also pointed towards poor monitoring of the programme implementation.

Conclusion

In the absence of effective mechanism in place for impact assessment of the scheme at State level, the impact of implementation of MGNREGS on individual household, labour market, migration cycle and efficacy of assets created could not be assessed.

Recommendation

The State Government needs to frame guidelines for carrying out evaluation studies through a third party appraisal for assessment of the impact of MGNREGS on individual households, labour market, migration cycle and efficacy of the assets created.