

NREGA Reforms Building Rural India

First Annual Report

of the National Consortium of Civil Society Organizations on NREGA
2008 – 09



August 2009



The National Consortium on NREGA is a loosely federated collective of civil society organisations (CSOs) that have come together to try and make NREGA a success. The Consortium seeks to move beyond the more traditional civil society role of acting as a watchdog for NREGA. The idea is to actively participate in making NREGA effective and its implementation true to the spirit of the objectives of the Act. This, of course, incorporates the vigilance role but focuses on an integrated approach to planning, implementation and social audit of NREGA works. The perspective of the Consortium is to look at NREGA as not merely giving rise to wage employment but leading to equity, food self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihoods in rural India. We also believe that NREGA affords an unprecedented opportunity for governance reform at the grass roots. Even while recognising the great difficulties CSOs and panchayat raj institutions (PRIs) have faced in working together, a key element of the Consortium's strategy is to facilitate partnerships between grass-roots CSOs and PRIs, given the crucial role assigned to PRIs under NREGA.

The Consortium gives greatest importance to work with women, Adivasis, Dalits, landless and small and marginal farmers, the old and the challenged, especially in the rainfed areas of India. Our vision is that work done under NREGA would create the necessary water infrastructure on whose basis a whole range of nature-based livelihood opportunities could be created for the disadvantaged. Planning for this convergence needs also to be done co-terminus with NREGA work.

The Consortium believes that a diversity of approaches, which builds on the common ground outlined here, only gives strength to our work. The Consortium's members include grass-roots CSOs working directly with PRIs as also a number of support agencies that provide technical/institutional/logistical backstopping and financial support to these grass-roots CSOs. Different agencies could also combine a range of roles.

Anyone subscribing to what is said here and wanting to contribute in any of these specific respects is welcome to join the Consortium, which is an inclusive entity. The Consortium opposes discrimination of any form based on grounds of region, community, caste, religion, gender or colour. Individuals or agencies engaging in such discrimination are not eligible to be members of the Consortium. Our aim is to enable work of the highest possible quality to take place across the length and breadth of India so that the potential of NREGA is realised. The Consortium will help document innovations and good practices. It will promote learning across contexts and facilitate reform of policies and practices at the state and national levels.

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NREGA REFORMS

BUILDING RURAL INDIA

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It is a great privilege for me to be a part of the National Consortium of Civil Society Organizations on NREGA and to have prepared this report on its work. The Consortium's work is an affirmation of faith in learning as it breaks from entrenched polarised mindsets to tread a new path of partnerships. Consortium partners have, in all humility, joined hands with India's poor and resolved to strengthen *their* determination to walk out of the shadows they have been pushed into. This is the promise NREGA holds out as it moves forward an idea whose time has come, even while struggling to forge a future brimming with possibilities of transformation. To all partners of the National Consortium on NREGA, this report owes the greatest debt of gratitude, with the hope that it has been able to do justice to them and their work

On behalf of the Consortium, I would like to thank the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, UNDP, New Delhi, the state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand, the Ford Foundation, New Delhi, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Mumbai, Arghyam Trust, Bangalore, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, New Delhi, Chetna Organic, Hyderabad, American India Foundation, New Delhi and Concern India, Bhubaneshwar, for their support.

I would also like to thank members of the Core Team of Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) - Debashis Banerji, Mridula Banerji, Rangu Rao, Nivedita Banerji, P.S. Vijay Shankar, Jyotsna Jain, Pinky Brahmachaudhury and Shobhit Jain - for their commitment, vision and support; SPS Core Team Member, Mihir Shah, who is now Member, Planning Commission, for guiding the work of the Consortium and for going through drafts of this report, and for performing both tasks lovingly and painstakingly; Jean Dreze, Nandan Nilekani and Srikanth Nadhamuni for reviewing some of the ideas expressed here; Ravi Kumar of WASSAN for preparing the format in which partners would submit their inputs; and my SPS colleagues, Sarat Rath and Anurag Pande, for their invaluable assistance in the work of the Consortium and in bringing out this report.

The report tries to draw together learnings from the experience of the past two years. We are optimistic that these will find a place in the public debate on how NREGA must be reformed. We are also hopeful that the report is able to provide a flavour of not only the huge effort that has gone into the work of the Consortium partners, but also the very difficult circumstances in which it has been attempted.

Pramathesh Ambasta
National Coordinator

August 2009

PREFACE

This is an unusual report about an unusual effort. Civil society in India is not renowned for work based on partnerships. The best NGO work tends to create oases of excellence. But the National Consortium of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) for NREGA is an exception to this generalisation.

Here is a remarkable example of organisations building partnerships with a wide array of stakeholders, each partnership characterised by a unique approach and giving rise to distinctive strengths. These CSOs have first developed relationships with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), including Gram Panchayats (GP) and Gram Sabhas (GS), in some of the most backward and neglected districts of India. Something the voluntary sector has tended not to do, often for immediately understandable reasons of being opposed by elected representatives for the difficult questions they have tended to raise. But the partners of the National Consortium have sought to break this pattern and actively seek out PRIs in the recognition that they are the constitutional face of Indian democracy at the grass-roots. Reflecting the immense diversity of this vast nation the strategies adopted by the CSOs for building these partnerships have been different in each case. They have supported GPs and GSs in various aspects of planning, implementation and social audit of NREGA work.

On the foundation of this growing engagement with PRIs, the CSOs have sought to partner the state and central governments. They have worked with them to develop creative training material, mainstream innovative ideas and help build capacities of government functionaries. And they have done so in the form of a National Consortium of CSOs, which is in itself a unique achievement, as NGOs tend not to work easily with each other, for a variety of not very good reasons. Bucking this trend, the Consortium now has 51 CSO partners working across 58 blocks of 44 most backward districts in 11 states of India. The work of the Consortium is anchored by Pramathesh Ambasta, Co-Founder, Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) and the National Coordinator of the Consortium, who needs to be congratulated for putting together this excellent report.

The Consortium is committed to excellence but not merely for its own sake. The broader goal is to strengthen PRIs and thereby Indian democracy at the grass-roots, to generate greater awareness and engender deeper capacities among NREGA stakeholders, as also to carry forward an agenda of NREGA reforms, which the Consortium partners believe is essential for the realisation of the enormous unrealised potential of this revolutionary Act. Thus, the work of the Consortium provides great emphasis to policy advocacy, showcasing the work of its partners as an example of the direction NREGA reforms need to take.

The NREGA promises the largest ever employment programme in human history. But it is not only its size that is new. It also seeks to mark a radical break with the past in the implementation process. It rejects a top-down contractor-based approach and seeks to make

planning truly people-centred, a bottom-up approach based on the needs and perceptions of the people.

The difficulty is that adequate provisions have not yet been made to ensure that a break from the past can become real in comprehensive terms. The GPs who are to be the main implementing agency do not have requisite human resources to plan and implement NREGA. There is still a tendency for states or districts to dictate the works to be carried out and there is little evidence on the ground of planning happening with the genuine involvement of the GP and GS.

It is here that the work of the National Consortium becomes so important. Not only are Consortium partners enabling PRIs to carry out their responsibilities effectively, they are also providing the state a clearer idea of the kinds of reforms that need to be urgently carried out in NREGA implementation for it to realise its full potential. Some of these ideas have been culled together in Chapter 10 of this report.

It is only when such ideas are effectively operationalised that NREGA will become a medium of transformation of India's countryside, which is its true destiny. Not many people know what data from the Rural Labour Enquiry of the National Sample Survey confirms, that a very high proportion of agricultural labour households in India actually owns land. The percentage is around 50 in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, 60 in Orissa and Uttar Pradesh and over 70 in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. And if we focus on Adivasis, the proportion shoots up to as high as 76-87 per cent in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

Why are these facts important? Because they help us understand that NREGA workers are not just consumers stimulating demand in a recessionary economy. They also include producers — millions of small and marginal farmers forced to work under NREGA because the productivity of their own farms is no longer enough to make ends meet. NREGA will become really powerful when it helps rebuild this decimated productivity of small farms. Public investment in the programme incentivises private investment by small farmers and gives them a chance to return to full-time farming. Work of Consortium partners in the poorest parts of the country shows how earthen dams on common land have recharged wells of those poor farmers who earlier worked as labourers to build these dams. These farmers are now busy making a series of investments to improve their own farms.

Thus, a mutually reinforcing relationship between investment and income is catalysed by NREGA. First, investment generates demand and income through the multiplier. Then, income stimulates investment via the accelerator. Giving rise to a spiralling cycle repeated in successive rounds. Although not usually deployed in such a context, the accelerator principle in macroeconomic theory describes the positive impact of growing incomes on private fixed investment. Rising incomes also improve capacity utilisation and happier expectations act as incentives for more investment. Under NREGA, farmers have come back to land they long abandoned, as increased output, in an atmosphere of renewed hope, spurs further investment. Converging NREGA with other programmes for rural livelihoods would carry this momentum forward in a positive upward spiral, which will broadbase the growth process via downstream multiplier-accelerator effects. Effectively a wage employment programme can thus be transformed into a source of sustainable livelihoods generating self-employment. Which would permit reductions in allocations for NREGA over time, not only because landed labourers get back to their own farms but also because of a general rise in demand for

labour in the rural economy.

Eleven years ago, in our book, *India's Drylands*, my colleagues and I sketched precisely this kind of scenario. With the key proviso that investments in an employment guarantee programme must be in productive, eco-friendly assets. This would ensure that the resultant growth dynamic is both sustainable (by regenerating the environment) and non-inflationary (by easing the agrarian constraint). Not only does demand need stimulation, growth has to be sustainable in both economic and ecological terms, especially in these times of climate change. So what we require is not just a stimulus a la Keynes but a specific new kind of stimulus a la Schumpeter!

There is no way this multiplier-accelerator synergy can fully come into play without the most important piece of the NREGA jigsaw falling into place – far-reaching governance reform. NREGA is a revolutionary Act that seeks to bring real democracy to India's grass-roots. By replacing the contractor raj, which has dominated rural development in India, with Panchayati Raj – planning, implementation and social audit of works by gram panchayats under the oversight of the Gram Sabha. This requires the creation of a new cadre of dedicated executive agencies serving panchayats, with a team of barefoot engineers and social mobilisers supporting them. Only then can NREGA yield rejuvenated watersheds and recharged water tables. Without which the multiplier-accelerator synergy will remain a distant dream.

NREGA has fallen short of its potential because the preparation needed for this radical Act was not in place before it was launched. Let us focus governance reforms on the 200 most backward districts or even better 2,000 most backward blocks. Where NREGA really matters and should have been restricted to in the first place. If a new architecture of implementation is put in place here, we could see not only the multiplier but a productivity enhancing accelerator in action that transforms livelihoods for millions of our poorest people, in a manner that is sustainable in both economic and ecological terms.

The work of the National Consortium of CSOs for NREGA is a significant initiative in demonstrating the effectiveness of such an approach as also in providing direction to reforms that would help NREGA fulfill its transformatory potential.

Dr. Mihir Shah
Member, Planning Commission
Government of India

August 2009

ONE

NATIONAL CONSORTIUM ON NREGA: AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Context

Two successive general elections in India since 2004 have brought back the poor, neglected and marginalized to the centre-stage, with the spotlight squarely on governance and development. This “other” India has spoken loud and clear to the few enclaves of prosperity that dot the country’s grim development landscape: if growth is not inclusive and broad-based, its wheels will come off, severely undermining the very fabric of Indian democracy.

India today presents a striking contrast of development and deprivation. Nearly two decades after the unleashing of economic reforms in India, there is no doubt that GDP growth has accelerated. The rate of GDP growth has consistently been above 5% during the last two decades (Nagaraj, 2008). India is the 12th largest economy in the world in terms of GDP and is also one of the fastest growing economies in the world today (World Bank, 2008).

Impressive as these achievements are, they pale into insignificance when confronted with the fact that after six decades of planned development, nearly 77 per cent of India’s population or over 800 million people, have a per capita consumption expenditure of less than or equal to Rs.20 per day (roughly \$2 in PPP terms) (NCEUS, 2007; Sengupta, A. et.al., 2008). The latest National Family Health Survey-3 (2005-06) shows that since the previous NFHS-2 survey of 1998-99, the proportion of anaemic children under-3 has gone up from 74% to 79%. Nearly half of India’s under-3 year children continue to remain underweight. India has the highest percentage (87%) of pregnant anaemic women in the world (World Bank, 2007).

A study Mihir Shah *et al* (1998) carried out for the Ministry of Finance, Government of India and the UNDP establishes the fact that there is a concentration of poverty and distress in the drylands of India, as also its hilly and tribal areas. It has been shown that “low-income and poorly-performing major states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa and Assam, have not only persisted with their low-growth syndrome but have also experienced further deceleration in growth rates in the 1990s” (EPWRF, 2003, p.26). Deaton and Dreze (2002) find strong evidence of divergence in per capita consumption across states in the

1990s. Growth rates of per capita expenditure point to a significant increase in rural-urban inequalities at the all-India level, and also within most individual states. They conclude that rising inequality within states has dampened the effects of growth on poverty reduction. This echoes the findings of Datt and Ravallion (2002) who find that “the geographic and sectoral pattern of India’s growth process has greatly attenuated its aggregate impact on poverty” (p.1).

This phenomenon of regional imbalance in India’s development finds official recognition in the Report of the Inter-Ministry Task Group on Redressing Growing Regional Imbalances (Planning Commission, 2005) that has developed a list of “170 most backward districts including 55 extremist affected districts”. Consequently, there is a severe undermining of belief in the system in these regions, a situation which is fertile ground for fostering disaffection and discontent. The Union Home Ministry now believes that a quarter to a third of India’s districts face the threat of extremist violence. At the other end of the emotional spectrum, thousands of farmers are continuing to commit suicide. This is no ordinary crisis. It reflects the complete breakdown of governance in large parts of the country (Shah, 2007).

While reforms have been unleashed for corporate India, the other India is crying out for “reforms” of another kind – reform of rural governance which focus on the most marginalised and dispossessed sections of our society. Why should the process of reform be confined to the government’s dealings with the corporate sector? The poor and marginalised in this country, surely the most important constituents of the electorate, have for years been crying out for reform. But virtually no political party has quite bothered to listen to them. An agenda of reforms with the rural masses at the centre would be both good economics and good politics.

It’s sad that in our political landscape while the Right appears to have a blind spot about market failure in public goods and in achieving equity and ecological balance, the Left appears strangely unconcerned about the urgent need for reforms in the way the public sector has functioned in India, especially in rural development. The Right is blind to market failure, the Left to “government failure”. Thus, in its hurry to attribute all of India’s ills to “neo-liberal” economic policies, the Left forgets the long history of non-performance of the public sector in rural India. We must remember that there is a massive task to be undertaken to reform the state in its interface with the poorest people in the land. The delivery systems of government, be they employment programmes, primary health centres or schools are all virtually non-functional. Indeed, one could say, that the weaker the voice of the people, the more intense is the malaise of the public sector. Indices of corruption and inefficiency rise exponentially as you move deeper into the Indian hinterland. The implications of which can at times be life-threatening. For the public sector is often the sole life-line of people in these areas.

1.2 Why the Consortium?

It is in this context that NREGA acquires great significance. The passage of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 marks a new chapter in the country when the unorganized poor have won the right to work after a long struggle spanning several decades.

This is a historic opportunity, replete with tremendous possibilities. For the NREGA is different from any other government initiative in one most significant respect. It is not a welfare scheme ordinarily understood, dependent on the wilful munificence of governments. Its implementation depends on the demand of the people who want work. On the one hand, governments will not provide work unless demanded by those who want it. On the other hand, governments will have to provide work if there is a demand for it.

At the same time, it is also true that there are those who believe that it is a waste of precious public money. They point to the rampant corruption that has plagued such programmes in the past. There is a real danger that NREGA will go the way of all such employment initiatives in India's chequered development history:

- Poor planning
- Massive corruption
- Lack of awareness among intended beneficiaries
- Lack of implementation capability among Gram Panchayats (GPs, the chief implementing agency)
- Lack of backstopping support

It is a moment when grassroots organisations across the country are called upon to resolve to make the Act work on the ground. Indeed, it is precisely the recognition of the huge possibilities and the awareness of the equally potent pitfalls on the way that prompted several grassroots organizations to come together to form the National Consortium on NREGA, with a resolve to work closely with gram panchayats to make NREGA a success.

When the Consortium's partners began work, the first task they set for themselves was to gain an organic insight into the status of NREGA implementation on the ground. They realized that while the Act and its operational guidelines had created a very positive and enabling framework for empowerment of the poorest of the country, much needed to be done to translate this potential into reality. Some of these problems observed on the ground are described below.

1.2.1 Lack of Full-time Professionals

There is no way NREGA can realise its full potential if implemented within the same moribund structure of governance that has characterised rural India since independence. A radically new programme also makes dramatically new demands from the system, requirements that the public sector in rural development, as it exists today, is completely unprepared for.

