

Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Bihar

A Process Study



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Selected districts in Bihar



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Monograph Series - 3



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Executive Summary

- * This process study focuses on some selected aspects, Viz., institutional arrangements for planning and execution of NREGS, awareness and capacity building, community participation, planning, implementation, monitoring, Social Audit, and outcomes of REGS in Bihar during 2006-07.
- * The State has launched the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) in 23 districts of Bihar from February 2006.
- * The process of planning and implementation of NREGS in Bihar during 2006-07 has been analysed in six sample districts, namely - Gaya, Muzaffarpur, Purnea, Sheohar, Vaishali and Nalanda.
- * At the State level the utilisation of funds under REGS B was moderate (59.84 per cent) and on an average, 16.4 days of employment per household was generated during 2006-07. Hardly 3.6 per cent of the participating worker households were provided with 100 days of employment. However, inter-district variations were observed to be high across the districts. For instance, in the six study districts, funds utilisation varied between 32 per cent (Sheohar) and 88 per cent (Nalanda). The employment provided per household fluctuated between less than five days (Gaya) and 61 days (Muzaffarpur). These low levels of fund utilisation and employment are of course, unacceptable.
- * The State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) was not constituted during 2006-07. The SEGC is now in place since December 07. About 60 per cent of the State Employment Guarantee Fund was utilised by the Department of Rural Development, the nodal department for implementation of REGS.
- * The District Deputy Development Commissioner acts as District Programme Coordinator (DPC) for REGS. Similarly, the BDO is entrusted with the task of REGS, and acts as the Programme Officer

2 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

(PO). While the Scheme requires full time attention, entrusting the BDO with additional charge of PO has been a drag on the movement of the Scheme. The Mukhiya along with the Panchayat Secretary are the key persons for planning and implementation of REGS at the GP level. Evidently, the attitude and capabilities of these two functionaries are not congenial for effective planning and execution of REGS in many blocks / villages. Even by 2006-07, the State had not established any kind of Management Information System (MIS) for REGS though there are plans for dedicated 'on line service' with interactive web portal for Bihar NREGS in 2007-08 in collaboration with the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

- * The REGS work was adversely affected initially by the delayed BPL list preparation exercise even though the entire machinery was predominantly occupied with its preparation. Yet in 2006-07 too, the prescribed inspection, monitoring as well as proper documentation, were lacking. But, the documentation process has accelerated in 2007-08. However, Social Audits have not been conducted in 2006-07, though the State had declared that the process will start in a big way during 2007-08.
- * The minimum wages for REGS was Rs. 71 per day during 2006-07, which has been revised to Rs. 81 per day for unskilled labour in 2007-08.
- * The Gram Panchayat profiling has been done by the State Panchayati Raj department, it has yet to develop an all encompassing Gram Panchayat through manual which contains all the development schemes including REGS in detail. Of course, it has circulated some REGS related information but much leaves to be done. The Mukhiya is the centre of GP activities, but he needs to be trained specially for the BREGS programme. It was reported in the Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) that the Gram Sabhas have to be made more open, participatory and people-friendly.

- * The level of awareness about entitlements, under the REGS, among the workers, was low (22.4 per cent). Only 8.5 per cent (7 per cent) workers had Knowledge about the RTI (Social Audits) which is alarming. Hence this calls for massive awareness campaigns and social mobilisation at the Gram Panchayat level. The sample workers were not well informed about the officials to be contacted for redressal of job card related grievance. Only 31.3 per cent were aware about whom to contact, if job cards were not given. About 12-13 per cent of the workers knew about the officials to be contacted, if work was not given within 15 days of application for wage employment or if payments were not made within 15 days. Since the REGS is based on the principle of 'Right to Work', the workers must be fully sensitised about whom to contact in case of denial of employment by the Mukhiya or the Panchayat Sachiv. Thus, the barometer of success depends crucially on this paradigm.
- * The State has not involved NGOs or CBOs in REGS. It could not fully make use of the funds available due to delays in obtaining due technical and administrative approval of works, and the consequent delays in the Scheme implementation. The lack of a proper REGS implementation strategy and a lack of role clarity / understanding at district, block and Gram Panchayat levels, constitute the key deficiencies. Several officials and elected representatives felt that the wage-material (60: 40) ratio has to be made flexible for creation of quality and durable assets.
- * Inter-block and intra-block (across GPs) performance of REGS both in terms of fund utilisation and employment generated per household varied substantially. These are attributable to the relatively varying capabilities and attitudes / concerns of GP level functionaries (e.g. Mukhiya, Sachiv and *Rozgar Gram Sahayak*) and due to delays in the release of funds. Most of the works taken up included rural connectivity, flood control protection work and micro-irrigation, all of which require concrete micro-planning initiative.

4 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

- * Most of the households which were issued job cards had sought employment and the demand was almost met. Though the applications for employment were given by the households, it was the Mukhiya or the Panchayat Secretary, who had helped in filling the forms or in affixing their photos on the job card. Thus, reportedly, several workers have paid (small amounts) for receiving job cards with photos. However, in many villages, the job cards were kept with the Panchayat *Sachiv*, thus affecting adversely the process of updating.
- * As per the sample survey data, majority of the workers belonged to scheduled castes, followed by Other Backward Castes. Among the sample workers, almost 42.0 per cent were poor. Most of the job cards (78.7 per cent) were issued in the name of males. Nearly two-thirds of workers were males. These figures raise doubts about the gender bias in the rural labour market and in the functioning of the REGS delivery system. In fact, it was during (our) fieldwork, that the job card entries were updated. Delays in provision of work were reported (20.5 per cent) and most of the complaints received at the district level included delays in getting employment and payment of wages. Of course, wages were paid equally for men and women in cash at the rate of Rs. 71 per day per worker. However, about 10 per cent workers did experience problems in receiving full wages. But none was paid unemployment allowance. Only 63.8 per cent had reported receipt of the minimum wages.
- * It is disquieting that most of the obligatory facilities like crèche, shelter etc., were not provided at the worksites. Neither payments were made for sharpening tools nor were the workers provided with improvised tools (to reduce their drudgery).
- * Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs) were not properly functioning and hardly eight per cent (7.7 per cent) of the workers had reported that the VMCs were visiting the worksites and only 13.2 per cent reported their participation in the Gram Sabhas. Reportedly, no Social Audit was done during 2006-07.

Executive Summary 5

- * As per the official statistics, the average number of employment days generated was 16.4 and the wage earnings amounted to Rs. 1164 per household through BREGS. Only about one per cent of the worker households were provided with 100 days of employment. The sample data suggest that only about 21 days of work was given, on an average, in the study area during 2006-07, which implies a wage income of Rs.1431 per household. Thus, most of the workers have got less than 40 days of employment. It is interesting to note that of the sample worker households only one got more than 100 days of employment (the sampling design does not permit estimation of employment per household at the State level).
- * About 64.5 per cent of workers reported that they could demand services from the GP; though more than one-third of the workers (36.2 per cent) were confident of demanding services from the 'officials'. It was opined by some workers (11.8 per cent) that the REGS had facilitated emergence of partnerships among local institutions. It is encouraging that 28.3 per cent of the workers realised their 'right to work'. As far as the quality of assets created under REGS was concerned, fifty per cent of them (50.8 per cent) have rated them good and useful to the community. Almost the same proportion of workers (50.2 per cent) felt that REGS had no impact on slowing or preventing push migration. As per the perception of the workers, the overall performance of REGS was less than satisfactory (13.2 per cent); though the contribution to the perceived performance by GP (74.5 per cent) was higher than that by officials (48.0 per cent). Though 42.0 per cent of workers mentioned that information on REGS was displayed at GP, their opinions indicate only a moderate improvement in their knowledge about decision-making at the GP level, which was only 23.7 per cent.
- * For effective supervision of the REGS, additional manpower is needed. In 2007-08, the Rural Development department has filled

6 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

the REGS posts which is presumed at this point of time that it will smoothen the NREGS implementation and delivery system.

- * The effectiveness of REGS depends on raising the workers' knowledge about the Scheme and institutional support for them to demand employment. While decentralisation of the planning process and reservations in local bodies should facilitate greater people's participation, in reality it has not taken place in several blocks / villages. Thus, organisations of the poor and the unemployed would be feasible options for empowering people and demand services from the officials and Gram Panchayats. Added to this is, at times and in few places only, the local Mukhiya and the Panchayat Secretary make it harder and complex for the targeted beneficiaries to benefit from the Scheme. The challenge is to empower the marginalised households to raise their voices in demanding their Right to Work as a fundamental Right.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme has been launched in Bihar as a sequel to the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), 2005. It guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. In case of failure to provide the employment, the worker is to be compensated with unemployment allowance. This Scheme has been launched in 23 districts of Bihar in February 2006. Simultaneously, the State has also introduced the Bihar State Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (BREGS) in another 15 districts with funds and on the same pattern as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is a Centrally sponsored programme on cost sharing basis between the Government of India and the State Government (90:10). The Government of India will bear the entire expenditure incurred on unskilled workers and 25 per cent of the expenditure on employment of semi-skilled/skilled workers and the cost of materials. The expenditure incurred on payment of unemployment allowance is to be fully borne by the State Government. This programme is being implemented through the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Under the BREGS, works worth at least 50 per cent of available funds have to be taken up by the GPs.

The present study has been taken up in the light of: a) the Central government's decision to extend the NREGS in all the districts gradually, and b) observed wide variations in the performance of REGS across the states and within the State. Several factors might be responsible for this differential performance. During the REGS planning and implementation phases, the delivery system has to adhere to the suggested process(es). The present enquiry focuses on the problems in adopting these processes indicated so that appropriate steps can be initiated to make the NREGS more effective.

8 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

The reference period for understanding and analysing the implementation process of NREGS B, was April 2006 to March 2007.

Overview of the Rural Economy, Poverty and Unemployment

Bihar is the third largest State in the country. It represents 8 per cent of the total Indian population. Bihar had a population of 83.0 millions in 2001 which, as per an estimate of the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO), has reached 90.2 million in 2006. Only 10 per cent of Bihar's population lives in urban areas, compared to 28 per cent in the country. The State of Bihar is a developing one and in the recent past it experienced an impressive growth in its Gross Domestic Product (SGDP) at 4.96 per cent per annum (Table 1).

But its literacy level of 48 per cent is way below the national average of 65 per cent; Primary school enrolment is 52 per cent, as against the national average of 77 per cent.

The rural workers are heavily engaged in agriculture while the share of this sector in the State domestic product is only around 32.6 per cent (2005-06). Nearly 37 per cent of the workers are casual labour thus indicating the uncertainty in getting gainful and full employment. Evidently, the unemployment and underemployment levels are high. The wage rates of casual workers in the non-public works were well below the minimum wages. During 2004-05, the estimated number of days of employment was 159 days for males and 30 days for females. These factors cumulatively led to higher incidence of rural poverty next to Orissa and Jharkhand. About 15.2 per cent of India's rural poor (BPL) live in Bihar. Rural Poverty in 1993-94 was 58.2 per cent and in 2004-05 it reduced to 42.1 per cent. Migration from rural to urban areas was 54.7 per cent (2001) mainly due to severe unemployment and poverty. The human poverty in rural Bihar was estimated to be 56 per cent in 1991.

Poverty has a strong linkage with the 'land ownership pattern' in the State, the landless and near landless people are mostly poor. The distribution of

BPL population across land categories shows that 56.6 per cent of the rural poor were landless and 25.3 per cent had holdings only up to 0.40 hectares. Nearly 90 per cent of the landholdings are small and marginal where the productivity levels were also lower. These socio-economic conditions imply that development interventions such as NREGA are necessary for ensuring livelihood security and in enhancing agricultural productivity.

Table 1 : Information sheet on selected indicators - Bihar

S.No. Socio- economic Indicators		
1	2	
1.	GDP per capita (Constant Prices) (Rs.) 2004-05	4013
2.	GDP growth rate (1997-98 to 2004-05) % per annum	4.96
3.	Workforce (Per thousand) 2004-05	
	- Males	477
	- Females	138
	- Persons	316
4.	Workforce growth (1993-94 to 2004-05) % per annum	-1.00
5.	Distribution of workforce (2004-05) % (PS+SS)	
	a) Agriculture	
	- Males	75.8
	- Females	86.4
	b) Mining & Quarrying	
	- Males	0.10
	- Females	0.00
	c) Manufacturing	
	- Males	5.00
	- Females	8.10
	d) Electricity, Water etc.	
	- Males	0.10
	- Females	0.00
	e) Construction	
	- Males	3.20
	- Females	0.00
	f) Trade, Hotel & Restaurant	
	- Males	8.70
	- Females	2.60
	g) Transport, Storage & Communications	
	- Males	2.80
	- Females	0.00

(Contd...)

10 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Table 1 : (Contd.)

1	2	
	h) Other Services	- Males 4.30
		- Females 2.80
6.	Wage rate (Rs/day) – Males – Public works – 2004-05	79.75
	Other works – 2004-05	45.41
7.	Wage rate (Rs/day) – Females - Public works- 2004-05	—
	- Other works- 2004-05	37.42
8.	Casual Labour	1993-94 % 43.7
		2004-05 % 37.1
9.	Unemployment rate (CDS) 2004-05 - Males %	6.9
	- Females %	6.1
10.	Average No. of days of employment per worker 2004-05	
	- Males	159
	- Females	30
11.	Rural Poverty (%)	- 1993-94 58.2
		- 2004-05 42.1
12.	Infrastructure index (2000) (CMIE) (All-India=100)	
	Bihar	91.31
	Gaya	119.70
	Purnea	102.52
	Sheohar	-
	Vaishali	91.02
13.	Migration from rural to urban areas (2001) (%)	54.7

Issues

Following are some of the issues examined in the study:

i) Awareness about NREGA:

- Strategies adopted to build awareness about NREGA, 'Right to Information' Act and 'Social Audit' among people, elected representatives, officials and their effectiveness

ii) Registration, Issue of Job Cards and Applications for Wage Employment:

- Roles played by the Gram Panchayats (GP), Officials and Civil Society Organisations in these activities and irregularities, if any, noticed

iii) Planning:

- Capacity building of Sarpanch and Secretary of GPs for preparing action plans / shelf of works / projects in a participatory manner
- Extent to which the causal factors of poverty and gender concerns and problems of the disabled have been taken care of in identification of works and provision of facilities
- Conduct of Gram Sabhas to finalise the activities / works
- problems in working out the cost and technical estimates for selected works in time and keeping an inventory of approved works in the pipeline

iv) Implementation:

- Arrangements made at various levels of administration to ensure smooth functioning of NREGS
- Mechanisms adopted to ensure transparency in the entire execution of works
- Matching of works with the magnitude of demand for employment
- Ensuring work for all applicants within 15 days
- Delay in execution / inspection / measurement of works
- Provision of the recommended facilities at worksites
- Updating job cards periodically with all the particulars correctly.
- Foolproof (institutional) arrangement for payment of wages

v) Monitoring and Social Audit:

- Adherence of officials to the monitoring schedules prescribed.
- Effectiveness of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committees VMCs

12 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

- Practices followed for conduct of Social Audit and participation of stakeholders
- Display of information on NREGSB works to ensure transparency and utilisation of funds, list of applications;
- Physical and financial audit of the works undertaken
- Type of irregularities reported in Social Audits and corrective actions initiated
- Effectiveness of the 'grievance redressal system'
- Public perception about the role and responsibilities of elected representatives and government functionaries in different stages of the programme implementation

Objectives

- Study the effectiveness of the processes adopted for generating awareness about NREGA, RTI Act and Social Audit among stakeholders;
- Assess the usefulness of the institutions and mechanisms chosen for sensitising people in regard to registration, issue of job cards and employment ;
- Ascertain the extent to which the mechanisms have facilitated participatory planning and selection of works ;
- Review the procedures for implementation of works including provision of employment, works measurement and payment of wages;
- Examine the nature and quality of community participation and inter-institutional coordination in planning, implementation, monitoring and Social Audit of the works / projects;
- Analyse the problems in utilisation of Central and State funds – administrative and programme expenditure;
- Study the quality of assets created and their utility to the poor / weaker sections / others;

- Assess the tangible benefits of REGS to the people in terms of employment and (minimum) wages, 'right to work', 'right to minimum wages', 'right to information' and accountability of development functionaries to people; and
- Identify the major factors influencing the performance of NREGS B with special focus on geographic and socio-economic aspects that explain differential performance in the study areas.
- Outline the broad direction in which the NREGSB is moving with specific reference to the national guidelines, state action plans, institutional arrangements, delivery systems / people's views, current achievements and future course of action.

Approach, Sampling Design and Profiles of the Study Area

To study the above stated objectives and to examine the issues referred to earlier, information was elicited from various key stakeholders. Secondary data for the reference period, i.e., financial year 2006-07, were collected from official registers, reports and other records available at the State, District, Block and Gram Panchayat levels. Data were also collected from other sources such as journals, newspapers, internet, etc.

The primary data were collected by interviewing the respondents at different levels as per the framework of the study. Some of the primary (qualitative) data were gathered through Focused Group Discussions (FGD) too.

The FGDs were conducted by the research team (one in each GP). The FGDs were conducted exclusively for beneficiary women workers of REGS and two FGDs were conducted for mixed group of beneficiaries and non-participating workers of REGS. Care has been taken to exclude the officials in the conduct of FGDs.

To organise and arrange the task of data collection, the following schedules have been used to collect primary/secondary data:

Table 2 : Type of schedules used in the NREGA study

S. No.	Schedule Code	Schedule
1	S-1	Schedule for Officials of State Employment Guarantee Council
2	S-2	Schedule for State Officials
3	S-3	Financial Allocation and Utilisation (2006-07) under REGS at State Level
4	S-4	Physical Performance (2006-07) under BREGS at State Level
5	S-5	Asset Creation (2006-07) at State Level
6	D-1	Schedule for District Programme Coordinator
7	D-2	Schedule for Elected Representatives of District Panchayat
8	D-3	Financial Allocation and Utilisation (2006-07) under REGS at District Level
9	D-4	Physical Performance (2006-07) under BREGS at District Level
10	D-5	Asset Creation (2006-07) at District Level
11	B-1	Schedule for Programme Officer (BDO)
12	B-2	Schedule for Elected Representatives of Intermediate Panchayat (IP)/Block
13	B-3	Financial Allocation and Utilisation (2006-07) under REGS at Block Level
14	B-4	Physical Performance (2006-07) under BREGS at Block Level
15	B-5	Asset Creation (2005-06) at Block Level
16	G-1	Schedule for Gram Panchayat (Elected Representatives/GP Secretary)
17	G-2	Schedule for Workers of REGS at GP Level
18	G-3	Profile of GP
19	G-4	Schedule for Focused Group Discussions (FGDs)
20	G-5	Financial Allocation and Utilisation (2006-07) under REGS at GP Level
21	G-6	Physical Performance (2006-07) under BREGS at GP Level
22	G-7	Asset Creation (2006-07) at GP Level
23	N-1	Schedule for NGO/CBO Representatives

Respondents at Different Levels : Besides collecting secondary data at the State, district, block and Gram Panchayat levels, REGS officials/elected representatives/beneficiaries were interviewed and the following formats were used for data collection and insight gathering.

