



INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER MGNREGA IN SOUTH WEST KHASI HILLS DISTRICT OF MEGHALAYA: A REVIEW

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Abstract: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as “Silver Bullet” to eradicate the twin chronic problems of poverty and unemployment. It is one of the largest wage employment schemes in human history which provide employment of 11.56 crores people only in 2018-19. The Scheme created huge impact in the rural economy through assets creation which supports rural livelihood and strengthening daily activities of villagers. In many villages of South West Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya, in the past people never dreamt of having roads, footpaths, footbridges, community washing facilities, irrigation facilities but through MGNREGA villagers are accessible to these importance assets. Various studies found a positive impact of the Scheme on employment, income, migration, poverty reduction, gender equality; improve in standard of living and environment conservation. The basic motive of the Government through MGNREGA was to empower villagers to be self govern in term of planning, surveying, executing and monitoring infrastructural development in the community. The number of persons and households employed under the Scheme has shown a positive trajectory for the last decade.

Key words: MGNREGA, Rural Employment, Infrastructure Development, Type of Assets, Meghalaya.

1. Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) continues to be a torch-bearer for rural development in Meghalaya (SRES, 2014-15). The Government pumped resources to the rural masses through unskilled wages by creating quality and durable assets which may strengthen rural livelihood. The Scheme was notified on September 7, 2005 and was launched in the country on February 2, 2006, but the actual implementation of the programme in Meghalaya did not commence immediately with the rest of the country. This was due to the fact that State of Meghalaya is not within the purview of Part IX of the Constitution where neither Panchayati Raj Institutions nor Local Councils or Authorities were in existence at the time when the Scheme was launched. The State Government at the initial stage had invested responsibilities through Village Employment Council (VEC), Area Employment Council (AEC), Block Employment Council (BEC) and District Employment Council (DEC). In Meghalaya, the Scheme was started in three Phases. Phase I, was started in the year 2006-07 covering West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills Districts. Phase II, in the year 2007-08 covering East Khasi Hills, Ri-Bhoi and Jaintia Hills Districts and Phase III in the year 2008-09 covering West Khasi Hills and East Garo Hills Districts. Subsequently, the scheme covers all 11 District, 46 C&RD Blocks, 6,309 Villages (mgnrega.ac.in). The State Rural Employment Society is the Nodal Agency for implementation of MGNREGA in Meghalaya.

2.1. Literature review

MGNREGA Sameeksha (2006-12), found that rural employment shared 15 percent of households' income due to MGNREGA. Centre for Science and Environment Report to Ministry of Rural Development, GOI (2008), has analyzed that Assets creation under MGNREGA has increased water availability and improved access to irrigation. Feroze *et al.*, (2012) in their study found that in Meghalaya maximum of works under MGNREGA were taken in rural connectivity followed by land development, water conservation and drought proofing related work in North Eastern Region. Panda *et al.*, (2009) made an attempt to compare the appraisal of NREGA in the State of Meghalaya and Sikkim and found that in Meghalaya men and women were paid same wage rate, creating social capital and reduction in moral hazard in rural society. Bhargava (2013), found that in Rajasthan, one-third (1/3) of wage were allocated to women beneficiaries.

2.2. Statement of the problem:

All assets created under MGNREGA are demand-driven associated with productivity and employability of the rural people. People demand specific assets which according to them will enhance productivity and raise their socio-economic life to some extent. This review study focuses on the role of MGNREGA in rural employment and achievement in creating infrastructure which may strengthen rural livelihood of rural people in South West Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya.

3.1 Objective of the study

1. To analyse the contribution of MGNREGA in rural livelihood.
2. To analyse the contribution of MGNREGA in rural infrastructural development.

3.2. Research methodology and tools

The present study is based on the secondary sources. Books, journals, periodicals, project reports and official websites of Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India have been consulted for the purposed of analyzing data. Simple descriptive statistics is used to analyse the available data for the purpose of the study.

4.1. Scenario of Employment Generation 2018-19 in various District of Meghalaya:

The table shows that the number of households provided employment under MGNREGA was about 98.5 percent, where 482928 households demanded work and 475388 households were provided employment only in 2018-19. Table 1 shows the achievement of MGNREGA in providing rural employment in Meghalaya.