Consortium partners in Bolangir and Nuapada districts of Orissa found that BDOs are doubling up as NREGA Programme Officers. In Dahod and Panchmahals districts in Gujarat, it was found that officers are being sent on deputation from other government departments, particularly the irrigation department, as POs. In Pohri block of Shivpuri district in Madhya Pradesh, the Panchayat Inspector is also PO NREGA. In Tikamgarh and Khandwa districts of MP, the CEOs of Block Panchayats have been given additional charge of NREGA. In Raigarh, Sarguja and Rajnandgaon districts of Chhatisgarh, uncertainty of tenure and resulting discontinuity have had an adverse impact on NREGA work. POs are demoralized and unmotivated and feel that the work done by them has come to nothing. In Orissa's Bolangir district, engineers of line departments have been given additional responsibility of NREGA.

For a block of 140 villages, there are only 4-5 Junior Engineers (JEs), two of whom are given additional responsibility for NREGA, while the others continue with their normal departmental work. These two JEs in-charge of NREGA also look after other schemes such as the Backward Regions Grant Fund, Indira Awas Yojana, Revised Long Term Action Plan for KBK, Biju-KBK Scheme, MPLAD and DPAP. The documentation and procedural requirements of NREGA often make it an unattractive proposition as compared to these other schemes where financial leakages are seen to be easier. Thus, the whole process of planning and design of works, implementation, measurement and payment is marked with poor attention to quality and long delays. In Chhatisgarh, the situation is no different. In Wardrafnagar block of Sarguja district, for instance, 4 technical assistants are shared across 72 gram panchayats. There is no pool of engineers available at the district either. In Raigarh and Jashpur districts, it was observed that where fresh JEs have been appointed, their tenure is again for a period of one year, after which it has to be renewed. The number of such JEs falls far short of what is required. Similar shortages of technical staff are reported from the Dahod and Panchmahals districts in Gujarat. In Tikamgarh and Shivpuri districts of MP, the Regional Engineering Services (RES) and other line department engineers have been given additional charge of NREGA. In Tikamgarh, some appointment of engineers at the block or district level have been made but under contract for a limited tenure. In Khandwa, there have been some contractual appointments but too few to make any difference. In Anuppur, also there is a shortage of technical personnel at the disposal of the GPs, as a result of which they are dependent on engineers of line departments posted at the block level.

These field observations of the Consortium partners found corroboration in the performance audit report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India¹ which found that 19 states had not appointed these officers in 70% of the blocks it surveyed. The CAG report said that every state government was required to appoint, in each block, a full-time Programme Officer (PO), exclusively dedicated to the implementation of NREGA, with necessary support staff. The existing Block Development Officers (BDOs) had been appointed POs and given “additional charge” of NREGA. Unfortunately, NREGA is not a programme that can work on an “additional charge” basis. An Employment Guarantee Assistant (EGA) was to be appointed in each Gram Panchayat, in view of the pivotal role of PRIs in NREGA implementation. According to the CAG report, 52% of the 513 Gram Panchayats it surveyed had not appointed EGAs. The State Governments were also required to constitute panels of accredited engineers at the district and block levels. Without timely and transparent costing of works and their measurement and valuation by such a panel, neither sanction of works nor payment to labour can happen on schedule. CAG found the panel missing in as many as 20 of the states it studied. The state governments were also to appoint Technical Resource Support Groups at the state and district levels to assist in planning, design, monitoring, evaluation, quality audit, training and handholding. The CAG report finds that 23 states had not set up such groups at the state or district levels. According to the report, “non-appointment of a full-time dedicated PO, who is pivotal to the successful implementation of NREGA, and giving the additional charge of PO to BDOs, who were responsible for other developmental

¹ CAG (2008). The CAG report covers 513 Gram Panchayats in 128 blocks of 68 districts in 26 states for the period February 2006 to March 2007. The more detailed field accounts of our Consortium are from 15 districts in 4 states, for the period July 2007 to January 2008.

schemes at the block level, strikes at the root of effective implementation of NREGA. In the absence of dedicated technical resources, the administrative and technical scrutiny and approval of works was, thus, routed through the normal departmental channels burdened with existing responsibilities. This was further compounded by the failure to specify time-frames for processing and approval of proposals at different levels. This was reflected in the poor progress in taking up works” (pp.16-17)

The CAG report summarises “significant deficiencies” and their impact on NREGA implementation: “The main deficiency was the lack of adequate administrative and technical manpower at the block and GP levels. The lack of manpower adversely affected the preparation of plans, scrutiny, approval, monitoring and measurement of works, and maintenance of the stipulated records at the block and GP level. Besides affecting the implementation of the scheme and the provision of employment, this also impacted adversely on transparency, and made it difficult to verify the provision of the legal guarantee of 100 days of employment on demand. Planning was inadequate and delayed, which resulted in poor progress of works. Systems for financial management and tracking were deficient, with numerous instances of diversion/ misutilisation, and delay in transfer of State Share. Monthly squaring of accounts at different levels to maintain financial accountability and transparency was also not being done. Maintenance of records at the block and GP levels was extremely poor, and the status of monitoring, evaluation and social audit was also not up to the mark.” (p.95).

All of this meant that of the 2.10 crore households who were employed under NREGA during its first year, only 0.22 crore received the full 100 days promised under the Act. The average employment per household was 43 days in 2006-07 (MoRD, 2007), 35 days in 2007-08 and 37 days in 2008-09 (<http://nrega.nic.in>).

1.2.2. Delays in Work Sanction, Fund Release and Wage Payments

This shortage of staff leads to delays in execution of works and payment of wages. This is the experience in all our Consortium districts but the most vivid illustration of the process comes from Bolangir and Nuapada districts of Orissa. The JE prepares the work plans and estimates. This itself takes time, since the JE is also overloaded with other responsibilities. Once the plan is made, it is submitted to the Assistant Engineer (AE) for approval. Since each AE is at times given the responsibility of more than one block, approval at the AE level also takes extra time. When the AE approves it, the proposal is sent to the PO (BDO) who has powers to approve a plan up to Rs.2 lakhs. If the proposal is for more than Rs.2 lakhs, it is sent to the district headquarters. Once the work is approved and funds released for it, the cheque is signed by the sarpanch, the panchayat EO *and* the PO-BDO. The BDO’s signature is an additional requirement under NREGA; normal non-NREGA panchayat works do not need this signature. This further delays withdrawal of funds and execution of works. Once work reaches a certain stage, the work done has to be valued and payments made to workers based on this valuation. This requires technical people who are in short supply. This means that measurement itself can sometimes take several months, although it is supposed to be done within a week. A Utilisation Certificate (UC) has to be submitted by the panchayat to the PO-BDO, for release of the next instalment. After measurement is done, the UC is prepared

and sent to the PO-BDO. The PO-BDO then waits for *all GPs to submit their UCs* so that they can be pooled together and sent to the District Panchayat (DP) for the next tranche. If one or two GPs delay submission of their UCs, onward submission to DP is delayed.

In parts of Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh, delays of as much as 2-3 months in payment of wages have been reported. Wage payments are delayed because of long gaps between execution and valuation of work due to paucity of engineers. In Rajnandgaon, delays in wage payments are reported by PRI leaders as one of the major problems facing NREGA works. In Sarguja, a shortage of technical personnel to do the valuation work is reported to cause delays in wage payments of up to 3 months.

1.2.3. Lack of People's Planning and Poor Quality of Works

Another serious consequence of shortage of professional staff is that there is little effort at social mobilisation without which there is no chance of NREGA emerging as a people-centred programme. In Rajnandgaon, Raigarh, Sarguja and Jashpur districts of Chhatisgarh, works are focused mainly on activities for which standardised estimates are available. Plans are made and approved at the "top" and sent downwards for implementation by the GPs. For instance, in the entire Wardrafnagar Block of Sarguja, 75% of funds have been utilised on roads of different types. Since this area is one of the poorest tribal pockets of the country, with a long history of droughts, the focus should naturally have been on drought proofing. The topography is naturally suited to watershed works too. But these are not the priority of NREGA plans. In Mandla district, MP there is an absence of annual plans. The shelf of projects exists but it is very broad in nature and the activities are not well defined. The general practice is that funds are first released by the DP and then activities are identified. In Shivpuri, the focus continues to be roads. The gram sabha is not aware of the plans nor do people know that without their approval, works cannot start or be completed. The perspective plans are photocopies of those prepared for the National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP). A list of such works compiled together has formed the perspective plan. The annual plans also are prepared in the form of lists culled out from previously prepared "plans". Activities may be subtracted from these lists or added to them by the PO and the RES engineers on their own. In Tikamgarh district there are no annual working plans ratified by the gram sabha. The plans are prepared by the CEO Block Panchayat and GP secretary and forwarded for fund release to the DP. In Anuppur, plan ratification by the gram sabha was a mere formality since people were reportedly excluded from the whole process. The panchayats are forced to implement action plans made by the district. In Khandwa district too, gram sabhas are not actively involved in the process of planning. Focus seems to be on rural connectivity and wells to the exclusion of other works. In Gujarat, the planning process again does not involve the people directly. While records suggest that the Gram Sabha was involved, field checks belie this claim. There has been very little effort to mobilise the people to take active part in plan formulation.

Given the low level of support infrastructure provided for NREGA works, it is not surprising that quality of works undertaken is uniformly reported to be poor. In Rajnandgaon, the emphasis is more on spending a larger amount of money than on ensuring quality in works execution. In Sarguja, shortage of technical staff is reported as adversely impacting

quality. Also poor and thoughtless implementation strategies result in low quality work – plantation is done but no provision is made for watering, nor is any protection (mechanical or human) planned against grazing. The plantations are thus destroyed fast. In Jashpur and Raigarh districts, poor quality of works is widely reported, particularly given the paucity of technical manpower resources at the disposal of NREGA projects. In Gujarat, the rates of work are an issue, due to which quality of work is adversely affected. In Madhya Pradesh, in Shivpuri, it is reported that quality of works is very poor. Farm bunding has been initiated without any proper technical planning because of which the quality of work is shoddy. In Tikamgarh, plants have died because no arrangement was made for water. The condition of roads is variable and only a few may survive.

1.2.4. Sabotage by Moribund Structure

The field experience of our Consortium partners shows that shortage of dedicated personnel is not the only problem. It appears that the existing bureaucratic machinery is just not willing to play ball with the strict provisions of NREGA and are at times actively sabotaging its implementation. Where PRI leaders are keen to implement NREGA work, secretaries and executive officers of gram panchayats are seen to be working overtime to convince these leaders of the “perils” of getting entangled with NREGA. In Bolangir, Orissa, Executive Officers of panchayats routinely dissuade sarpanchs from putting up a demand for work under NREGA by raising the bogey of getting caught under the strict provisions of the law. NREGA is apparently seen as a programme where making money is not only “unnecessarily complicated” but might also be “fraught with danger”. While critics of the Act have expressed fears that this scheme too will go the normal route of leakages, ironically many field-level functionaries perceive NREGA as a programme where corruption is very difficult, due to the numerous procedures that have been introduced. In Rajnandgaon district, Chhatisgarh, there are reports that sarpanchs fear that getting work done under NREGA is tantamount to going to jail and that the unemployment allowance will have to be given out of the sarpanchs’ pockets. In Dahod and Panchmahals districts of Gujarat, the *talatis* are also being seen as putting the fear of NREGA into the sarpanchs and dissuading them from raising work demand. An elaborate mechanism has been evolved in Bolangir and Nuapada districts in Orissa to escape doing NREGA work by suppressing such demand if it arises. When an applicant demands work in writing by submitting Form B-1 (work application or demand form) to the panchayat, the application has to be acknowledged in writing by the GP through a notice to the applicant for reporting to work (Form B-2 in Orissa). What the panchayat does is to duly fill up Form B-2 for each applicant but the form is never actually given to the applicant. It is kept with the panchayat. This is done so that work under NREGA does not start, but in case of an official inquiry, the sarpanch and the EO can claim that the job card holders concerned were issued a written notice to appear for work vide form B-2, but that they never turned up at the work site. To discourage POs from keeping job applications pending, they are threatened that any unemployment allowance paid will be recovered from their salaries. This suppresses the demand for work, especially in the absence of time-bound sanction and release procedures.

1.2.5. Inappropriate Schedule of Rates

Work done on rural employment programmes in India is measured through the Schedule of Rates (SoR). This schedule provides rates at which work done by labour is valued. Workers are paid according to the value placed on their work by the SoR. What the government has overlooked is that the present SoRs are meant for a system that uses contractors and machines to carry out public works. These contractors, as a rule, do not pay statutory minimum wages to labour and get most of their work done through machines like the JCB.² Deploying the same SoRs under NREGA makes it impossible for workers to earn minimum wages. This is also because existing SoRs make inadequate provisions for variations in geology and climate, discriminate against women, tend to underpay workers by lumping various activities together and do not revise rates in line with increments in statutory minimum wages (Vijay Shankar *et al*, 2006). Deploying the old SoRs also makes it impossible for implementers like Gram Panchayats to correctly cost works undertaken by them. The result is a varying combination of a series of malpractices — more work is shown than actually undertaken on the ground, poor quality of work takes place, works are left incomplete as actual costs exceed sanctions, labour is underpaid, bogus workers are shown as paid while machines actually do the work etc. In Mandla, wage payments of as low as Rs.37 per day are also being reported because of the valuation as per the task rate. Here people are unwilling to work on a task rate basis because they get less than the minimum wage under the system. In Rajnandgaon, while minimum wages are being paid, the work actually extracted from workers is reported to be more than that mandated by the wage rate. In Panchmahals and Dahod districts of Gujarat, the use of JCBs for excavation has been reported. In Orissa, village labour leaders appointed as EGAs were widely reported to be working as contractors. In Sarguja district, Chhatisgarh, 50% of NREGA works that are to be implemented by line departments, are invariably found using machinery. But in Raigarh and Jashpur, the use of both contractors and machines has come down following public outcry against the same.

1.2.6. Poor Transparency and a Mockery of Social Audit

All partners of our Consortium report that there is no real social audit process taking place in any location nor is there any system in place to do so. Provision for mandatory availability of muster rolls on work site is also not followed. In Gujarat, while the administration in Panchmahals and Dahod claims that social audit has been conducted, actually no report of the proceedings of these audits is available for scrutiny. Nor has the necessary mobilisation been carried out before organising such events. Talatis also resist divulging any information, despite threats of using the RTI. In Chhatisgarh, monitoring and vigilance committees have been largely inert in Raigarh and Jashpur. In Rajnandgaon, social audits have been done to complete a formality. Monitoring and vigilance systems are either not present or inactive. In Sarguja, the social audits conducted have been far from satisfactory. Field reports indicate that the frequency of these audits needs to be increased from the present

² The word “JCB” is now used colloquially as a genericised term for digger-excavator engineering vehicles, (now appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary), although the J. C. Bamford (Excavators) Ltd. company still treats JCB as its trademark.

once every year to once a quarter. In Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh district, only one social audit is reported, that too in October 2006. Even for this reports are not available for public scrutiny. In Mandla, no social audit is reported to have been conducted. The data on work done and payments is kept tightly under wraps. In Khandwa there does not seem to be any social audit arrangement in place. In Shivpuri reports clearly point to a lack of social audit and no village-level vigilance committees. Panchayat secretaries have floated vigilance committees by entering a few names from the GP in their records. These names are also used for "ratification" by gram sabhas of various decisions. However, these members do not themselves know either of their membership of these committees or about their duties or powers. The worst thing that could have happened to social audit is the process of inviting tenders for conducting them. In Shivpuri, it is reported that some agencies have tendered as low as Rs.27 per gram panchayat to do a social audit. In Khandwa, owners of photography shops, printing presses and manufacturing units had also submitted tenders to conduct this audit. Here the lowest bid was for Rs.100 per GP. Social audit is a qualitative process, needing tremendous efforts at grassroots mobilisation and preparation of the community to understand what the audit process means and how they can use it ensure that they direct development interventions in their own villages. Thus, the process leading up to the social audit event and persistent follow-up after the event are as important as the event itself. Unfortunately, many so-called NGOs have also been unable to resist the temptation of bidding for social audit tenders at ridiculous rates, ending up making a mockery of one of the most radical and critical provisions of NREGA.

1.3 The National Consortium

It was in such a context that the consortium was born, out of a vision of making NREGA effective by active participation of Civil Society Organizations in planning, implementation and social audit of NREGA works.

The National Consortium on NREGA is a loosely federated collective of civil society organisations (CSOs) that have come together to try and make NREGA a success. The Consortium seeks to move beyond the more traditional civil society role of acting as a watchdog for NREGA. The idea is to actively participate in making NREGA effective and its implementation true to the spirit of the objectives of the Act. This, of course, incorporates the vigilance role but focuses on an integrated approach to planning, implementation and social audit of NREGA works. The perspective of the Consortium is to look at NREGA as not merely giving rise to wage employment but leading to equity, food self-sufficiency and sustainable livelihoods in rural India. We also believe that NREGA affords an unprecedented opportunity for governance reform at the grass roots. Even while recognising the great difficulties CSOs and panchayat raj institutions (PRIs) have faced in working together, a key element of the Consortium's strategy is to facilitate partnerships between grass-roots CSOs and PRIs, given the crucial role assigned to PRIs under NREGA.

