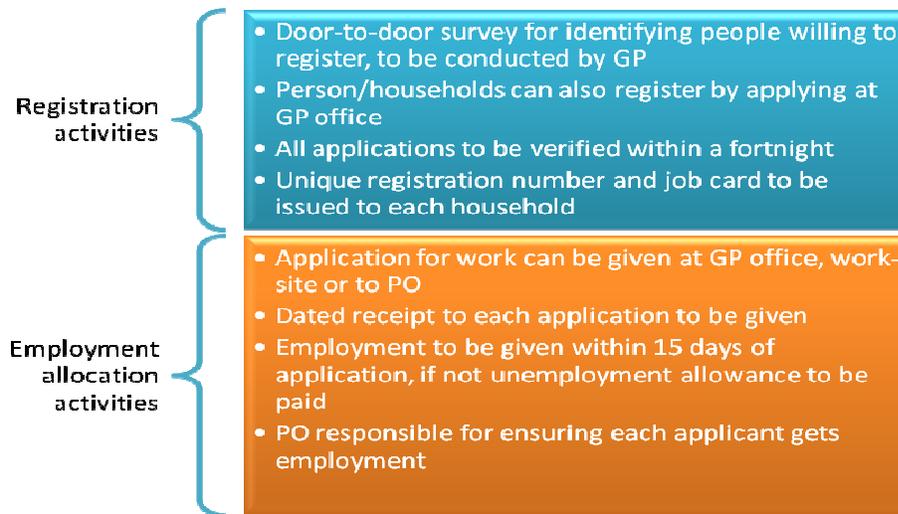


Chapter-7 Registration and Issue of Job Cards

The first step in ensuring that the beneficiary can exercise his/her right of hundred days of employment under the scheme is registration with the Gram Panchayat. As per Section 2(1) of Schedule II of the Act, it is the duty of the Gram Panchayat to register the household and issue a job card. The guidelines envisage that the registration should be initiated by the Gram Panchayat, by conducting a door to door survey. Also, any person seeking registration under the scheme can also do so by applying to the Gram Panchayat. The Guidelines also require that the job card will be issued to the beneficiary within 15 days of receiving the application. The various activities related to the registration process and issue of the job card is outlined in Chart-3.

Chart-3: Registration Process



7.1 Household survey for issue of job cards

(i) In 13 test-checked GPs in Cachar districts, no Orientation Training was imparted to the household survey team members entrusted to identify the persons willing to register under the Act, at GP level. Again, 7¹ out of 13 test-checked GPs in Cachar district did not conduct door to door household survey to identify the persons willing to register under the Act.

(ii) Further, no registration of the households was done and no job card was issued in Deosri Village Council Development Committee (VCDC) under Sidli-Chirang Development Block of Chirang district till June 2012.

¹ (i) Bhubandohar; (ii) Indragarh; (iii) Tapang; (iv) Khaspur; (v) Salganga; (vi) Madhura; and (vii) Bhubanhill GP.

7.2 Application for job/time bound employment

In the test-checked GPs under Kamrup (14 Nos.), Dibrugarh (8 Nos.), Jorhat (11 Nos.) district and VCDCs under Chirang (15 Nos.) district, scrutiny of records revealed that the system for issuing acknowledgement on receipt of applications from the beneficiaries for job and issuing letter of intimation offering job thereagainst within 15 days, was not in place. Again, all these information (including number of days for which job sought for and provided) that requires to be incorporated in the Employment Registers were not found maintained by the GPs/VCDCs in proper spirit as most of the columns of Registers were left blank. In the MIS, the number of days for which the employment provided was uploaded as employment demanded as a routine without going through the basic records.

During beneficiary survey in the above mentioned districts, job card holders stated that they were not aware of the provision and they had never applied for jobs and used to go to work site as and when asked by the GP personnel/Chairman of the VCDC. Thus, transparency in the process of selection of job seekers was inadequate. Delays in offering jobs, if any, were not ascertainable as the records were deficient and consequently, it was also not possible to ascertain admissibility and quantum of unemployment allowance required to be paid to the entitled beneficiaries.