Table 3 : Criteria of selection of respondents at different levels

Level	Selected Respondents		
	Officials	Elected Representatives	Others
State	Joint Director (NREGS)	Member of SEGC not (constituted) during 2006-07	-
District	DDC	President, Vice-president, One SC Member and One Female Member of ZP	NGO Officials
Block	BDO	President, Vice-president, One SC Member and One Female Member of PS	
GP	G.P. Secretary	Mukhiya, One SC Panch and One Woman Panch	Beneficiary Workers & Non-Participating Workers of REGS
Village level	REGS workers	No. of participating REGS households	
Total		Focus Group Members - 200	

Sampling Design and Units : All the 23 phase-I REGS districts of Bihar were grouped into three categories – low, medium, and high performance districts, based on the percentage of utilisation of funds and the average number of employment days per household. From each category, two districts were randomly selected. Based on the performance indicators, six districts were selected for the study. Two blocks were selected from each of these districts and one GP was randomly selected from the selected blocks. The details of selection are given below :

16 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...*

S. No.	District	Blocks	GP villages
1	Nalanda (20 blocks)	Asthwan and Sarmna	Asthama, Chero
2	Gaya (24 blocks)	Belaganj and Manpur	Baragandhar, Bela Ganj
3	Purnea (14 blocks)	Banmankhi and Dagarna	Majhrua Prem Raj, Dagarua
4	Sheohar (5 blocks)	Piprali and Dumari Kastari	Belwa, Naya Goan Purbi
5	Vaishali (16 blocks)	Bhagwanpur and Bidupur	Ratanpura, Doudnagar
6	Muzaffarpur (16 blocks)	Kanti and Marban	Raksha, Serukahi

Profiles of the Study Area

The profiles of the sample districts, blocks and GPs are presented below:

A. Profiles of Districts and Profiles of Blocks ...

1. District: Gaya

Population: Total – 30.0 lakh; SC: 9.75 lakh; ST: 0.02 lakh

Belaganj Block

19 GPs; Population: Total 1.77lakh; SC: 0.44 lakh; ST: 0.001 lakh

Belaganj Panchayat	Population	SC	ST
Bela	7597	1495	2
Hasanpur	586	149	0
Bansi Bigha	951	283	0
Pararia	777	206	0
Total	9911	2133	2

Manpur Block

12 GPs; Population: Total - 1.08 lakh; SC: 0.40 lakh; ST: Neg.

Bara Gandhar Panchayat	Population	SC
Gandhar	3257	1457
Sikahar	1640	376
Kamalpur	476	223
Abgila	4721	516
Total	10091	2591

2. District: Muzaffarpur

Population: Total - 34.0 lakh; SC: 5.6 lakh; ST: 0.03 lakh

Kanti Block

21 GPs; Population: Total - 1.92 lakh; SC: 0.32 lakh; ST: 0.002 lakh

Sherukahin Panchayat	Population	SC
Bheriahi	1508	311
Bhagwanpur	519	60
Hardaspur	979	298
Serukahi	2241	188
Kabilpur	1266	259
Balha	465	115
Alahdapur	707	173
Mobarakpur	1211	99
Total	8896	1503

18 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Marban Block

14 GPs; Population: Total - 0.095 lakh; SC: 0.019 lakh; ST: Neg.

Roksa Panchayat	Population	SC
Roksa	10224	848
Total	10224	848

3. District: Nalanda

Population: Total - 20.21 lakh; SC: 4.35 lakh; ST: 0.008 lakh

Asthwan Block

19 GPs Population: Total- 1.44 lakh; SC: 0.36 lakh ST: Neg.

Asthawan Panchayat

Population: Total- 0.117 lakh; SC : 0.023 lakh ST: Neg.

Sarmera Block

9 GPs; Population: Total - 0.786 lakh; SC: 0.175 lakh; ST: Neg.

Chero Panchayat

Population: Total- 0.090 lakh; SC: 0.023 lakh; ST: 0.00 lakh

4. District Sheohar

Population: Total - 4.95 lakh; SC : 0.71 lakh ST: Neg.

Piprahi Block

11GPs Population: Total - 0.954 lakh; SC: 0.124 lakh ST: Neg.

Belba Panchayat	Population	SC
Belba Nakatiya Bandobasti	1056	47
Belba Nakatiya Nijamat	2954	218
Idrava Khurd	1732	600
Singahi Idrava	2403	632
Chakpateha	97	25
Total	8242	1522

Dumari Katsari Block

8 GPs Population: Total – 0.714 lakh; SC: 0.094 lakh ST: Neg

Nayagaon Poorvi Panchayat	Population	SC
Nayagaon Ansh	7432	718
Sahwajpur	308	16
Danhara	1532	158
Total	9272	892

5. District Purnea

Population: Total – 23.2 lakh; SC: 2.92 lakh ST: 1.03 lakh

Banmankhi Block

27 GPs; Population: Total – 23.2 lakh; SC: 2.92 lakh ST: 1.03 lakh

Majhuwa Premraj Panchayat	Population	SC	ST
Akhitipyarur	5880	1338	207
Manna Khoda Nagar	652	44	0
Majhuwa Premraj Milik	951	321	45
Majhuwa Premraj	2205	181	0
Total	9688	1884	252

Dagarua Block

18 GPs Population: Total -1.72 lakh; SC: 0.16 lakh; ST: 0.056 lakh

Dagarua Panchayat	Population	SC
Dagarua	6548	354
Bahadurpur	—	—
Soti	1021	
Ladua	707	
Udhama	1212	
Total	9488	354

6. District Vaishali

Population: Total - 25.32 lakh; SC – 0.52 lakh; ST: Neg.

Bhagwanpur Block

21 GPs; Population: Total -1.622 lakh; SC: 0.323 lakh; ST: Neg

Ratanpura Panchayat	Population	SC
Rasalpur Sohawan	2374	198
Bahlopur	970	0
Saidpur Bijli	1916	170
Ratanpura	3227	440
Total	8487	808

Bidupur Block

24 GPs Population: Total - 2.07 lakh; SC: 0.39 lakh; ST: Neg

Daudnagar Panchayat	Population	SC	ST
Daudnagar	8921	2388	29
Total	8921	2388	29

Profiles of Gram Panchayats

This section presents profiles of the twelve selected Gram Panchayats.

Daudnagar Gram Panchayat : Gram Panchayat Daudnagar is situated in Bidupur block of Vaishali district. The total population of Daudnagar Panchayat is 8921. There are 2236 households, of which 100 belong to the Gonds.

The net sown area in Daudnagar is 2240 acres, of which 250 acres is water-logged. Tube wells are the major source of irrigation. Banana (200 acres), rice (200 acres), wheat, potato and maize (200 acres), tree plantation (350 acres) and mango and bamboo grove (20 acres) are grown in the GP.

Employment opportunities in the Gram Panchayat are generally not adequate during December to March. During the lean employment seasons, poor workers migrate to other areas (e.g. Punjab and J&K) in search of wage employment. The wages paid to male and female workers in agriculture and non-agriculture activities are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 : Profiles of sample GPs in Bihar
(District / GPs)

Indicators	Gaya		Muzaffarpur		Nalanda		Purnea		Sheohar		Vaishali	
	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	V6	V7	V8	V9	V10	V11	V12
1 2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1 Population size	10091	9911	10224	8896	11732	8967	9688	9488	8242	9272	8487	8921
2 No. of households	2663	2000	1530	2836	2500	1700	—	875	3036	2209	1202	2236
No. of SCs	2591	2133	848	1503	2297	2331	1884	354	1522	892	808	2388
No. of STs	—	2	0	0	2	14	252	0	0	0	0	29
No. of landless	500	600	30	1400	500	8000	—	500	1401	289	61	1500
No. of marginal farmers	1663	600	500	500	1000	400	—	125	668	1505	200	460
No. of small farmers	500	100	1000	1000	1000	500	—	150	805	326	1200	276
No. of households with PDS card (meant for poor)	1200	215	2200	700	2000	1000	347	300	—	—	750	700
3 Net sown area (acres)	3100	2500	2200	2690	10000	8000	—	—	1750	1046	500	2240
- Irrigated area (acres)	1700	1800	1500	2000	8000	4000	—	—	1240	789	450	1500
4 Major crops grown (3)	04	6	05	05	05	04	05	05	03	05	05	Banana, rice, wheat, potatoes, Maize
5 No. of migrant workers	—	500	200	500	500	500	397	—	360	—	200	60
6 Lean months for work	03	4	04	06	06	05	03	04	02	05	04	04

(Contd..)

Table 4 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
7	No. of children in labour market	—	100	100	—	200	200	36	—	—	—	—	18
8	Wage rate (Rs./day)	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75	75
	Adult males - Agriculture	60	60	60	40	35	20	40	20	60	60	50	70
	Peak season - Min.	80	90	70	50	50	25	50	40	75	75	100	110
	- Max.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	20	50	50	—	—
	Lean season	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Adult Females- Agriculture	60	60	80	40	35	100	30	20	60	60	35	30
	Peak season- Min.	80	80	100	40	50	125	30	30	75	75	60	35
	- Max.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50	50	—	—
	Lean season	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Adult males - Non-Ag.	90	60	80	75	90	100	30	40	77	75	75	70
	- Min.	150	100	100	90	100	125	40	60	77	77	120	110
	- Max.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
	Adult Females- Non-Ag.	90	50	75	—	100	100	20	30	77	75	—	—
	- Min.	150	70	95	—	150	125	25	50	77	77	—	—
	- Max.	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
9	Basic Amenities (distance Km.)												
	- Primary School	0	0	0.5	01	00	0.3	01	0.5	0.5	01	0.5	01
	- High School	03	03	05	1.5	0.5	01	25	20	01	01	01	04
	- Health sub-centre	06	03	01	2.5	0	01	25	01	02	03	01	02

(Contd...)

Table 4 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
	- Primary Health Centre	03	02	05	3	0	01	05	04	07	09	01	05
	- Anganwadi	0	0	01	1	0	01	05	02	0.5	01	—	08
	- Bank	03	02	05	2.50	0	03	01	04	01	01	0.5	02
	- Cooperatives	08	03	0	3	0	03	02	07	10	10	—	0
	- Krishi Vignan Kendra	02	-	15	00	—	—	13	13	80	—	—	—
	- Nearest Town	06	20	15	14	10	03	27	13	10	18	10	10
	- Bus / Rail facility	03	12	15	0.5	08	14	01	07	20	10	04	04
	- Post Office	01	02	01	2.5	0	0	01	0.5	01	0.5	0.5	0.5
	- Electricity	0	02	15	40	0	0	0	02	11	00	0	0
	- Drinking Water	01	0	0	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	00	0

Gaya-V1: Baragandhar V2: Bela Ganj; Muzaffarpur-V3: Raksha; V4: Serukahi; Nalanda-V5: Asthama; V6: Chero; Purnea V7:- Majhrua
 Prem Raj V8: Dagarua ; Sheohar-V9: Belwa; V10: Naya Goan Purbi Vaishali: - V11: Ratanpura; V12: Doudnagar

Source: GP Schedules.

24 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Daudnagar Gram Panchayat : It has its own primary school and *anganwadi* centre. The high school, primary health sub-centre, bus stand and post office are situated at a distance of 4 km. There is no *Krishi Vigyan Kendra* and the nearest town and bank are located 8-10 km away from the village. Drinking water and electricity facilities are available but are insufficient. Seven hundred poor households are registered for the red PDS cards.

Under the REGS, a total fund of Rs.729862 was available during 2006-07 and the GP has utilised Rs. 117023 (16.0 per cent) —Rs. 31027 (26.5 per cent) was spent on wages of unskilled labour; Rs. 8270 (7.1 per cent) on semi-skilled and skilled labour; Rs. 77726 (66.4 per cent) on material for construction of kachha village roads, digging of ponds etc.

Of the 2236 households of the Gram Panchayat Daudnagar, 705 households (31.5 per cent) were registered and issued with job cards under REGS. Out of 705 households, 423 were SCs and 282 belonged to 'others'. There were no female workers employed under the REGS. The GP has provided wage employment to 48 households. No household got 100 days of work, 504 persondays of employment was generated, 388 persondays of employment was provided for 36 SC households (i.e. 10.8 days of employment per household), 116 person days of employment was generated for 12 others households (i.e. 9.7 employment days per household).

Ratanpura Gram Panchayat : The Gram Panchayat Ratanpura is located in Bhagwanpur block of Vaishali district. The distribution of households is as follows: 61 are landless, 200 are small farmers, 200 are marginal farmers and 741 belonged to the 'others category'. Only 550 families have had PDS cards. 48.35 per cent households have *Antyodaya* cards, 10.76 per cent households have BPL cards and only 1.3 per cent households have APL cards and 39.56 per cent of the households have not applied for any kind of PDS card.

The net sown area is 500 acres, of which 450 acres is irrigated. 'Tube wells' are the major source of irrigation. Wheat is sown in approximately 200 acres of land, rice in 175 acres and tobacco cultivation in 50 acres; vegetables are grown in small area. From an employment point of view, the months of July to October (due to flood and heavy rain) are lean months. However, the seasonal unemployment does result in migration of workers. Only 200 workers migrate. There is no child labour in the GP. Table 4 shows the wage rates of workers in different seasons. Also, information on location of some important amenities is presented.

Out of the 1202 households of GP Ratanpura, job cards were issued to 700 households. Under the REGS, a fund of Rs. 3,28,516 was given on 19/07/2006 and Rs. 3,58,110 on 20/01 / 2007 and Rs. 4,790 as interest as on 1/02/2007, i.e., a total fund of Rs. 6,83,854 was available in 2006-07 to the GP Ratanpura, Rs.485000 was allocated. However, only a small amount of this was utilised i.e. Rs.7,562.

Majahua PremRaj Gram Panchayat: The Gram Panchayat Majahua PremRaj is situated in Banmankhi block of Purnea district. The total population of Gram Panchayat Majahua PremRaj is 9688, out of which 1884 are SCs, and 252 are STs. Only 347 families have red PDS cards meant for the poor.

Rabi, patua, banana, wheat and maize are grown. Employment opportunities are generally not adequate in the months of July, November and December. Last year 397 workers have migrated. There are 36 child labourers. The details of wages of workers sex-wise and activity-wise are shown in Table 4. It also contains the extent of physical access of the people to some selected amenities.

Of the total population of 9688 in GP Majahua PremRaj, the GP had issued only 977 job cards under REGS and of these, only 250 job cardholder families were provided employment. Under the REGS, a fund of Rs. 4,30,963 till 31/03/2007 was allocated, out of the available fund of Rs 7,13,463, in 2006-07, to the GP Majahua PremRaj. But only Rs.2,82,500 was utilised for

26 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

72 approved activities, namely — drainage construction, brick soling, soil cutting, and pul and puliya construction work activity.

Gram Panchayat Dagarua : Gram Panchayat Dagarua is located in Dagarua block of Purnea district. Of the 875 households of the Gram Panchayat, 500 households are landless; 125 are marginal landholders and 150 are small farmers.

Tube wells are major sources of irrigation. Banana, rice, wheat, and maize, and patua are grown. Employment opportunities are bleak during July to October. Data on wage rates and location of basic amenities are presented in Table 4.

Under the REGS, a total fund of Rs. 3, 47,413 was allocated during 2006-07 and Rs.3, 20,055 was utilised. In all, 1975 mandays of employment was provided to the workers. Connecting Kachha village roads, filling of ditches and *mitti katai* (soil work) are the main works taken up in the village. 110 out of 875 households were registered and issued with job cards under the REGS. However, no household got 100 days of work. No female worker participated in the Scheme.

Gram Panchayat Belba : The Gram Panchayat Belba is located in Piprahi block of Sheohar district. There are 3036 households and 1401 households are landless; 668 are marginal landholders; 805 are small landholders.

The net sown area is 1750 acres and 1240 acres are irrigated, 1200 acres are sown more than once and 40 acres are irrigated more than once. 'Tube wells' is the major source of irrigation. Rice (1020 acres), sugarcane (120 acres) and banana (100 acres) are the major crops grown in the GP. August to September is a lean period in the labour market. The wages earned by male and female workers in agriculture and non-agriculture activities in the GP are given in Table 4. The distance of some of the amenities from the GP is also shown in this Table.

About 175 households were registered and issued with job cards under REGS. However, no household got 100 days of work. There were no female

workers, who took part in this Scheme. Under the REGS, a total fund of Rs. 28,01,350 was allocated and was released during 2006-07 but only Rs.11,55,000 was utilised. However, all the 175 workers got employment under pond digging and flood protection works.

Gram Panchayat Naya Gaon Poorvi : The Gram Panchayat Naya Gaon Poorvi is located in Dumari Katsari block of Sheohar district. There are 3036 households and of which 289 households are landless; 1505 are marginal landholders; 326 are small landholders.

The net sown area is 1046 acres and 789 acres are irrigated. 'Tube wells' is the source of irrigation. Rabi crops are grown in 803 acres. Wheat is grown in 609 acres, sugarcane in 82 acres, maize 94 acres and pulses in 194 acres. The conditions of labour market with reference to wage structure are depicted in Table 4. The spatial distance of some of the socio-economic amenities from GP is presented in this Table as well.

About 138 households were registered and issued with job cards under REGS. However, no household got 100 days of work. There were many female workers. Under REGS, a total fund of Rs. 11.07 lakh was allocated; but only Rs.3.82 lakh was released, during 2006-07 while Rs.3,72,503 was utilised. Pond digging and flood protection works are the major works undertaken under this Scheme.

Gram Panchayat Asthwan : The Gram Panchayat Asthwan is located in Asthwan block of Nalanda district. Of the 2500 households, 500 are landless; 1000 are marginal landholders; and 1000 are small farmers.