The Consortium gives greatest importance to work with women, Adivasis, Dalits, landless and small and marginal farmers, the old and the challenged, especially in the rainfed areas of India. Our vision is that work done under NREGA would create the necessary water infrastructure on whose basis a whole range of nature-based livelihood opportunities could

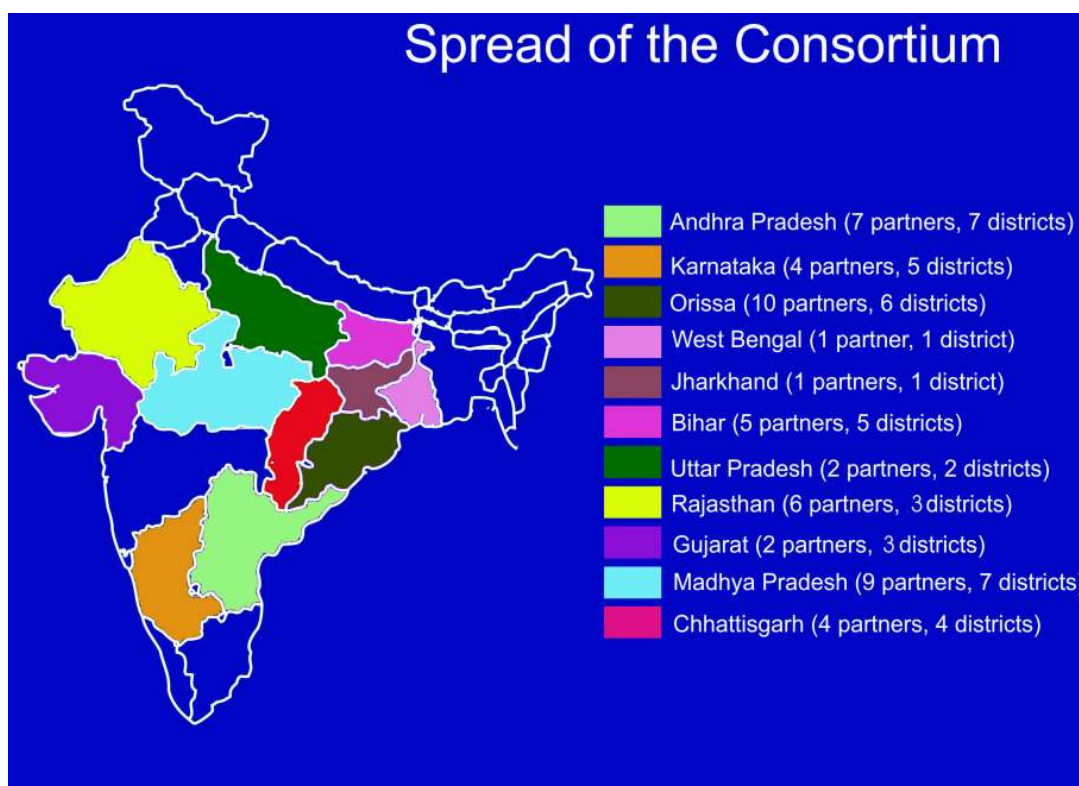
be created for the disadvantaged. Planning for this convergence needs also to be done co-terminus with NREGA work.

The Consortium believes that a diversity of approaches, which builds on the common ground outlined here, only gives strength to our work. The Consortium’s members include grass-roots CSOs working directly with PRIs as also a number of support agencies that provide technical/institutional/logistical backstopping and financial support to these grass-roots CSOs. Different agencies could also combine a range of roles.

Anyone subscribing to what is said here and wanting to contribute in any of these specific respects is welcome to join the Consortium, which is an inclusive entity. The Consortium opposes discrimination of any form based on grounds of region, community, caste, religion, gender or colour. Individuals or agencies engaging in such discrimination are not eligible to be members of the Consortium.

1.4 Regional Spread of the Consortium

As the map shows, the Consortium has 51 partners spread over 44 districts of 11 states of India. The table below gives details of partners and the districts in which they are working³:



Map Showing Spread of Partners Across States

³ See Annexure I for contact details of partners

State	Partners	Districts covered
1. Andhra Pradesh	1. WASSAN 2. REDS 3. EFFORT 4. APMSS 5. PILUPU 6. ARTS 7. Foundation for Ecological Security	1. Anantpur 2. Prakasam 3. Nalgonda 4. Warangal 5. Karimnagar 6. Srikakulam 7. Chittoor
2. Karnataka	1. Samuha 2. Samrasa 3. Ingrid 4. Outreach	1. Raichur 2. Gulbarga 3. Bellary 4. Bidar 5. Koppal
3. Orissa	1. PRADAN 2. Vikalpa 3. Lokadrusti 4. Bolangir Gramodyog Samiti 5. Bolangir Bikash Parishad 6. Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushthan 7. Adhikar 8. Shramik Shakti Sangha 9. Jan Mukti Anushthan 10. Foundation for Ecological Security	1. Bolangir 2. Nuapada 3. Dhenkanal 4. Angul 5. Mayurbhanj 6. Kandhamal
4. West Bengal	1. PRADAN	1. Bankura
5. Chhatisgarh	1. Lokshakti Samiti 2. Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha 3. Margdarshak Sewa Sanstha 4. Vardan Samajik Sanstha	1. Raigarh 2. Jashpur 3. Sarguja 4. Rajnandgaon
6. Madhya Pradesh	1. Sambhav 2. Parhit 3. Niswarth 4. Gram Sudhar Samiti 5. HARD 6. Nirmaan 7. Foundation for Ecological Security 8. Spandan 9. Samaj Pragati Sahayog	1. Tikamgarh 2. Shivpuri 3. Sidhi 4. Anuppur 5. Mandla 6. Khandwa 7. Dewas
7. Rajasthan	1. Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development 2. Hanuman Van Vikas Samiti 3. Jagran Jan Vikas Samiti 4. Prayatn Samiti 5. Samarthak Samiti 6. Foundation for Ecological Security	1. Udaipur 2. Bhilwara 3. Pratapgarh
8. Gujarat	1. ANANDI 2. Manav Kalyan Trust	1. Dahod 2. Panchmahaals 3. Sabarkantha
9. Jharkhand	1. Vikas Sahayog Kendra	1. Palamau
10. Uttar Pradesh	1. Vanangana 2. Aarthik Anusandhan Kendra	1. Chitrakoot 2. Mirzapur
11. Bihar	1. Megh-Pyne Abhiyan 2. Samta 3. Kosi Sewa Sadan 4. Gramyasheel 5. Ghoghardiha Swarajya Vikas Sangh	1. Supaul 2. Saharsa 3. Madhubani 4. Khagaria 5. W. Champaran
Total : 11 States	51 partners	44 districts

1.5 Regional Consortia

Our aim is to also form and energize various regional consortia on NREGA by a coming together of grassroots partners in each state. The Regional Consortia will provide a forum for exchange of experiences and ideas between partner organisations. In a sense, this forum hopes to complete the picture for partners in terms of achieving a certain degree of broad-basedness and “globalization” of their localized field work. Through the exchanges of the regional consortia, partners can decide to implement certain things better in their own areas as other partners may be doing. Or they may decide to take up certain issues together to advocate for policy level changes in their own area and states. Finally, the Regional Consortia will feed into the National Consortium which is already into its second year of existence.

1.6 Description of Work Done and Possible Ways Forward

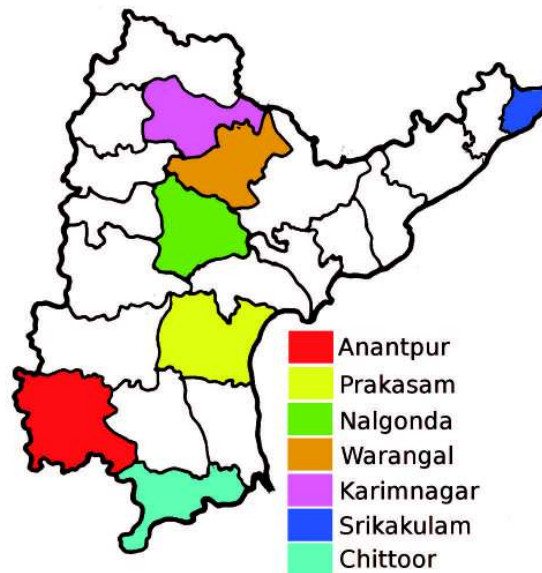
The consortium partners have adopted different approaches to their work, given their own distinct orientation, contexts, experience and capacities. Broadly speaking, the work done falls into the following categories:

- Mobilization
- Assistance to Gram Panchayats for Plan Preparation and Implementation
- Implementation, where the states allow for such a participation
- Capacity building and support to each other and to other agencies such as panchayat and line department functionaries
- Advocacy of required policy changes at the local, the state and the national levels.

This report offers glimpses of the work done by partners on the above approaches. Chapters 2 to 9 provide details of the work done in selected districts in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat respectively. Work in the other locations has gathered momentum later and is planned to be covered in subsequent reports. Each chapter reports on the work done by the partners working in that state and the impact of this work on NREGA implementation. Some interesting case studies highlighting certain aspects of partner intervention and photographs have also been provided. Chapter 10 of the report draws on the lessons learnt from the field experiences to outline the path ahead. In particular, it seeks to address issues in the policy framework which need changes so that the lessons learnt so far can be used to help NREGA realise its full potential.

TWO

ANDHRA PRADESH



Districts Covered by Consortium Partners in Andhra Pradesh

2.1 WASSAN and Partners

2.1.1 Introduction

The consortium's effort in 6 districts of Andhra Pradesh is being coordinated by Watershed Support Services and Activities Network (WASSAN). A network of 5 partners is working in 7 mandals of 6 districts of the state as shown below:

	Organisation	District	Mandal	Panchayat	Village
1	REDS	Anantapur	Kadiri	Patnam	Patnam
				Etigadda thanda	
				K. N Palem	
				Veerepallipeta	
			Kalagamudram	Kalagamudram	
2	ARTS	Srikakulam	Seethampeta	Kadagandi	24 habitations
			Sembham	28 habitations	
			Pedarama	33 habitations	
3	APMSS	Warangal	Mogullapalli	Pidisilla	Pidisilla
				Yellareddyapalli	
			Vemulapally	Vemulapally	
				Kasulapadu	
				Narasingapur	
4	APMSS	Nalgonda	Kanagal	Dorepally	Dorepally
				Yerragadlagudem	
				Lingalagudem	
				Pullayyagudem	
				Kummarigudem	
			Sabdulapuram	Sabdulapuram	
5	APMSS	Karimnagar	Koheda	Basvapur	Basvapur
				Arepally	
				Chnadranyak thanda	
				Jyothiramthanda	
				Muktannapeta	
				Gaddelapally	
			Poreddipally	Poreddipally	
6	EFFORT	Prakasam	Tarlupadu	Nagellamudupu	Nagellamudupu
			Taadivaripalli	Taadivaripalli	
			Meerjapeta	Meerjapeta	
			Mangalakunta	Mangalakunta	
				Natanampally	
7	PILUPU	Nalgonda	Turkapally	Mulkalapally	Mulkalapally
			Malkapur	Malkapur	
			Gollagudem	Gollagudem	
			Pallepahad	Pallepahad	
	Total	6 districts	7 mandals	19 panchayats	35 villages

The network selected these panchayats and villages on the basis of several baseline indicators such as rainfall, drought-proneness, landlessness, extent of SC/ST population, migration and level of irrigation development.

2.1.2 Profile of Selected Panchayats and Villages

- As per the 2001 census, the total population of these 19 panchayats is 36,630 (8122 Families). Of these, the share of SC population is 16.5 % and that of ST population is 18.8 %. Baseline data collected for 18 panchayats shows that the proportion of SCs and STs in the total targeted population is more than 50%
- The average annual rainfall for all mandals is 756mm. There is wide variation in the lowest and highest average rainfall in the selected locations. The district/mandal with the lowest rainfall is Kadiri (Anantpur) with 381 mm. The highest rainfall (1281 mm) is observed in Seethampeta (Srikakulam)
- Agriculture is the main occupation in the selected villages with 48.37% reporting agriculture labour as their primary occupation and 37.6% reporting agriculture as their primary occupation. As per the Census of 2001, of the population of main workers, nearly 47% are agriculture labour households
- About 80% of the total landholding families are small and marginal farmers
- 78.6% of the total cultivated area is unirrigated and only 21.4% is irrigated. The main source of irrigation is canal irrigation accounting for 8% of cultivated area, followed closely by wells with electrification which account for 3%.
- Around 4700 acres of land is marked as cultivable waste and an additional 4500 acres is shown as not available for cultivation. This shows the possibility of utilising NREGS resources to bring more land into cultivation and other uses for the benefit of the poor and the landless.
- 15% of the households migrate in the lean season for work of which an estimated 3% is distress-induced migration

2.1.3 Status of NREGA Implementation before Interventions

- In the process of engagement with NREGS at ground level, it was realized that all those eligible are not able to access the wage entitlements equally and as per their need. Certain categories of people/households are being left out because of their specific limitations, particularly single women and disabled people. They were being denied their rights and were not allowed to participate in the program.
- Before the project intervention most of the wage seekers in villages did not know the process of applying for job cards. They had to excessively depend upon the panchayat secretary or village functionary.
- More importantly, while getting a job card is a one-time affair, securing work formally against the job card is a much more cumbersome process. In all the villages there was no practice of demanding work through proper applications and obtaining receipts in return. The field level functionaries of the EGS either did not know about the processes involved or deliberately did not bring it into implementation.
- Most of the EGS functionaries from Village level to Mandal level did not have complete knowledge about procedures. Particularly maintenance of musters, village level registers and worksite facilities were very poor. And most of the technical functionaries had no knowledge about measurements. In some cases like Kanagal Mandal of Nalgonda district,

and Mogullapalli Mandal of Warangal district, the Field Assistants (FAs) were very irresponsible. It was observed that they entered wrong names in musters and missed out some names.

- In the case of Mogullapalli mandal in Warangal District, a Field Assistant had taken Rs.50 per wage seeker per each payment and even the Post Master had reportedly taken Rs.10 per person. In the same mandal in another village, the FA did not submit the muster rolls of work done by around 80 wage seekers for 6 months. Because of which payments were delayed by more than six months. These issues were followed up and brought to the notice of the Mandal and district officials. Later the FA was removed from service.
- A key issue which emerged during implementation was identifying the reasons behind low work demand and low number of households employed. An analysis of the situation in the villages showed that this was due to the following reasons:
 - As the program was in its initial years, there was insufficient awareness about provisions and processes did not reach wage seekers
 - wage seekers were not empowered enough to demand and seek employment
 - The implementation machinery was not geared up to meet the maximum potential demand of the wage seekers, a fact reflected in:
 - ♦ inability to commence work as per the demand,
 - ♦ inability to ensure timely payments
 - ♦ inability to ensure quality of the works
 - ♦ inadequate capacities of program functionaries
 - ♦ excessive centralization of the program implementation process and excessive dependance on functionaries with negligible involvement of elected panchayat representatives.
 - ♦ irregular fund flows to mandal/district

2.1.4 Work Done and Impact

Organizing and Mobilizing Wage-Seekers

Given the above situation, project interventions were designed to overcome the difficulties observed.

- It was felt by the consortium partners that the first step in this direction would have to be organization and mobilization of NREGA wage seekers so that they can act as an aware group pressing for entitlements under the Act.
- Continuous awareness generation campaigns and follow-up ensured that proper applications were filed for job cards
- Similarly, regular follow-up also ensured that work demand was created on the ground
- Simultaneously, a need was felt to form EGS Committees at village and mandal level so as to provide wage seekers a forum to interface with the programme structure at different levels and take up issues
- Together 129 wage labour groups and 26 EGS committees were formed in the span of about 8 months with a membership of around 4,000 wage-seekers.
- 591 single women were identified and a process initiated of enabling them to participate in EGS by convincing the wage seekers in the village, identifying suitable works for them

and so on

- 417 disabled wage seekers were identified and their participation in the program enhanced through initiating dialogue in the groups for their inclusion, ensuring a 30% wage enhancement for them and encouraging them to take up works like provision of worksite facilities
- 654 absolute landless labourers were identified and a process of ensuring their maximum participation in EGS was initiated
- 494 distress migrating households were identified and a process initiated of ensuring their stay in the village by accessing the EGS to a maximum extent

The table below gives mandal-wise details of these engagements:

	Mandal	No.of Panchayats	No. of Wage Labour Groups Formed	No.of Mandal/ Village Committees	Single Women	Disabled	Landless HHs	Migrating HHs
1	Seethampeta	3	0	12	45	51	53	92
2	Tarlupadu	4	26	5	127	109	172	161
3	Kadiri	2	20	5	245	51	24	11
4	Kangal	2	16	0	70	4	21	0
5	M. Turkapally	4	22	4	162	113	39	60
6	Koheda	2	21	0	72	61	24	130
7	Mogullapally	2	24	0	91	68	100	0
	Total	19	129	26	591	417	654	494

Job Cards and Work Demand

Before project interventions most wage seekers did not know how to apply for job cards, which resulted in an excessive dependence on the panchayat secretary or village



Cultural programmes were carried out to create awareness among the village communities

functionary. Through group meetings and cultural programmes, partners created awareness and ensured that proper applications were made for job cards. In the selected mandals of Srikakulam and Prakasam districts, the efforts of the partner organisations made a significant difference in terms of securing number of job cards.

