

## Chapter-6 Capacity building

### 6.1 Appointment of Key Stakeholders

The act envisages appointment of a State Rural Employment Guarantee Commissioner, District Programme Coordinators and Programme officers at State, District and Block level respectively for management, implementation and monitoring of the schemes under MGNREGS. There were, however, shortcomings in regard to appointment of the above stakeholders as indicated in Table-10.

**Table-10**  
**Appointment of Key Stakeholders**

Sl no	Stakeholders	Status of appointment	Remarks
1	State Rural Employment Guarantee Commissioner	Not appointed	The Commissioner, Panchayat and Rural Development had been entrusted to look after the implementation of the scheme in addition to his regular duties. No separate Government order entrusting him such responsibility was made available to audit.
2	District Programme Coordinator (DPC)		The State Government had not created any post for DPCs. The Deputy Commissioners of the districts were allowed to function as DPC for implementation of the scheme.
3	Programme Officer (PO)		The Government of Assam did not appoint full-time dedicated Programme Officers (POs) in the blocks of the State. The existing Block Development Officers (BDOs) were appointed as POs and given the additional charge for implementation of the Scheme.

*Source: Information furnished by Commissioner, P&RD, GOA.*

### 6.2 Resource Support

The Act makes it mandatory for the State Government to make available to the District Programme Coordinators and the Programme Officers, necessary staff and technical support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the scheme. Ministry of Rural Development has suggested an administrative pattern that may be adopted by States according to their contexts. There shall be full funding by Government of India for management support at the District, Block and Gram Panchayat level.

The SEGC in their meeting held on 13 August 2008 advised the State Government for engagement of Gram Rojgar Sahayak (GRS)/Accredited Engineer/Computer Assistant/Accountant Assistant at GP and Anchalik Parishad (AP) levels for effective implementation of the scheme. The Director, Panchayat & Rural Development (P&RD), Assam, on receipt of approval of the Government, instructed<sup>1</sup> all the Deputy

<sup>1</sup> vide letter No. DRD-15/75/2008/18 dated 27.10.08.

Commissioners (DCs)/District Programme Coordinators (DPCs) of the State to go ahead with the recruitment process.

Deficiencies noticed with regard to engagement of support staff in the test checked districts are brought out in subsequent paragraphs.

### 6.2.1 Accredited Engineers

The State Government/Director, P &RD instructed to engage one Accredited Engineer for minimum two Gram Panchayats with minimum qualification of Higher Secondary School Leaving Certificate (HSSLC) pass under science stream. The Director also suggested that the candidates having diploma in engineering may be given preference. As per the guidelines, the Accredited Engineers were to prepare estimates of the works as well as to supervise and record measurement of the works. The State Government, however, realised later (May 2010) that the HSSLC passed candidates did not possess the required technical knowledge for the assigned work and instructed (May 2010) all DPCs/PD, DRDAs to terminate those Accredited Engineers and recruit only Civil Engineering Diploma holders in their place.

In four test-checked districts, altogether 249 non-diploma holder Accredited Engineers were appointed/engaged and the Government incurred an expenditure of ₹61.75 lakh during the period March 2009 to May 2010 and retrenched them thereafter due to their inability to carry out the assigned works. District wise position is given in Table-11.

**Table-11**  
**Engagement of Accredited Engineers**

Name of district	No. of non diploma Accredited Engineers appointed	Period of engagement	Total expenditure on remuneration (₹ in lakh)
Cachar	58	July 2009 to October 2009	15.62
Kamrup (R)	124		29.80
Darrang	32		7.45
Lakhimpur	35	31 Accredited Engineers from March 2009 to May 2010; one Accredited Engineer from March 2009 to January 2011 and remaining three Accredited Engineers not retrenched.	8.88
<b>Total</b>	<b>249</b>		<b>61.75</b>

Source: Departmental records.

Thus, injudicious decision of the State Government with regard to engagement of non-diploma holder candidates as Accredited Engineers not only affected the implementation of the schemes but also resulted in infructuous expenditure of ₹61.75 lakh.

### **6.2.2 Gram Rozgar Sahayak (GRS)**

Though there were shortages in regard to engagement of GRS in other test-checked districts, no GRS was found engaged in 104 GPs under Jorhat district as of March 2012.

### **6.2.3 Accountant and Computer Assistant**

In the test checked Kamrup (R) district, 31 Computer Assistants (against requirement of 139) and 71 Accounts Assistants (against requirement of 139) were appointed in the GPs belatedly in October 2009 and June 2010 respectively. The numbers were further reduced in subsequent years. Moreover, none of the Accountants/Computer Assistants were posted at GP level.

In Jorhat district, 23 Computer Assistant were appointed against 104 GPs.

### **6.2.4 Engagement of Mates**

The SEGC in their meeting held on 13 August 2008 advised the State Government for engagement of Mates at GP level and accordingly, the Government of Assam, P&RD Department issued (June 2010) guidelines to all DPCs and Principal Secretaries of the Autonomous Councils for empanelment and contractual engagement of Mates for supervision of work and recording of attendance of labourers.