7.3 Updating Registration list

In the test-checked districts of Kamrup, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Goalpara, Chirang, Karbi-Anglong, Lakhimpur and Darrang, the registration list was never updated to add eligible workers and to delete ineligible workers due to death, migration etc. However, in the selected GPs of Cachar and Hailakandi, the registration list/register was found regularly updated.

In the absence of periodical updating of registration list, the possibility of remaining ineligible beneficiaries in the list, could not be ruled out.

7.4 Display of registration list

In all the test-checked districts, the registration list was not made public by displaying the same on the notice board of the GPs as required under the scheme.

7.5 Cross Checking of registration list

No system of sending the registration list to the POs was found put in place by the GPs of all the test-checked districts. Thus, there was no scope for the cross verification of the list available with the GP with that of the PO.

7.6 Timely issue of Job Cards

In all the test-checked districts (except Jorhat and Dibrugarh), the timelines of issuing job cards could not be ascertained as the date of receipt of application forms of the

job seekers was not recorded. In Tingkhong Block under the Dibrugarh district, delay in issue of 912 Job Cards ranged between 10 and 528 days. Further, scrutiny of 39 applications for Job Cards in Jorhat district revealed that the Job Cards were issued with delays ranging between 2 and 523 days to the respective beneficiaries.

Similarly, in Rajgarh GP under Narayanpur Development Block of Lakhimpur district, 264 Job Cards were issued with delays ranging from 10 to 36 months. Similar cases of delay (12 to 16 months in 213 cases) in issue of job cards were also noticed in other test checked Simaluguri GP under the same block.

7.7 Affixing Photograph in the Job Card

In the test-checked districts of Kamrup, Goalpara and Karbi Anglong, joint photographs of the families of the Job Card holders were neither affixed in the job card nor in the Job Card Register. The photographs of the head of the families were, however, found affixed in the job card. In seven selected GPs of Dibrugarh district, photographs were not found affixed in 417 out of 2,689 cases test checked. In eight selected GPs in Jorhat district, photos were not affixed in 119 cases out of 2,163 cases test-checked. In Chirang district, in 232 out of 300 job cards test-checked, joint family photographs were not affixed. Similarly, in Dakhin Narayanpur and Simaluguri GPs under Narayanpur Development Block of Lakhimpur district, in 274 and 81 cases respectively, no photograph/joint photographs were found pasted in the job card register.

In Cachar and Hailakandi, however, photographs were found affixed both in the job card and the job card register as per the requirement.

7.8 Issue of Job Cards

(a) Generation of excess Job Cards in MIS

83 GPs under eight Development Blocks of test checked Kamrup (R), Lakhimpur and Darrang district actually issued 1,42,088 job cards to the registered households but as per MIS 1,55,882 job cards were shown generated and issued. One possible reason to generate excess job cards was to get more funds from the Centre as labour budget is prepared on the basis of number of job card holders. Possibility of misuse of 13,794 job cards generated in excess could also not be ruled out as it was actually detected in two blocks under Lakhimpur district as discussed in para 7.8 (b). The details of generation of excess job cards is shown in the Table-13.

Table-13
Position of generation of excess Job Cards

Sl. No.	Name of the district	Name of the Blocks	No. of GPs	Job Cards issued as per MIS	No. of job cards issued to household	Difference (Excess cards as per MIS)
1	Kamrup	Kamalpur	12	11,513	10,843	670
2		Goroimari	8	15,764	15,276	488
3		Chamaria	16	33,551	29,810	3741
4		Hajo	15	29,089	28,381	708
5	Lakhimpur	Boginadi	8	19,820	17,237	2583
6		Narayanpur	14	25,832	22,397	3435
7	Darrang	Bechimari	5	11,394	9,655	1739
8		Paschim Mangaldai	5	8,919	8,489	430
Total			83	1,55,882	1,42,088	13,794

Source: 'Job card issue register' and information furnished by GP Secretaries.

(b) Fraudulent payment through fake Job Cards

It would be revealed from Table-13 above that in Lakhimpur district, 6,018 excess job cards were generated in MIS under Boginadi (2,583 job cards) and Narayanpur (3,435 job cards) Development Blocks. Further detailed scrutiny of records of seven GPs under the above two blocks disclosed generation of 1,366 fake job cards as detailed in Table-14.