Awareness campaigns and continuous follow up turned this situation around. Wage-seekers are now applying for works to the NREGS functionaries. In case the village functionaries do not accept the application, wage-seekers are able to submit applications to the APO/ PO at the mandal level. In more than 50% of cases receipts are being obtained and the efforts are to secure receipts for all the applications. Even in cases of non-issue of receipts, mandal functionaries are providing work within 15 days because of the pressure created through application process.

In order to facilitate the awareness process, several types of material were produced which would help understand the NREGA implementation structure as well as aid concurrent review and monitoring. The source material is listed as under:

	Title	Type	Language	Remarks
1	Village level review format	EGS Checklist of questions	Telugu	For use by the village level volunteers and wage group leaders for regular review of the EGS implementation in their village
2	Mandal level Consolidation of status	Format	Telugu	For use by the Field coordinators for monthly consolidation and review of status
3	NREGA - Handbook for activists	Booklet	Telugu	A hand book in simple format detailing the process of securing rights under NREGA
4	From Securing wage employment to Securing Livelihood opportunities	A short document with case studies and analysis	English	Illustrates the possibilities of securing livelihood opportunities from wage employment opportunities in NREGS. Shared widely with persons working on NREGS for triggering ideas
5	Compilation of Songs	Songs	Telugu	Songs on NREGA
6	Wage entitlement cycle	Poster	Telugu	Explains the cyclical process in securing wage employment
7	NREGA entitlements, issues and possible action points	Pamphlet	Telugu	Apart from detailing the entitlements, it also draws from the field experience till now and suggests action points
8	NREGS-AP responsibility chart	Chart/Poster	Telugu	Presents responsibilities of various field functionaries and stakeholders in NREGS-AP in a brief format. Department agreed to issue it as a circular

The impact of concerted efforts to mobilize wage seekers was immediately felt on job

cards and work demand:

- The number of job cards rose from 5,559 to 8,935 to cover more than 90% of households as a result of interventions from partners. Earlier only about 50% of the households had managed to obtain a job card. This was a 60% increase over the base situation.
- Before project interventions, there were no formal job applications made nor were there any formal receipts obtained from the NREGS implementation structure. After concerted efforts by partners, 384 group work applications were generated (with membership in each group ranging from 15 to 30 job card holders). Against these job applications, 207 receipts (54%) were obtained

The table below gives detailed mandal-wise break up of job cards, work applications and receipts:

	Mandal	Organization	Group Work Applications	Receipts Obtained	Job Cards (Before)	Job Cards (After)
1	Seethampeta	ARTS	93	-	1497	2492
2	Tarlupadu	EFFORT	6	-	270	1192
3	Kadiri	REDS	26	26	716	1172
4	Kangal	APMSS	16	13	825	952
5	M.Turkapally	PILUPU	96	64	703	933
6	Koheda	APMSS	129	104	556	973
7	Mogullapally	APMSS	18	-	992	1221
	Total		384	207	5559	8935

- 60% of job card holding households worked up to March 2008 in the selected panchayats as against state average of 53%
- Average working days generated per household in the selected 19 panchayats are 47.3 as against the state average of 42.
- When we compare the above indicators with the mandal and district indicators, we find that 12 panchayats were in a categorically better position in these two parameters. Only two panchayats are lower in both the parameters than the mandal averages. Other four panchayats fared better in terms of either number of households participated or number of days per household
- When compared to the state average of working days per household, 9 panchayats fared better than the state average whereas 5 panchayats fared marginally less than the state average and the average of four panchayats is substantially less than the state average. Out of these, five villages are from Prakasam and Srikakulam which are second phase districts where NREGS started effectively in August 2007. Other two villages are from Warangal district in which the local organisation started work late and could not put intensive efforts during the peak period. However, in the later half of the project period, i.e from April to August 2008 the average working days in these villages also improved significantly

- But, when we look at the number of households participating in work, 14 panchayats did much better than the state average

The table below provides a glimpse of these indicators:

Average Wage Days Per Household April 2008 to March 2009								
	Organisation	District and District Averages		Mandal and Mandal Averages		Panchayat	Average Days/ HH	% of HHs worked
		Avg days	% of HHs worked	Avg days	% of HHs worked			
1	REDS	Anantapur		Kadiri		K.N Palem	67	69
		43	42	36	31	Yeguvappalli	46	49
						Kalsamudram *	27	35
						Patnam *	14	17
2	ARTS	Srikakulam		Seethampeta		Kadagandi	35	81
		38	59	43	83	Sembham	59	91
						Pedarama	53	79
3	PMSS	Warangal		Mogullapalli		Pidisilla	40	48
		32	58	33		Vemulapally	28	79
4	APMSS	Nalgonda		Kanagal		Dorepally	54	81
		34	50	45	74	Sabdulapuram	94	87
5	APMSS	Karimnagar		Koheda		Basvapur	80	73
		37	61	43	61	Poreddipally	42	64
6	EFFORT	Prakasam		Tarlupadu		Nagellamudupu	52	31
		37	54	47	53	Taadivaripalli	36	68
						Meerjapeta	42	49
						Mangalakunta	66	58
7	PILUPU	Nalgonda		Turkapally		Mulkalapally	32	33
		34	50	42	53	Malkapur	46	62
						Gollagudem	48	60
State Average		41	50			Pallepahad	31	66

* The habitations in Kalsamudram and Patnam have a peculiar problem of land boundaries. The lands of these villages fall in the adjacent mandal and the officials have not been able to find a solution yet to allow them to work in their own lands as mandal jurisdiction changes. This is one of the main reasons why much of the work could not be taken up. Through the interventions of REDS this problem has now been solved (see below)

Wage Payments

A concerted effort was also made to look into cases of delayed payments and ensure that wage payments are made on time¹.

- Before project interventions, between April 2007 and August 2007, 2,797 out of 9,406 (30%) cases of delayed payments were observed.
- As interventions picked up, the reporting and follow-up of payment delays became more intensive. Thus, between September 2007 and March 2008, 17,482 out of 40,828 (43%) cases of delayed payments were reported.
- All cases of delayed payments were assiduously followed up. As a result, it was observed that delayed payments were reduced in 8 panchayats as a result of project interventions, there was more or less no change in 2 panchayats and in 5 panchayats there was actually an increase in the delay.
- The reasons for delayed payments have largely been out of the control of partner organizations, related as they are to extraneous factors such as:
 - non-availability of funds at mandal level
 - delays in submission of muster rolls
 - delays in issue of payment orders/ money to post office
- What is important, however, is that while before project interventions there was no follow-up on delayed payments, once the partners adopted these panchayats for their interventions, every case of delayed payment has been followed up. All partners are supporting wage-seekers to put pressure on the local functionaries so that delays are completely eliminated

Plan Preparation

A major thrust of the consortium's effort has been to help gram panchayats develop treatment plans which can be implemented by leveraging NREGA funds:

- Around 4,500 acres of assigned land and another 4,200 acres of private patta land, of small and marginal farmers mainly of S.C and S.Ts have been identified for inclusion in the NREGS for development.
- 700 acres of common land have also been identified for development in EGS
- The works for the development of above



Horticulture Pits being Dug, Porreddipally,
Koheda Mandal, Karimnagar district

¹It needs to be remembered in this context that time-bound wage payments are among the five defining non-negotiables for the GoAP's Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.



Land Development Works at Shabdullapur village, Kangal Mandal, Nalgonda district

selected lands have been identified and most of them included in the shelf of works

- In 31 villages around 400 works were identified and submitted through a resolution from the Gram Panchayat for inclusion in the shelf, out of which around 130 works were included. Work has started on more than 50% of the works sanctioned.

- The major works being implemented are bunding, silt application, bush clearance, trenches, stone bunding and horticulture

- In 4 villages in Anantapur district around 21 compost pits in the lands of the poor have been facilitated

The table below gives details of the land identified according to partner, district and mandal.

	Organisation and District	Mandal	Lands identified for inclusion & development under NREGS				
			Assigned Lands		Small and Marginal Farmers		Development of common lands (ac)
			Acres	HH	Acres	HH	
1	ARTS, Srikakulam	Seethampeta	2492	2248		1969	NL
2	EFFORT, Prakasam	Tarlupady	680	136	1138	142	390
3	APMSS, Nalgonda	Kanagal	-	-	1120	400	29
4	APMSS, Warangal	Mogullapally	25	15	272	153	NL
5	APMSS, Karimnager	Koheda	82	50			32
6	REDS, Anantapur	Kadiri	1232	365	1298	454	130.55
7	PILUPU, Nalgonda	M.Turkapally	239	126	379	174	120

Migration

The project interventions have started making an impact on migrant families as well with about 200 families in the chosen villages who were traditional migrants returning from their migrant destination, obtaining job cards and getting work in their own area. Below are some highlights:

- In Nagallamudupu village of Tarlupadu mandal, local organization EFFORT ensured return of 122 households who had migrated and helped them in getting job cards as well as work
- In Kanagal mandal, where APMSS is working, earlier 50 families used to migrate to other districts, but now most of them are working in EGS and not migrating.
- In Koheda mandal of Karimnagar district, where APMSS is working, in one village 10 families returned from migration
- In the Kadiri mandal around 20 families returned from migration

Interface with Government

The partners adopted an approach of systemic and routine meetings between Mandal functionaries and wage-seekers. This interface served as an effective platform for wage seekers for bringing the problems and issues in implementation to the notice of mandal and district officials. This built confidence among them and also helped in speeding up the processes like showing work, payments, provision of work site facilities etc.

Through mandal level interface meetings between the wage seekers and the department officials, following issues were raised and most of them are solved:

- Delays in payments for more than one month
- Work site facilities especially not appointing separate person for drinking water provision, lack of shades, medical kits etc.,
- Tools not provided on worksite
- Field assistant not taking proper measurements
- Job cards not updated
- Names of those who have not worked in the field entered in the muster rolls and those who have worked not entered



Mandal convergence meeting in
M.Turkapally mandal,
Nalgonda district



Mandal convergence meeting in Koheda mandal, Karimnagar District

- Worker accounts not opened
- Accident compensation not paid
- Works being commenced during the time of harvesting
- Works not being started though there is a demand
- Insistence with wage seekers that they take up work which they are not interested in

Briefly, the following impacts were observed as a result of the interventions of the partners in Andhra Pradesh:

- The biggest achievement was an MoU (see box) signed between the civil society organisations (includes consortium partners) and the GoAP. The MoU is historic in that it mandates a role for the consortium partners in monitoring different stages of NREGA implementation and ensuring that the wage-seekers get their rights. Its importance lies in the formal acceptance of a role for civil society organizations in the NREGA implementation structure.

**Memorandum of Understanding for Securing Rural Employment Gurantee by the Poor in the Selected Villages
Between
Commissioner, Rural Development
and
Voluntary Organisations, People's organisations and their networks
(as listed in Annexure-1)**

Objective

This agreement is made for working together with mutual understanding and cooperation to ensure all the rights of the poor in the NREGA for their secured livelihoods. This MOU will be operational for one year i.e from 1st April, 2009 to 31st March, 2010.

- Rural Development department will ensure the following for providing 100 days of employment for the identified poor in the selected villages based on their need and demand
 - Make the work applications available in the village and mandal offices
 - Take the work applications and issue receipts

- Open up such works that ensure adequate days of work for the applicants and in such a manner that provides work within the prescribed time of 15 days
 - Payment of wages within 15 days
 - Ensure early resolve of the issues brought to the notice of mandal and district officials by the civil society organisations
 - Ensure that all the posts of field assistants, technical assistants and program officers are filled
 - Ensure that all the records at the village level are properly maintained by the village functionaries
 - Ensure the availability of muster roll and work sanction details at the work place
 - Share the copies of pay order and paid muster roll with the organisations for pasting it in the gram panchayat or verifying it with the wage seekers
 - Take appropriate measures required to ensure all the worksite facilities, linkage with anganwadi for child care, supply of work tools for the landless poor
 - Take up the works for the development of SC/ST lands on priority for sanction and grounding proposed by the local organisations with the resolutions by labourers/farmers/panchayat
- Responsibilities of the civil society organisation
The organisations/networks listed in the Annexure will take on the following responsibilities
 - Ensure that the wage seekers in the village apply for work and obtain receipts
 - Ensure that all the records are updated at village level by the village level program functionaries
 - Ensure that all the work site facilities are provided by the program functionaries
 - Ensure that the functionaries arrange boards for display with all the work details at the worksite
 - Ensure that the paid muster roll is readout to all the wageseekers
 - Work towards ensuring around 2000 wageseekers in a mandal get 100 days of work on demand in a year
 - Ensure that the wages are paid within 15 days of work
 - Participate in Social audit
 - Identify land and other resource development works related to SC and ST and put up for approval and grounding to the mandal officials
 - Ensure that single women, aged, disabled and SC, ST wage seekers are not discriminated in NREGS
- Review and coordination:
 - All the organisations party to the agreement will be allowed
 - ♦ to participate in the official weekly Monday meetings at mandal level
 - ♦ to participate in the official monthly review meeting at the district level along with Program officers
 - A bi-monthly review meeting with Commissioner, Rural Development will be conducted on the operationalisation of MOU and implementation of NREGS
 - Any shortcomings and issues in operationalisation of MOU will be discussed in bi-monthly meeting with CRD and appropriate steps will be taken to rectify
 - As per the enclosed Annexure, the listed organisations will work in respective villages and mandals and respective local organisations are responsible for the tasks mentioned in the agreement
 - Costs of conducting any meetings and training programs as part of this agreement and on prior approval will be borne by respective District Water Management Agencies or Commissioner, Rural Development Department. In addition to that no financial support will be provided to the organisations party to this agreement
- Both the parties mutually agree to fulfill the responsibilities mentioned in the MOU for securing employment guarantee right to the poor

Date:

Rural Development Department
Shantha Kumari
Commissioner

for CSO

- In the Kadiri mandal REDS has tried out four models of shades for work sites and the Department has entrusted the task of piloting and finalizing the models to the organization. For a complete report on all shades tested by REDS along with design specifications, see REDS (2008)

Shades Designed by REDS

One person can easily carry the tent to any of the worksites. The tent can be easily assembled and erected in just 20 minutes by a single person.



Green Net Shade



Tarpaulin Shade



Hard Canvas Shade



Hard Cloth Shade

4 types of portable shades have been designed and developed using different types of material such as green net, hard cloth, tarpaulin and hardcanvas are used. A 3/4 inch dia MS pipe of hard quality is used to enable a strong structure for the shades / tents. Simple nuts and bolts are used for assembling and erecting the structure. Wellcrow tape is used to fasten the material used for the shade.

All the models have been tested in different worksites. It has been observed that the shade could make a difference in temperature to the tune of 12°C. A shade can accommodate from 20 to 40 persons depending on the model. Wageseekers especially women feel safe, and their privacy is safeguarded. It is also convenient to eat inside the shade when the sun is hot.

The shades cost between Rs 3,700/- to 5,000/- depending on the model.