The net sown area is 10,000 acres and 8000 acres are irrigated, 3000 acres are sown more than once and 5000 acres are irrigated more than once. Tube wells, tanks/ ponds and river are the major sources of irrigation. Rabi is grown in 8000 acres. Wheat (8000 acres), maize (5000 acres), potato (5000 acres) and mustard crop (1000 acres) are the principal crops of the GP. Employment opportunities in the Gram Panchayat are not adequate during May, June, September to December. There are 200 child workers engaged in agriculture, bidi making and local shops.

28 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

The details on wage structure can be gleaned from Tabel 4. Also provided are the data on the location of some the selected amenities in the GP. Under REGS, a total fund of Rs. 13.1 lakh was allocated and Rs. 11.26 lakh was released during 2006-07, and the amount utilised was Rs.1.86 lakh (14.2 per cent). Seventeen projects were taken up. Funds were spent on road, soil cutting and filling, ahar and pyne cleaning, and puliya construction.

Gram Panchayat Chero : The Gram Panchayat Chero is located in Sarmera block of Nalanda district. About 2000 households are landless; 4000 are marginal landholders; and 2000 are small landholders.

The net sown area is 8000 acres and 50 per cent is irrigated, 4000 acres are sown more than once and 4000 acres are irrigated more than once. Tube wells, ponds and river are the sources of irrigation. Rabi is grown in 4000 acres. Maize is cultivated in 50 acres and mustard crop is sown in 4000 acres. Employment opportunities in the Gram Panchayat are moderate in the months of May, June, August to October. Five hundred poor workers have migrated to other areas in search of wage employment (e.g. Delhi and Punjab).

The male and female workers receive unequal wages in various activities. Table 4 contains information on this dimension. The access of the people of the GP to selected socio-economic amenities can be gleaned from Table 4. Under REGS, a total fund of Rs. 15,56,672 was allocated but only Rs.7,73,622 was utilised, during 2006-07. In all, 20 projects were taken up. The utilised fund was spent on unskilled wage component such as connecting road soil, cutting and filling, ahar and laghu sichai.

About 1050 households were issued job cards. Among them were 370 SCs and 795 households which had demanded employment and all of them were given employment. About 318 women participated in the Scheme. No household completed 100 days of employment.

Gram Panchayat Sherukahin : The Gram Panchayat Sherukahin is situated in Kanti block of Muzaffarpur district. Out of 2836 households, 1400 are landless; marginal and small landholders are 500 and 1000, respectively.

The net sown area is 2690.76 acres and 2000 acres are irrigated, 1000 acres are sown more than once and 1000 acres are irrigated more than once. Diesel pumpsets are used for drawing water from tanks/ ponds and river for irrigation purposes. The area under rabi is 4500 acres. Wheat is grown in 4000 acres and maize is sown in 500 acres. Arhar dal crop is cultivated in 50 acres and moong dal in 2000 acres.

Employment opportunities are inadequate from 15 June to 15 October. About 500 poor workers have migrated to other areas like Delhi and Punjab in search of wage employment. The wage rates are presented in Table 4 for male and female workers in the GP. The availability / accessibility of socio-economic infrastructure can be appreciated from the data included in Table 4.

Under REGS, Rs. 5,74,673 was allocated and Rs.5,66,888 was utilised, during 2006-07 towards 20 projects such as rural connectivity (road), soil cutting and filling. About 132 households were issued job cards. 35 households were given employment, 29 were issued SBI ATM cum debit cards. However, no household completed 100 days of employment.

In Serukahin Panchayat, a REGS Software project was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister Shri Raghubansh Prasad Singh, MoRD, Government of India. The NREGS software was developed at the National Informatics Centre, New Delhi under the leadership of Mrs. Madhuri Sharma T.D. The NREGA Software supports online as well as the offline mode. This software is Unicode enabled and supports all Indian languages.

The Serukahin Panchayat of Kanti block in Muzaffarpur district, is the first district, where payment of wages to the beneficiary has been made through ATM. Job seekers apply for registration and the

Programme Officer issues the job card to the head of the family and JOB SLIP to all the adult members including the head of the family with an unique Registration No. for each family. After Registration, the Registered members are asked for employment and a job is allotted to them as per their demand.

Each work has been entered with full details like type of work, financial year, work name, work status, estimated amount, sanction date etc. and against each work, muster roll is issued for information of the executive agency. Entry of muster roll is done through a software and it will generate the muster roll showing attendance of each worker with their registration No., name, wages, accounts No. etc. This muster roll is transferred to the bank and the workers get their wages through the ATM.

The muster roll also provides the information about the No. of man-days, No. of workers under different categories, number of skilled/semi-skilled/unskilled workers and category-wise total amount paid. For this endeavour, this authority the REGS has full praise for NIC's NREGA Software as stated by Dr. Saurabh Gupta, Senior Technical Director and State Informatics Officer, Bihar.

Nirdesh, an NGO, has been working at the Serukahin Panchayat for awareness building and literacy among the workers. Due to this effort, 29 employed REGS workers' bank accounts were opened with the ATM cum debit card facility. According to this NGO, the Serukahin Panchayat of Kanti block in Muzaffarpur district in India is the first district, where payment of wages to the beneficiary has been made through ATM.

Gram Panchayat Roksa : The Gram Panchayat Roksa is located in Marban block of Muzaffarpur district. There are 1530 households and of them 30 are landless; 500 are marginal landholders; and 1000 are small farm households.

The net sown area is 2200 acres and 1500 acres are irrigated, 1000 acres are sown more than once and 200 acres are irrigated more than once. Boring and diesel pumpsets are used for drawing water from tanks/ ponds and river for irrigation purposes .They rely on diesel pumps more than electricity-driven tubewell pumps due to poor power situation in the Gram Panchayat. Rabi crops are grown in 1000 acres. Wheat and maize are sown in 800 acres and 500 acres, respectively. Sugarcane crop is grown in 200 acres and moong dal in 700 acres.

Employment opportunities in the Gram Panchayat are moderate during July to October. The wage rate differs considerably sex-wise, season-wise and activity wise. The details are furnished in Table 4. The data on socio-economic infrastructure that determines the quality of life are presented in Table 4.

Under the REGS Rs. 10.2 lakh was allocated and Rs. 5.32 lakh was utilised, during 2006-07. The fund was spent on works such as connecting road, soil cutting and filling, brick soling, social forestry, removing collected water (*jal nikasi*), tank cleaning (*pokhar ugahi*) and water conservation. Four hundred households were issued job cards of which 140 were given employment.

Gram Panchayat Belaganj : The Gram Panchayat Belaganj is located in block Belaganj of the district. There are about 2000 households and 600 are landless; marginal and small farmers are 600 and 100, respectively.

The net sown area is 2500 acres and 1800 acres are receiving irrigation. The gross cropped and gross irrigated area are respectively, 4000 acres and 2100 acres. Rabi crops are grown in 1300 acres. Wheat is sown in 1000 acres and sugarcane is raised in 20 acres.

As far as employment opportunities are concerned, June to September is the lean period. Therefore, about 500 (poor) workers have migrated to other areas in search of wage employment.

32 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Male workers get a maximum wage of Rs.90 per day and a minimum of Rs. 60 as wages during the peak agriculture season. The activities include sowing, winnowing and harvesting. In non-agricultural works, the daily earnings vary between Rs.100 and Rs. 60 per day. Adult female workers get a minimum of Rs.60 per day and a maximum of Rs 80 per day in the peak agricultural season. In non-agricultural activity, they get a maximum wage of Rs.70 and minimum Rs.50 per day. The data on the availability of socio-economic facilities are presented in Table 4.

Under the REGS, about Rs. 4.9 lakh was allocated and Rs. 4.88 lakh was utilised during 2006-07 for taking up 12 projects such as road connectivity, soil cutting and filling, brick soling, ahar and pyne cleaning and pul and puliya construction. About 140 persons/ households were employed under the REGS out of which women and SC workers are 72.

Gram Panchayat Bara Gandhar : The Gram Panchayat Bara Gandhar is situated in block of Gaya district. The demographic particulars are shown in Table 4.

The net sown area is 2100 acres and net irrigated area is 1700 acres. The cropped area during Rabi is about 1500 acres. Wheat and potato are raised in 1500 acres and 1200 acres, respectively. Vegetable is grown in another 1200 acres. Employment opportunities in the Gram Panchayat are limited during July to September. However, no migration of labour was reported.

The data on wage structure and location of amenities are presented in Table 4. Under the REGS, Rs. 2.76 lakh was spent against an allocation of Rs. 7.49 lakh during 2006-07 on nine projects. A sum of Rs.1.49 lakh was spent on the unskilled wage component. The works taken up include connectivity (road), soil cutting and filling, brick soling, cleaning of ahar and pynes and construction of pul and puliya. About 200 households were given employment and of whom 24 were female workers.

CHAPTER II

Institutional Arrangements for Planning and Implementation of REGS

State Level

At the State level, the Rural Development Department of the State Government is the nodal agency for implementation of the NREG Act, 2005. The Secretary, Rural Development is the Commissioner of REGS, who is expected to ensure that all the activities required to fulfill the objectives of the Act are carried out both in letter and spirit. The Special Secretary, Rural Development assists the Secretary.

The NREGS also envisages that the State Government shall constitute the State Employment Guarantee Council for the purpose of advising the State Government on all matters related to the Scheme implementation to determine the preferred works, reviewing the implementation and monitoring and redressal mechanisms, promoting widest possible dissemination of information about the Act and schemes under it, and for preparing the Annual Reports to be placed before the State legislature by the State government. The Council is on the anvil.

District Level

At the district level, the Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) is the District Programme Coordinator (DPC), and the Director, DRDA is the Additional District Programme Coordinator (ADPC) under the REGS. The DPC is responsible for overall coordination and successful implementation of the Scheme in the district and the ADPC assists the DPC in carrying out the associated tasks.

At the district level, the Zilla Parishad (ZP) is responsible for finalising the REGS district plan and for monitoring and supervising its implementation. The DPC monitors all aspects of the implementation including registration,

34 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

employment, unemployment allowance, Social Audit, fund flow, progress and quality of works and timely and correct payment of minimum wages.

Block Level

The Panchayat Samiti (PS) is responsible for planning of the REGS at the block level and for its monitoring and supervision. The Block Development Officer (BDO) is the Programme Officer (PO) at the block level with necessary support staff for facilitating implementation of the REGS. The PS and the BDO monitor registration, employment provided to each household, unemployment allowance, Social Audit, flow of funds, timely and correct payment of wages, progress and quality of works etc. The BDO is also responsible for sending the progress reports and returns to the DPC, who sends these reports to the State and Central Government.

Village Level

The Gram Sabha (GS) is responsible for a number of functions relating to the planning and monitoring of REGS at the village level. The Gram Panchayat (GP) is the principal planning and implementing agency and is responsible for identification and execution of the works in the GP as per the recommendations of the GS. The *Gram Sachiv* helps the GP in discharging its duties and also receives applications, issues job cards, maintains records, etc. The services of the village level organisations of the poor, SHGs, Youth Clubs, etc., are also envisaged under REGS to be utilised by the GP in discharging its duties particularly in awareness building, communication, mobilisation of rural households for registration and submission of applications for work, identification and prioritisation of works, etc.

Fixation of Minimum Wages under REGS during 2006-07

There is no different set of wages for REGS and other development programmes like Haryali, SGRY, etc. in the State. Initially, the minimum wage was Rs. 71 per day under REGS during 2006-07. The rate now stands revised at Rs. 81 per day w.e.f. July 2007.

Institutional Arrangements for Planning and Implementation of REGS 35

The prevalent agriculture wage is Rs. 81 for digging 100 CFT of Soil. In REGS, the wage rate is the same (i.e. Rs.81) but the quantum of the expected output depends upon the hardness and softness of the soil. The State Government has conducted the time-work-motion study for both male and female workers for determining the quantum of output. For male workers, if the soil is hard, then he has to dig 75 CFT and in the case of soft soil, he has to dig 100 CFT for one manday of work. In case of female workers, if the soil is hard, then she has to dig 70 CFT, and if the soil is soft, then she has to dig 80 CFT for one personday of work.

Wages are generally paid by the GP to workers in cash. In the sample villages, the workers are being motivated to open Bank Accounts so that their wages can be directly sent to their SB A/c. In district Muzaffarpur, Marban block, some GP workers have an ATM card with REGS A/c in a bank.

In the sample districts, the REGS funds are routed through the GPs from the DPC through the BDO at block level. However, the District Administration is planning to route the REGS funds directly to the GPs in future. Therefore, there is need for introducing a standardised and common procedure for transfer of funds in all the REGS districts.

CHAPTER III

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS

Physical and Financial Performance of REGSB at the State Level:

During 2006-07, the performance of REGS in Bihar was assessed through a set of indicators. The data on these indicators are presented in Table 5.

Table 5 : Performance of REGS in sample districts: Bihar (2006-07)

S. No.	Indicators	Selected Districts of NREGA from Bihar						
		State Bihar	Gaya	Muza- ffarpur	Nala- nda	Pur- nea	She- ohar	Vais- hali
1.	% of households (hhs) demanding work to issued job cards	48.0	47.1	35.6	65.1	24.6	36.4	58.6
2.	% of hhs provided employment to households demanding emp.	98.8	88.6	100.8	100.0	97.1	99.8	100.0
3.	% hhs provided with 100 days of emp.	3.6	—	34.8	1.6	5.5	18.4	—
4.	Utilisation of funds (%)	59.84	35.02	71.37	87.9	85.7	32.4	62.96
5.	Employment days (million)	29.6	2.67	5.18	3.50	2.47	0.89	4.04
6.	Employment per household (days)	16.4	4.7	60.6	20.0	6.9	39.8	50.2
7.	Share of SCs in employment (%)	47.1	62.1	61.0	60.0	35.3	13.5	55.0
8.	Share of STs in employment (%)	3.2	—	—	—	17.9	—	—
9.	Share of women in employment (%)	17.4	35.0	9.30	28.9	22.1	14.6	1.73
10.	Cost of generating one day of employment (Rs.)	119	124	110	119	75.0	117	125

(Source: <http://nrega.nic.in>, as on 9.11.2007)

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 37

The fund utilisation in Bihar was almost 60 per cent, which is not high in comparison to the other states. This low level of fund utilisation use cannot ensure provision of 100 days of employment. The inter-district variations on this crucial indicator suggest varying performance across the districts. The performance of Nalanda and Sheohar district are at two extremes. The under-utilisation of available funds where a State is experiencing a high degree of poverty and unemployment is unacceptable.

At the State level, on an average, the participating worker households have got hardly 16.4 days of employment from the REGS, which offers at least 100 days of work to those who demand employment. Therefore, there is need to develop a sense of urgency to realise this strategic aspect because most of the workers belong to the disadvantaged sections of the society. Muzaffarpur has given maximum of 60.6 days of employment per household, whereas Gaya (4.7 days) and Purnea (6.9 days) have provided the minimum employment opportunities.

It is reported that about only 3.6 per cent of the households could obtain 100 days of employment. On this indicator, the performance of the State is very unsatisfactory. Of course, the performance of Nalanda district on this count has been impressive.

At the aggregate level, only 48 per cent of households (hhs) which were issued job cards had demanded work. The highest demand came from Nalanda (65.1 per cent), followed by Vaishali (58.6 per cent) and Gaya (47.1 per cent). In Purnea, Sheohar and Muzaffarpur districts, most of the households had not demanded adequate employment. Lack of awareness about REGS provisions could be partly responsible. However, it is encouraging to note that nearly 99 per cent of the households which were demanding employment were provided employment. Nalanda and Purnea have reported 100 per cent coverage. The other districts were also showing high performance.

Though this programme is open to all, the inclusion of the socially disadvantaged (SCs) was encouraging from the poverty alleviation point

38 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

of view. The share of SCs in the workers was more than 60 per cent in Gaya, Muzaffarpur and Purnea. After creation of Jharkhand, the majority of the tribal population is located there. The low participation of STs in REGS in Bihar is mainly due to this.

The inclusion of the socially disadvantaged women in REGS is another step towards socio-economic equity. The current share of women in the State is 17 per cent, which of course is very low. Efforts should therefore, be made to include them in greater numbers. The cost of generating one day of employment under REGS was Rs.119 in Bihar during 2006-07. These costs varied significantly across the districts which will have implications on the quality of assets created since the minimum wage was the same for all districts under 'time-based' wage employment.

The data on employment generated for selected social groups for the State and also in the six study districts are presented in Table 6. The shares of SCs and STs in total employment are over 50 per cent except in Sheohar. However, the average number of days of employment of these groups and others was very low in Gaya and Purnea. In Sheohar, while 'others' got 48 days of work, the SCs could obtain only 20 days of employment. This uneven distribution of employment indicates the biases in the execution of the REGS works in the State works.

The statistics on availability and utilisation of funds in the six districts during 2006-07 are given in Table 7. The wage-material ratios hovered around 60:40 except in Nalanda. The contingencies which include the salaries of the staff did not (even) exceed one per cent. It implies that the State needs to assign priority to recruitment of staff and also scale up the expenditure on IEC campaigns / MIS. Nalanda had spent almost 90 per cent of its allocated amount on wages of unskilled workers. Therefore, the very low share on materials (9 per cent) may affect the quality and durability of the assets created.

Table 6 : Employment generation under NREGSB -2006-07

District	SCs		STs		Others		All	
	Share in total emp. days	Emp. per household	Share in total emp. days	Emp. per household	Share in total emp. days	Emp. per household	Emp. per household	No. of days of work by women aries
Gaya	62.1	4.5			37.9	5.0	4.7	9.370
Muzaffarpur	61.0	62			39.0	59	60	4.820
Nalanda	60.0	20			40	20	20	10.118
Purnea	35.0	6	18.0	6.1	47	8.0	6.9	5.472
Sheohar	13.4	20			86.6	48.1	40.4	1.300
Vaishali	55.3	50.5			44.7	50.5	50.5	0.703
BIHAR	47.0	17.0	3.2	17.5	50.0	15.8	16.4	103.717
								2231

Source: Bihar: Monitoring format for the Monthly Progress Report under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

40 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...



Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 41

42 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 43

Table 8 (Contd...)

44 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...*

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 45

Table 9 (Contd...)

46 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...*

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 47

Table 10 (Contd...)

48 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

During 2006-07, Sheohar district has completed 50 works, with an expenditure of Rs. 278.52 lakh and the ongoing 61 works amounting to Rs. 335.65 lakh.

In Sheohar, the most important assets created relate to rural connectivity (44 works) and another 305 works were in progress. The villages in Sheohar are frequently damaged by flood waters; hence there is need for an appropriate rural connectivity because the existing situation was not satisfactory.