Table: 1: Employment generation 2018-19

District	Cumulative no. of households h issued job cards				employment demanded		employment provided			No. of families completed 100 days (% to households in the district)
	SCS	STS	Other s	Total	House hold	Person s	House hold	Person s	Person days	
EGH	23	28484	450	28957	26971	56253	26905	55762	2076459	9969 (37.05)
EJH	1	28842	45	28888	20801	21828	20344	21303	895466	229 (1.12)
EKH	198	90269	1240	91707	78441	90466	76784	87008	5707899	25207 (32.82)
NGH	16	37900	481	38397	37393	73099	37374	73067	3626594	32632 (87.31)
RB	427	53105	1888	55420	40968	67366	39933	65113	2173348	5863(14.66)
SGH	179	35488	1147	36814	32107	33490	32062	33440	2926785	19323(60.26)
SWGK	783	32178	8518	41479	40891	56723	39642	55191	2998164	14250(34.84)
SWKH	0	22279	31	22310	20573	28344	20438	28023	1314348	2944 (14.40)
WGH	2111	72710	24156	98977	94220	136683	93186	134905	7265441	35981(38.62)

WJH	143	50348	207	50698	37739	49160	36609	47677	1946550	5733(15.67)
WKH	4	62181	98	62283	52824	81028	52111	78038	3284375	8784(16.85)
TOTAL	3885	513784	38261	555930	482928	694440	475388	679527	3421542	160915 (33.8)

Source: <https://nrega.nic.in>

The number of person demanded work in 2018-19 was 694440 and 679527 persons were employed which account 97.85 percent achievement in term of providing employment. In term of persondays, West Garo Hills alone constitute of about 21.33 percent of persondays to the total persondays of the state whereas East Jaintia Hills recorded the lowest percentage with only 2.3 percent to the total persondays of the state. About 33.8 percent of rural households were provided 100 days of employment. North Garo Hills District recorded the highest percentage with 87.31 percent of households got 100 days employment in 2018-19, whereas East Jaintia Hills recorded the lowest with only 1.12 percent.

4.2 Brief Description and Demographic Profile of South West Khasi Hills District:

South West Khasi Hills District was carved out from West Khasi Hills District, on 3rd August, 2012 with its headquarters at Mawkyrwat. It is a rural District with none of its villages fall under Township and occupies an area of 1,341 Sq. Kms. It is bounded in the North by West Khasi Hills District, Bangladesh in the South, East Khasi Hills District in the East and West Khasi Hills and South Garo Hills District in the West.

As per Census 2011, the total population of the district was 1, 10,152, reside in 216 Villages and 16,809 Households. The literacy rate was 76.84 Percent (Census 2011) which surpassed the state literacy rate of 74.43 percent. Female constitutes 49.24 percent of the total population and 95.53 percent of population are Schedule tribe. The principal languages of the District are Khasi, Garo and local dialect (Maram), while English is used as the official language. The District comprises of two Community & Rural Development Blocks viz. Ranikor and Mawkyrwat. Recently, with the re-organization and division of Villages, the District comprises of 315 villages, where Mawkyrwat C&RD Block consists of 158 Villages with a population of 54,462 and Ranikor C&RD Block comprised of 157 villages with a population of 41,218.

4.3 Occupational Structure

The occupational structure refers to the distribution or division of its population according to its different occupation. The census of 2011, has classified main and marginal workers into four categories. (A) A cultivator; if he or she is engaged in cultivation of land owned. (B) Agricultural worker; if a person works on another person's land for wages in money or kind or share. (C) Households industry carried on by members of the household at home or within the village in rural areas and (D). Others, include government servants, teachers, factory workers, etc. Table 2 shows the classification of workers in different categories.

Table 2 Classifications of workers in West Khasi and South West Khasi Hills.

Classification	Main workers				Marginal workers				Total	
	Cultivators	Agricultural labourers	Workers in household industries	Other workers	Cultivators	Agricultural labour	Workers in household industries	Other workers	Total workers	Non-workers
West and South West Khasi Hills	7102 1	19987	1416	2737 9	13935	17197	1059	1135 1	16334 5	22011 6

(Census of India, 2011 & Statistical Abstract, Meghalaya 2016)

Table 2 shows that the total number of cultivators both main and marginal workers was 84956 (71021+13935=84956) which constituted 52.01 percent to the total workforce. The agricultural workers both as main workers and marginal workers was 37186 (19987+17197=37186) which constituted about 22.76 percent to the total workforce. Thus cultivators and agricultural labourers constituted about 74.77 percent of the total workers in the District. Workers in households industries constituted about 1.51 percent and 23.71 percent as other workers.