Wage seekers inside the shade



Shri K. Raju, Principle Secretary, Rural Development. GoAP reviews the shades designed by REDS

Model	REDS Model 1: Green Net Shade
Weight	26 Kgs
Material Used	Structure : 1' dia hard steel pipe Roof : Garden Net (Green Net) Roof : Garden Net (Green Net) Size : 10' x 14' Pipe length : 10' 90' pipe required 35 Sq.mts green net required Wellcrow Tape, Iron pipe Brackets, Nuts and Bolts
Time required for erection	20 minutes by two persons.
Mobility	Two persons can carry or it can be transported by bicycle.
Quality of Shade	The material used for a shade is a Green Net, which has very tiny holes enabling people to see from inside, it is excellent and comfortable and full of air circulation.
Rain and Wind Tolerance	It is a comfortable shade with good air circulation but it will not withstand rain. It will withstand wind because the pipe structure is fixed into the ground.
Accommodation/ Capacity	Accommodates 35 persons in ideal conditions and 25 persons can comfortable eat inside it.
Durability	The life of the green net is 1 year. The Iron pipes will last for a minimum of 4 years.
Needs no expertise	30 minutes orientation is sufficient to erect, and all pipes and brackets are marked with numbers with the help of which they can be erected very easily.
Cost	Rs 3,850
Remarks	This model has a special advantage that the erected shade can be shifted or direction can be changed according to the sunshine.
Model	REDS Model 2: Tarpaulin Shade
Weight	30 Kgs
Material Used	Structure : 1' dia hard steel pipe Roof : Tarpaulin Size : 8' x 8' Shed height : 7' 95' pipe and 15 mts tarpaulin, wellcrow tape, iron pipe brackets, nuts and bolts
Time required for erection	25 minutes by two persons.
Mobility	Two persons can carry or it can be transported by bicycle.
Quality of Shade	Good and dark shade; being tarpaulin, it also durable.
Rain and Wind Tolerance	Withstands both wind and rain well.
Accommodation/ Capacity	It accommodates 20 persons in ideal condition and 12 persons can eat comfortably.
Durability	The Tarpaulin life is of 2 years, the iron pipes will last for 4 years
Needs no expertise	It takes only 30 minutes to erect the shade structure and needs only one person, and all pipes and brackets are marked with numbers so that they can be assembled very easily .
Cost	Rs 4,400
Remarks	This model is ideal for small groups

Model	REDS Model 3: Hard Canvas Shade
Weight	28 Kgs
Material Used	Structure : 1' dia hard steel pipe Roof : Hard Canvas Size : 8' x 8' Shed height : 7' 100' pipe and 15 mts canvas, wellcrow tape, iron pipe brackets, nuts and bolts
Time required for erection	25 minutes by two persons
Mobility	Two persons can carry or it can be transported by bicycle
Quality of Shade	Good and dark shade
Rain and Wind Tolerance	It provides good shadow but it cannot withstand rain. It will withstand wind because the pipe structure will be fixed into the ground
Accommodation/Capacity	It accommodates 20 persons in ideal condition and 12 persons can eat comfortably
Durability	The hard canvas life is of 1 year. The Iron pipes last for 4 years
Needs no expertise	30 minutes orientation for one person is sufficient to erect, and all pipes and brackets are marked with numbers so that they can be assembled very easily
Cost	Rs 5,000
Remarks	This model is ideal for small groups
Model	REDS Model 4: Hard Cloth Shade
Weight	24 Kgs
Material Used	Structure : 1' dia hard steel pipe Roof : Hard Cloth Size : 8' x 8' Shed height : 7' 75' pipe and 10 mts cloth, wellcrow tape, iron pipe brackets, nuts and bolts
Time required for erection	15 minutes by two persons
Mobility	Two persons can carry or it can be transported by bicycle
Quality of Shade	Good and dark shade
Rain and Wind Tolerance	It provides a good shadow but it cannot withstand rain. It will withstand wind because the pipe structure will be fixed into the ground
Accommodation	It accommodates 20 persons in ideal conditions and 12 persons can eat comfortably
Durability	The life of the hard cloth is of 1 year. The Iron pipes will last for 4 years
Capability	30 minutes orientation for one person is sufficient to erect, and all pipes and brackets are marked with numbers with which they can be erected very easily
Cost	Rs 3,700



REDS has developed two types of trolleys to transport the water from safe source to the worksite. Tyres of 12" diameter and good ball bearings for free movement of wheel have been used to make the trolleys. One person can easily push the trolley for 5-6 kms, on uneven roads with pebbles, sand and soil. It has a good platform of 24" x 30" base which is arranged to accommodate and carry the load of a water tank with a capacity of 100 litres.

If a spare water tank is also filled and carried to the worksite, it fulfills the drinking water requirement of nearly 70 wage seekers,

The trolley can be used for multiple purposes, to carry tents, water and with little modifications, this can also be used to water the plants. The manufacturing cost of the trolley is approx. Rs.5000/-



Shri M.S. Chandra, designer of the shades, water trolleys and medical kits explains the details of the trolleys and kits to Smt. Shantha Kumari, Commissioner, Rural Development, GoAP.

- The district administration also entrusted the task of piloting of improved tools and supply of nutrition food for children.
- REDS has facilitated the placement of one aaya with the local anganwadi in one village.
- The efforts of APMSS in Kanagal mandal, has led to an improvement in the working of Field Assistants.
- In the same mandal in one village one additional Aaya is attached to Anganwadi from EGS funds and medical kits are provided with full medicines.
- The above efforts resulted in a series of circulars passed by the Director, EGS, GoAP, with clear instructions for provision of shades, appointment of aayas at worksite with more than 20 women working, provision of safe drinking water and first aid kit etc.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT

From :
Smt. A. Santhi Kumari, IAS
Commissioner,
Rural Development Dept.,
Hyderabad.

To
The District Collectors,
District Programme Coordinators of
NREGS Districts (19)
Andhra Pradesh.

Sir,

Lr.No 653/EGS/PM(T)/2006, dated 13. 02.2008
Sub : NREGS-AP-Providing worksite facilities - reiteration of guidelines -
Reg.

Ref : 1.Memo.No. 10063/RD.II Dept./2006,dt.2.06.2006
2. This office Lr.No. 955/EGS(SPM)/2006, dt 3.8.2006
3. This office Circular No.1497/SPM/EGS/2006, dt 13.11.2006.
4. This office Circular No. 1497/SPM/EGS/2007, dt 14.5.2007.

Vide references cited above, clear instructions have been issued to provide worksite facilities as per provisions of the NREGA Act. It has come to the notice of the Commissioner, RD that the four worksite facilities provided in the Act are not being provided regularly. In this regard you are once again enlightened with basic guidelines to provide the four worksite facilities.

1. Safe Drinking water:

(a) During summer, i.e, 1st February to 30th June, one water person for every 25 labourer, shall be engaged at every worksite

(b) Every worksite shall be provided with the required number of pots / drums / cans / jugs with proper lids / covers / garatas etc.,

(c) Suitable instructions may be given to MPDOs, how to procure this material so that the required materials are procured and supplied to every habitation.

(d) The material procured in the last year in some habitations must have been broken or damaged. The same may be re-procured again.

(e) If the person days provided for this purpose in the estimate are exhausted, then the Programme Officer can generate an other estimate and engage required number of drinking water persons for the required number of days and so on.

2. Shades

a) The required number of sets of Heavy Dense Polythene Sheets shall be procured so that in every habitation and at every worksite the required sheets shall be erected. In the above reference 1st cited, it is advised to procure only 5 sets of such polythene sheets per each Gram Panchayat. Now, the procurement may be made as per the actual requirement.

(b) The required guidelines to procure the polythene sheets shall be issued to MPDOs so that they buy it and maintain. Alternatively at District level also the procurement may be carried out by calling tenders from manufacturer or approved dealers.

(c) If the shades provided for this purpose in the estimate are exhausted, then the Programme Officer can generate an other estimate and and procure the required number of shades.

3.Aya :

Vide reference 3rd cited, instructions were issued to engage One aya preferably the disabled woman or old woman or a single woman at the worksite wherever a minimum of 20 women are working.

If the person days provided for this purpose in the estimate are exhausted, then the Programme Officer can generate an other estimate and engage required number of Aya persons for the required number of days and so on.

4. First Aid boxes

(a) The detailed guidelines to procure and maintain First Aid boxes at every worksite are given in 1st cited above.

(b) It has come to the notice of the Commissioner, Rural Development that once the material in First Aid box is exhausted, there is no system for replenishing the consumables.

(c) You are requested to ensure that at every worksite in every habitation, the first aid boxes with full material are procured and is maintained as per the provisions of the Act.

(d) Detailed guidelines on 'how to procure' the material for replenishment purpose maybe given to all field functionaries from Dist. Offices.

(e) The detailed guidelines to procure First aid boxes by calling for tenders are given separately Ideally, the above four worksite facilities such as two drinking water persons (depending upon the season), One First Aid box, One Ayah and One set of shade sheets shall be linked to the MATE who looks after 40 to 50 labourers. Field Assistant shall be given the responsibility of over all safeguarding the materials

Yours faithfully
Sd/- A. Murali,
Director, EGS
for Commissioner, RD

Copy to the Project Director, DWMA with a similar instruction
Copy to MPDO and PO for information
Copy to APO, EGS
// Attested //
Programme Manager (Q.C)

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER: RURAL DEVELOPMENT
2nd Floor, HUDA Hermitage Complex, Hill Fort road, Saifabad, Hyderabad.

From
Smt A.Santhi Kumari, IAS
Commissioner, Rural Development
Rural Development Department
Hyderabad

To
The Director,
Women Welfare and Child
Development Department,
Hyderabad

Lr.No. 170/EGS/2009, dated 31.3.2009

Sir,

Sub : NREGS-AP – Convergence with Anganwadi Centers – Reg
-o0o-

Rural and Environment Development Society (REDS), an NGO has been working for last one year to converge the Anganwadi Centre with Crèche under NREGS in the following mandals of Anantapur District:

1. Kadiri
2. Amadaguru
3. Gandlapenta
4. Nallamada

In the above mandals we request you to give guidelines to the Project Director, Women Welfare and Child Welfare Department, Anantapur to supply nutritious food for the children of the labourers attending crèche maintained under NREGS in Anganwadi Centers. In Non-Anganwadi centers also the same may be supplied through Mini Anganwadi Ayahas where the Anganwadi centers are not existing.

Yours faithfully


31/3
Director, EGS
Commissioner, RD

Copy to REDS, Kadiri, Anantapur for information.
Copy to Project Director, DWMA, Anantapur Dist. for information

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER, RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPT

From :
Smt. A. Santhi Kumari, IAS
Commissioner,
Rural Development Dept.,
Hyderabad.

To
The District Collectors,
District Programme Coordinators of
NREGS Districts (19)
Andhra Pradesh.

Sir,

Lr.No 950/EGS/PM(T)/TOOLS/2006, dated 13.02.2008
Sub : NREGS-AP-Supply of tools and implements to the needy labour -
Reg.

Ref : 1.Govt.Memo No.10063/RD.II/2006, PR&RD Dept dated 15.04.06
2.This Office Lr.No.653/EGS/PM(T)/2006, dated 5.5.2007
3. This Office Lr.No.950/EGS/PM(T)/Tools, dated 11.1.2008

With reference to the guidelines issued above all the District Collectors and District Programme Coordinators were requested to procure required tools and implements for issuing the same to the labourers under NREGS.

It has come to the notice of the Commissionarate, Rural Development that in many villages labourers are unable to report to the work because of lack of necessary tools and implements like Crowbars, spades etc., This is very severe in habitations of SC/STs who are either land less or dependants of Non -Timber Forest Produce (NTPF).

Hence you are requested to procure necessary tools and implements sufficient for the labourers working in your Dist. The details of the labourers completed 25 days in your district is enclosed herewith for your information. This may be used for the purpose of calculating required number of tools mandal wise and you may procure sufficient number for the above after deducting supply already made if any. Tenders may be invited if not already invited only from manufacturers.

Action taken on this matter may be communicated to this office from time to time.

THIS MAY BE TREATED AS MOST URGENT.

Encl: List

Yours faithfully
Sd/- A. Murali,
Director, EGS
for Commissioner, RD

Copy to the Project Director, DWMA with a similar instructions.
Copy to MPDO and PO for information
Copy to Addl. Programme Officers of NREGS-AP districts.
// Attested //
Programme Manager (Q.C)

- In these mandals the organizations ensured that receipts are given for the work applications and issue of work starting intimation letter. They were also successful in starting of 4-5 works at a time to meet the demand of the wage seekers
- In Kadiri mandal, REDS facilitated resolution of a peculiar problem where the residents of one village and mandal have their lands in another mandal and were not allowed to work in those lands as the jurisdictions are different. Through persuasion of the NGO, the district Project Director agreed to issue the temporary job cards to them and allow to work in those lands
- In Kadiri a mandal committee has been formed which is regularly meeting once in a month in which the mandal EGS officials and functionaries are attending and the issues are being resolved
- With continuous follow up and facilitation in Karimnagar single women are working as a group (10 members) at worksite, and getting same wage as other groups.
- In Turkapally mandal in Nalgonda district, PILUPU ensured that wage labourers were

organized systematically in various formations from small groups of 10-15 to village committees up to the mandal committee level. The mandal committee members take responsibility of bringing issues to the notice of the mandal administration and seek redressal.

- During the agriculture (*kharif*) season last year several farmers raised objections about starting NREGA work. Moreover, a shortage of funds also forced the government to stop work from April to May 2008. Due to pressure from farmers, again from June to July 2008, GoAP passed a circular stopping eight types of earthen works. However, the field and mandal level EGS functionaries stopped all works. After this, in August an enquiry committee was formed to look into the situation with respect to utilization of funds. With pressure of consortium partner organizations, including labour unions, government announced the start of work from September 2008, but in some villages farmers again raised an objection. In Mogullapally, APMSS organized a meeting with labourers and farmers to forge a common understanding and work plan which does not affect either the interests of farmers as well or landless labourers adversely. In this village, 14 wage labour groups are formed. They worked out a solution whereby, one group works for 14 days continuously on an EGS site at a time. After this, the second group works for the next fourteen days and so on, so that labour availability for the farmers as well as the work availability of the workers is balanced. This is a localized, temporarily negotiated mechanism to ensure the continuity of EGS work in the village. Due to this mechanism, work could continue without any break.

2.1.5 WASSAN's Role as A Support Agency

WASSAN has been associated with NREGS in Andhra Pradesh right from the initial process of preparation of guidelines for operationalization by the rural development department. It has drawn from its experience of engagement with watershed development programmes and other land development programmes for contributing to the process of evolving operational systems for NREGS in AP. Subsequently, after grounding of NREGS in AP WASSAN's role can be broadly described as falling in two categories:

- Continuous research and analysis of different aspects of NREGS and providing feedback to the Rural Development Department, GoAP, in particular and other civil society organizations and political parties in general. This includes facilitating action research programmes at a small scale with the selected local organizations and sharing learnings with the department at the state level as well as various organizations at the national level for improving programme implementation. As part of this role, WASSAN:
 - Undertook a rapid assessment of operationalization of NREGS in AP in collaboration with agriculture workers unions in June, 2006. A status report was presented to the Commissioner, Rural Development as well as Mr. Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy, member of the Parliamentary Standing committee on Rural Development
 - Prepared two Annual Performance Analysis reports of NREGS in AP (for 2006-07 and 2007-08) based on the data presented in the official website of NREGS-AP. These reports were shared with the department as well as various organisations, networks and individuals working on NREGS to help focus on issues in NREGS implementation

- Carried out a comparative performance analysis on effective implementation of NREGS in different states in two years (2006-08) and shared this with various organizations.
- Has supported activities of 5 consortium partner organisations in 6 districts in 7 mandals. The particular role of WASSAN is to coordinate the initiatives at ground level by the respective local organizations and facilitate sharing of the learnings at various levels
- Has piloted various initiatives of land and CPR development, productivity enhancement for integration into NREGA, particularly in Mahaboobnagar and Ananthapur districts in collaboration with local CBOs and NGOs.
- As part of the above initiatives, produced and widely shared various publications, posters and communication material on NREGS in Telugu
- Supporting initiatives and engagement of agriculture labour unions and other organisations working on a rights-based approach to promote workers rights as well as strengthen the rights approach to entitlements in NREGA. As part of this process WASSAN has been working closely with various agriculture labour unions, network of organisations and state level fora like the *Upadhi Hami Hakku Amalu* committee and providing need-based technical and backup support in their initiatives particularly related to wage rates, demand based work commencement, work site facilities, choice of works, transparency and accountability at all levels etc.

2.2 Foundation for Ecological Security

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) carries out activities to promote the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, forests and water in particular, through local self-governance institutions. The crux of FES efforts lie in locating forests and other natural resources within the prevailing economic, social and ecological demands at the level of villages and village conglomerates, and amalgamating principles of conservation and local self governance to safeguard the natural surroundings and improve the living conditions of the poor.

To this end FES:

- Works towards the ecological restoration and conservation of land and water resources, in the uplands and other eco-fragile, degraded and marginalized zones of the country and to set in place the processes of co-ordinate human effort and governance to this end;
- Undertakes work either directly, or with and through a range of democratic village institutions, their federal bodies, and civil society organisations, (set up) through initiatives that are ecologically sustainable and socially and economically equitable;
- Ensures the ecological integrity of all efforts by working, as far as possible, with entire landscapes, and with all the interrelated communities within it, through a range of arrangements on their land and aquatic resources whether Commons, Public or Private;
- Works for and promote stability of the ecosystems through the protection and restoration of biological diversity, including the diversity of species, age diversity, genetic variability as well as that of structural composition;
- Collaborates with Panchayati Raj and other democratic village institutions, as well as appropriate civil society organisations, in their efforts to contribute towards the objectives

of the society, and to provide technical and financial assistance to them.