In all, 3543 works were taken up in Vaishali and out of which 2102 were completed with an expenditure of Rs. 4092.99 lakh. The balance of works (1441) were in progress and the expected expenditure would be Rs. 954.17 lakh. The GPs have preferred rural connectivity (1720 works) and about 1414 works were completed and it was also the maximum activity 'in progress'. While Vaishali has good horticulture prospects, it does not have access to good markets. Rural connectivity will help small and marginal farmers, more so producers of horticulture crops to have access to major markets to sell their produce at fair prices.

The priority works to be taken up under REGS in Bihar during 2006-07 are shown in Table 11.

Table 11 : Priority works under REGS in the study districts

District	Category of works preferred under REGSB (2006-07)
Gaya	Water conservation and water harvesting, rural connectivity
Muzaffarpur	Rural connectivity, water conservation and water harvesting, micro-irrigation
Nalanda	Water conservation and water harvesting, micro-irrigation, Rural connectivity
Purnea	Rural connectivity
Sheohar	Rural connectivity
Vaishali	Rural connectivity, flood control and protection, micro-irrigation, other activities, land development

Views and Observations of the Elected Representatives of PRIs

The REGS envisages a significant role for PRI functionaries at various levels. For discharging these functions effectively, the development functionaries (elected representatives and officials) need to be sensitised and informed about the provisions of the REGA. And also their capabilities have to be built and strengthened for carrying out the stipulated planning and monitoring and Social Audit functions. Tables 12 to 17 provide the details relating to the above as also about the effectiveness of their participation. The views of the functionaries about the programme effectiveness are also presented in these Tables.

As a part of the research investigations, interview schedules were canvassed to PR functionaries at the district, block and GP levels in the study area. The key aspects covered include training received and usefulness and nature of participation in planning and implementation.

Table 12 presents the data relating to ZP elected representatives with regard to the REGS. The ZP representatives were specifically asked about their awareness about NREGA, RTI, Social Audit, Plan Preparation and their understanding on these aspects. They were asked about the awareness, interest, involvement, participation with reference to: publicity to the schemes and wages, allocation of works, payment of wages and redressal of grievances in the six sample districts of Bihar. The responses of the sample respondents to the queries in the survey schedules as well as during general discussions with other members, on the whole, had been rather disappointing. They were not clear and sometimes even outright unenthusiastic. Most of the respondents in this category have not been involved themselves adequately in the various aspects and processes of the BREGS in their respective districts. In fact, most of the responses were of "do not know/ cannot say" type, and thus, reflected the feelings of either lack of concern, lack of interest or frustration on account of having been excluded from the decision-making and implementation process by the officials. The study reveals the pressing requirement for an effective sensitisation, orientation and capacity-building of the elected PRI functionaries and their greater participation in the planning and implementation processes, pertaining to REGSB, on the other. Effective training of elected representatives of ZPs on NREGA, RTI, Social Audit and preparation of REGS plan is therefore, imperative. They want enhanced role or independent domain.

50 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 51

Table 51 (Contd...)

52 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

Table 12 (Contd...)

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 53

Table 12 (Contd...)

54 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 55

Table 13 (Contd...)

56 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

Table 13 (Contd...)

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 57

Table 14 shows responses of the Programme Officers (PO) relating to different aspects of REGS in the sample districts of Bihar. The officials were explicitly asked about their work and their role in implementing NREGA, RTI, Social Audit, plan preparation, conduct of training for others and GP and target groups, payment of wages etc. Most of the responses were positive. None has admitted any major impediments in executing NREGS in their districts. They have respected the role of PRI representatives as well. According to them, the 'Rights' based REGS delivery system is very effective. Except Marban block in Muzaffarpur, all have reported about the maintenance of complaint register and its use by workers. The impact on the wages of unskilled workers was noticeable, because it was reported that REGS resulted in an increase of wages in other sectors ranging from Rs.10 to 35. In fact, Belaganj block reported highest increase (by Rs.35) in the wages, and in Asthama block by Rs.30. The officials suggested — Institutional training for all the concerned; Massive awareness campaign for all; Relaxation of 40 per cent norm for material component in the rocky terrains due to soil conditions and permit use of machinery, POs and *Rozgar Sevaks* should be posted in all the project areas; appointment of dedicated NREGS officials, revised schedule of wage rates that are based on work-time-motion studies; and less paper work minimising documentation and formats for Social Audit. Also, it was pointed out that public awareness is a pre-requisite for success of REGS and greater involvement of PRI representatives is desirable.

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 59

60 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

Table 60 (Contd...)

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Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 61

62 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 63

64 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 65

66 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...*

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 67

68 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...*

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 69

70 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 71

72 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...

Table 15 (Contd...)

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Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 73

74 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Table 16 depicts the responses of members of GP/ Secretary to different facets of REGS in sample districts of Bihar. The elected Panchayat office-bearers at the GP level were asked about their awareness / understanding of NREGA, RTI, Social Audit, Plan Preparation, VMC, Social Audit etc. It can be inferred that Panchayat Secretary dominates all the proceedings and processes related to REGS. Even BDOs work through Panchayat Secretaries directly even at the cost of ignoring *Mukhiyas*. They expressed lack of cooperation by *Gram Sachivs*. They reported that 'Rights' based REGS execution was satisfactory. The migration in most of the GPs had moderately declined though a few mentioned that there was no effect. The impact on the wages of unskilled workers was noticeable because there was reported increase in most of the GPs. The suggestions to improve the effectiveness of REGS are: better coordination between *Mukhiya* and GP Secretary; Appointment of *Gram Rozgar Sahayak*; support in specific areas; Payment of wages through banks/post office, 60:40 ratio be made more flexible; enhanced role of *Mukhiyas*; increased allotment to the Gram Panchayats; increase in REGS wages and compulsory training for GP members including *Mukhiyas* in Patna or outside for increasing their understanding of NREGP. Training was strongly stressed by all for *Mukhiyas* and other GP elected PR representatives. Shortage of staff was the reason given for the moderate performance. They expressed that when all NREGP related staff are appointed, then the performance will get enhanced. *Mukhiyas* felt that they should be given full authority for planning and execution of REGS works.

76 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 77

Table 16 (Contd...)

Table 17 (Contd...)

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78 Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....

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Table 16 (Contd...)

Table 16 (Contd...)

Planning, Implementation and Performance of REGS 79

80 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment...*

Role of NGOs in REGS: The NGOs were not given any major role at the State level even though the State Employment Guarantee Council did not exist in 2006-07. Therefore, the council will do well by coopting some NGOs as its members.

'*Wada Na Todo Abhiyaan*' Campaign was executed in Bihar, for generating awareness about REGS through "*Rozgaar Adhikaar Yatras*"; with the cooperation of *Vidyasagar Samajik Suraksha Seva Evam Shodh Sansthan*, Patna in some districts during 1-7, November, 2006.

Another NGO network 'Voluntary Action Network India' (VANI) adopted multiple strategies to bring awareness on REGS, RTI, and good governance. They held training-cum-workshops on REGS / RTI in Patna on 12-13 August 2006, 2 – 3 December 2006; and on 23 – 24 Feb, 2007. The workshops were organised with the network partners. The purpose of the workshops was to see how to take the message of REGS to the people and make it workable at the grassroots with the help of NGOs in Bihar. The task was awareness campaign for sensitising every family in the villages. Bihar was divided into five regions for REGS awareness campaign: Koshi & Kamla, Gandak, Angika, Magadh and Bhojpur.

NIRDESH, an NGO in Muzaffarpur, was involved in REGS awareness in the districts through rath yatra, poster and wall writings, organising meetings in villages, distribution of pamphlets, hand bills, public hearing interviews, *Nukkad* meetings, *Sangosthi*, public address, rallies, and nuded Natak. It had opened ATM Accounts for REGS workers with the facility of a night Guard. It suggested that the workers need to be trained in operating bank accounts.

Manav Seva Bharti, NGO in Vaishali district, was propagating NREGS and minimum wages through advocacy measures in the form of rath yatras, posters, wall writings, meetings in villages, pamphlets, hand bills, public hearing interviews, *nukkad* meetings, *sangosthi*, public address, rallies, natak and rallies. They organised wage seekers to procure job cards and inculcated the idea that it is a right based employment. They criticised wrong selection of works and use of machinery for the work. According to them, there is need for frequent announcements on radio and television regarding REGS and involvement of NGOs at all levels in its planning and implementation of REGS. They also suggested that training be given to panchayat elected representatives and officials of NREGS. Table 17 summarises some of the efforts made by the NGO sector in the study area.

Table 17 : Role of NGOs in REGS *

S.No. Indicator	Muzaffarpur	Vaishali
1	3	4
Respondent Organisation Processes / Activities	NIRDESH	MANAV SEVA BHARATI
1. Social Mobilisation / Community Participation	Rathayatra, poster and wall writings, organised meetings in villages, phanplets, hand bills, public hearing interviews, Nukkar meetings, <i>Sangosthi</i> , public address, rallies, <i>natak</i>	
2. Awareness Building		
3. RTI		
4. Right to Work Campaign		
5. Organising training programmes	Opened ATM accounts and appointed night guard workers need to be trained Only <i>Rozgar Sevak**</i> and Technical Staff are trained	
6. Preparation of development plan		
7. Selection of works		
8. Publicity to wages	Workers need to be trained in operating bank accounts	Organised rally regarding minimum wages
9. Payment of minimum wages		

(Contd...)

Table 17 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4
10	Monitoring of implementation		
11	Social Audit		
12	Grievance redressal		Organised wage seekers to procure job cards and inculcated the idea that it is a right and not a skill
13	Convergence of activities / funds		
14	Development of Trg. material		Pamphlets and Posters
15	Ensuring equal wages to men and women		
	NGOs – Development Agencies: Linkages		
16	Post Office / Banks	Effectively	
17	Gram Panchayat	Effectively	
18	Intermediate Panchayat	Effectively	
19	Officials	Effectively	
20	CBOs	Effectively	
21	Other NGOs	Effectively	

(Contd...)

Table 17 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4
22	Low Awareness Levels among people	Lack of understanding / Lack of training	Poor advocacy measures
23	Reasons for not registering	No idea about the procedures. Forms for Job cards not issued on time Both Officials (GP Secy.) and elected representatives (sarpanch) not showing interest in implementing the programme	
24	Reasons for not availing of Hundred Days Employment	Officials not selecting right projects Not getting timely administrative and technical sanctions 60:40 ratio affects employment Panchayats <i>Sachiv</i> in charge of 4-5 Gram Panchayats	Wrong selection of works and use of machinery
25	Delays in providing employment	Delays in obtaining sanction	Only quorum is ensured in

(Contd...)

Table 17 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4
26	Organising Gram Sabhas	Only in a few villages; peoples' participation is ok	organising Gram Sabhas
27	Conducted Social Audit	No	
28	Achievements / Deficiencies in REGS noticed in Social Audit	NA	
29	Role in Social Audit	NA	
30	Participation of Villagers in Social Audit	NA	
31	Follow-up Actions after Social Audit	NA	
32	Suggestions – Social Audit changes foreseen in coming five years	NA	
33	Employment opportunities for workers	Yes	Enormous opportunities
34	Rise in wages	Yes	Higher Impact on other sectors
35	Effects on agriculture	Wages in Agriculture is Rs. 40: NREGA is Rs. 68 (will have negative effect on agriculture)	Wage seekers are not interested in agricultural activities
36	Demand for child labour	Reduction in Child Labour	

(Contd...)

Table 17 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4
37	Bargaining capacity of workers		
38	Expanded opportunities		
39	Overall quality of life of people		
40	Any other	Improvement in overall quality of life – Health & Education	
41	Interactions among local institutions		
42	NGOs' interface with officials		
43	NGOs' interface with media		
44	Suggestions	Separate accounts for every wage seeker	Frequent announcements in radio and television regarding REGS
		Timely payment and assigning work	
		Organising Ward Sabha	Involvement of NGOs at all levels in planning and implementation of REGS
		Improving awareness among wage seekers	Training to panchayat elected representatives and officials

*: During 1-7, Nov. 2006, a number of NGOs took part in mass awareness campaign – Rozgar Adhikar Yatra (RAY) (e.g. were recruited in Oct. / Nov, 2007.

CHAPTER IV

Performance of REGS in Bihar

The performance of REGS was mainly judged by the responses of the key stakeholders, i.e., the workers. The profile of the workers is discussed prior to the analysis of their responses.

Profile of Workers

Based on the field survey in the six selected districts, the socio-economic profiles of the sample workers were developed and are presented below.

The data on the distribution of REGS workers sex - wise in Table 18 reveal the predominance of male workers (78.7 per cent); in Vaishali (94 per cent) and Purnea (93 per cent) most of the workers are males. Thus, the implementation of NREGS appears to be lopsided in providing fair distribution of work to males and females with the exception of Nalanda, where there were more female workers (55 per cent) than male workers (45 per cent). Therefore, there is need to correct the gender bias, if any, assuming that the females were willing to work but were not given significant opportunities of employment by spreading awareness among the female workers / SHGs that all are eligible to participate in NREGS employment. Bihar is an agrarian / traditional society which is male biased, but the scenario is gradually changing.

Table 18 : Distribution of workers: sex-wise

District	Male	Female	Total
1	2	3	4
Gaya	77 77.0 %	23 23.0 %	100 100.0 %
Muzaffarpur	86 86.0%	14 14.0%	100 100.0 %

(Contd...)

Table 18 : (Contd...)

1	2	3	4
Nalanda	45 45.0%	55 55.0%	100 100.0 %
Purnea	93 93.0 %	7 7.0 %	100 100.0 %
Sheohar	77 77.0 %	23 23.0 %	100 100.0 %
Vaishali	94 94.0%	6 6.0%	100 100.0 %
Total	472 78.7%	128 21.3%	600 100.0%

Source: Primary survey.



Table 19 contains data on caste-wise distribution of workers. It is evident that majority of the workers belong to SC category (69.7 per cent), followed by OBC (23.3 per cent).

Table 19 : Distribution of workers: caste-wise

District	SC	ST	OBC	OC	Total
Gaya	94	1	2	3	100
	94.0 %	1.0 %	2.0 %	3.0 %	100.0 %
Muzaffarpur	71	5	15	9	100
	71.0%	5.0%	15.0%	9.0%	100.0 %
Nalanda	90	2	8	—	100
	90.0%	2.0%	8.0%		100.0 %
Purnea	70	3	24	3	100
	70.0 %	3.0 %	24.0 %	3.0 %	100.0 %
Sheohar	28	12	59	1	100
	28.0 %	12.0 %	59.0 %	1.0 %	100.0 %
Vaishali	65	—	32	3	100
	65.0%		32.0%	3.0%	100.0 %
Total	418	23	140	19	600
	69.7%	3.8%	23.3%	3.2%	100.0%

The representation of OCs and STs is insignificant. Gaya has the highest number of SC workers (94 per cent), followed by Nalanda (90 per cent). Sheohar has the maximum participation by OBCs (59 per cent), which is a significant depiction of the large scale unemployment among OBCs and the SCs (28 per cent). Sheohar is a remote district in North Bihar plagued by floods and low agricultural productivity. It was carved out of old Sitamarhi district.

The age group-wise distribution of workers is presented in Table 20 and it indicates that mainly youth (48.7 per cent), followed by middle aged (46.5 per cent) dominate the work participation scenario. In Purnea, youth participation was overwhelmingly high (70 per cent), whereas middle aged were more among the workers in Sheohar (64 per cent). REGS is thus, an opportunity for the unemployed rural youth and middle aged persons in rural Bihar.

Table 20 : Distribution of workers: age group-wise

District	Years < 20	21-35	36-60	60 and above	Total
Gaya	5 5.0 %	53 53.0 %	42 42.0 %	—	100 100.0 %
Muzaffarpur	8 8.0%	43 43.0%	46 46.0%	3 3.0%	100 100.0 %
Nalanda	4 4.0%	49 49.0%	46 46.0%	1 1.0%	100 100.0 %
Purnea	2 2.0 %	70 70.0 %	28 28.0 %	—	100 100.0 %
Sheohar	2 2.0 %	33 33.0 %	64 64.0 %	1	100 100.0 %
Vaishali	3 3.0%	44 44.0%	53 53.0%	—	100 100.0 %
Total	24 4.0%	292 48.7%	279 46.5%	5 0.8%	600 100.0%

The average household size of the sample worker households is presented in Table 21. It is high (5.8) and varied between 6.5 (Muzaffarpur) and 5.3 (Purnea). It is also evident that there are 2.20 workers per household in the study GPs. The dependency ratios are high in Muzaffarpur, Sheohar and Vaishali, which signify that the demand for gainful employment is high and that it would grow over time.

Table 21: Household size, workers and dependency ratio

District	HH Size	Average No. of workers	Dependency ratio *
Gaya	5.7	2.50	1: 1.3
Muzaffarpur	6.5	2.20	1:2.0
Nalanda	6.2	2.60	1:1.4
Purnea	5.3	2.30	1:1.3
Sheohar	6.1	1.93	1: 2.2
Vaishali	5.4	1.70	1:2.3
Total	5.8	2.20	1: 1.7

* Workers: Non-workers.

The occupation-wise distribution of workers presented in Table 22 shows that more non-agricultural labour (52.5 per cent) followed by agricultural labour (40.75 per cent), took part in the REGS. The other occupation categories are insignificant.

Table 22 : Distribution of workers: occupation-wise

District	Cultiv-ator	Ag. Labour	Non-Ag. Labour	Artisan	Busi-ness	Serv-ices	Total
Gaya	4 4.0 %	27 27.0 %	67 67.0 %	2 2.0 %	—	—	100 100.0 %
Muzaffarpur	2 2.0%	53 53.0%	45 45.0%	—	—	—	100 100.0 %
Nalanda	—	52 52.0%	47 47.0%	1 1.0%	—	—	100 100.0 %
Purnea	13 13.0 %	39 39.0 %	46 45.0 %	1 1.0 %	1 1.0 %	—	100 100.0 %
Sheohar	1 1.0 %	49 49.0 %	50 50.0 %	—	—	—	100 100.0 %
Vaishali	6 6.0%	24 24.0%	60 60.0%	9 9.0%	—	1 1.0%	100 100.0 %
Total	26 4.3%	244 40.7%	315 52.5%	13 2.2%	1 0.2%	1 0.2%	600 100.0%

Participation of agricultural labour was higher in Muzaffarpur (53 per cent), Nalanda (52 per cent) and Sheohar (49 per cent). The non-agricultural labour was more among the total workers in Gaya (67 per cent), Vaishali (60 per cent) and Sheohar (50 per cent). It was reported in the focus group discussions that there are less avenues of work for non – agricultural workers in some of the study GPs. For instance, Gaya has stone crushing quarries which provide employment for a few months, and in other months most of them either remained unemployed or migrated to other areas in search of employment.