4.4 Climatic and Physiographical Condition

Although, the District experiences four seasons in the year, but winter and monsoon dominates the most. The District lies in the same belt of southern slope with Cherrapunjee and Mawsynram and experience the same monsoon throughout the year. The District was blessed by natural endowment like rivers and streams which has huge potentiality of hydro-electricity. Thick forest supports life to varieties of fauna and flora, and a treasure house to valuable products such as timber, firewood, medicinal plants, bamboos and other varieties.

Besides agriculture and allied activities, livestock is the other alternative for the villagers and this activity has a huge potentiality for employment and income generation in a sustainable way which can lead to be self-sufficient in meat production as till date production of meat is imported from other states. Besides, there is also a potentiality of using the by-product of livestock which can be a rich source of organic fertilizer.

4.5 Progress of MGNREGA in SWKH District during 2014-15 to 2018-19: MGNREGA in West Khasi Hills District and South West Khasi Hills District of Meghalaya was launched in 2008-09. MGNREGA has provided employment of about 6.71 lakhs persondays in 2014-15 which has been increased every financial year to about 13.14 lakhs per-persondays in 2018-19. Out of the total of employment generated, women participation increased from 50.47 percent in 2015-16 to about 52.41 percent in 2018-19 as shown in table 3.

Table 3 Progress of MGNREGA in SWKHD during 2015-16 to 2018-19

Progress	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
Persondays generated so far[in lakhs]	13.14	10.68	10.37	6.54	6.71
ST persondays % as of total persondays	99.87	99.97	99.99	100	100
Women persondays out of total (%)	52.41	53.52	51.58	48.98	50.47
Average days of employment provided per household	64.31	57.5	56.82	39.99	44.54
Average wage rate per day per person(rs.)	181	175	169	162.94	153

Source: <http://mnregaweb4.nic.in>

Table 3 shows that, women participation was more than 50 percent in all financial years which surpassed the target of one-third or 33 percent. The scheme had shown an improving trend in providing employment from 44 days in 2014-15 to an average of 64.31 days in 2018-19 to registered households which remain a challenging task to provide 100 days employment as per the mandate of the scheme.

As per MGNREGA official Report (<http://mgnrega.nic.in>), about 99.87 percent of the beneficiaries of the Scheme are indigenous Khasi and Garo people. About 8 percent of the total number of households had achieved 100 days of employment for the last five financial years. Though the data shows that some households are closed to get 100 days, it is still a challenging task to provide 100 days employment to all households due to many factors and climatic condition may be one of them. The total number of households worked in MGNREGA has increased from 0.15 lakhs in 2014-15 to 0.2 lakhs in 2018-19 and the number of individual workers has increased from 0.18 lakhs in 2015-16 to 0.28 lakhs in 2018-19. The number of job cards issued till 2018-19 was 0.23 lakhs and the total workers registered was 0.43 lakhs but active workers were 0.31 lakhs. If taken into account that the number of working days in a year is 272, and the number of person works in 2018-19 was 0.28 lakhs, the total persondays of the District was 76.16 lakhs (0.28x272=76.16) but only 13.14 lakhs persondays generated under MGNREGA which show that the

Scheme could generate employment of about 17.25 percent ($13.14/76.16 \times 100=17.25$) to the total employment of the District.

4.6 MGNREGA Assets Undertaken in South West Khasi Hills District

Assets, constructed under MGNREGA, had created huge infrastructural development in the remote villages who hardly dreamt of availability of such assets in one's lifetime. Data available in the official website of MGNREGA shows that, there were about 6542 types of work completed and 1479 ongoing work undertaken in the entire district of South West Khasi Hills till 2018-19. The different types of work completed and ongoing works in the District till 2018-19 is shown in Table 4

Table 4 Category wise Numbers of Completed and Ongoing Works with Total Persondays