In the test-checked Kamalpur, Goroimari and Chamaria Development Blocks under Kamrup (R) and Bechimari and Paschim Mangaldai Blocks under Darrang district, no efforts were made for empanelment and engagement of Mates at GP level.

Similarly, in test-checked Jorhat, Goalpara, Karbi Anglong, Chirang and Darrang districts, no mates were found engaged under the scheme.

Thus, engagement of support staff was not only delayed but also remained inadequate at district and GP levels and thereby management support at GP level with a pool of trained staff was absent.

## **6.3 Technical Support**

The State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) in its first meeting advised the State Government to prepare a panel of Technical Institutions at Guwahati and Silchar, Jorhat Engineering Colleges, North Eastern Regional Institute of Water and Land Management (NERIWALAM), Tezpur and Agriculture Universities for technical support in respect of planning, designing, monitoring, evaluation etc. Despite availability of funds, the panel was not prepared resulting in deprival of envisaged technical support in implementation of programme.

It was also seen that out of the fund of ₹32.70 lakh received for the purpose, an amount of ₹12.28 lakh was utilised during May 2010 for purchase of stationary

articles, hiring of vehicles, payment of transport allowances and printing of Assamese Wall Calendar etc., by the Commissionerate resulting in irregular and unauthorised expenditure to that extent.

Thus, the objective of improving the quality and cost effectiveness of the scheme through appropriate technical support remained largely unachieved.

#### **6.4 Setting up of State Employment Guarantee Fund/Revolving Fund**

The State Government may, by notification, establish a fund to be called the State Employment Guarantee Fund as per the scheme. This Fund is to be administered as a Revolving Fund, with Rules that govern and ensure its utilization according to the purposes of the Act. Similarly, Revolving Fund should be set up under MGNREGS at the District, Block and GP level.

As per the minutes of the first meeting held on 13 August 2008, the SEGC decided to create State Employment Guarantee Fund (SEGF) to ensure timely resource support to the DPCs, POs and PRIs and accordingly, moved (August 2008) the Finance Department, GOA for formal notification. The same was yet (April 2012) to be issued. In the GPs/Blocks/District Panchayats of the test-checked districts, Revolving Fund to ensure complete and sound financial management had also not been set up. Thus, a significant provision of the Act was not observed.

#### **6.5 Preparation of Information Education Communication (IEC) Plan**

Awareness generation through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) for people to know their rights under the Act, effective communication of information about the Act and the Scheme is essential. For this, State Government was required to undertake an intensive Information Education Communication (IEC) exercise to publicise the key provisions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and procedures to be followed like the process of registration, demand for employment, unemployment allowance, grievance redressal mechanism and social audit. The IEC should target workers, rural households, PRIs and pay special attention to needy areas and marginalised communities. The State Government should draw up an IEC Plan and develop communication material designed to help people articulate their demand and claim their entitlements.

The State Government could not furnish IEC Plan drawn up and communication material designed, if any.

In seven test-checked districts, an amount of ₹164.74 lakh was spent on various purposes for carrying out IEC activities during 2007-12 without any approved IEC plan. District wise position is given in Table-12.

**Table-12**  
**Expenditure on IEC activities**

(₹ in lakh)

Sl no.	Name of district	Expenditure incurred	Particulars of expenditure	Remarks
1	Kamrup (R)	7.58	Street plays, erection of hoardings, advertisements in magazines, short programmes in AIR and Doordarshan.	Out of ₹9.00 lakh received in 2007-09, ₹7.58 lakh was spent upto 2009-10. No activities carried out there after though there was unutilised balance of ₹1.42 lakh. Survey revealed that beneficiaries had little knowledge about the scheme and their entitlements.
2	Cachar	25.10	Not made available	Amount spent by Zilla Parishad. The GP Secretaries were not aware of any activities carried out in their GPs. Survey revealed that beneficiaries had little knowledge about the scheme and their entitlements.
3	Hailakandi	28.60	Not made available	Amount spent by PD, DRDA. GP Secretaries were not aware of any activities carried out in their GPs. Survey revealed that beneficiaries had little knowledge about the scheme and their entitlements.
4	Dibrugarh	8.38	Banner, poster and hoarding etc.	Activities carried out, if any, did not come to the notice of the audit team. Beneficiaries also did not have any idea about the activities.
5	Jorhat	21.81		Activities carried out, if any, did not come to the notice of the audit team. Beneficiaries also did not have any idea about the activities.
6	Karbi Anglong	70.59	Not made available	Survey revealed that the beneficiaries remained largely unaware of their entitlements
7	Lakhimpur	2.82	Publicity and awareness campaign and making of hoarding etc.	Paid to APO (A) <sup>2</sup> and PO <sup>3</sup> as advance who had not submitted the adjustment vouchers and in absence of any records, the activities carried out, if any, and the extent of awareness generated among the local people remained unassessed.
<b>Total</b>		<b>164.88</b>		

Source: Departmental records.