FES has been working in the area of Natural Resource Management since the last fifteen years and its activities have spread to 26 districts in different eco-zones across six states: Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Rajasthan of India. FES presently works with 1,402 village institutions and assists the village communities in protecting nearly 1 lakh hectares of revenue wastelands, degraded forest lands and Panchayat grazing lands (*Charagah* lands), and crafting rules and regulations in managing and governing the natural resources, common land and water bodies. FES implements these project directly through its Spearhead Teams (comprising a mix of professionals and local extension workers) located in each of the project areas. The work in each location is undertaken in a contiguous set of villages and across landscapes so as to build on the social and ecological advantages that working at such scales offer. FES is engaged in helping communities draw up perspective plans for natural resource management and leveraging the NREGA to systematically implement their plans. With the expansion of NREGA to cover all districts in the country from 1st April 2008, FES is presently involved in facilitating the implementation of NREGA in all its project locations. FES works in close coordination with the State Governments. Apart from the Memorandum of Understanding with the State Governments, State Level Coordination Committees comprising of the Secretaries of relevant departments like Forest, Revenue, Rural Development, Cooperation, Agriculture etc. and District Level Coordination Committees have been formed to facilitate the implementation of the projects, assist in convergence of other programmes and also steer policies.

2.2.1 FES Initiatives on NREGA in Chittoor

The State Government invited FES to facilitate implementation of NREGS in the 6 Panchayats, on the village common lands in the Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh. This provided the team an opportunity to demonstrate and extend its integrated natural resource management/watershed development initiatives using NREGS. Based on the previous year's experience FES work on NREGS has now been extended to 14 Gram Panchayats in Chittoor. Under the Project, emphasis is on two important aspects:

- Panchayats are to form the pivot in the entire developmental process and policy formulation process. It has thus been ensured that the Panchayats be included in the conceptualization, planning, implementation and also monitoring of the works under the scheme, and
- The activities shall be targeted towards holistic regional level natural resource development in the project area.

Area Profile

At present the team is carrying out the NREGA activities in the following Gram Panchayats in Chittoor district:

1. Gopidinne
2. Gundlapalle
3. Kalwapalle

4. Kotala
5. Zunzurpenta
6. RN Thanda
7. Gangireddypalli
8. Thamballapalli
9. Panchalamarry
10. Devalacheruvu.

In four more panchayats, Gurramvandlapalle, Muslikunta, Bandrevu and Kotakadapalli Community Forest Management under NREGA has been undertaken in the forest (Van Suraksha Samiti) area.

Work Done and Major Achievements

Following activities have been undertaken under the Pilot Project:

- Mobilization of wage earners and developing partnership towards diversification of livelihood options with respect to Land and Water (Agriculture and Animal Husbandry):
 - Identification of beneficiaries (with Survey Nos.) for undertaking physical works in their private and common lands.
 - Taking up physical works (Bunding, leveling, farm pond construction, RFDs, rain water harvesting structures, etc.)
 - Supporting physical works with vegetative measures.
- Undertaking soil and moisture conservation on common land
 - Vegetative fencing around the common land (Agave, Pongamia pinnata, Acacia siamea, etc.).
 - Fodder seed broadcasting (through team level funding).
- Water harvesting structures
 - Construction of Farm Ponds
 - Earthen bunds across the streams.
 - Desiltation of tanks and strengthening of embankments.
 - Drainage line treatment of the catchments of water bodies.
- Afforestation measures on the common land and private lands
 - Pitting for plantation.
 - Plantation of native and horticultural species.
 - Planting on the bunds of the field and farm ponds that improve the biomass productivity of both trees and crops.
- Enhancing associated farm based livelihoods options
 - Supply of horticultural saplings for plantation (fruit bearing and fodder species) around the homestead lands and farm bunds.
 - Broadcasting of fodder grass seeds around the homestead lands and common lands, and
 - Providing technological support and resources for undertaking vermi-composting activity to supplement organic farming.
- Capacity building of the communities
 - Promotion/strengthening of farmers clubs and such existing women's Self Help Groups (SHG), which are promoted and supported by VELUGU.

- Skill development, and enhancement through exposure and training on Soil and Water Conservation technology, Vermi-composting, horticulture and appropriate and sustainable agriculture practices.
- Undertaking studies and documentation of physical interventions as well as social and economic processes associated with it
 - Developing understanding of farmers and women groups on biophysical aspect of the natural resources, their quantity and diversity.
 - Documenting farming systems, practices, and farm and common land production and market linkages.
 - Assessment of demand and supply of water and biomass.
 - Regular documentation of the processes and the project impacts on a continuous basis.
 - Qualitative and analytical assessment of the economic improvement arising out of the enhancement of the ecological base and its productivity.

Financial Progress

The table below shows the expenditure undertaken, wage employment generated and the number of households which have completed 100 days of work:

Panchayat	Financial progress (Jan08-Dec08) in Rs. Lakhs	Wage employment provided (no. of labor)	No. of household completing 100 days
Gundlapalle	27.34	550	155
Gopidinne	20.40	824	62
R.N.Thanda	12.64	432	36
Kotala	14.10	519	79
Zunzurpenta	09.53	335	35
Kalavapalle	26.35	776	136
Devalacheravu*	23.10	416	80
Panchalamari*	9.20	250	35
Thambalapalle*	19.35	445	72
Gangireddipalli*	10.22	325	60
Forest areas of Muslikunta, Bandrevu Kotakadapalli and Gurramvandlapalle **	7.36	150	-
Total	179.59	5128	750

Notes:

* Data are from April 2008-December 2008

**In remaining four panchayats, Gurramvandlapalle, Muslikunta, Bandrevu and Kotakadapalli, CFM-NREGA has been undertaken only in the forest area. And the financial progress is under consolidation for these four panchayats.

- An amount of Rs. 4 crores has been leveraged under NREGA thus far
- Of this amount, an expenditure of nearly Rs.1.80 crores has already been undertaken
- This expenditure has been entirely made on NREGA priority activities such as water conservation, land development, irrigation development and drought proofing as the table below highlights:

Item	Expenditure (Rs. Lakhs)	% Share in Total Expenditure
Water conservation	80.11	45
Drought proofing and plantation	17.08	10
Land development	54.13	30
Renovation of traditional water bodies	0.36	0
Irrigation facilities	27.91	16
Total	179.59	100

Case Studies Highlighting NREGA Related Impacts and Processes

Case Study I

Name of the stakeholder: Shri Harinath

Name of the village: Burujupalli, Zunzurpenta R.V.

Harinath is a marginal farmer in Burujupalli village, which comes in Zunzurpenta R.V. He owned three and a half acres of agriculture land, which he was not able to cultivate due to ownership-related conflicts. In June 06, he was forced to migrate to nearby Madanapalle town, because of lack of employment. In Madanapalle, he started working in a wine shop for Rs.50/- a day. But considering the extent of expenditure, he found it hard to survive. He had to discontinue his LIC policy, because of his inability to pay its instalments.

The introduction of NREGS-AP in Burujupalli came as a ray of hope for him. In March 2007, along with his wife, he got work in constructing a water supply channel in their own village. They received Rs.75 to Rs.80 per day, an amount they had never received before for the same or greater amount of work. Since March, both of them have got 25-27 days of work on an average per month. It enabled them to continue with their LIC policy by paying its previous instalments. Harinath's wife took a loan of Rs.14,000 under the DWACRA (Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas) initiated Self Help Group to purchase sheep. She is now able to pay the instalments of loan through her own hard earned money. The income from NREGA activities has helped them to improve their financial status.

Case study II

Name of the stakeholder: Smt. Gangulamma

Name of the village: Yedullavemanagaripalli

Gangulamma stays in Harijanwada of Yedullavemanagaripalli village. She and her husband owned three acres of dry land, but could not cultivate it because of scarce rains and

undulating topography of the land. With a family of 16 members to support, she had no option but to work on wages as low as Rs.20 a day. They were forced to take a loan of Rs.10,000 just to meet their daily expenses. Her elder son and daughter-in-law consequently migrated to Hyderabad to escape this vicious circle of poverty.

Under the NREGS, both Gangulamma and her husband started working on an average wage of Rs.80 a day. They also worked on their own land for the construction of a farm pond and farm bunds. In this year alone, they together have received about four months of work earning about Rs.20,000. This enabled them to support their children's education, and also purchase gold worth Rs.5,000 for her daughter's marriage. Gangulamma is also planning to cultivate her land for the first time in the coming rainy season (thanks to the farm pond which has water even in summer). She can now dream of having a stable and secure life.

Specific Efforts

- Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI's) are visualized as institutions competent to chart out an alternative path of development in the rural areas. The guiding principle for the team is to transform the PRI's into vibrant, representative and suitably empowered bodies.
- Orienting and enhancing the awareness and knowledge levels of the Panchayats and assisting them in a better comprehension of their roles and responsibilities
- The team has been promoting the participation of women in EGS day meetings, village meetings, etc. The team is also focusing on discussions to understand and cultivate the linkages of women with the forest, agriculture, livestock and other social and cultural factors in a given village through which the team plans to further facilitate the participation of women in every stage of the project. The role of women in documentation activities is also being promoted.

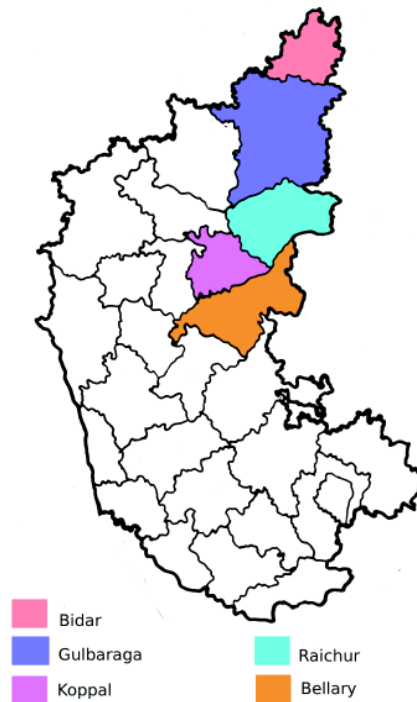
THREE

KARNATAKA

3.1 The Hyderabad-Karnataka Consortium

The work in Karnataka is being carried out by a regional consortium of 4 organizations led by SAMUHA. The organizations are:

- Samarasa
- Ingrid
- SAMUHA
- Outreach



Districts Covered by Consortium Partners in Karnataka

The network is active in the Hyderabad-Karnataka region of Karnataka state where it works in the following districts:

1. Bidar
2. Gulbarga

3. Raichur

4. Koppal

5. Bellary

SAMUHA was founded in 1986 and is working to improve the quality of life of vulnerable groups. It has been active in the fields of HIV/AIDS, disabilities, social justice, public resources, integrated village development, watershed development, micro-credit, sustainable agriculture and appropriate information and communication technologies. SAMUHA is committed to:

- *People's ownership*: It has already facilitated the setting up of 4 women's thrift co-operatives, 1 registered community society, 5 village development societies, and 7 watershed development societies.
- *Quality*: SAMUHA's work with People with Disabilities, people vulnerable to/living with HIV/AIDS, watershed development, community monitoring, micro credit and appropriate technology are at the cutting edge of participative methodologies.
- *Development and Public Accountability*: SAMUHA is administered by a professional Board. In addition, all SAMUHA projects undergo stringent and monthly internal and external financial audits. SAMUHA follows Credibility Alliance practices of good organizational governance.

3.1.1 The Area

The following table lists the districts, blocks, gram panchayats and villages that the consortium partners are working in.

Organization: Samuha			
District	Block	Panchayat	Village
Raichur	Deodurga	1. Palkanmardi	1. Vandili
		2. Galag	2. Chadakalgudda
		3. Jagir Jadaldinni	3. Jagir Jadaldinni
		4. Alkod	4. Nagoli Malledevargudda
		5. Kothadoddi	5. Rekalardi.
		6. Kydigera	6. Bhumanagunda
			7. Kothadoddi
			8. Kydigera
Koppal	Gangavathi	1. Chikkamadinal	1. Chikkamadinal
			2. Ramdurga
			3. Udejali
			4. Nagalapur
			5. Bankapur
			6. Hire madinal
			7. Karadigudda

Organization: Samarasa			
Bidar	Bidar	1. Astur	1. Hemambad
			2. Vodawarda
			3. Kajalapur
			4. Gumma
		2.Chitta	5. Chitta
			6. Chittawadi
			7. Gunnali
		3. Makapur	8. Sulthanpur
			9. Sahapur
			10. Marjapur
		4. Gadgi	11. Gadgi
			12. Hanilapur
			13. Solapur
			14. Chamarajpur.
			15. Meeraganz
			16. Mamkera
		5. Barur	17. Darmapur
			18. Gospur
			19. Wakama B
			20. Wakama K
			21. Chintalgera
			22. Barur Thanda
		6. Manalli	23. Manalli
Organization: OUTREACH			
Bellary	Hospet	1.Pothalakatti	1. Chilakanahatti
Organization: INGRID			
Raichur	Gillesugur	1. Elibechalli	1. Yadlapur
			2. Elibechalli
		2. Matmari	3. Matmari
Total Districts			4
Total Blocks			5
Total Gram Panchayats			16
Total Villages			42

The selection of the villages was undertaken after the Gram Panchayat members were first given an orientation. Interested GP members then asked for a detailed training on NREGA. Villages represented by the most interested GP members were selected.

Description of Villages Selected

The following table summarizes some of the major characteristics of the chosen villages:

	Raichur INGRID	Bellary Outreach	Bidar Samarasa	Raichur Samuha	Koppala Samuha	All
Average annual rainfall. (mm)	630	440	940	520	630	632
Total Population	5453	2177	48558	6044	18667	80899
Percentage of SC in total population	30	30	20	4	25	21
Percentage of ST in total population	30	10	30	24	49	33
Net Sown Area (ha)	2250	250	11525	6535	2136	22696
Gross Sown Area (GSA) (ha)	2375	350	13062	7469	2465	25721
GSA/NSA	1.06	1.4	1.13	1.14	1.15	1.13
Gross Irrigated Area (ha)	500	35	1537	1867	822	4761
GIA/GSA %	21	10	12	25	33	19

- The interventions potentially cover nearly 81,000 people. Of these, 55% belong to the SC and ST groups.
- Interventions show a marked impact in all GPs except those in Raichur district, Block Gillesugur and Bellary district, Block Bellary. This is because work in these two districts started late
- The average annual rainfall of all villages is only 632mm. If we leave out the somewhat higher rainfall in Bidar, where Samarasa is active, the average annual rainfall comes to only 555 mm.
- In all villages only about 13% of the Net Sown Area is cropped more than once. Leaving out project villages in Bellary (where this ratio is somewhat better), all other villages show GSA to NSA ratios of between 1.06 to 1.15. This can be correlated to the fact that the villages belong to a low rainfall and low irrigation regime.
- This fact has to be read in conjunction with the figures on irrigated area. For all villages, the Gross Irrigated Area is only 4,761 ha which is 19% of the Gross Sown Area.
- In the chosen Panchayats of Bidar and Bellary districts, this share is as low as 10% and 12% respectively.
- Clearly, therefore there is need for drought-proofing work to be integrated into the main body of NREGA works.
- The major occupation is agriculture with 80 to 100% of the population reporting agriculture as their primary occupation and 75 to 100% reporting it as their secondary occupation (see table below)

Occupation	Raichur INGRID	Bellary Outreach	Bidar Samarasa	Raichur Samuha	Koppala Samuha
Primary Occupation (% of households reporting)					
Agriculture	50	60	60	50	60
Agriculture Labour	50	30	30	30	35
Total agriculture	100	90	90	80	95
Secondary Occupation (% of households reporting)					
Agriculture	60	45	45	45	35
Agriculture Labour	40	40	35	35	40
Total agriculture	100	85	80	80	75

- The major crops of the area are Bajra (40% of GSA), Sunflower and Groundnut (25%) in the kharif season and jowar, pigeonpea and other pulses in the rabi season together occupying 8% of GSA
- 35% of the households migrate out of their villages in distress while 65% migrate because of better opportunities

3.1.2 Work Achievements

Job Cards and Work Demand

The first step in getting NREGA implementation off the ground was to run a systematic campaign to register workers and get job cards made for families who had been left out. The results of this campaign, in terms of applications for job cards and actual job cards obtained are shown in the following table:

District	Raichur		Bidar		Raichur		Koppala		Bellary		Total	
Block / Partner	Deodurga Samuha		Bidar Samarasa		Gillesugur Ingrid		Kanakagiri Samuha		Bellary Outreach			
Item	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Before Intervention	After Intervention
1 Job Cards Applied For (no.)	1860	2025	4193	4943	1172	1422	279	914	189	358	7408	9662
2 Job Cards Obtained (no.)	1575	2025	4193	4943	800	1422	279	914	189	358	7321	9662

- Overall, there was a 30% rise in job card applications from 7,408 to 9,662 and a 32% rise in the job cards obtained from 7,321 to 9,662.
- The most spectacular rise was observed in Koppala where the number of job applications and job cards rose by 228%.