Type of work	Ongoing work (number)	Complete work (numbers) since time of inception till 2018-19						persondays 2014-15 to 2018-19
			2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15	
Renovation of traditional water bodies	16	178	29	54	46	12	11	1231464
Water conservation	89	533	28	58	68	33	63	45207067
BNRGSK	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	9746
Rural sanitation	53	158	8	52	55	16	9	11608200
Rural connectivity	270	2036	77	299	185	138	234	129219765
Playground	0	44	12	20	12	0	0	641247
Other work	0	46	0	1	45	0	0	122071
Land development	30	118	16	27	20	32	1	10495049
Work on individual land	918	3184	44	646	1243	1239	0	46178402
micro-irrigation	2	12	1	2	3	55	1	787631
Fishery	6	31	5	12	5	6	2	2599802
Flood control and Protection	15	80	6	14	9	19	5	4773260
Food grain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rurall drinking	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Drought proofing	23	117	2	62	10	16	1	4807957
Coastal area	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Agandwadi and rural infrastructure	57	0	0	0	0	0	0	12230112
Total	1479	6542	228	1247	1701	1566	327	269911773
All plantation	0	118	2	63	10	16	1	357561
Water related work	115	742	44	93	128	142	46	50776598
All agriculture work	4	2288	71	478	565	54	90	15734058
NRM	185	1039	62	193	164	206	53	82906530

Source: <http://nregarep2.nic.in>; accessed on 17.7.19

Table 4 shows that, the District has created three major categories of works namely rural connectivity; work on individual land and water conservation. In terms of number of work completed, there were about 2036 projects under rural connectivity, 3184 on individual land and 533 water conservation works which account about 31.12 percent, 48.67 percent and 8.14 percent to the total number of assets accordingly. Similarly, the shared of employment in these three main works were 16.72 percent in water conservation, 48.02 percent in Rural road connectivity and 17.10 percent in works on individual land. Rural connectivity has been prioritized by all villages in the District.

MGNREGA assets not only supported livelihood to the rural people but also improved their standard of living and enhance their socio-economic life in due course of time. As per MGNREGA Report (<http://mnregaweb4.nic.in>; accessed on 17.7.19), the scheme has created 5919 number of Individual Households Latrine (IHHL) and 488 BPL rural housing like Prime Minister Awas Yojana (PMAY) through convergence of labourers. Since 2014-15 till 2018-19 there are about 29995 IHHL created in Meghalaya, out of which 5919 or 19.7 percent to total units of IHHLs in the State were created in South West Khasi Hills District. Moreover, under MGNREGA 488 PMAY Houses were constructed and 47628 persondays were generated.

4.7 MGNREGA and its Financial Investment in the District

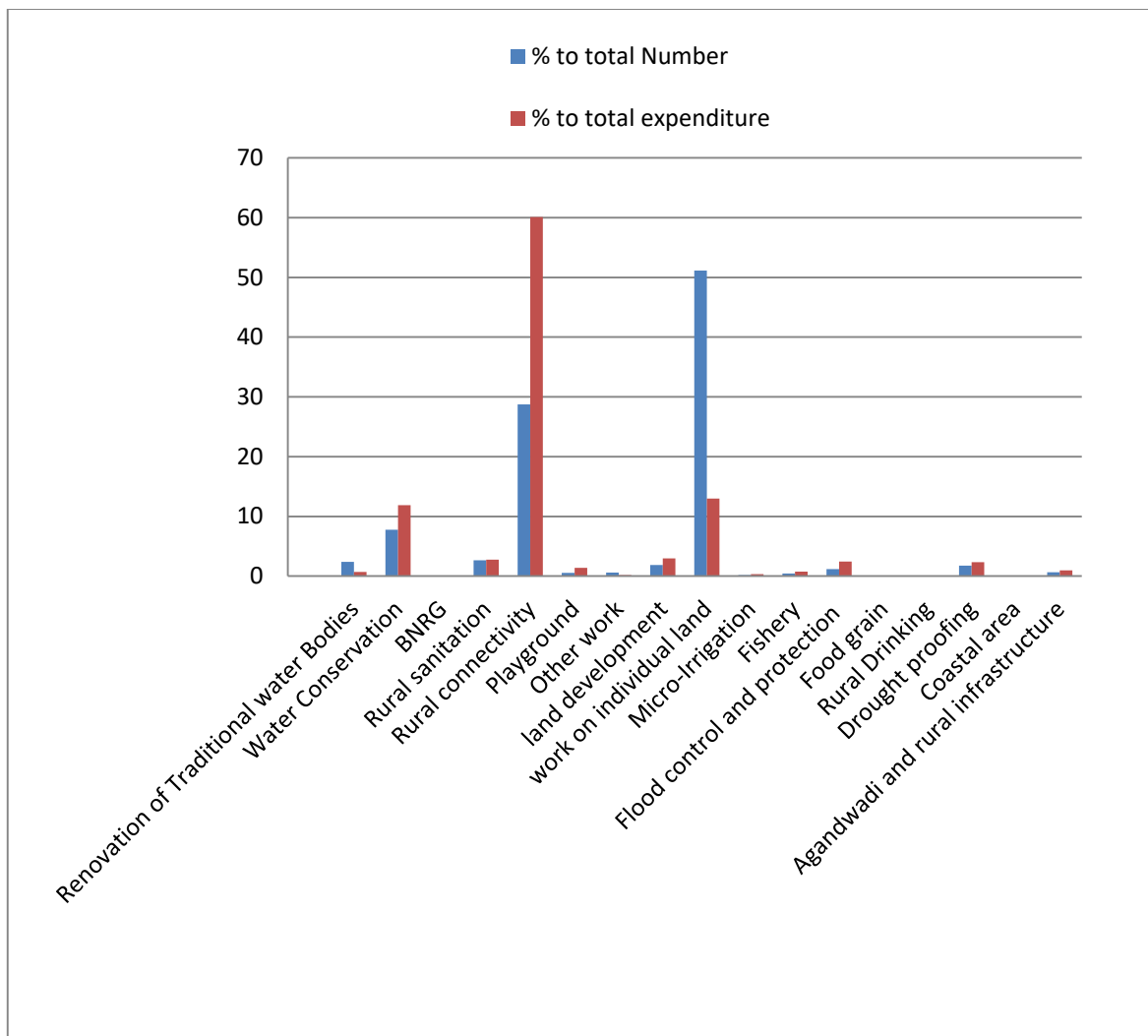
Investment through assets creation is a noble idea of empowering traditional institution in the process of planning and administration in a responsible manner. Since the implementation of MGNREGA in the District, the Government of India had invested an enormous amount of Rs.16591.42 lakhs as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Total Expenditure and Percentage shared by Categories of Assets