Table-14
No. of fake Job Cards generated in seven test checked GPs

Sl No.	Name of the blocks	Name of the GPs	No. of fake Job Cards issued
1	Boginadi	Thowthowani	45
2		Bhimpara	28
3		Boginadi	220
4	Narayanpur	Pichala	296
5		Rajgarh	104
6		Simuluguri	394
7		Dakhin Narayanpur	279
Total			1,366

Source: 'Job card issue register' and information furnished by GP Secretaries.

These job cards were generated in MIS only and never issued physically to the job seekers as revealed from the respective Job Card Registers. Verification of Electronic muster rolls (EMRs) and physical MRs revealed that an amount of ₹35.82 lakh was fraudulently paid through 796 double/fake job cards (out of the above fake job cards) by the Blocks mentioned above. GP wise fraudulent payments made are given in Table-15.

Table-15
GP-wise fraudulent payments made through fake Job Cards by the two Blocks

Sl no.	Name of the block	Name of the GP	No. of fake Job Card involved	No. of days for which wages paid	Period of payment	Fraudulent payment made (₹)
1	Boginadi	Thowthowani	16	360	Dec/09 to July/12	40,752
2		Bhimpara	86	2,521	May/09 to March/12	2,54,420
3		Boginadi	129	4,404	Nov/08 to Aug/11	4,66,914
4	Narayanpur	Pichala	191	9,710	Nov/08 to March/12	9,01,516
5		Rajgarh	21	1,873	Nov/08 to March/12	1,75,609
6		Simulugauri	305	15,088	March/09 to March/12	15,83,906
7		Dakhin Narayanpur	48	1,474	Jan/09 to Aug/12	1,58,912
Total			796	35,430		35,82,029

Source: Physical MRs and EMRs.

Thus, excess job cards generated under MIS by these blocks but not issued to the job seekers were actually utilised for fraudulent payments of ₹35.82 lakh.

(c) Job cards taken away/issued to unauthorised persons

Some instances of issue of job cards to unauthorised persons other than the actual job seekers in violation of scheme guidelines are brought out below.

(i) 13 job cards of different registered households (HHs) were found to have been taken away by a single person from the Secretary, Borka-Satgaon GP under Kamalpur Block of Kamrup (R) district.

Similarly, 177 job cards were received by four PRI members from Dampur GP under Hajo Development Block (Details are shown in **Appendix-10**) of Kamrup (R) district.

(ii) 238 job cards alongwith the Post Office Pass Books were taken away from Saniadi GP (under Hajo Development Block of Kamrup (R) district) by one Casual Staff of the GP (97), two GP members (75), GP Vice President (45) and two un-identified persons (21). The BDO-cum-PO, in reply, stated (July 2012) that steps would be taken not to handover the job cards to other persons.

(iii) Similarly, scrutiny of Job Cards Register of Thowthowani GP under Boginadi Development Block of Lakhimpur district revealed that 33 job cards in the names of different households were issued/taken away by a single unidentified person in violation of NREG Act/guidelines.

(iv) Further, in one test-checked GP (Kasipur under Cachar district), 840 job cards (both the original and duplicate copies) were kept in the office of the Gram Panchayat although they were shown as having been issued to the job card holders. In another GP (Salganga under Cachar district), 10 job card holders reported (as ascertained from Beneficiary Survey) that their cards were retained by the GP Secretary.

Thus, issue of job cards to persons other than the original job seekers is fraught with the risk of misuse, mis-utilisation and even fraudulent payments.

(d) Issue of Job Cards without obtaining signature of Job Seekers

Test check of records further revealed that:-

(i) 203 and 71 job cards respectively were found issued by the Secretary, Borka-Satgaon GP and Secretary, Hekra Jogipara GP under Kamalpur and Chamaria Development Block respectively without obtaining any signature of the recipient.

(ii) In Boginadi, Bhimpara and Thowthowani GP under Boginadi Development Block of Lakhimpur district, 739, 440 and 39 job cards respectively, were found issued without obtaining the signature of the recipients.

(iii) Also in Dakhin Narayanpur and Simaluguri GP under Narayanpur Development Block of Lakhimpur district, 244 and 634 job cards respectively, were found issued without obtaining the signature of the recipients.