- In Bellary, the rise in both job card applications and job cards obtained was to the tune of 90% over the base situation.
- In Gillesugur block of Raichur district, before interventions, the job card applications were 1,172 as against which, the actual job cards received were only 800. After interventions, both job card applications and job cards obtained rose to 1,422. This represented an 80% rise in the job cards obtained over the base period.
- In all blocks, the percentage rise in job cards obtained is well established. In terms of the percentage of total households covered, there are variations. These variations are particularly caused by the large populations in Koppal and Bidar where maximization of coverage with respect to total number of households is still to be achieved.

Works Planned, Sanctioned and Implemented

Given the base scenario, a clear thrust towards NRM was mandated. The project teams carried out assessment of work needs and the total target of person-days of employment that would be needed to equal this estimated. Works were planned to meet this needed employment volume.

- Compared to the base situation, when only 10 works had been sanctioned and 4 started, the concerted effort of consortium partners eventually led to a situation where 120 works were sanctioned and 92 started.
- The value of NRM works *sanctioned* showed a spectacular overall rise from Rs.28 lakhs to Rs.3 crores.
- The value of NRM works *implemented* showed a similar spectacular rise over the base situation from Rs.4 lakhs to nearly Rs.77 lakhs. The tables below give a detailed break-up of

Item	Value of NRM Works Sanctioned			Value of NRM Works Implemented		
	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase
Deoduga (Samuha)	15,87,000	1,40,00,000	1,24,13,000	4,00,000	27,20,223	23,20,223
Bidar (Samarasa)	-	90,00,000	90,00,000	-	19,41,676	19,41,676
Gillesugur (Ingrid)	12,18,090	12,18,090	-	-	12,74,090	12,74,090
Kanakagiri (Samuha)	-	60,84,400	60,84,400	-	16,09,694	16,09,694
Bellary (Outreach)	-	1,35,000	1,35,000	-	1,40,000	1,40,000
	28,05,090	3,04,37,490	2,76,32,400	4,00,000	76,85,683	72,85,683

- There are differences in impacts between partners as we can see from the above table:
 - Work began in some areas later than others because of which very striking results were not visible uniformly. In the case of Ingrid, for example, the value of NRM works sanctioned did not increase. In Bellary (where Outreach is working) the value of NRM works sanctioned and implemented was very small.
 - However, in both cases it was ensured that whatever was sanctioned also saw the light of implementation, which is itself a very big improvement over the base situation.
 - In the case of Outreach, the lower initial coverage in terms of villages and GPs is also

perhaps one of the reasons why the expansion of NRM works has not been of the same scale.

- However, in Deodurga, the value of NRM works sanctioned rose by Rs.1.24 crores and in Bidar, it rose by Rs.90 lakhs.
- And the value of NRM works implanted in the above two locations increased by Rs.23 lakhs and Rs.19.3 lakhs
- Overall, the activities that were planned and implemented concentrated on Trench-cum-Bunds (TCBs) for soil and moisture conservation, farm ponds and check dams for water harvesting, desilting of tanks for augmentation and recovery of their storage capacity and nala training. The table below provides details of activities planned and undertaken in each partner location
- 12 tanks were taken up for desilting, 26 new farm ponds were constructed along with 10 new checkdams, 8,029 units of Trench-cum-Bunds and 4 nala training works were also implemented
- This work resulted in the generation of 1,06,46 person-days of employment for wage-seekers in the villages.

Partner and District	Value of Work Planned with GP (Rs)	Work Carried Out	No	Volume of work Cum	Estimated Value of Work Targeted in the Current Period (Rs)	Person days Generated	Actual Amount spent activities (Rs)
Ingrid (Raichur)	1274090	TCB	100	10975	1074090	14918	1274090
		Farm pond	4	1440	200000	2778	
Samuha (Raichur)	6279480	TCB	7757	19393	570223	7920	2720223
		Tank desilting	10	10750	430000	5972	
		Check Dam	6	2160	840000	11667	
		Farmpond	22	7920	880000	12222	
Samarasa (Bidar)	4200000	Tank desilting	1	8308	332335	4616	1941676
		Check Dam	2	720	280000	3889	
		Nala training for Water harvesting	4	33234	1329341	18463	
Samuha (Koppal)	1609694	TCB	172	916	1469694	20412	1609694
		Tank desilting	1	3500	140000	1944	
Outreach (Bellary)	140000	Check Dam	2	720	140000	1944	140000
	13503264			100036	7685683	106746	7685683

Transparency, Social Audits, Wage Payments and Work-site Facilities

- Most of this aspect of the work has taken off in Samuha's own target panchayats in Deodurga. Since other partners are still in the earlier stages of getting their work off the ground, it is expected that in the coming months, work on these areas will also take off, gaining from the experiences already garnered by Samuha
- Samuha has conducted 181 social audits in its Deodurga work location. No social audit had been done in these panchayats before Samuha's work took off.
- 44 cases of delayed payments in the concerned gram panchayats in Raichur and 1 such case in Koppal were observed before Samuha started work. All 45 cases were followed up for redressal and successfully redressed. There have been no such case of delayed payment after the project interventions have consolidated themselves.
- As a result of Samuha's interventions, 15 cases of unemployment allowance were taken up and in all cases the allowance was paid up.
- Women have been actively involved in the implementation of the NREGA programme in its various dimensions.

3.1.3 Policy Advocacy

Since the project is an innovative attempt, partners plan to make its successful implementation an issue of advocacy with the administration. In particular, it is felt by partners that advocacy issues need to focus on integration of NRM activities and pushing TCB and Farm Pond technology to lands of SC/ST/Poor families. All partners are pushing for wider adoption of this package with the administration.

A Note on TCBs

SAMUHA has been successful as part of its work with the Consortium in promoting Trench-cum-Bunds (TCBs) as an NREGA treatment on private lands in the Raichur and Koppal districts in North Karnataka. Each TCB is 6m x 1.5m x 0.6m = 5.4cum. At Rs 80/cum, the latest NREGA rate, each TCB costs Rs.432 and generates 5.27 person-days. The TCB evolved as part of an Indigenous Technical Knowledge sharing effort by 2 elderly labourers - Timmana and Chattarappa - from the Kumarkhed watershed being implemented by SAMUHA with NABARD support.

There was initial apathy because people saw the TCB as being more and harder work. This was overcome by organising interested farmers and labourers into land and labour groups. Today, the demand for TCBs is becoming central to land development activities under NREGA in Samuha's 2 districts. What the TCB does is:

- *Create hardier farm bunds:* Because the pit is 2' deep, harder calcareous soil is often used in the bund formation. In the NABARD WDF watersheds as well as the ISPWD-K Kananakala watershed, where SAMUHA introduced TCBs four years ago, it is observed that bunds have weathered 8 Rabi and Kharif rains well.
- *Provide space for bund plantations:* The lead of 1m between the bund and pit provides space for planting and also ensures that the bund does not collapse into the pit. However, since most agriculture lands become grazing land post-harvest, there is poor plant survival rate.
- *Each pit harvests 5400 liters of rainwater:* At 11 TCBs per acre, that's 59,400 liters per acre. At 50% efficiency, the 40 annual raindays that Raichur receives ensure a harvesting of 1.18 million liters of rain water annually per acre.
- *All of this water, apart from some evaporation loss, is converted into sub-surface interflows:* The NABARD WDF Hadagali watershed had 135 open and borewells that had dried up as the groundwater disappeared. Farmer desperation can be gauged by the fact that 39 of the farmers had dug borewells as their open wells dried up, only to see these also dry up. Most farmers had over the years sold their pumpsets. Today 115 of the 135 dry wells have been recharged, and there is a palpable difference in the air as life giving water glistens in the sun.
- The 5.4 cum space in each pit after the rains provides space for crop residue to be composted. Each pit absorbs approximately 2 tons of wet matter and ensures 1 ton of dry compost availability by the next crop.

It appears from experience that the TCB meets the core watershed objectives of soil conservation, rain water harvesting, the conversion of this into sub-surface interflows and soil organic content leading to drought proofing and greater soil and crop productivity. At 500 acres per village, 11 TCBs per acre and 5.27 person-days per TCB, each village has the potential to generate nearly 29,000 person-days of work. An NREGA investment of Rs.23.7 lakhs per village has the potential to drought-proof all arable lands in a village and to create the infrastructure for sustainable rain water harvesting and composting thereafter. At an average of 175 households per village, that's 165 person-days per household – enough to help them overcome the drought and prepare for a more stable future. If NREGA resources could also be used for raising and watering bund plantations, and for systematically making compost in these TCBs, then it would have created a self-sustaining safety net for food security in the semi-arids.

3.1.4 Case Studies

In Reklamardi village of Deodurga Block, Basavaraj and Rangappa Timmappa left their land barren for well over 5 years. Under Samuha's intervention, TCBs were constructed on their land and the farmers have once again begun cultivation of land which they had led barren. In Malledevegudda village farmer Hanumantha Budeppa, who has not cultivated his land is now growing crops after the TCB programme was implemented. Ramachandra and Hanumanthray and Govindayya had planned to go Bangalore with their children. After this programme the family has not migrated from its villages.



Construction of bund for Chandegutta was undertaken under NREGA in 2006. As a result of the elevated bund, water holding capacity of the bund increased and water accumulated making it available even in summer.

Amaresh s/o Konappa is a beneficiary of village Kurlerdoddi. Farmers in the nearby fields are excited sharing the experience of Amaresh. This year they have noticed that 7 borewells in their fields are functioning again and that too in summer. Several borewells in Kurlerdoddi and Dyamanadoddi villages which have been dysfunctional for the past 3 years are functioning again.



3.1.5 Capacity Building and Social Mobilization

SAMUHA and consortium partners initiated training for the members who are involved in the process of accessing government resources for NRM activities:

- Training of 10 Gram Panchayat presidents, 10 Gramaswarj Sevaks, 10 NREGA labour groups representatives, 10 volunteers, 20 NGO field staff, 20 NGO representatives from 10 Gram Panchayats in the five districts
- Training of 3 Taluka NREGA nodal officers, 13 Gram Panchayat secretaries, 13 Gram Panchayat presidents, 6 NGO staff from 2 talukas in Bidar Raichur and Koppal districts.
- The Major focus and orientation was on the grassroot level so that their understanding of the TCB package is enhanced and the package is used in NREGA works
- Taluka level officials recognized the importance and potential of TCB work and started payments for these activities. District level officers in Raichur, Koppal and Bidar invited SAMUHA to make a presentation on this to all the ZP members and presidents. In the other 2 districts, discussions are on with the district administration for conducting similar workshops on TCB implementation under NREGA.
- Orientation on operationalizing the Gram Panchayat Perspective Plans for 12 district officials, including District Nodal Officers and Line Department officials, of Raichur Zilla Panchayat, Raichur District. The meeting was chaired by the CEO NREGA
- 5 days training for 23 ZP members and 11 district Nodal Officers and line department officials for Zilla Panchayat, Koppal District on NREGA along with 2 other master trainers. The training was convened by the CEO, Koppal.
- Training of 1 Taluk Panchayat President, 9 taluk Panchayat Members, 1 Executive officer, 8 taluk Officials, 10 Gram Panchayat Secretaries and 2 extension officers in Koppal district
- In Raichur district, the Executive Officer and other NREGA officials:
 - Training of 16 taluka Panchayat members and 8 taluka officials
 - Training of 5 ZP members, 28 Gram Panchayat Presidents, 14 GP secretaries, 8 taluka officers, 2 extension officers. The training was convened by the CEO, ZP
 - Facilitation of NREGA review by ZP president, CEO and Chair of the ZP Agriculture standing committee.
 - Training of 7 GPs, 7 secretaries, 3 agriculture extension workers
- Training of 6 GP Secretaries, 4 taluka officers, 22 women sangha members, 33 representatives of Progressive Groups and 5 NGO staff. 1 Gram Panchayat President and 1 Gram Panchayat members for Deodurga Taluk also attended the training as resource persons.
- SAMUHA also facilitated the following:
 - In Killarhatti Gram Panchayat in the project of Kushtagi taluka, Koppal District:
 - ♦ NREGA Orientation of 26 Gram Panchayat President, Members, Secretary and Volunteers
 - ♦ NREGA Facilitation with Kushtagi NREGA Nodal Executive Officer, Taluk NREGA Nodal Officer Taluk level officials and Gram Panchayat President and Secretary.
 - ♦ Data entry of 882 households data in to NREGA internet.
 - ♦ Facilitation of 468 bank account opening
 - ♦ Formation of 11 NREGA Labour Groups. Of these 9 are presently functional. These cover 462 households.
 - ♦ Formation of 12 NREGA PPR Groups covering 313 farmers 863 hec.
 - ♦ Facilitation of the Rs 37.21 Lakh Gram Panchayat Annual Action Plan. This was subsequently approved by Koppal Zilla Panchayat.

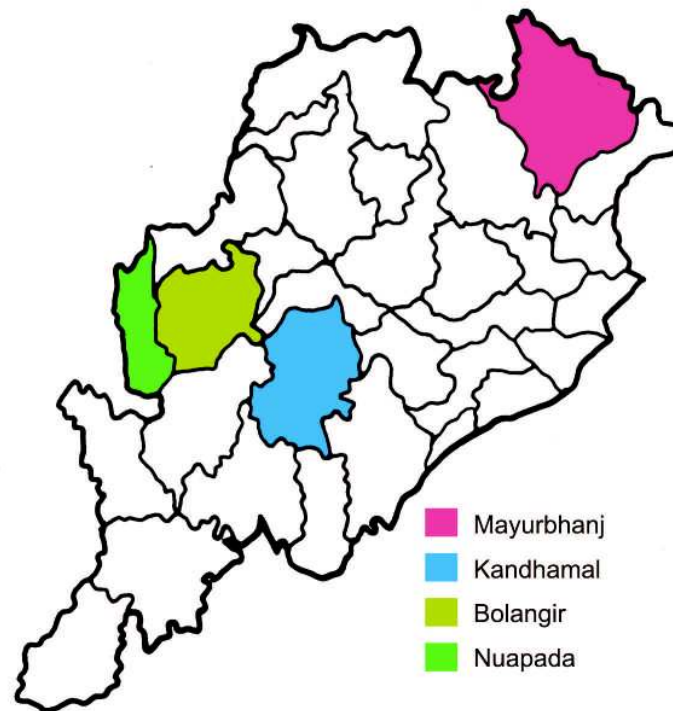
- ♦ Of the Rs 10.03 Lakhs is for water harvesting, Rs 7.63 Lakhs for Trench-cum-Bunds, Rs 7.89 Lakhs for Social forestry.
- ♦ Rs.14.00 Lakhs of works were initiated by Dec 08.
- In Chikmadinal Gram Panchayat in the SAMUHA-Plan Project, Gangavati taluk, Koppal District:
 - NREGA Orientation of 42 Gram Panchayat President Members, Secretary and volunteers.
 - Facilitation of 791 bank account opening covering 100% of the Households
 - Formation of 22 NREGA Labour Groups covering 618 households.
 - Formation of 18 NREGA PPR Groups covering 179 farmers and 303 hac
 - Training of 11 NERGA labour group representatives from 2 villages
 - Facilitation of the Rs 60.84 Lakh Gram Panchayat annual action plan. This was subsequently approved by Koppal Zilla Panchayat.
 - Of this Rs 52.23 Lakhs is for water harvesting, and Rs 1.27 Lakhs for social forestry

3.1.6 Field Support

In Raichur Samuha has worked with 28 Gram Panchayats in the Deodurga taluk of Raichur District to create Gram Panchayat Perspective Plan (GP3). Rs.54 crore worth of works were identified in the taluka and approved by the respective Gram Sabhas. Subsequently, despite the GP3s being accepted by the Zilla Panchayat, none of the documents were sent for technical approval. As a result most of these plans went into cold storage. Individual Gram Panchayat's have however continued to use their GP3 as a referral document and have based many of their NREGA works on this.

FOUR

ORISSA



Districts Covered in Orissa

4.1 Western Orissa NREGA Consortium

4.1.1 The Background

Districts in Orissa which are part of the Koraput, Bolangir and Kalahandi (KBK) trio are among the poorest districts in the country. The fortunes of these districts rise and fall in accordance with the periodic and contrasting extreme weather conditions. This region lives a fragile unstable existence withstanding heat waves, floods and drought. 90% of the population of Bolangir and Nuapada districts, lives below poverty line and about 30% of its population

is under-nourished. Recurring droughts manifesting in almost an alternate-year cycle since the 1980's have led to large scale distress migration in which poor and vulnerable people mainly from the marginalized caste and class are exploited endlessly.

The challenges are particularly severe for the poor and the marginalized whose lives are constantly under threat because of their deprived economic and social situation. Almost solely dependent on agriculture, few have productive land holdings and have to depend on agriculture labour income, which is erratic. While subsistence agriculture and collection and sale of minor forest produce are the two major source of livelihood in the district the traders money lenders harvest the benefit and enjoy a large share of the agricultural produce and from NTFP collection.