type of work	expenditure (rs.lakh) both completed and ongoing works	number of assets both completed and ongoing	% to total number	% to total expenditure
Renovation of traditional water bodies	113.22	194	2.41	0.68
Water conservation	1966.72	622	7.75	11.85
BRNGSK	42.77	5	0.06	0.0016
Rural sanitation	458.41	211	2.63	2.76
Rural connectivity	9976.21	2306	28.74	60.12
Playground	232.77	44	0.54	1.4
Other work	29.18	46	0.57	0.17
Land development	491.08	148	1.84	2.95
Work on individual land	2153.78	4102	51.14	12.98
Micro-irrigation	58.13	14	0.17	0.35
Fishery	122.39	37	0.46	0.73
Flood control and protection	402.27	95	1.18	2.42
Food grain	0	0	0	0
Rural drinking	0	0	0	0
Drought proofing	383.58	140	1.74	2.31
Coastal area	0	0	0	0
Agandwadi and rural infrastructure	160.91	57	0.67	0.96
total	16591.42	8021	99.9	99.6816

Source: <http://nregarep2.nic>; accessed on 17.7.19

Table 5 shows that out of the total expenditure, the amount spent on categories of assets like food grain, rural drinking and coastal area is negligible. In terms of the number of assets created, rural connectivity shared only 28.74 percent but the expenditure on rural connectivity dominated with 60.12 percent to the total expenditure. The above table can be presented graphically in Graph 1

Graph 1: Percentage of Assets and Expenditure shared by categories of Assets

Source: Computed on the basis of Table 3.4

Table 5 and Graph 1 describe the financial investment in the District. The percentage of assets created on individual land to the total assets stood at 51.14 percent but in terms of expenditure, only 12.98 percent to the total expenditure spent. Water related work shared was about 7.75 percent of water related works been completed but the percentage of expenditure to the total expenditure is 11.85 percent. .

5. Suggestions:

1. Primary Stakeholders should strategies plan to maintain of MGNREGA assets.
2. Focus should be more in productive assets for both community and individual assets.
3. Assets related to promotion of rural tourism need to be initiated for sustainable livelihood and environment conservation in a long run.

6. Conclusion:

MGNREGA remains one of the sources of rural livelihood especially in time of distress. The creation of durable and sustainable assets has provided a benefit to many villages, a change they yearn to see for years. Footpaths, footbridges, community washing facilities, water conservation, land development, play grounds, household latrines, have been a boon for the people. However, rural connectivity is a favorite choice considering the difficult terrain and inaccessibility in the village. The Scheme empowered villagers the policy of self governance and monitoring.

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