(e) Non-opening of Bank/ Post Office accounts of Job Card Holders

Para 7.2.1 of MGNREGS Operational Guidelines, 2008 stipulated that all payments of MGNREGS wages should be made through banks or post offices and the bank /post office accounts should be opened pro-actively on behalf of all concerned labourers by an appropriate authority (e.g., Gram Panchayat). Labourers should not be required to open their own bank account.

(i) In Kamrup (R) district, it was, however, noticed that of the total 1523, 1118 and 1667 job cards issued (in 2008-09) to the registered HHs by Hekra Jogipara GP, Pijupara GP and Kismat- Kathmi GP under Chamaria Development Block respectively of Kamrup (R) district, bank accounts (bank/PO) in respect of 404, 496 and 64 job card holders respectively were not opened at all. Further, bank accounts in respect of 181 job card holders (out of the total 1,639 job cards issued by the GP Secretary) of Bangalpara GP under Hajo Development Block were also not opened.

(ii) Similarly, in Lakhimpur district, scrutiny of records revealed that a total 17,300 job cards were issued to the registered households by the Secretaries of the eight GPs under Boginadi Development Block over the period upto 31 March 2012 but their bank/post office account number had neither been recorded in the job card register nor the block maintained any separate register for the purpose. But it was revealed from the MIS that a total of 10,955 numbers bank/post office accounts were opened against total number of 17,300 job card holders as on September 2012.

(iii) Again, in Narayanpur Development Block under Lakhimpur district, scrutiny records revealed that a total 22,397 number of job cards were issued to the Registered Households by the Secretaries of the 14 GPs over the period upto 31 March 2012 but

had neither recorded their bank/post office account numbers in the job card register nor did maintain any separate register for the purpose. But from MIS, it was revealed that as of September 2012, a total of 14,869 numbers of bank/post office accounts only were opened.

(iv) In Chirang district, bank/post office accounts were not opened in respect of 29,849 numbers job card holders (out of total 1,08,103 number job card holders).

As a result, only persons having accounts were considered and engaged in the works on rotation basis depriving the others (who had no accounts) from the benefits of employment under MGNREGS.

(f) Excess printing/non-accountal of manual Job Cards

(i) In Jorhat district, 2,00,000 job cards were printed at a total cost of ₹35 lakh (@ ₹17.50 each) in 2008-09, of which, 1,03,131 cards were issued to job seekers till 2011-12. Balance 96,869 cards remained unutilised resulting in idle expenditure of ₹16.95 lakh (₹17.50 X 96,869). This indicated that the printing of job cards was done without assessing actual requirement based on proper household survey.



JOB CARDS LYING UNUSED AT BAGHCHUNG BLOCK (25 April 2012)



JOB CARDS LYING UNUSED AT DHEKORGORAH BLOCK (15 May 2012)

(ii) In Lakhimpur district, 3,44,801 manual blank job cards were procured/printed from different firms/printers and from Director, P & RD, Assam, Guwahati at a cost of ₹63.94 lakh though there was only 1,71,683 registered households in the district. This indicated that procurement/printing was done without assessment of actual requirement, which resulted in excess expenditure of ₹32.10 lakh [(3,44,801- 1,71,683) X ₹18.54]. Instead of incurring such excess expenditure towards procurement of excess job cards, the department could have utilised the fund for engagement of supportive staff at GP (e.g., no 'Gram Rozgar Sahayak (GRS)' engaged in three GPs under Boginadi Development Block).

(iii) 1.35 lakh and two lakh job cards without machine numbering were printed by the DPCs of Dibrugarh and Jorhat districts respectively. As a result, serial number-wise issue of job cards to the blocks/GPs could not be ascertained. The

authorities concerned of Jorhat district maintained the records of 1.08 lakh out of the two lakh job cards printed. Whereabouts of the rest 0.92 lakh job cards could not be ascertained in audit and thereby possibility of misuse of these job cards with huge financial involvement could not be ruled out.

(g) Other points

(i) As per MIS, 90 job cards were issued to households of Borka gaon (75) and Panitema (15) villages under Borka-Satgaon GP of Kamalpur Block in Kamrup (R) district. The Secretary of the GP, however, failed to produce any records in audit regarding issue of the said Job Cards to registered households.

(ii) Secretary of the Achalpara GP, under Goroimari Block of Kamrup (R) district failed to furnish the details of 533 job cards (out of total 1,852 job cards) shown as having been issued to the job seekers.