The above position indicated that the IEC activities were not carried out in true and proper spirit for which awareness generation among local people regarding the scheme and their entitlements remained unachieved in the districts mentioned above.

### 6.6 Training of various stakeholders/key agencies under MGNREGS

As per paragraph-3.3 of the Operational Guidelines, all key agencies were required to be trained in discharging their responsibilities under the Act. This includes Gram Panchayats, other PRIs, District and State-level departmental personnel involved in implementing NREGS, as well as local committees, groups formed for the purpose of vigilance, monitoring and social audit.

As per instructions (October 2008) of the Director, P&RD regarding engagement of contractual staff, the staff selected for engagement should be given training for their works/duties before joining. The training should include practical demonstration and

<sup>2</sup> Shri D. Baruah (₹2.22 lakh).

<sup>3</sup> Sri P C Gohain (₹0.60 lakh).

practical test to ensure that the candidates have understood the concepts. The deficiencies noticed are brought out below-

(a) In respect of Kamrup (Rural) and Cachar districts, modules for training were developed by State Institute for Rural Development (SIRD) without ascertaining the actual requirements. Programmes were chalked out according to the convenience of SIRD and only one round of training conducted after recruitment of different category of stake-holders like GRS, Accredited Engineers, Computer Assistants and Accountants etc., during the period 2009-10 to 2011-12. Feedbacks from the trainees to assess the fruitfulness of the training were also not obtained.

(b) In Dibrugarh district, both Class-room and On-site training to the members from AP/ZP and the Mates were not imparted. Details of training imparted, if any, to the stakeholders of Jorhat district, was not made available though expenditure of ₹nine lakh (against receipt of ₹11.50 lakh in 2007-08) was incurred during 2008-09, in this regard.

(c) In Goalpara district, training to 81 Key Agencies (PRIs) involved in implementation of MGNREGS was imparted during 2009-10 and 2011-12 in four and three sessions, respectively.

(d) In Karbi Anglong district, ₹16.75 lakh was spent on training to the BDOs, Junior Engineers (JEs) and Additional Programme Officers (APOs) during 2009-10 to 2011-12. However, no training to other key stakeholders like VDC members, BLCC members, Accredited Engineers, GRS etc., was provided.

(e) In the test-checked Darrang district, the PD, DRDA, Darrang, Mangaldai utilised only ₹0.74 lakh as of March 2012 out of ₹seven lakh received from GOI in March 2007 for providing training to various stakeholders involved in implementation of MGNREGS. It was noticed that out of the said amount of ₹0.74 lakh, ₹0.55 lakh was utilised for other purposes like food for workshop, hiring charges of vehicle, video photography and publication of advertisement etc., instead of providing training to stakeholders.

Further scrutiny of records and information furnished revealed that no training to important stakeholders like GRS, Accredited Engineers, Account Assistants, Computer Assistants, GP/AP/ZP members and AP/ZP Presidents was provided during the period under report though sufficient fund for the purpose was already available. Training provided to the POs, GP Secretaries and GP Presidents in 2007-11 was also not found sufficient.

Thus, the purpose of vigilance, monitoring and social audit under the scheme remained largely unfulfilled in the absence of sufficient and effective trainings.

## 6.7 Implementation of works/scheme at block level instead of at village level

As per paragraph-2.1.3 of the Operational Guidelines, 2008, Gram Panchayat is the pivotal body for implementation at the village level and is empowered to receive and utilise funds at its level. There are Village Council Development Committees (VCDCs) and Village Development Committees (VDCs) instead of GPs in the two test-checked Sixth Scheduled Chirang and Karbi Anglong districts which were carrying out identical functions.

Scrutiny revealed that funds received by the Blocks for developmental works relating to VCDCs/VDCs were spent directly by the Blocks though all VCDCs/VDCs were facilitated with Contractual Accountants, GRS, Accredited Engineers and DEOs. Thus, non-consideration of VCDC/VDC as pivotal body for scheme implementation at village level and non-release of funds to them not only violated the stipulated provisions of the Act but also failed in decentralisation of functions.

### **Conclusion**

*Employment of personnel/supporting staff meant to enhance the role of the DPCs in overseeing the scheme implementation and capacity building as part of the structural mechanism for programme implementation was not adequate and effective. Training to key Stake holders for proper implementation of the schemes and IEC exercise for awareness generation to publicise key provisions of the Act was also not adequate.*

### **Recommendation**

*State Governments should consider setting up of State Employment Guarantee Fund at State level and Revolving Fund at District/Block/GP level. Staff requirement should be assessed and steps taken to address the gaps particularly regarding appointment of full-time POs at each Block, with adequate supporting staff like GRS, Accountant and Computer Assistant for each GP. The State Government also needs to prepare a clear IEC plan and exercise activities intensively for awareness generation among the beneficiaries.*