Land ownership / access to land is one of the important determinants of income in rural areas. Table 23 presents information on this key variable. Majority of the NREGP workers are landless (85.3 per cent); landlessness among sample workers was highest in Gaya (99 per cent) followed by Nalanda (93 per cent). Rest of the workers are either marginal or sub-marginal farmers. These workers need gainful employment for their survival and REGS has proven to be an important lifeline for them.

Table 23 : Distribution of workers: landholding status based on operated area

District	Landless	1-10 Katha	11-25 Katha	1-2.5 Bigha	Total
Gaya	99.0%	11.0%	-	-	100 (100.0%)
Muzaffarpur	60.0%	3636.0%	-	44.0%	100 (100.0%)
Nalanda	93.0%	44.0%	11.0%	22.0%	100 (100.0%)
Purnea	88.0%	55.0%	22.0%	55.0%	100 (100.0%)
Sheohar	86.0%	88.0%	44.0%	22.0%	100 (100.0%)
Vaishali	86.0%	1010.0%	-	44.0%	100 (100.0%)
Total	85.3%	6410.7%	71.2%	172.8%	600 (100.0%)

Note: 1 acre = 50 Kathas ; 1 acre = 2.5 Bighas

The major sources of income for the workers are non-agricultural labour (58.7 per cent) and agricultural labour (55.8 per cent). The main source of income for the majority in Muzaffarpur (80 per cent), Sheohar (76 per cent), Nalanda (56 per cent), Gaya (56 per cent), and Purnea (56 per cent) is 'agriculture labour'. In Purnea (89 per cent), Gaya (81 per cent), Vaishali (54 per cent) and Sheohar (53 per cent) earnings from non-agriculture labour is an important source of income (Table 24).

Table 24 : Distribution of workers – sources of income

	Crop	Poultry	Sheep	Milch	Trade	Ag. Lab.	Non-Ag. Lab.	Others
Gaya	—	—	2	—	—	56	81	2
			2.0 %			56.0 %	81.0%	2.0%
Muzaffarpur	1	—	—	—	—	80	16	3
	1.0%					80.0%	16.0%	3.0%
Nalanda	—	2	—	—	—	56	42	—
		2.0%				56.0%	42.0%	
Purnea	22	26	30	23	—	56	89	5
	22.0 %	26.0 %	30.0%	23.0 %		56.0 %	89.0 %	5.0%
Sheohar	10	5	17	5	2	76	53	—
	10.0 %	5.0 %	17.0%	5.0 %	2.0%	76.0 %	53.0 %	
Vaishali	—	—	—	6	—	28	54	12
				6.0%		28.0%	54.0%	12.0%
Total	33	33	49	34	2	352	335	22
	5.5%	5.5%	8.2%	5.7%	0.3%	58.7%	55.8%	3.7%

The official poverty line per capita per annum during 2004-05 was Rs.4252. The poverty line per household of size 5.8 would be around Rs.24,662 per annum. The economic status of the NREGS workers presented in Table 25 reveals that most of them (42 per cent) were 'very very poor'. The underdevelopment of Bihar with large number of people below poverty line is clearly reflected here. Hardly 2.5 per cent of the participating workers were non-poor.

**Table 25 : Distribution of workers: economic status-wise
(household income per annum)**

	<Rs. 5000	Rs.5001- 10,000	Rs.10,001- 15,000	Rs.15,001- 20,000	Rs.20,001- 25,000	Rs.25,001- 40,000	Total
Gaya	18 18.0%	18 18.0%	15 15.0%	32 32.0%	12 12.0%	5 5.0%	100 100.0%
Muzaffarpur	1 1.0%	—	8 8.0%	47 47.0%	38 38.0%	6 6.0%	100 100.0 %
Nalanda	54 54.0%	4 4.0%	1 1.0%	17 17.0%	20 20.0%	4 4.0%	100 100.0 %
Purnea	75 75.0%	20 20.0%	4 4.0%	1 1.0%	—	—	100 100.0%
Sheohar	58 58.0%	36 36.0%	4 4.0%	2 2.0 %	—	—	100 100.0%
Vaishali	46 46.0%	36 36.0%	8 8.0%	7 7.0%	3 3.0%	—	100 100.0 %
Total	252 42.0%	114 19.0%	40 6.7%	106 17.7%	73 12.2%	15 2.5%	600 100.0%

Awareness Levels

REGS is a 'Rights' based programme. The poor and unemployed have a right to live a dignified life without any discrimination. REGS is a dynamic programme which addresses multiple objectives like removal of unemployment (provision for 100 days of employment in 365 days), prevention of distress migration, greater involvement in development activities at Gram Panchayat level etc. It is important to understand that the success of the programme depends upon the awareness of the community about the programme. The success can be achieved through mass mobilisation, sensitisation camps and publicity. The data in Table 26 underscore the need for accelerating the pace of awareness campaign on NREGA.

Table 26 : Distribution of workers: awareness-wise

	Aware of entitlements	Max.No. of days of employment	Unemployment allowance	Wages to be paid if work is given beyond 5 km from GP	Minimum wages to be paid	Time limit for providing employment	Time limit for payment of wages
Gaya	8 8.0 %	4 4.0%	1 1.0%	2 2.0%	8 8.0%	2 2.0%	3 3.0%
Muzaffarpur	35 35.0%	39 65.0%	6 6.0%	4 4.0%	86 86.0%	6 6.0%	7 7.0%
Nalanda	2 2.0%	2 2.0%	2 2.0%	—	80 80.0%	57 57.0%	2 2.0%
Purnea	12 12.0%	10 10.0%	2 2.0%	3 3.0%	9 9.0%	5 5.0%	3 3.0%
Sheohar	33 33.0%	29 29.0%	12 12.0%	1 1.0%	4 4.0%	28 28.0%	24 24.0%
Vaishali	44 44.0%	40 40.0%	21 21.0%	-	39 39.0%	9 9.0%	2 2.0%
Total	134 22.4%	124 20.7%	44 7.3%	10 1.7%	226 37.7%	107 17.8	41 6.8%

Only 22.4 per cent of the workers were aware about REGS entitlements. Regarding the information about maximum number of days of employment, only 20.7 per cent of the workers had knowledge about it. The understanding as well as information about unemployment allowance under NREGS is also limited. Hardly 7.3 per cent of the workers were aware about the unemployment allowance. Nalanda depicts the lowest awareness level (with 2 per cent) followed by Gaya and Purnea.

Regarding wages to be paid, if work is given beyond 5 km from GP, a meagre 1.7 per cent of the target group was aware about such a provision under REGS. It was startling to find that none in Nalanda and Vaishali and hardly one per cent in Sheohar knew about this provision. Thus, it is clear that NREGA has not been properly campaigned where it matters most.

The awareness about the provision regarding the minimum wages (38 per cent) to be paid was not satisfactory. Muzaffarpur showed good result with 86 per cent of workers having awareness. It was closely followed by Nalanda (80 per cent). The rest of the districts need effective intervention for raising the information base.

Only 17.8 per cent knew about the time limit (maximum 15 days) for providing employment under REGS. Awareness on this dimension was better in Nalanda (57 per cent) whereas only 28 per cent of the workers were informed about it in Sheohar. The rest of the districts showed a dismal picture in this aspect. Equally disturbing is the level of awareness about the time limit for payment of wages (6.8 per cent); in Sheohar this percentage (24.0) was the highest. The rest of the districts reflected low levels of awareness (3 to 7 per cent).

An average score of awareness was computed for each district based on the number of correct responses to the selected aspects relating to NREGA (Table 27). The overall score for all the sample workers (600) was hardly 16 per cent which itself indicates that REGS as a Scheme with 'Rights' oriented perspective, could not be expected to be very effective. The responses show that Muzaffarpur and Nalanda fared (relatively) better.

Table 27 : Awareness score based on responses to the questions on REGS

	Correct responses against six questions on NREGA							Average score (%)
	Nil	Only 1	Only 2	Only 3	Only 4	Only 5	Only 6	
Gaya	92	1	3	3	1	—	—	3.3
	92.0%	1.0%	3.0%	3.0%	1.0%			
Muzaffarpur	14	44	29	8	4	—	1	24.7
	14.0%	44.0%	29.0%	8.0%	4.0%		1.0%	
Nalanda	15	32	51	—	1	1	—	23.8
	15.0%	32.0%	51.0%		1.0%	1.0%		
Purnea	89	1	3	4	2	1	—	5.3
	89.0%	1.0%	3.0%	4.0%	2.0%	1.0%		
Sheohar	67	1	11	13	5	2	1	15.3
	67.0%	1.0%	11.0%	13.0%	5.0%	2.0%	1.0%	
Vaishali	56	5	19	14	4	2	—	18.5
	56.0%	5.0%	19.0%	14.0%	4.0%	2.0%		
Total	333	84	116	42	17	6	2	15.3
	55.5%	14.0%	19.3%	7.0%	2.8%	1.0%	0.3%	

Data in Table 28 point out that the workers' awareness about RTI Act and Social Audit was extremely low. It is heartening to note that 47 per cent of workers in Nalanda had some knowledge about RTI Act.

Table 28 : Distribution of workers as per awareness about RTI Act and Social Audit

	RTI Act	Social Audit
Gaya	—	—
Muzaffarpur	1 1.0%	—
Nalanda	47 47.0%	—
Purnea	—	1 1.0%
Sheohar	2 2.0 %	3 3.0 %
Vaishali	1 1.0%	—
Total	51 8.5%	4 0.7%

It can be gleaned from Table 29 that GP is the main source of information on REGS for 72 per cent of the sample workers. One can infer that Gram Panchayats in Purnea and Vaishali were less active in information dissemination about NREGA.

Table 29 : Distribution of workers reporting GP as source of information for REGS, RTI and Social Audit

	NREGA	RTI	Social Audit
Gaya	68 66.0%	1 1.0%	—
Muzaffarpur	100 100.0%	16 16.0%	9 9.0%
Nalanda	83 83.0%	1 1.0%	1 1.0%
Purnea	44 44.0%	—	—
Sheohar	98 98.0%	1 1.0%	3 3.0%
Vaishali	42 42.0%	10 10.0%	8 8.0%
Total	435	30	21

The point of awareness about contacting officials was unimpressive on the whole (Table 30). Only 31.3 per cent of the workers were aware about whom to contact, if job cards were not given. People of Muzaffarpur were better placed in this aspect. If work is not given within 15 days, only 12.3 per cent of workers knew whom to contact. In this regard only Sheohar and Muzaffarpur showed some signs of awareness. About 13 per cent were aware of the officials to be contacted if wages are not paid within 15 days.

Table 30 : Distribution of workers: awareness about contact officials

	If job cards are not given	If work is not given within 15 days	If wages are not paid within 15 days
Gaya	25 25.0 %	3 3.0 %	4 4.0 %
Muzaffarpur	75 75.0%	21 21.0%	25 25.0%
Nalanda	16 16.0%	1 1.0%	3 3.0%
Purnea	22 22.0 %	10 10.0 %	7 7.0 %
Sheohar	38 38.0 %	30 30.0 %	29 29.0 %
Vaishali	12 12.0%	9 9.0%	10 10.0%
Total	188 31.3%	74 12.3%	78 13.0%

Table 31 contains data on some selected aspects of registration and issue of job cards under REGS in the sample districts. About 79 per cent of workers were in possession of the job cards; it was over 90 per cent in Sheohar, Muzaffarpur and Gaya. About 13.7 per cent of the workers informed that some expenditure was incurred for getting the job card. It was high in Sheohar (38 per cent) and Purnea (22 per cent). From the focused group

discussions it was reported that an amount of Rs. 25 - 50 per card was taken by Sarpanch / Sachiv for issue of job cards.

Overall, 42 per cent of the workers were keeping the job card while going for work. Similarly, 43 per cent reported that information on employment and wages paid was entered in the job card. Performance was encouraging on this account in Sheohar (80 per cent).

Table 31 : Distribution of workers by: job card registration and possession

	Who has registered for the job card		Possession of job card by self	Expenditure incurred, if any, for getting job card	Keeping job card while going for work*	Making entries of employment and wages paid in the job card#
	Male	Female				
Gaya	69	11	93	10	35	35
	76.0%	11.0%	93.0%	10.0%	35.0 %	35.0 %
Muzaffarpur	96	—	96	—	67	60
	96.0%		96.0%		67.0%	60.0%
Nalanda	44	39	63	10	53	47
	44.0%	39.0%	63.0%	10.0%	53.0%	47.0%
Purnea	87	13	48	22	9	4
	87.0%	13.0%	48.0%	22.0%	9.0 %	4.0 %
Sheohar	76	24	98	38	61	80
	76.0%	24.0%	98.0 %	38.0 %	61.0 %	80.0 %
Vaishali	81	81	74	2	26	34
	81.0%	81.0%	74.0%	2.0%	26.0%	34.0%
Total	453	453	472	82	251	260
	75.5%	75.5%	78.6%	13.7%	41.8%	43.3%

* For others, the job card is left behind at home or it is with the / Others. / Programme Staff

: Entries by or other designated official.

It is disquieting that only 29 per cent showed awareness that an application has to be submitted for getting the REGS work (Table 32). This sort of ignorance would deny several workers of employment; in fact it happened in several GPs of Bihar. It warrants creation of an institutional arrangement for assisting / guiding the illiterate workers for seeking work. Thus, the low awareness level in Purnea (5 per cent), Nalanda (10 per cent) and Vaishali (11 per cent) is really a matter of concern.

Table 32 : Distributions of workers: awareness level of requirements for getting work

	Application to be given
Gaya	53 53.0%
Muzaffarpur	56 56.0%
Nalanda	10 10.0%
Purnea	5 5.0%
Sheohar	39 39.0%
Vaishali	11 11.0%
Total	174 29.0%

Table 33 highlights the degree of awareness regarding the knowledge of methods of seeking work. It is encouraging to note that a high proportion of workers acknowledged the necessity of possessing job card and submission of application for getting employment. However, this contradicts with the earlier observation (Table 32). We need to work this out by way of triangulation of observations and methods.

Table 33 : Distribution of workers: knowledge of methods of seeking work

	Can get employment without			
	Job Card		Without Application	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Gaya	15 15.0 %	85 85.0 %	37 37.0 %	63 63.0 %
Muzaffarpur	1 1.0%	99 99.0%	30 30.0%	70 70.0%
Nalanda	31 31.0%	69 69.0%	40 40.0%	60 60.0%
Purnea	14 14.0 %	86 86.0 %	13 13.0 %	87 87.0 %
Sheohar	14 14.0 %	86 86.0 %	8 8.0 %	92 92.0 %
Vaishali	—	100 100.0%	34 34.0%	66 66.0%
Total	75 12.5%	525 87.5%	162 27.0%	438 73.0%

Participation

Work participation is a pre-condition for workers to reap benefits from development interventions such as REGS. Table 34 displays information on this dimension.

Table 34 : Distribution of workers by extent of time taken for giving employment

	Time taken for giving employment					
	Given application for work	Immediately	Less than a week	7-10 days	11-15 days	> 15 days
Gaya	62 62.0 %	2 2.0 %	6 6.0 %	5 5.0 %	7 7.0 %	42 43.0 %
Muzaffarpur	65 65.0%	11 11.0%	22 22.0%	30 30.0%	2 2.0%	—
Nalanda	70 70.0%	—	—	19 19.0%	1 1.0%	50 50.0%
Purnea	33 33.0 %	—	5 5.0 %	1 1.0 %	-	27 27.0 %
Sheohar	82 82.0 %	—	39 39.0 %	18 18.0 %	22 22.0 %	3 3.0 %
Vaishali	9 9.0%	—	8 8.0%	—	1 1.0%	—
Total	321 53.5%	13 2.2%	80 13.3%	73 12.2%	33 5.5%	122 20.3%

Despite low literacy levels and lack of adequate awareness about the provisions of REGS, about 54 per cent of workers had given application for work. This practice was found to be high in Sheohar, Nalanda, Muzaffarpur and Gaya. About 20 per cent expressed that the time taken for giving employment to the workers was more than 15 days. However, no unemployment allowance was paid to them. Such delays were found to be high in Nalanda (50 per cent) and Gaya (43 per cent). This indicates the laxity of local government institutions (e.g. GP) in providing employment on demand and denying the legal entitlements of the workers. Sheohar (39 per cent) and Muzaffarpur (22 per cent) results were better than the other four districts in providing employment.

Work and Working Conditions

Information collected from the sample workers on type of workers, mode of wage payments, provision of minimum and equal wages etc., was compiled and is presented in Table 35.

Table 35 : Distribution of workers by type of wages and receipts of wages

Districts	Piece-rate contract	Time-based employment*	Wages paid- equally for men and women	Issue of wage slips	Mode of payment – cash	Problems in getting full wage	Receipt of Min. wage
Gaya	29 29 %	60 60.0 %	91 91.0 %	2 2.0 %	100 100.0 %	7 7.0 %	62 62.0 %
Muzaffarpur	77 77.0 %	10 10.0 %	81 81.0 %	1 1.0 %	50 50.0 %	1 1.0 %	80 80.0 %
Nalanda	13 13.0 %	81 81.0 %	13 13.0 %	—	99 99.0 %	27 27.0 %	47 47.0 %
Purnea	5 5.0 %	66 66.0 %	33 33.0 %	1 1.0 %	98 98.0 %	9 9.0 %	43 43.0 %
Sheohar	7 7.0 %	93 93.0 %	91 91.0 %	3 3.0 %	100 100.0 %	6 6.0 %	96 96.0 %
Vaishali	3 3.0 %	68 68.0 %	23 23.0 %	2 2.0 %	76 76.0 %	9 9.0 %	55 55.0 %
Total	134 22.3 %	378 63.0 %	332 55.3 %	9 1.5 %	523 87.1 %	59 9.8 %	383 63.8 %

Market wage (without) NREGS: Gaya: 78.6; Muzaffarpur: 70.8; Nalanda: 44.9 (Rs./day):
54.8; Vaishali: 66.5

* : Some of the workers were not aware of the method followed for payment of wages.

The wages were paid under 'piece-rate contract' (22 per cent) and on 'time-basis' (63 per cent) also. In district Muzaffarpur, most of the workers (77 per cent) were paid wages through piece-rate method. Time-based employment was reported mainly in districts such as, Sheohar (93 per cent), Nalanda (81 per cent), and Vaishali (68 per cent).