(iii) The MoRD observed that there were 7,154 double job cards of different numbers but with the same name of head of the households under Chamaria Development Block of Kamrup (R) district. In response, PD, DRDA, Kamrup (R) instructed (June 2011) the BDO/PO to verify the position of these job cards and to submit the report by 10 June 2011.

The BDO/PO, Chamaria Development Block verified all the 7,154 disputed cards through the Secretaries of the GPs and GRS and found that job cards were issued twice to 32 individuals, two were not in the Job card issue register and another two job cards were wrongly issued in different names. There was nothing on record to ascertain whether the matter was brought to the notice of the DPC/Ministry. These anomalies were however, not rectified in the MIS.

(iv) In the Hailakandi district, total 1,01,246 blank job cards were received in Algapur (44,982) and Hailakandi Block (56,264) from the district authorities. According to MIS, the GPs under Algapur and Hailakandi Block, however, issued 23,667 (against 22,491 HHs) and 31,361 (against 28,132 HHs) job cards respectively. Thus, there was total excess issue of 4,405 job cards² by the GPs. Further, audit could not verify the details of issue of these job cards as the same were not machine numbered.

(v) As per Para 5.3 of MGNREGS Operational Guidelines, 2008, the GPs are to issue Job Cards to every registered household.

In Barlawgaon and Malipara VCDC of Borobazar Development Block, separate Job Cards were issued to husband and wife of the same household unauthorisedly as indicated in Table-16.

² (i) GP under Algapur Block: 1,176 (23,667-22,491) and (ii) GP under Hailakandi Block: 3,229 (31,361-28,132).

Table-16
Issue of different Job Cards to members of same household in Chirang District

Sl. No.	Job card No	Name (age) to whom issued	Husband/wife	family member as per Job Card	Address	Date of Registration	Account No
1.	AS-25-094-025-001-56	Sulendra Basumatary (40 years)	H/o Rita Basumatary	Both	Hatimara village, Barlawgaon VCDC	04.10.09	6956 of UCO bank, Borobazar branch
	AS-25-094-025-001-99	Rita Basumatary (30 years)	W/o Sulendra Basumatary	Single	Hatimara village, Barlawgaon VCDC	04.10.09	8002, UCO Bank, Borobazar branch
2.	AS-25-094-025-001-66	Karendra Basumatary (46 years)	H/o Champa Basumatary	Single	Hatimara village, Barlawgaon VCDC	04.10.08	532, UCO Bank, Borobazar branch
	AS-25-094-025-001-192	Champa Basumatary (30 years)	W/o Karendra Basumatary	Both	Hatimara village, Barlawgaon VCDC	04.10.09	532, UCO Bank, Borobazar branch
3.	AS-25-094-010-001-70	Nikhil Basumatary (30 years)	H/o Mayarani Basumatari	Single	Malipara VCDC	04.10.08	1351, AGVB, Borobazar branch
4	AS-25-094-010-001-38	Mayarani Basumatari (27 years)	W/o Nikhil Basumatary	Both	Malipara VCDC	04.10.08	780, AGVB, Borobazar branch

Source: MIS data.

Thus, there were irregularities in issue, accounting and utilisation of Job Cards noticed in test-checked GPs/Blocks/Districts which indicated large scale of deficiencies in the process of implementation of MGNREGS. Prevalence of such deficiencies had definitely an unquantifiable adverse impact on achievement of the intended objective of providing gainful employment to bonafide job seekers under the scheme.

Conclusion

There was no effective and transparent process of registration of households in compliance with the scheme Guidelines. There were also deficiencies in maintaining, accounting and issue of Job Cards which resulted in generation of double/fake job cards leading to fraudulent payment thereagainst.

Recommendation

The State Government should direct all the POs/GP Secretaries to maintain Job-Card Registers as per the prescribed format, review the position of Job Cards issued, ensure affixing of photographs in the existing Job Cards and close/delete the fake Job Cards from MIS to avoid any further fraudulent payments. State Government must ensure that under no condition job cards are retained by GPs/other departmental officials for any purpose. State Government may also involve PRIs for the opening of the Bank/Post Office accounts of those willing workers who have been issued job cards but accounts are not opened.