

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Transparency and Accountability in MGNREGA with Special Reference to Kashmir Division of District Anantnag

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Abstract

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is one of the most important employment providing schemes in India backed by legislation. For any programme to succeed it is imperative that it should be implemented effectively at all levels. Mere introduction of any programme never means the end of the problem or the achievement of the set objectives. A poorly organized programme is bound to prove to be a failure despite its massive investment because it gives rise to a number of deficiencies & inefficiencies like slow and poor decisions, lack of co-ordination among the different levels and line departments, poor specification of duties etc. The present paper makes an effort to know about the transparency and accountability features from the sample respondents and also to know how much MGNREGA workers are aware about the provision.

Keywords: *Transparency, Accountability, Co-ordination.*

Introduction

Anantnag District lies in the Southern sector of the Kashmir Valley. The district is known for its majestic and high mountains, many perennial springs and streams flowing with melodious sounds and enchanting beauty, famous heath resort which make her climate pleasant and rejuvenating. Besides, fertile soil, suitable agro-climatic conditions, crop diversity, production of fresh and dry fruits, trout fish rearing add to its greatness and fame. As the district is surrounded by the Peer Panchal Range which stretches in its South and South-East, it has a temperature climate in summer than other districts of the valley.

In winter, however, snowfall is heavier and temperature is relatively low. Being bordered on two sides by mountains, the monsoon does occasionally reach the district. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is one of the most important employment providing schemes in India backed by legislation. The legislation guarantees 100 days employment to any rural household that desires to do any manual work stipulated in the Act, during a financial year. The scheme has three important dimensions -one dimension is the creation of assets in rural areas; second

dimension is the social protection of the vulnerable sections of the society; and the third dimension is the guaranteed provision for employment, the mother of all social securities. For any programme to succeed it is imperative that it should be implemented effectively at all levels. Mere introduction of any programme never means the end of the problem or the achievement of the set objectives.

A poorly organized programme is bound to prove to be a failure despite its massive investment because it gives rise to a number of deficiencies and inefficiencies like slow and poor decisions, lack of co-ordination among the different levels and line departments, poor specification of duties etc.

A structurally sound programme and scheme on the other hand can produce better results even with a modest investment because a well designed scheme encourages growth, diversification, improves administration, ensures coordination at all levels and hence tones up the overall operation of a programme. Truly speaking the success or failure of any development strategy/programme largely depends on its

implementation rather than its mere introduction.

Some Review Of Literature Related To The Present Study

Dre'ze[1] noticed lingering delays in wage payment and hurdles for delays. The delay in work capacity, flow of funds, irresponsible record keeping etc., were observed. In addition to these, unexpected switching to bank payments led to 'jam' in banking system and unwillingness of government functionaries also contributed to the delays.

He commented that the answer shown by the centre to the crisis of delay payment was 'Business Correspondent (BC)' model which has little to do with delays. He also suggested the substitution of piece-wage rate with daily wage in drought exaggerated areas and revoking of the Section 25 of MGNREGA to ensure transparency.

Siwach Raj Kumar and Kumar Sunil [2], conducted a study focusing on social audit in Haryana. They reported that unemployment was the main reason for the existence of abject poverty in rural areas. The study further highlighted that the NREGA had the

potential not only to strengthen social security in India but also strengthened community mobilizations to ensure better responsiveness of local government to community needs and priorities.

Need and Objectives of the Study

A structurally sound programme & scheme on the other hand can produce better results even with a modest investment. The failure of any development strategy/programme largely depends on its implementation rather than its mere introduction. Consequently, the present study has been carried out to know about the Transparency and Accountability in the scheme and also to know about the role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in the MGNREGA scheme.

Methodology

The present study is based on primary data collected by researcher by applying simple random sampling. From each village of the two blocks, 60 beneficiaries holding active job cards in year 2015-16 were selected.

Results and Discussion

Transparency and Accountability

Custody of Job Cards

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to custody of Job Card

Custody of job card	Anantnag								
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block				Total	
	Chinegund	Lehedingan	Katsoo	Bon-Numbal	Akoora	Fohar			
Yes	5	3	3	3	1	4	19	5.3%	
No	55	57	57	57	59	56	341	94.7%	
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360	100%	

Source: Primary data

The respondents were asked at the worksite about possession of their job cards. But results found were very dismal only 5 respondent workers accepted that they

possessed job cards. About 95% out of the total 360 workers inquired said that their job cards were not with them.