About 55 per cent of workers mentioned that male and female workers were paid wages equally. The wage parity was significant in Gaya (91 per cent), Sheohar (91 per cent) and Muzaffarpur (81 per cent).

The practice of issuing wage slips was almost non-existent. In sum, 87.1 per cent REGS workers were paid in cash. Most of the districts paid wages in cash, as in Gaya (100 per cent), Nalanda (99 per cent), Sheohar (100 per cent) and Purnea (98 per cent). In a few cases in one of the study GPs, payment was also made through ATM cards.

Only 9.8 per cent of workers reported problems in receipt of full wages, which is an encouraging sign. The maximum number of cases reporting problem in getting full wages was witnessed in Nalanda (27 per cent).

About 20 per cent of workers were of the view that piece-rate was disadvantageous to females. Many workers of Gaya (45 per cent), Muzaffarpur (35 per cent) and Vaishali (19 per cent) endorsed such a view (Table 36). In the absence of work-time-motion studies, the adoption of 'piece-rate' approach may not be beneficial to workers, more so for women and the physically challenged, since they cannot attend to drudgery high' work.

The preference for time-based work was high (71.1 per cent), more so in Nalanda (90 per cent), Gaya (88 per cent), and Muzaffarpur (76 per cent).

Table 36 : Distribution of workers by perceptions on type of wage and their preference

	Piece-rate work disadvantageous to females	Preference for time-based work
Gaya	45 45.0%	88 88.0%
Muzaffarpur	35 35.0%	76 76.0%
Nalanda	6 6.0%	90 90.0%
Purnea	4 4.0%	63 63.0%
Sheohar	12 12.0%	54 54.0%
Vaishali	19 19.0%	56 56.0%
Total	121 20.2%	427 71.1%

Worksite Facilities

Facilities at the worksite are the entitlements of the workers under REGS. The situation in this regard is presented in Table 37.

Nearly one-fourth of the workers informed the availability of 'muster roll' at worksite. Some of the workers are expected to verify the muster roll every day. This is an indicator of transparency in the implementation of REGS. In Purnea, Gaya and Vaishali, muster rolls at worksite were not available and situation in Muzaffarpur and Nalanda was a bit encouraging.

Provision of 'First Aid facility' at worksites was reported by 19 per cent of workers. There is need to strengthen this facility. There was no such facility provided at worksites of Vaishali, Nalanda and Purnea.

The drinking water facility is another mandatory provision and even this facility was not available in many worksites (73.5 per cent). The districts with low ranking on provision of drinking water are Nalanda (2 per cent), Vaishali (14 per cent), Purnea (27 per cent) and Gaya (30 per cent).

The crèche facilities were non – existent at many places. Only 3.2 per cent of workers reported provision of crèche facilities. The low performers in regard to provision of shade are Nalanda (1 per cent), Gaya (5 per cent) and Vaishali (9 per cent).

Thus, in all six study districts, the blocks and GPs had evinced little attention to provide the mandatory facilities at worksite. So, the entitlements of workers envisaged under NREG Act were not taken care of by the development administration.

Table 37 : Distribution of workers reporting availability of muster roll and mandatory facilities at worksite

	Muster roll	First Aid	Drinking water	Creche	Shade
Gaya	4 4.0%	29 29.0%	30 30.0%	3 3.0%	5 5.0%
Muzaffarpur	55 55.0%	50 50.0%	51 51.0%	1 1.0%	50 50.0%
Nalanda	48 48.0%	1 1.0%	2 2.0%	— 1	1 1.0%
Purnea	3 3.0%	2 2.0%	27 27.0%	1 1.0%	23 23.0%
Sheohar	32 32.0%	34 34.0%	35 35.0%	14 14.0%	15 15.0%
Vaishali	4 4.0%	—	14 14.0%	—	9 9.0%
Total	146 24.3%	116 19.3%	159 26.5%	19 3.2%	103 17.2%

Most of the workers reported that they had worked within the GP (Table 38). No provision was made for making available the improvised tools for reducing drudgery at worksites in majority of the cases. (The focused group discussions revealed that some of the workers could not understand the question properly). In fact, several workers have not responded to this question. Only in two districts, a few workers reported payment for sharpening of tools.

Table 38 : Distribution of workers by working conditions and facilities

	Work within the GP	No provision of improvised tools for reducing drudgery		Payment of money for sharpening tools
		Males	Females	
Gaya	100 100.0%	77 77.0%	77 77.0%	—
Muzaffarpur	85 85.0%	42 42.0%	3 3.0%	31 31.0%
Nalanda	98 98.0%	1 1.0%	1 1.0%	—
Purnea	100 100.0%	—	1 1.0%	—
Sheohar	100 100.0%	28 28.0%	29 29.0%	22 22.0 %
Vaishali	66 66.0%	4 4.0%	—	—
Total	549 91.5%	152 25.3%	111 18.5%	53 8.8%

Though several workers have not participated in the Gram Sabhas for selection of works, about 2.7 per cent of workers showed awareness about the works selected under REGS (Table 39). Nalanda (48 per cent), Sheohar (34 per cent) and Muzaffarpur (31 per cent) showed better awareness among the workers about the works selected under REGS.

Most of workers (62 per cent) were aware that their Sarpanch took part in the Social Audits. The participation of GP members and local people was low (11-15 per cent) in the Gram Sabhas and Social Audits. It is evident from Table 39, that Sarpanches of Muzaffarpur, Sheohar and Nalanda were actively involved in Gram Sabhas. The responses to the issue of 'display of information on REGS works at the GP which is an indicator of transparency, were also not encouraging. This needs special attention.

Table 39 : Distribution of workers by awareness about type of works and participants in Social Audit

District	Works selected under NREGS	Who participated in Social Audit / GS			Display of information on works at GP
		GP Members	Sarpanch	People in general	
Gaya	1 1.0 %	37 37.0%	26 26.0%	17 17.0%	2 2.0%
Muzaffarpur	31 31.0%	40 40.0%	87 87.0%	10 10.0%	31 31.0%
Nalanda	48 48.0%	3 3.0%	84 84.0%	8 8.0%	49 49.0%
Purnea	14 14.0 %	2 2.0%	64 64.0%	18 18.0%	17 17.0%
Sheohar	34 34.0 %	1 1.0%	87 87.0%	—	47 47.0 %
Vaishali	8 8.0%	5 5.0%	26 26.0%	12 12.0%	7 7.0%
Total	136 22.7%	88 14.7%	374 62.0%	65 11.0%	153 26.0%

Since many 'Social Audits' were neither conducted properly nor have enlisted the participation of community, workers could not realise the advantages of Social Audits (Table 39). The workers in Bihar are largely

ignorant of the Social audit concept. In Gaya, Muzaffarpur, Nalanda they were completely unaware. It shows the failure of REGS IEC unit to spread awareness about Social Audit as well as workers' perception about it.

About 48 per cent of the workers felt that there has been an impact of REGS on the wages of unskilled workers in other activities and more so in a positive manner. Such impact was more pronounced in Sheohar (97 per cent), Purnea (55 per cent) and Muzaffarpur (48 per cent).

Table 40 : Distribution of workers by perceptions on benefits of Social Audit and impacts of REGS on wages

	Social Audits are beneficial	Impact on wages of unskilled workers in other activities	Nature of effect on wages - Increased
Gaya	—	40 40.0 %	12 30.0 %
Muzaffarpur	—	48 48.0%	30 62.0%
Nalanda	—	10 10.0%	50 5.0%
Purnea	2 2.0 %	55 55.0 %	54 98.0 %
Sheohar	7 7.0 %	97 97.0 %	96 99.0 %
Vaishali	11 11.0%	37 37.0%	28 76.0%
Total	20 3.3%	287 47.8%	225 78.0%

Monitoring and Social Audit: At the GP level, Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs) were constituted to supervise the works, prepare reports and present them to programme officers and in Gram Sabhas (Social Audits). Table 41 provides information on the knowledge of the community about the existence of VMCs and their performance. Only

8.3 per cent had any clue about the formation and functioning of Vigilance and Monitoring Committee. Workers of Nalanda and Purnea have no knowledge about VMCs, though VMC is a local institution and people's knowledge about them should have been high. The responses indicate that in several places, VMCs were dormant and their presence was not felt by the community. Hardly 7.5 per cent of the workers indicated that VMCs visited the NREGA worksites.

Scrutiny of muster rolls, ensuring the facilities at worksites and inspecting job cards etc., are some of the functions of VMC members. Unless these functions are attended to by VMC, the credibility of this institution will be at stake.

Table 41 : Distribution of workers by views on performance of Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs)

	Knowledge about formation of VMC	VMCs visiting worksites	VMCs participating in GS
Gaya	1 1.0 %	1 1.0 %	2 2.0 %
Muzaffarpur	8 8.0%	8 80.0%	3 3.0%
Nalanda	—	-	
Purnea	1 1.0 %	—	1 1.0 %
Sheohar	10 10.0 %	9 9.0 %	8 8.0 %
Vaishali	30 30.0%	22 22.0%	17 17.0%
Total	50 8.3%	40 7.7%	30 5.0

Quality of Assets

The secondary objective of REGS is to create assets of good quality within the eight categories of works specified and become useful to the community. Tables 42 to 44 summarise the perceptions of the workers about the three main assets (roads, ponds, soil development works etc.,) created under REGS in the selected districts.

Road construction was a major asset created under REGS in Bihar (Table 42). The quality of roads, on the whole, was rated as good (66.5). About 42 per cent of the workers were not able to judge the quality. If we go by the workers' rating, the rural connectivity schemes were well executed in Gaya and Muzaffarpur.

Table 42 : Distribution of workers by opinions on quality of assets created – asset - roads

Districts (Weights)	Roads					Ave. Score (%)
	Very good (3)	Good (2)	Average (1)	Not good (0)	Don't know	
Gaya	52 52.0%	36 36.0%	4 4.0%	2 2.0%	6 6.0%	82.3
Muzaffarpur	12 12.0%	63 63.0%	4 4.0%	—	21 21.0%	78.0
Nalanda	1 1.0%	—	—	—	99 99.0%	—
Purnea	2 2.0%	35 35.0%	41 41.0%	3 3.0%	19 19.0%	48.1
Sheohar	29 29.0%	26 26.0%	35 35.0%	2 2.0%	—	58.0
Vaishali	—	—	—	—	100 100.0%	—
Total	96 16.0%	160 26.7%	84 14.0%	7 1.2%	253 42.2%	66.5

Note: Cases reporting 'Don't know: or 'Cannot say' are excluded while working out the weighted average score.

Another REGS asset created was ponds (farm) and the quality of ponds constructed was reported as good (64 per cent) (Table 43). In Gaya, workers opined that quality of such assets was very good (85 per cent). The quality of ponds in Purnea was rated very low and it implies wastage of resources as these assets may not be durable. Nearly 44 per cent of workers were not able to judge the quality of ponds created under REGS. Such percentage of workers was (unacceptably) very high in Nalanda (99 per cent).

Table 43 : Distribution of workers by opinions on quality of assets created – asset pond

Districts (Weights)	Pond					Ave. Score (%)
	Very good (3)	Good (2)	Average (1)	Not good (0)	Don't know(-)	
Gaya	53 53.0%	33 33.0%	2 2.0%	1 1.0%	11 11.0%	85.0
Muzaffarpur	4 4.0%	42 42.0%	4 4.0%	—	50 50.0%	66.6
Nalanda	1 1.0%	—	—	—	99 99.0%	—
Purnea	6 6.0%	14 14.0%	11 11.0%	23 23.0%	46 46.0%	35.2
Sheohar	19 19.0%	31 31.0%	12 12.0%	6 6.0%	32 32.0%	64.2
Vaishali	8 8.0%	49 49.0%	13 13.0%	6 6.0%	24 24.0%	59.2
Total	91 15.2%	169 28.2%	42 7.0%	36 6.0%	262 43.7%	64.3

Soil development is another important activity taken up by GPs in the study area (Table 44). It is disturbing that 80 per cent of workers could not assess the quality of work. Since majority of the workers were agriculture labour with little knowledge of the parameters of 'quality' one can implicitly infer that the quality of these works was not good. Gaya is an

exception to this since half of them opined that soil work done under REGS was very good.

On the whole, it can be inferred that Gaya and Muzaffarpur have done a very good job in creating quality assets. On the other extreme, we have Nalanda and Vaishali where workers were reluctant to comment (indirectly suggesting that assets are of poor quality). This is a serious issue which defeats the secondary objective of REGS, viz., creation of (quality) community assets.

Table 44 : Distribution of workers by opinions on quality of assets created – asset soil work

Districts (Weights)	Soil work					Ave. Score (%)
	Very good (3)	Good (2)	Average (1)	Not good (0)	Don't know	
Gaya	52 52.0%	26 26.0%	1 1.0%	1 1.0%	20 20.0%	87.0
Muzaffarpur	1 1.0%	3 3.0%	—	—	96 96.0%	75.0
Nalanda	2 2.0%	—	—	—	98 98.0%	100.0
Purnea	—	—	1 1.0%	—	99 99.0%	33.3
Sheohar	8 8.0%	3 3.0%	10 10.0%	10 10.0%	69 69.0%	63.0
Vaishali	—	—	1 1.0%	—	99 99.0%	43.0
Total	63 10.5%	32 5.3%	13 2.2%	11 1.8%	481 80.2%	74.5



Benefits

The gains from REGS are two-fold. The employment and wage income to the participating workers and the Scheme impact on labour market and creation of useful assets to the community are tangible ones. The intangible ones are several which include workers demanding services from delivery system, realisation of rights and improved knowledge about decision-making at GP level. Some of the intangible outcomes are presented in Table 45.

Table 45 : Distribution of workers by perceptions on REGS benefits to the community and development agencies

	Demanding services from		Bringing together GP / CBOs, NGOs, Officials as partners		Realisation by workers about		Creation of useful assets in GP
	Officials	GP	Right to work	Right to information			
Gaya	7	59	3	7	1	74	
	7.0 %	59.0 %	3.0 %	7.0 %	1.0 %	74.0 %	
Muzaffarpur	78	81	4	67	2	49	
	78.0%	81.0%	4.0%	67.0%	2.0%	49.0%	
Nalanda	43	13	48	47	2	39	
	43.0%	13.0%	48.0%	47.0%	2.0%	39.0%	
Purnea	10	60	3	27	—	35	
	10.0 %	60.0 %	3.0 %	27.0 %		35.0 %	
Sheohar	42	95	13	17	1	90	
	42.0 %	95.0 %	13.0 %	17.0 %	1.0 %	90.0 %	
Vaishali	37	79	—	5	1	18	
	37.0%	79.0%		5.0%	1.0%	18.0%	
Total	217	387	71	170	7	305	
	36.2%	64.5%	11.8%	28.3%	1.2%	50.8%	

The workers' perceptions about REGS benefits to the community and development agencies were mixed. About 36 per cent of them were confident of demanding services from officials and it was 65 per cent in the case of Gram Panchayat. It appears that in Muzaffarpur, people-official relationships are smooth and REGS has strengthened them further. On the other hand, cordial links between people and GPs are evident in Sheohar, Muzaffarpur and Vaishali.

The impact of REGS in bringing the local institutions as partners in development initiatives was moderate (11.8 per cent). However, in Nalanda such coordination was witnessed to some extent.

NREGA's major thrust is on operationalising the concept of 'Right to Work'. Less than one-fourth of the workers realised this in the first year itself. In the socio-political-cultural context of Bihar, this is a good sign. A concerted awareness drive is needed to educate and sensitise the workers about their 'Right to Work'.

Since people were unaware of the RTI Act and given the delivery system's reluctance to educate the community on rights (making the officials and elected representatives accountable to the people), the responses were not surprising.



Perceptions

One of the expected outcomes of REGS is reduction in (push) migration from rural areas. If works are properly planned and executed, the distress migration is expected to reduce considerably. Table 46 shows the perceptions of the workers on this critical issue which is one of the aims of NREGA.

The workers perceived that REGS has helped in reduction of migration of unskilled adults (moderately) from their households and also at the village level (25-27 per cent). Nearly 46-50 per cent of workers opined that REGS has checked migration either moderately or considerably. In the context of Bihar it is a positive sign. Among the districts, the overall effect of REGS on migration was reported to be high in Sheohar, Gaya and Nalanda.

Since workers are the major beneficiaries of REGS, their own assessment of the Scheme's effectiveness is a key indicator in understanding the Scheme's impact. The views of the workers on the effectiveness of REGS are presented in Table 47.

The workers' view on effectiveness of REGS implementation was mixed and it was just average (42.5 per cent). Nearly one-fourth of them felt that it was not effective. Hardly, 13.2 per cent of the sample workers expressed that it was very effective. The implementation effectiveness was better in Sheohar, Nalanda and Gaya. The performance in Vaishali was dismal. The NREGA is a rights based intervention and most of the workers are ignorant of this. Non-involvement of NGOs, indifference of officials and elected representatives to disseminate such information to the community are some of the causes. In several places, the GP Sarpanch and *Sachiv* have been implementing the programme not as per the guidelines; denied employment to many. Several workers have little access to the GP level functionaries who are the key persons in the Scheme execution.

Table 46 : Perceptions about REGS impact on migration of unskilled adults

District (weights)	At household level						At village level					
	Conside- rably (2)	Mode- rately (1)	No effect (0)	Cannot say (-)	Score (%)		Conside- rably (2)	Mode- rately (1)	No effect (0)	Cannot say (-)	Score (%)	
Gaya	—	67	33	—	33.5		—	67	33	—	33.5	
		67.0 %	33.0 %					67.0 %	33.0 %			
Muzaffarpur	2	5	93	—	4.5		3	27	70	—	16.5	
	2.0%	5.0%	93.0%				3.0%	27.0%	70.0%			
Nalanda	2	60	38	—	32.0		2	59	39	—	31.5	
	2.0%	60.0%	38.0%				2.0%	59.0%	39.0%			
Purnea	4	41	—	—	24.5		3	46	51	—	26.0	
	4.0%	41.0%	55.0%				3.0%	46.0%	51.0%			
Sheohar	7	79	14	—	46.5		14	76	10	—	57.8	
	7.0 %	79.0 %	14.0 %				14.0 %	76.0 %	10.0 %			
Vaishali	1	9	82	8	6.0		—	—	98	2	—	
	1.0%	9.0%	82.0%	8.0%					98.0%	2.0%		
Total	16	261	315	8	25.1		22	275	301	2	26.6	
	2.7%	43.5%	52.5%	1.3%			3.7%	45.8%	50.2%	0.4%		

Table 47 : Distribution of workers by views on effectiveness of REGS implementation

District (weights)	Very effective (3)	Effective (2)	Less effective (1)	Not effective (0)	Cannot say (-)	Score (%)
Gaya	7 7.0%	55 55.0 %	16 16.0%	20 20.0 %	2 2.0 %	50.0
Muzaffarpur	2 2.0%	13 13.0%	80 80.0%	1 1.0%	4 4.0%	38.8
Nalanda	55 55.0%	2 2.0%	3 3.0%	40 40.0%	—	57.3
Purnea	2 2.0%	22 22.0 %	38 38.0%	25 25.0 %	13 13.0 %	33.7
Sheohar	13 13.0%	52 52.0 %	34 34.0%	1 1.0 %	—	59.0
Vaishali	—	—	16 16.0%	61 61.0%	23 23.0%	6.92
Total	79 13.2%	144 24.0%	187 31.2%	148 24.7%	42 7.0%	42.5

The contribution of GP, officials, and community awareness to the observed effectiveness was assessed by the responses of the workers and the relevant information is presented in Tables 48 to 50.

About 75 per cent of workers opined that Sarpanch and GP members have contributed to a large extent to the (observed) implementation effectiveness of REGS. It is to be noted that the overall implementation effectiveness of REGS was 42.5 per cent. On the whole, the workers felt that GP Sarpanch and members have played a significant role (89 per cent) in the execution of REGS. However in Purnea, the opinion score was 70 per cent only (Table 48).

Table 48 : Distribution of workers by opinions on contribution of Sarpanch and GP members to effective implementation of REGS

District (weights)	Large extent (2)	To some extent (1)	Not at all (0)	Cannot say (-)	Total	Score (%)
Gaya	74 74.0%	22 22.0 %	2 2.0%	—	100 100.0%	86.7
Muzaffarpur	96 96.0%	3 3.0%	1 1.0%	—	100 100.0%	97.5
Nalanda	96 96.0%	3 3.0%	—	1 1.0%	100 100.0%	98.4
Purnea	40 40.0%	42 42.0 %	5 5.0%	13 13.0 %	100 100.0%	70.1
Sheohar	79 79.0%	20 20.0 %	1 1.0%	—	100 100.0%	89.0
Vaishali	65 65.0%	14 14.0%	—	21 21.0%	100 100.0%	91.1
Total	447 74.5%	107 17.8%	9 1.5%	37 6.2%	600 100.0%	88.9

The role of officials in the Scheme implementation and making it effective was second to Gram Panchayat. About 48 per cent of the workers felt that the officials contributed to a large extent for the success of REGS. The overall contribution of officials to implementation effectiveness was around 66 per cent (see Table 49).

In districts such as Gaya (85 per cent), Vaishali (81 per cent) and Nalanda (75 per cent) the contribution of officials was impressive. The reasons for their passive role in Purnea and Sheohar need to be identified.

Table 49 : Distribution of workers by opinions on contribution of officials to effective implementation of REGS

District (weights)	Large extent (2)	To some extent (1)	Not at all (0)	Cannot say (-)	Total	Score (%)
Gaya	71 71.0%	25 25.0 %	2 2.0%	—	100 100.0%	85.2
Muzaffarpur	60 60.0%	19 19.0%	19 19.0%	2 2.0%	100 100.0%	70.9
Nalanda	50 50.0%	50 50.0%	—	—	100 100.0%	75.0
Purnea	21 21.0%	21 21.0 %	44 44.0%	14 14.0 %	100 100.0%	36.6
Sheohar	35 35.0%	27 27.0 %	38 38.0%	—	100 100.0%	48.5
Vaishali	51 51.0%	28 28.0%	1 1.0%	20 20.0%	100 100.0%	81.3
Total	288 48.0%	170 28.3%	104 17.3%	38 6.3%	600 100.0%	66.4

The contribution of community awareness to make REGS implementation effective was above average (57 per cent) and its effectiveness was found high only in Muzaffarpur.

Workers of Muzaffarpur, Gaya and Nalanda could realise that awareness of community would certainly improve the REGS implementation effectively. Therefore, the state administration should pay greater attention to awareness building and community mobilisation.

If planning and implementation of schemes / programmes are transparent and the delivery system becomes more responsive and accountable, people's awareness / knowledge about decision making at GP level would improve. Table 51 reveals the effect of REGS on the perceptions of the workers on this dimension. The average score indicates that such effect was an average one (50 per cent). In Sheohar and Muzaffarpur, the people's knowledge about decision-making at GP level was relatively higher.

Table 50 : Distribution of workers by opinions on contribution of awareness levels of community to effective implementation of REGS

District (weights)	Large extent (2)	To some extent (1)	Not at all (0)	Cannot say (-)	Total	Score (%)
Gaya	59 59.0%	13 13.0 %	25 25.0%	3 3.0 %	100 100.0 %	67.5
Muzaffarpur	79 79.0%	19 19.0%	2 2.0%	—	100 100.0 %	88.5
Nalanda	36 36.0%	61 61.0%	3 3.0%	—	100 100.0 %	66.5
Purnea	13 13.0%	5 5.0 %	43 43.0%	39 39.0 %	100 100.0 %	25.4
Sheohar	1 1.0%	51 51.0 %	28 28.0%	20 20.0 %	100 100.0 %	33.1
Vaishali	23 23.0%	14 14.0%	35 35.0%	28 28.0%	100 100.0 %	41.7
Total	211 35.2%	163 27.2%	136 22.7%	90 15.0%	600 100.0%	57.3

Table 51 : Distribution of workers by opinions on perceptions on improved knowledge of GP decision-making

District (weights)	Large extent (2)	To some extent (1)	Not at all (0)	Cannot say (-)	Total	Score (%)
Gaya	8 8.0%	70 70.0%	16 16.0%	6 6.0%	100 100.0 %	43.0
Muzaffarpur	12 12.0%	71 71.0%	2 2.0%	15 15.0%	100 100.0 %	47.5
Nalanda	16 16.0%	56 56.0%	26 26.0%	2 2.0%	100 100.0 %	44.0
Purnea	22 22.0%	29 29.0%	44 44.0%	5 5.0%	100 100.0 %	36.5
Sheohar	78 78.0%	20 20.0%	2 2.0%	—	100 100.0 %	88.0
Vaishali	6 6.0%	44 44.0%	47 47.0%	3 3.0%	100 100.0 %	28.0
Total	142 23.7%	290 48.3%	137 22.8%	31 5.2%	600 100.0%	47.8

Tangible Benefits: Under ideal conditions all those households who demand unskilled labour work should be provided up to 100 days of work in a year. It is a demand-driven Scheme but in practice, at least in the initial year the field observations suggest that it is more supply-driven. Tables 52 to 56 deal with the benefits accrued to the workers / households from REGS in terms of employment and wage income. The Table also reveals that only one worker participated from each household. But our field visits and focus group discussions suggest that in many households more than one worker participated in REGS.

Table 52 : Caste-group-wise number of workers

Caste Group	No. of sample households	Total number of REGS workers
SC	418	418
ST	23	23
OBC	140	140
OC	19	19
Total	600	600

Caste-group-wise Employment Generation

The Caste-group-wise Employment Generation data suggest that STs and OBCs gained more from REGS during 2006-07 (Table 53) but overall the workers could get only 21 days of employment which was very low i.e. 21 days out of guaranteed 100 days of employment. This situation needs further probing as it defeats one of the major objectives of REGS.

Table 53 : Caste-group-wise employment generation

Caste Group	No. of Households	Average number of employment days per worker
SC	418	19
ST	23	34
OBC	140	28
OC	19	16
Total	600	21

The sample workers are grouped as per caste and days of employment and the relevant data are shown in Table 54. These data provide some startling facts in the implementation of NREGSB. About 68 per cent of SC workers got less than 20 days of employment; it was 27 per cent for STs and 51 per cent for OBCs. About 10.6 per cent of OBC workers could get employment between 61 and 80 days. Only one SC worker reported of having worked for 100 days of employment.

Table 54 : Distribution of households according to caste-group-wise and number of days of employment

Caste Group	Employment days						Total
	Up to 20 days	21-40	41-60	61-80	81-100	101 & above	
SC	249	82	20	15	1	1	368
ST	6	10	4	1	1	—	22
OBC	58	25	18	12	—	—	113
OC	12	4	1	—	—	—	17
Total	325	121	43	28	2	1	520

Note: Data on employment in respect of 80 workers were found inconsistent and thus excluded for this analysis.

Wage Employment data in the absence of REGS and under REGS show the additional gain to the different categories of households in the study GPs. It is very clear that inter-caste group employment disparities were corrected to some extent due to REGS (Table 55).

Table 55 : Employment and wages with and in the absence of REGS (per household)

Caste Group	Market wage rate (Rs. / day)	Employment through REGS	Total wage received from REGS (Rs. / per annum) *
SC	60	19	1230
ST	62	34	2172
OBC	56	28	1991
OC	71	16	1094
Total	60	21	1431

* No. of days of employment x wage paid under REGS.

Poverty line for Bihar Rural was Rs. 354 per capita per month during 2004-05.

The market wage rate was Rs. 60, which is less than NREGS rate of Rs. 71 (Now it is Rs.81 in Bihar). If the REGS had been planned and executed properly, the workers would have earned more; some of them might have crossed the poverty line as well. The average wage income received from REGS was Rs. 1431 per annum per household which worked out to about 16 per cent of the total (wage) income from all sources.

Overall, 21.23 days of employment was provided per worker. The three districts which showed some performance were Sheohar (38.8 days), Muzaffarpur (27.8 days), and Nalanda (21.3 days) (Table 56).

In sum, the average wage income per worker household was Rs. 1,432. The income gains per household varied substantially from Rs. 432 to Rs. 2,840. Thus, the State which needs schemes like REGS most, could not avail of it to the desired extent. Therefore, the REGS delivery system needs thorough revamping.

Table 56 : Employment provided and wage income earned under REGS per worker

	Employment provided per worker	Average wage income per household
Gaya	16.8	1031
Muzaffarpur	27.8	1857
Nalanda	21.3	1397
Purnea	10.8	622
Sheohar	38.8	2840
Vaishali	6.09	432
Total	21.23	1432

Table 57 presents data on the shares of SCs, STs and women in the employment generated under NREGS during 2006-07. The average number of days of employment among the sample workers was 21.2 days but for SCs & STs it was about 19.6 days. However, women workers could get more number of days of employment (26.2 days).

Table 57 : Share of socially disadvantaged in employment (2006-07)

District	SCs & STs		Women	
	Average No. of days of employ- ment	% Share of employ- ment	Average No. of days of employment	% Share of employment
Gaya	17.3	97.2	15.3	21.7
Muzaffarpur	25.1	69.2	3.5	0.3
Nalanda	21.8	93.8	25.0	66.7
Purnea	10.7	82.0	30.0	7.8
Sheohar	41.0	42.3	43.1	25.6
Vaishali	6.4	68.7	6.5	2.8
Total	19.6	69.2	26.2	25.1

Overall Effectiveness of NREGS

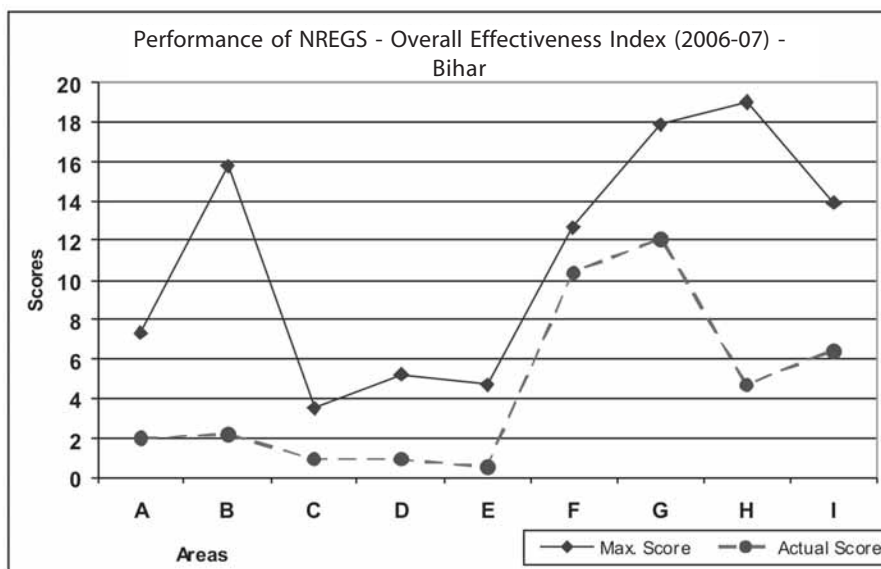
Based on the salient features of REGS, guidelines for its planning and implementation, participation and perceptions of workers and outcomes, key indicators / areas were identified. The importance (weightage) of each indicator / area was assessed by a panel of Judges. The average values (scores) after excluding outliers were taken as the maximum score whose sum is equal to 100. Using data from the secondary sources and largely from the worker schedule, the actual score against each indicator / area was arrived at for all the six study districts of Bihar. These results are shown in Table 58.

The overall effectiveness scores varied between 33 per cent (Gaya, Nalanda, Purnea and Vaishali) and 45 per cent (Muzaffarpur). No efforts to bring awareness among the people, indifference of the delivery system in the low performing districts (e.g. Gaya, Purnea and Vaishali, are the major causes. Even this level of performance was on account of scores in two areas, viz., issue of job cards and time taken for provision of employment and payment of wages. The workers were not aware that they can demand work (duration and time period of work). In reality, the GP Secretary was submitting the applications to PO for sanction of works and once approved, the workers were asked to participate – a supply-driven employment generation schemes at that. In such a situation, the workers were of the opinion that there were no delays in getting the employment. The focused group discussions have clearly indicated that most of the workers were asked to pay (Rs. 25 – Rs. 50) towards photo and issue of job cards. Similarly, in the absence of wage slips and use of attendance register in the place of muster roll, the delays were not assessed. Once adjusted for these deficiencies, the overall score would be even lower (about 30 per cent). The score on the key indicator, i.e., average number of days of employment per household was itself very low (around 21 days). It is to be noted that utilisation of funds in the selected districts (as per the official records) was varying from 32 per cent (Sheohar) to 86 per cent (Purnea). Thus, the employment generation and overall effectiveness scores are hardly in tune with the funds utilisation.

Performance of REGS in Bihar 129

The low awareness scores (1.04 to 3.73 out of 15.8) warn that the State has to invest massively on social mobilisation and awareness building. Little concern by the delivery system to ensure transparency is clearly reflected by the scores on 'Display of NREGA related information at the GP'. The delivery system should be more responsive in future by providing the mandatory facilities at the worksites and promoting people's participation.

The scores on various indicators / areas suggest that the State, district, block and local administration should take the NREGS planning and implementation more seriously and challengingly. This approach alone can help ensure livelihood security to the poor and unemployed.



A: General; B: Awareness of workers; C: Display of information on works and wages at GP; D: Worksite facilities; E: Participation of workers in GS and Social Audits; F: Issue of job card and time taken for provision of employment; G: Payment of wages (within 15 days and full payment); H: Gains / Benefits; I : Perceptions of workers

**Table 58 : Performance of Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS)
- Overall Effectiveness Index (2006-07) – Bihar**

Areas (Indicators)	Maximum score	Gaya	Muzaffarpur	Nalanda	Purnea	Sheohar	Vaishali	Bihar	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
A. General		7.3	1.15	2.85	2.9	2.83	1.07	2.08	1.97
- Convergence of NREGS with other rural development programmes		2.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
- Innovations		2.0	-	0.5*	-	-	-	-	-
- Utilisation of funds		3.3	1.15	2.35	2.9	2.83	1.07	2.08	1.97
B. Awareness of workers		15.8	1.94	3.73	3.31	1.04	2.84	1.8	2.16
- About NREGA provisions (days of employment, unemployment allowance, wages to be paid, time limit for payment of wages etc.)		4.8	1.58	1.19	1.14	0.25	0.73	0.89	0.73
- About RTI		1.5	0.0	0.01	0.7	0.0	0.03	0.01	0.13
- About Social Audit		2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.02	0.07	0.01	0.01
- About Official to be contacted and procedure for seeking work		3.1	0.31	1.24	0.22	0.4	0.99	0.31	0.59
- About VMC and Rozgar Sevak		1.6	0.02	0.48	0.0	0.01	0.14	0.37	0.11
- About works under REGS		2.6	0.03	0.81	1.25	0.36	0.88	0.21	0.59

(Contd...)

Table 58 : (Contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
C.	Display of information on works and wages at Gram Panchayat (GP)	3.5	0.07	0.1	1.71	0.59	1.64	0.24	0.9
D.	Worksite facilities (shade, creche, first aid, drinking water, muster roll)	5.2	0.74	2.15	0.54	0.58	1.35	0.28	0.94
E.	Participation of workers in Gram Sabha and Social Audits	4.7	0.8	0.47	0.38	0.85	0.0	0.56	0.52
F.	Issue of job card and time taken for provision of employment	12.7	8.46	12.7	7.83	9.46	10.66	12.63	10.36
	- Provision of work within 15 days	9.0	5.13	9.0	4.5	6.57	8.37	9.00	7.17
	- % of households which obtained the job cards free of cost	3.7	3.33	3.7	3.33	2.89	2.29	3.63	3.19
G.	Payment of wages (within 15 days and full payment)	17.9	13.08	13.39	10.04	11.00	13.97	11.43	12.05
	- Receipt of minimum and equal wages	4.8	3.67	3.86	1.44	1.82	4.49	1.87	2.86
	- Timely payment	5.9	5.9	5.84	5.9	5.78	5.9	5.49	5.80
	- Issue of wage slips	3.5	0.07	0.03	0.0	0.03	0.10	0.7	0.05
	- No problems in receipt of full wages	3.7	3.44	3.66	2.7	3.37	3.48	3.37	3.34
H.	Gains / Benefits	19.0	1.84	3.61	2.35	1.09	2.87	0.72	4.69
	- Average number of days of employment	6.3	1.06	1.75	1.34	0.68	2.44	0.38	1.34

(Contd...)