Entries in the Job Cards

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to entries in the job card

Entries on job cards about wages and work	Anantnag								
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block				Total	
	Chingund	Lehindagan	Katsoo	Bon-Numbal	Akoora	Fohar			
Job cards Having entries	5	3	3	3	1	4	19	5.3%	
Job cards Not having entries	55	57	57	57	59	56	341	94.5%	
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360	100%	

Source: Primary data

At the time of survey it is found that only 5 job cards have been entered with information about wages and number of days work done

by workers. About 95% of job cards are found without entry of such information.

Demand of jobs by People Under the Scheme

Table 3: Distribution of respondents who demand employment

Respondents Employment	Anantnag							
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block				
	Chingund	Lehedinga n	Katso o	Bon-Numba l	Akoor a	Foha r	Total	
Have demanded employment	0	5	1	0	12	8	26	7.2%
Have provided Employment	60	55	59	60	48	52	334	92.5%
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360	100%

Source: Primary data

The Table 3 portrays that out of total sample of 360 respondents only 26 respondents who have demanded jobs and 334 respondents have not demanded jobs under scheme MGNREGA work but on questioning about it

respondent workers revealed that they were contacted by contractor directly and he offered them jobs under scheme.

Payment of wages

Table 4: Distribution of respondents according to payment of wages

Wages on time	Anantnag						
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block			
	Chingund	Lehedingan	Katsoo	Bon-Numbal	Akoora	Fohar	Total
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No	38	53	15	47	19	24	196
Sometime	22	7	45	13	41	36	164
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360

Source: Primary data

The Table 4 portrays that out of total sample of 360, 164 respondents (45.4%) reported that sometime wages were paid within a period of 15 days and majority of respondents reported that there is delay in payment of wages. Important reasons for the delay in payment

of wages as told by the respondents in group discussions were delay in making available the MGNREGS funds, lack of staff, delay in measurement, and delay on the part of the bank etc.

Awareness about worksite facilities

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents according to worksite facilities

Awareness about worksite facilities	Anantnag							
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block				
	Chingund	Lehindagan	Katsoo	Bon-Numbal	Akoora	Fohar	Total	
Yes	6	4	5	6	3	6	30	8.3%
No	54	56	55	54	57	54	330	91.7%
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360	100%

Source: Primary data

Table 5 shows that out of total sample of 360 respondents only 30 respondents (8.3%) have awareness about the worksite facilities and majority of 330 respondents (91.7%) have not awareness about worksite facilities. When observation was made at the time of survey there found no such facility at worksite.

When beneficiaries were interviewed they stated that they did not aware of such provisions in the scheme. Majority of work done under contractors and he never provided such facilities.

Participation of Respondent workers in Gram Sabh

Table 6: Distribution of Respondents according to their participation in Gram Sabha

Participation in Gram Sabha	Anantnag							
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block				
	Chingund	Lehedingan	Katsoo	Bon-Numbal	Akoora	Fohar	Total	
Yes	2	4	3	2	2	4	17	4.7%
No	58	56	57	58	58	56	343	95.3%
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360	100%

Source: Primary data

Out of total 360 respondent workers only 17 workers accepted that they had participated in Gram Sabha meetings as shown in table 6.6. A large chunk of respondent workers (343) told that they have no knowledge about

meetings of Gram Sabha regarding MGNREGA work.

Awareness about Provisions of MGNREGA Among Workers

Table 7: Distribution of Respondents in selected villages with respect to awareness of MGNREGA

Source of Information	Anantnag							
	Dachinipora Block			Khoveripora Block				
	Chingund	Lehedingan	Katsoo	Bon-Numbal	Akoora	Fohar	Total	
Gram panchayat	6	6	10	7	9	10	48	13.3%
Media	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Poster	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0%
Gram Rozgar Sahayak	0	41	38	13	43	29	164	45.4%
Third person	54	13	12	40	8	21	148	41%
Total	60	60	60	60	60	60	360	100%

Source: Primary data

The Table 7 portrays that out of total sample of 360 respondents 48 respondents get information about MGNREGA from Gram Panchayat, 164 respondents aware through Gram Rozgar Sahayak and 148 respondents aware through third person (contractor etc). All in all it can be concluded that at grassroots level implementation of MGNREGS in study area is severely beset by malpractices; corruption; inefficiency; lack of knowledge; least participation.

Conclusion

Strengths

- As the scheme provides guarantee for 100 days of employment to the willing household in the vicinity of village.
- A considerable reduction in distress migration through MGNREGA in study area is a major achievement of the scheme.

Weaknesses

- Use of machineries by contractors is great loophole in schemes which weakens the very purpose of labour employment. Also involvement of contractor is serious concern to address.

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