Table 58 : (Contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-	% share of SCs and STs in employment	3.5	0.62	0.42	0.58	0.4	0.27	0.33	2.62
-	% share of women in employment	3.6	0.16	1.44	0.37	0.01	0.16	0.01	0.73
-	% hhs with 100 days of employment	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.06	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
I.	Perceptions of workers	13.9	5.51	6.49	4.27	5.42	8.53	3.97	6.38
-	Realisation about 'Right to work'	1.9	0.13	1.27	0.89	0.51	0.32	0.09	0.54
-	Realisation about 'Right to information'	1.2	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.0	0.01	0.01	0.01
-	Quality of assets created	1.7	1.44	1.25	0.56	0.66	1.05	0.58	1.16
-	Usefulness of assets to community	1.7	1.26	0.83	0.66	0.59	1.53	0.31	0.86
-	Realisation that people can demand work from officials & GP	2.0	0.66	1.6	0.56	0.7	1.37	1.16	1.01
-	Effect of REGS - Increase of wages of unskilled workers in other works	1.9	0.57	0.38	0.09	1.86	1.88	1.44	1.48
-	Reduction in the migration due to NREGS	1.4	0.47	0.23	0.44	0.36	0.81		0.37
-	More informed about decision making at GP	1.1	0.47	0.52	0.48	0.40	0.97	0.31	0.53
-	Effectiveness of planning and implementation of REGS	1.0	0.5	0.39	0.57	0.34	0.59	0.07	0.42
J.	Overall Effectiveness of REGS	100.0	33.59	45.49	33.33	32.86	42.93	33.71	39.97

*:ATM cards for payment of wages.

CHAPTER V

Major Findings and Concluding Observations

- * The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and the Bihar Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS) was introduced in Feb. 2006. It is a revolutionary Scheme in the sense that it seeks to empower the workers and rural community in demanding services from the delivery system and ensures transparency in the activities of the delivery system.
- * Bihar is one of the backward states of India. The high rural-urban migration (54.7 per cent) and rural poverty ratios (42.12 per cent) lend support to this view.
- * The physical and financial performance of REGS during the financial year 2006-07 at different levels – State, district, block and Gram Panchayat levels, was reviewed in 12 Gram Panchayats of the six sample study districts. The spatial units capture the varying performance of BREGS. The major findings and observations are:
- * This process study focuses on some selected aspects, viz., institutional arrangements for planning and execution of REGS, awareness and capacity building, community participation, planning, implementation, monitoring, Social Audit, and outcomes of REGS during 2006-07.
- * The State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC) was not constituted until recently. However, about 60 per cent of the State Employment Guarantee (SEGC) Fund was utilised during 2006-07.
- * The District Deputy Development Commissioner acts as District Programme Coordinator as REGS. Similarly, the BDO is entrusted with the task of REGS at block level and acts as the Block Programme Officer (BPO). *Mukhiya* is the key person for planning and implementation of REGS along with the Panchayat Secretary. In 2006-07, the State had not established any 'MIS' for REGS or the 'on

line facility', though there are plans for introduction of dedicated on line service with interactive web portal for Bihar REGS in 2007-08 in collaboration with NIC.

- * Though the REGS guidelines envisage employment of hired staff and involvement of NGOs for carrying out some of the assigned functions, but such outsourcing had not taken place in 2006-07. Despite the availability of funds under the head 'Administrative expenses', the State has not taken steps to augment manpower for programme implementation in 2006-07. Hence, shortage of staff has also hampered the REGS work. The officials at various levels, therefore, felt over-burdened with the multiple responsibilities of REGS. Yet, the inaction on the part of the REGS officials sounds strange and begs the question as to who should balance whom.
- * REGS work has suffered to some extent because of pre-occupation of officials in the list preparation of BPL. In 2006-07, the prescribed inspections, monitoring as well as proper documentation were lacking. However, the documentation component has accelerated in 2007-08.
- * The minimum wages for REGS was Rs. 71 per day during 2006-07, which has been revised to Rs. 81 per day for unskilled labour in 2007-08.
- * In 2006-2007, Bihar distributed 35.63 lakh job cards, out of which, 15.37 lakh were given to SCs and 0.72 lakh to STs; coverage of the disadvantaged sections was high. The disbursement of job cards was highest in Nalanda, followed by Muzaffarpur and Gaya.
- * About 48 per cent of households with job cards had demanded work. Such low participation was on two counts — lack / low levels of awareness about procedures among workers and some households have applied for job cards in anticipation of some benefits in future other than wage employment.
- * As per official statistics, almost 99 per cent of households demanding employment were provided employment. Focused Group

Major Findings and Concluding Observations 135

Discussions (FGDs) have indicated that whatever employment generated was shown as demand.

- * The participation of women in REGS is a progressive step towards social equity. However, it is discouraging to note that the share of women in total number of the participating households was only 17.4 per cent during 2006-07. Of course, their shares are growing in Nalanda (28.9 per cent) and Purnea (28.9 per cent).
- * The level of awareness about entitlements, under REGS among the workers was low (22.4 per cent). Only 8.5 per cent workers had Knowledge about RTI and 0.7 per cent knew about the Social Audit which is alarming. This calls for massive awareness and mobilisation at Gram Panchayat level through Panchayat functionaries, officials and media persons. The study sample workers were not well informed about the officials to be contacted for redressal of job card related grievances. Only 31.3 per cent were aware about who and where to contact, if job cards were not given. Regarding the information that if work is not given within 15 days, only 12.3 per cent were aware whom to contact in that situation. Only 13 per cent were aware about whom to contact if wages are not paid within 15 days. Since REGS is based on 'Right to Work, then they must be made fully sensitised about whom to contact etc.
- * The State has not involved NGOs or CBOs in REGS. It could not fully make use of the funds available due to delays in obtaining due technical and administrative sanction of works, and the consequent delays in scheme implementation. The funds in 2006-07 could not be fully utilised due to lack of proper REGS implementation strategy in Bihar and the lack of implementation clarity as well as understanding at district, block and Gram Panchayat levels.
- * The capacity building efforts to equip the officials and elected representatives (PRIs) were highly inadequate and this has affected adversely the REGS in a large measure.

136 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....*

- * The degree of awareness and active involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions at district and block levels in decision-making and implementation of NREGB was highly varying. There is need for capacity building of the officials and PRI functionaries. At Gram Panchayat level too, additional efforts have to be made to properly orient the functionaries with emphasis on attitudinal change.
- * The funds utilisation was as about 60 per cent. Among the six selected districts, Nalanda has topped in utilisation of funds (87.9 per cent) followed by Purnea (85.7 per cent). The poor performers were Sheohar (32.4 per cent) and Gaya (35.02 per cent).
- * REGS had generated 596.9 lakh persondays of employment for 36.59 lakh participating households during the reference year. On an average, 16.4 days of employment was given to the working households. The share of SCs & STs in total employment generated was 50.3 per cent. Inter-district variations in employment generated per household were substantial (e.g. it was 4.7 days in Gaya and 60.6 days in Muzaffarpur). The least satisfactory performance is exhibited by Gaya (4.7 days) and Purnea (6.9 days). It is reported that about only 3.6 per cent of the households could obtain 100 days of employment.
- * Inter-block and intra-block (across GPs) performance of REGS both in terms of funds use and employment generated per household varied substantially. These are attributable to the relatively low capabilities and concerns of GP (*Mukhiya, Sachiv and Rozgar Sahayak*) and due to delays in release of funds. Most of the works taken up included rural connectivity, flood control protection work and micro-irrigation.
- * The cost of generating one day of employment was Rs.119 in Bihar during 2006-07. The costs varied across the districts and it was around Rs. 125 in Vaishali and Gaya. The lowest cost was in Purnea (Rs75).
- * As per the survey data, the majority of the workers belonged to scheduled castes, followed by other backward castes. Of the sample

Major Findings and Concluding Observations 137

workers almost 42.0 per cent were poor. Most of the job cards (78.7 per cent) were issued in the name of males. Nearly two-thirds of workers are males. These figures raise doubts about the gender bias in the rural labour market. In the focused group discussion it was reported that many of the workers have paid amounts ranging from Rs. 25 to Rs. 50 to the GP Sarpanch / Secretary for obtaining job cards. The maintenance of job cards was not satisfactory. In fact, it was during our fieldwork that the job card entries were updated. Delays in provision of work were reported (20.5 per cent) and most of the complaints received at the district level include delays in getting employment and payment of wages. Wages were paid equally for men and women in cash at the rate of Rs. 71 per day per worker. Delays in wage payment (more than 15 days) were not significant and problems in receiving full wages were reported. None was paid unemployment allowance. Only 63.8 per cent reported receiving the minimum wages

- * It is disquieting that most of the obligatory facilities like creche, shelter etc., were not provided at the worksites. Neither payments were made for sharpening tools nor were workers provided with improvised tools (to reduce drudgery).
- * As per the official statistics, the average number of employment days was 16.4 and the wage earnings amounted to Rs. 1164 per household through REGS. About one per cent of the worker households were provided with 100 days of employment. The sample data suggest that about 21 days of work was given, on an average, in Bihar during 2006-07 which implies a wage income of only Rs.1431 per household. Most of the workers got less than 40 days of employment. It is interesting to note that of the sample worker households only one got more than 100 days of employment.
- * About 64.5 per cent of the workers reported that they could demand services from the GP; the responses relating to the 'officials' in this regard were comparatively lower at 36.2 per cent. About 11.8 per

cent of the households have mentioned that the REGS has facilitated emergence of partnerships among local institutions. It is encouraging that 28.3 per cent of the workers have realised their right to work. As far as the quality of assets created under REGS is concerned, they were rated as useful (50.8 per cent). About 50.2 per cent felt that REGS had no impact on slowing or preventing 'push' migration. As per the perception of workers, the overall performance of REGS was satisfactory (13.2 per cent); the GPs' contribution to the observed performance was high (74.5 per cent) followed by officials (48.0 per cent). Though 42.0 per cent of workers have mentioned that information on REGS was displayed at the GP, their opinions however indicate a low value about their (improved) knowledge about decision-making at GP level, which was 23.7 per cent.

- * Our focussed group discussions with the people point out that the provision of additional wage beyond 5 km from GP should be modified to beyond 3 km in backward and hilly regions and for effective supervision of REGS, additional manpower is needed. In 2007-08, the Rural Development department has reportedly filled the REGS posts. This initiative is expected to smoothen REGS implementation and the delivery system.
- * The Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs) were not properly functioning and only 7.7 per cent of the workers informed that VMCs were visiting worksites and 13.2 per cent reported their participation in Gram Sabhas. No Social Audit was done during 2006-07. However, the State desires to organise them in a large scale during 2007-08 as revealed by the REGS coordinators. .
- * In general, the impact of REGS on wages of unskilled workers in other activities was favourable. REGS has also resulted in some reduction in the migration of adult workers in search of work.
- * The effectiveness of REGS depends on raising the workers' knowledge about the Scheme. The demand is low hence the pressure is also low; therefore, the supply is equally slow and low.

Added to this, at times and in a few places, the local *Mukhiya* and Panchayat Secretary make it harder and complex for the targeted beneficiaries to benefit from the Scheme. The challenge is to empower the marginalised households to raise their voices in demanding their 'Right to Work' as a 'Fundamental Right' which is envisaged in the historic and revolutionary REGS. Bihar will benefit down the road, with the passage of time, and with the spread of equity and workers' empowerment.

- * Lack of awareness about REGS, RTI, Social Audit was low even among the elected representatives, and the *Gram Sachivs*. Training for (GP) Sarpanch and Panchayat *Sachivs* was inadequate. Hence they need to be trained.
- * BDOs /POs and the Panchayat *Sachivs* initiated the works as and when they desired rather than as a response to the workers' demand. The majority of the workers got work within the radius of their Gram Panchayats.
- * Workers got work on 'piece-rate' in general. GP has not paid any money to workers for sharpening of tools. Neither did it provide any improvised tools at work place to reduce their drudgery.
- * Drinking water and first aid box facilities were not provided at many worksites. Crèche facility and shade facility were also not provided.
- * Vigilance and Monitoring Committees (VMCs) were hardly functional and almost non-existent in many GPs. Awareness level about RTI also very low among the respondents. The Social audit component was missing in the districts. Most of the respondents were not clear about Social Audit and its benefits.
- * The involvement of NGOs in REGS was limited to Vaishali and Muzaffarpur districts. This needs to be expanded.

CHAPTER VI

Towards Effective Implementation of REGS

The present study has undoubtedly brought out the following, which if sufficiently addressed, would ensure successful accomplishment of the goals of REGS in Bihar besides enhancing the capacities of the functionaries.

- * There is need to launch village level campaigns for raising awareness about REGS, RTI and Social Audit. It is appropriate to build the capabilities of CBOs and NGOs which can be entrusted with community mobilisation and participation tasks. This among other strategies would make REGS demand-driven and its development process endogenous. NGOs and CBOs can be involved in the campaign for awareness generation as well as for playing the role of a watchdog on behalf of the civic society. They can also oversee the registration and issue of job cards and guide the *Rozgaris* in generating demand-based employment.
- * Provision of 100 days of employment and creation of quality assets should remain a major concern of the implementing agencies.
- * NGOs should train the beneficiaries to involve themselves effectively in the Gram Sabha meetings, community based monitoring, Social Audit and third party evaluation. The paradigm of popular participation in decision-making along with public scrutiny can be achieved through the Gram Sabha and Social Audit. Conduct of Social Audits and Gram Sabhas regularly and effective functioning of VMCs are pre-requisites from the view point of good governance.
- * Systematic training is needed for all functionaries at the GP level on the procedures to be followed in the implementation of REGS, conduct of Social Audit and ensuring transparency.
- * The *Rozgar Sewak*, and the Mate should be appointed at the earliest to facilitate community mobilisation, awareness building,

Towards Effective Implementation of REGS 141

counseling and guidance to workers. Recruitment of some more JEs and *Gram Sachivs* would help in smoothening the implementation process.

- * The present REGS software developed by NIC should be further modified so that MIS would be effective and accessible to all. E-muster roll, E-Biometrics, and a dedicated REGS website will go a long way in fostering transparency, accountability and effectiveness of implementation.
- * In a backward State like Bihar, where agricultural wages are lower than the minimum wages, the impact of REGS on labour market including migration is positive and encouraging. As the prospects of rainfed agriculture are erratic with low (average) levels of yields, the rise in wages would further increase the costs of cultivation. In this process, agriculture may turn out to be less lucrative, viable. This aspect deserves special attention by the policy makers.
- * Issuance of 'wage slips' (computerised or manuals printed) would ensure transparency and accountability of the officials.
- * The choice of works, if done in a participatory manner, would certainly benefit the agriculture sector. The consequent productivity rise in the sector would certainly sustain the increase in wages. All efforts should be made to mobilise the community, more so with focus on small farmers and labourers and enlist their participation in the REGS. This will also help in correcting the erring officials and elected representatives.

Annexure

NREGA in Bihar (2006-2007): Observations from the Field

- * Bihar is in learning mode of REGS — It is a late starter.
- * The State Employment Council has been recently constituted.
- * No NGO is working at the State level for REGS in collaboration with the State Rural Development Department. There are NGOs working for awareness creation about REGS in the Wada NA Todo Campaign at the micro-level.
- * DDC and BDOs (POs) need to be sensitised more about the programme. Their present level of knowledge about REGS in most of the districts is inadequate. BDOs show little interest in NREGS.
- * No effort has been made to establish an MIS at the block and district levels.
- * Widespread corruption has been reported in Panchayats for issuing job cards to applicants. The *Mukhiya* and The Panchayat Secretary are generally the custodians of the job cards. Applications for work are not entertained by *Mukhiyas* and Panchayat Secretaries. Those who manage to give the application for employment are not provided any receipt.
- * No district can claim to have given 100 days of employment to any NREGA job cardholder. No district has paid any unemployment allowance to applicants on not being given work after 15 days. The Vigilance and Monitoring Committee are defunct.
- * The Panchayat Secretary is the key player in the implementation of REGS provisions and field observations indicate that some of them could successfully manipulate the provisions.
- * No Social Audit has taken place in the study districts. Of course, some claims have been made in some districts.
- * The DDC and his team are mainly engaged in preparation of the Below Poverty Line list in each Panchayat. Very few Gram Sabhas

seem to have been held in the REGS districts in 2006-07. Even where they are held, it is *Mukhiya* and their henchmen who dominate to their advantage.

- * Publicity / awareness creation, capacity building have to be done at the Gram Panchayat level on a war footing to disseminate information regarding objectives, approach etc., to benefit the (poor) people.
- * Unsuccessful innovation: In Kanti block of Muzaffarpur there are 36 NREGS job cardholders having SBI ATM Cards. There has also been an attempt by a local NGO (NIRDESH) to give this facility through local intervention. But, the ATM cardholders are skeptical of using it because of low proficiency in ATM operating skills. They prefer cash payment to ATM withdrawals. Sheohar district has used REGS in some positive direction. They used it for activity like Flood Embankment (asset) Creation, which proved beneficial in the recent floods. It acted as a flood proofing mechanism too. SHEOHAR shows some signs of positive results in prevention of migration of labour from the district.
- * There is no unanimity of views on payment of wages. It appears that there is lack of understanding about REGS mechanisms.
- * Material : wage (60: 40) ratio is not well understood.
- * Most of the work is *mitti katai*. Road filling , culverts, pyne cleaning etc.,
- * Sheohar has problems in *mitti katai* work due to little gap between cultivable fields and roads.
- * Creche, shade for rest, water, or any mandatory provisions under REGS are non-existent.
- * There is hardly any convergence of REGS with other Rural development (anti-poverty) schemes. Whatever little convergence is there is accidental and not planned or designed.

144 *Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment....*

- * REGS Posters, books in local dialects are far and few in the districts.
- * REGS job cardholders and those who have received payments have complained about corruption in payment. They are never paid full wages or due payments. Some percentage is greased off by the *Mukhiya* or the Panchayat Secretary.
- * In many districts, REGS job cardholders are mostly males. Gender factor is significant (there were representations to ANSISS team that their claim for REGS job has been overlooked or sidetracked).
- * There are reports of REGS job cards being given to those who have been traditional supporters of the *Mukhiya* in the Panchayat elections. His close supporters are given preferential treatment. The *Mukhiya* uses job card distribution as reward of personal loyalty to him.
- * Economic, social and geographical backwardness has helped in feudalising REGS for the benefit of the rich and the powerful *Mukhiya Raj*.

Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation

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To become a nodal research and training centre with special focus on Rural Wage Employment Programmes and Poverty Alleviation.

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Training activities relating to Planning and Management of Wage Employment Programmes, Assessment of Impact of Rural Development Programmes on Rural Poverty Reduction and Livelihood Security.

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- Conducting research on poverty and sustainable livelihoods
- Assess periodically the effectiveness of wage employment programmes
- Documentation of successful cases / best practices
- Develop training modules and course material in a partnership mode
- Organize training programmes for RD functionaries of wage employment programmes
- Conduct workshops on the major development issues of poverty, labour markets and wage employment programmes to sensitise policy makers.

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