When drought occurs the poor and the marginalized are the first to suffer the after effects as their life is one of subsistence, and they have no reserves of either food or money to fall back on. This situation compels them to sell their land, labour and whatever produce at the cheapest rates and become further marginalized and asset-less. The small and marginal farmers typically own land that is small in acreage and also in its capability to yield. More often than not, they own uplands where the cultivation of paddy is difficult. Scanty rainfall, the spiraling cost of agricultural inputs, further lower productivity. However there is a contradiction here. Upland cultivation is possible even when rainfall is inadequate because traditional millet crops can still be productive when rain fails. These millets often provide food security for the farmers. Since small farmers own uplands logically even through years of monsoon failure, they should not face food-insecurity. In reality though, this is not the case and the contradiction lies in the fact that these small farmers own their lands in name alone. The *de-facto* owners of their land are the money lenders to whom the small farmers have become indebted over the years for a few hundred rupees. Therefore even the yield that their land gives does not benefit them, as they are merely labourers, often bonded on their own land.

Land and Water

The region is faced with a situation of severe loss of tree cover, with more than 50% forest area degraded. This has caused soil erosion, rapid runoff and deposits of eroded soil in paddy fields. Soil erosion and land degradation have also reduced the water retention capacity of the soil and contributed to a loss of productivity. Poor management of common pool resources has ensured high rates of soil and water runoff during the monsoons, resulting in annual water shortages and a steady decline in soil fertility. Both factors have contributed to poor and uncertain returns on rain-fed agriculture.

Another significant factor that makes the region particularly vulnerable to frequent drought is the collapse of the traditional irrigation system. Bolangir and Nuapada districts have been home to a unique system of traditional irrigation and water harvesting which are suitable for the topography of the area. The system ensured that the excess runoff from the upper structures flowed in to the lower ones and together they capture the maximum quantity of water that was used during the non-monsoon months. For instance, in Bolangir district, through the use of traditional irrigation methods, farmers were able to irrigate about 31.12% of the total cultivatable land of 3,91,332 acres even as far back as 1936. By 1996 however this figure had dropped to a mere 3.36%, increasing the vulnerability of farmers to erratic and

scanty rain fall. Many of these water bodies are now partially or completely defunct. Large scale deforestation leading to reduced rainfall and siltation has choked the water bodies and made them useless for storing water from heavy showers.

Large-scale Distress Migration and Indebtedness

Recurring drought manifested in an almost alternate year cycle has diminished opportunities for labour employment in the agriculture sector forcing people to migrate in large numbers. It has been estimated that more than one lakh families migrate annually from Bolangir district alone. In the absence of alternative employment opportunities, most families in tribal western Orissa survive on remittances by family members employed in brick-kilns, on roads, or other forms of contract labour. It is evident in almost all villages that the worst effected are the landless and marginal farmers who resort to distress mortgaging or selling of their little yet precious land and other assets and migrate out along with their families, taking with them school going children, leaving behind the old and aged. Search for wage employment forces them to migrate to far off places like the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh, the carpet industry in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, construction sites in Maharashtra and for rickshaw pulling in Chhatisgarh. Inducing the poor farmer and labourer to migrate in truck loads and train loads are the labour contractors who not only take the migrants illegally but also take great advantage of their helpless situation. After barely surviving the migration period lasting between 6 to 8 months, the migrants return to their village only to get sucked into the same vicious cycle. With no savings to bank upon, they depend for loans on the local money lenders who charge exorbitant rates of interest. In order to pay back the loan and survive they are forced time and again to migrate out of the villages. The migration process is very peculiar and perverse. *Nuakhai* (eating new rice) is the biggest festival in Western Orissa, which falls before harvest of the kharif crop. To observe the festival, a poor villager approaches the money lender who is also a labour contractor, for a small loan of rupees Rs.400 to Rs.500 as advance to go to work in brick kilns in Andhra Pradesh. To avail this small loan she has to mortgage her two hands and in the month of October she gets an advance of Rs.8, 000 to Rs 10,000 to go to the brick kiln site with her entire family.

There is clearly a need for employment opportunities to be created in the villages themselves. Not only do these opportunities need to be created, they have to be in place before the peak migration period starts in October, for if there is any delay, the villages will be deserted. Further, these employment opportunities also need to be seen as reliable for the local people to have confidence in them as real alternatives to their distress migration. In addition, there is obvious need for access to credit outside of the traditional moneylender.

The interventions on the ground in Western Orissa are centrally focused on leveraging employment possibilities and watershed funds that are made available via NREGA. Additionally, suitably targeted micro-credit and agriculture programs will supplement this core engagement with NREGA. The overarching expectation is that a combination of a micro-credit program and locally available employment will reduce tribal dependence on labour contractors/money lenders; that by utilizing labour to undertake watershed management works the program will begin to build communally and individually owned agricultural assets, and that programs in agriculture will enable these communities to obtain significantly higher returns from these sectors.

4.1.2 Consortium Partners: A Brief Introduction

The partners of the Western Orissa NREGA Consortium (WONC) are a group of 8 NGOs and CBOs who have been active in Bolangir and Nuapada districts for several years. These NGOs and CBOs are:

1. Adhikar
2. Janamukti Anusthan
3. Bolangir Bikash Parishad
4. Bolangir Gramodyog Samiti
5. Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushthan (AJSA)
6. Shramik Shakti Sanghatan
7. Vikalpa in Bolangir District and,
8. Lokadrusti in Nuapada district of Orissa.

In its first phase, the effort was being coordinated by Vikalpa. As the interventions move on to their second phase, the project is being coordinated by Lokadrusti. Following is a brief introduction to each of the WONC partners.

Adhikar

The main objectives of Adhikar are to work in Western Orissa to combat drought, distress migration, help children in education and to help the tribal and rural community to move towards a life of dignity. Adhikar was formed to promote participatory and people-centred development. Social workers and professionals from different parts of Orissa came together and formed Adhikar on 23rd November 1998 which was registered with the Registrar of Societies, Orissa. The main areas of work have been food security and establishment of grain and seed banks, Natural Resource Management, Organic Agriculture, Women's Empowerment through SHGs, Health, Policy Advocacy and Formation and Strengthening of Village Level Institutions.

Janmukti Anushthan

Janmukti Anushthan (JMA) was established in 1996-97 and registered in 1999-2000. Its main objective is to assist the people for their socio-political and economic empowerment and upliftment. JMA works with small and marginal farmers, homeless, widow-headed households, the disabled and landless, agricultural and unorganized labour. It sees itself as a rights-based organization also engaging in development work

Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushthan

Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushthan (AJSA) is a community based organization (CBO). It is a non political, non-profit, social development organization involved in sustainable development initiatives since inception. AJSA was formed by local poor people of Bangomunda Block in the Bolangir District, to work for the social-economic development of small and marginal farmers, landless labour, agricultural labour, bonded labour as well as women, children and other weaker deprived section. The vision of the organization is to draw upon grass root level workers, volunteers, and suppressed people of the society and work with them to create awareness for sustainable development through constructive work and struggles.

Shramik Shakti Sangha

Shramik Shakti Sangha (SSS) was established in Bolangir in 1984. It has worked on sustainable livelihood promotion of the rural poor specially women, SC/ST communities and the economically weak, by building self-sustained people organisations and micro-enterprise by utilization of existing skill and effective utilization of credit and resources. SSS has worked towards creating community infrastructure (water harvesting structures, tank, ponds, forestry, nursery), food security, health, checking distress sales and distress migration from this area.

Bolangir Bikash Parishad

Bolangir Bikash Parishad was formed to promote participatory and people centred development. It has worked on food security related issues, NRM, advocacy, publication of books, health, women's empowerment and building village-level institutions.

Bolangir Gramodyog Samiti

BGS strives to enable poor rural/tribal households and communities to be self-reliant on a sustainable basis. BGS started in the year 1987 and has been working in the field of education, health, and natural resource management. During droughts, BGS has worked to check distress migration and create livelihood opportunities for the poor. At the same time it is organising health camps, coaching centres for poor students and training programmes on organic farming as well as sanitation.

Vikalpa

Orissa in 1981 - perpetual drought, mass exodus of distressed people, routine reports of hunger deaths and starving mothers selling off their infants and children to feed them. These horrendous tales of poverty caught the attention of a handful of students of Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi who, wanting to look into the causes of these issues, organised themselves into a research group and landed in Nuapada, the then Kalahandi district in 1981. Over time, this engagement transformed itself into Vikalpa, which was formally registered under the Societies registration Act. However, the experiences gathered during the FOCUS programme were a significant turning point for the group. During 1989 to 1996, the organisation worked in the Bangomunda and Turekela Blocks of Bolangir District on mass mobilisation through various movements and campaigns on issues like education (literacy), land and water management, environment and different government schemes, building people's organisations at the village level through formation of Village Development Councils (VDCs), Mahila Vikas Samittees and Village Level Youth Clubs. It resolved to work to stop the process of marginalisation among the poorest of the poor. It has worked, *inter alia*, on providing alternative livelihood options for the landless poor, management of natural resources through people's participation, promotion of organic agriculture, women's empowerment through self help groups, health, lobby and advocacy for policy change, formation and strengthening of village level organisations and research and documentation including visual documentation.

Lokadrusti

Lokadrusti aims at sustainable development, overall growth in education, health, art and culture. Its area of operation is Nuapada district in Western Orissa. Women's empowerment is

one of its prime areas of work. Lokadrusti aims at creating a developed region with the best blend of local resources, traditional methods and modern outlook. It attempts to achieve this with the maximum involvement of youth of the region. The organization's main areas of work have been strengthening of people's organization through social mobilization, NRM, rights of tribals, education and child labour, food security and health.

4.1.3 Profile of the Area

A brief profile of the problems of the area has already been given above. We provide here some characteristics of the panchayats. All partners together are working in 59 villages of 8 Gram Panchayats of 8 blocks of the 2 districts of Bolangir and Nuapada. They are covering about 10,334 households through their interventions

NGO/ CBO	District	Block	GP	No of villages	Target House holds
1 Adhikar	Bolangir	Belpada	Juba	8	2191
2 Janamukti Anusthan (JMA)	Bolangir	Muribahal	Bankel	9	857
3 Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushthan (AJSA)	Bolangir	Bangomunda	Gandharla	8	1117
4 Shramik Shakti Sangha (SSS)	Bolangir	Turekela	Badbanki	5	1722
5 Bolangir Bikash Parishad (BBP)	Bolangir	Belpada	Bagdore	10	1330
6 Bolangir Gramodyog Samiti (BGS)	Bolangir	Turekela	Kuibahal	4	1051
7 Vikalpa	Bolangir	Khaprakhol	Tankapani	6	1107
8 Lokdrusti	Nuapada	Boden	Sunapur	9	959
Total				59	10334

- The total population covered by their interventions is 42,666 persons, 20% of which is in the SC category and 39% in the ST category.
- The average annual rainfall of the chosen panchayats is 1,150 mm.
- Only 9% of the Gross Sown Area of all villages is irrigated. At its highest in the JMA area, the GIA as a percentage of GSA still does not exceed 15%.

The table below highlights some of these characteristics:

	Adhikar	AJSA	BBP	BGS	JMA	SSS	Lokadrusti	Vikalpa	All
Average annual rainfall (mm)	1177	1155	1177	1300	1300	720	1200	1179	1150
Total Population	6852	5811	6852	4150	7191	7392	4204	6025	42666
Percentage of SC in total population	18	25	18	26	7	16	9	22	20
Percentage of ST in total population	45	34	45	34	5	27	59	36	39
Net Sown Area (ha)	2536	952	2536	945	2224	1583	1218	1474	13468
Gross Sown Area (GSA) ha	3810	1216	3810	1086	2309	1786	1218	2716	17949
Gross Irrigated Area as % of Gross Sown Area	8	8	8	4	15	9	0	7	9

- The major crop of the area is paddy. Cotton, followed by pulses and groundnuts, which occupy a very small share of the area
- For most households, agriculture is the primary and secondary occupation, either as farmers or as agricultural labour.

4.1.4 Work Done and Achievements

Worker Registration and Job Cards

In all Gram Panchayats, the level of awareness regarding NREGA and its provisions was uniformly low. Thus the coverage of households in terms of job cards was also extremely low. The first step therefore, was to carry out systematic campaigns to enrol wage-seekers and get job cards made. In the beginning, this took the form of baseline surveys conducted by all the partners to assess the current situation. Through this process, contact was made with the people and they were informed about the provisions of the NREGA, the demand-driven nature of the scheme, the need for people to get job cards made and so on. Pressure was created on the implementation structure to redress certain problems:

- For instance, in the Adhikar work area, the organization found that job cards were issued without entry in the Job Card Registration Register. The vigilance and pressure created by Adhikar led to a reversal of the situation.
- Similarly, in the villages of BBP's work, it was found that household registration was not as per norms. After the organization's interventions all the relevant registers were updated and the registration of fresh workers accelerated.
- After the efforts made by BGS, registration began to be carried out publicly, with facilities for people to verify their own details, or those of others. A survey was also conducted by the GP to prepare the list of all the families and their adult members who are eligible to register. There now exists a basis for ensuring that all persons who are eligible and wish to be included in the scheme are accounted for. The first registration was done in a special gram sabha conducted for this purpose.
- Similarly, in JMA's area, the organization started awareness campaigns on NREGA in all the 9 villages. JMA estimates that before this process, only 10% people were aware of the programme. But, after their intervention the percentage of those aware about NREGA rose to 80.
- Lokadrusti carried out similar baseline surveys to identify un-registered workers and then called for village meetings in its work area to formally complete the registration process.
- Vikalpa's baseline surveys also revealed that the registration of workers was either improper or incomplete or both and that the level of awareness about NREGA among the people was minimal. They directed their interventions at correcting this situation.

The table below sheds light on the situation before and after the partner interventions in the project area. What the table brings out is that in the preliminary stages of NREGA a huge amount of effort had to be expended to get the basics in place because the base territory was completed uncharted by the conventional implementation structure. Without the registration of workers and maximization of coverage in terms of job-cards, NREGA implementation would have been a non-starter.



Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushthan activists interact with village people to understand the situation of NREGA on the ground ▼

▲ Village awareness campaigns such as this organized by WONC partner Lokadrusti, helped to make wage seekers aware of their entitlements



A village GP interface meeting organized by Jan Mukti Anushthan in the Bankel GP. Such meetings were crucial in registering workers and raising the demand for work with the GPs ▼



▲ GP-level workshops such as this one organized by Bolangir Bikash Parishad helped to cement ties with the Gram Panchayats



◀ WONC partners have also constantly been involved with advocacy with the NREGA implementation interface. Here they are seen in a meeting with the PD, DRDA of Bolangir district

	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase	Increase Factor Over Base %	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase	Increase Factor Over Base %
Adhikar	221	1120	899	407	156	1120	964	618
AJSA	302	1188	886	293	284	1076	792	279
BBP	398	1039	641	161	398	1039	641	161
BGS	523	897	374	72	412	897	485	118
JMA	698	897	199	29	612	1346	734	120
SSS	467	1604	1137	243	408	1604	1196	293
Lokdrusti	174	846	672	386	270	750	480	178
Vikalpa	350	1305	955	273	347	1115	768	221
Total	3133	8896	5763	184	2887	8947	6060	210

The table clearly shows that the job card applications and obtaining job cards were really low in the target panchayats before project interventions began:

- Job card applications before interventions were only 3,133. After interventions they rose by 5,763 to 8,896.
- Job cards received were only 2,887 and they rose by 6,060 to cover 8,947 households.
- Overall the above implies a nearly 3-fold increase in the job card applications and more than 3-fold increase in the number of job cards obtained
- The increase was the most dramatic in the area of Adhikar, where job card applications increased 5-fold and job cards received increased more than 7-fold.
- In SSS and AJSA areas, the increase in job cards received was nearly 4 times.

Work Demand

The next step was to step up work demand and ensure that these demands were met by the GP. To ensure this, all partners went into campaign mode to ensure that work demands were generated *in the proper format* and receipts obtained for the same from the Gram Panchayats.

To realize the importance of this, we will have to understand the elaborate mechanism that was devised by GPs to evade responsibility for not providing work against demand for it. This itself was necessitated because of the GP's fears of being held liable under the law for not providing employment. The mechanism evolved in Bolangir and Nuapada districts in Orissa to escape doing NREGA work involves suppressing NREGA work demand if it arises. When an applicant demands work in writing by submitting Form B-1 (work application or demand form) to the panchayat, the application has to be acknowledged in writing by the GP through a notice to the applicant for reporting to work (Form B-2 in Orissa). What the panchayat does is to duly fill up Form B-2 for each applicant but the form is never actually given to the applicant. It is kept with the panchayat. This is done so that work under NREGA does not start, but in case of an official inquiry, the sarpanch and the EO can claim that the job card holders concerned were issued a written notice to appear for work vide form B-2, but that

they never turned up at the work site¹.

Under the circumstances, it is not a minor achievement to have formally submitted 8,986 work demand applications in Form B-1 of which for more than 70% official receipts in Form B-2 were given by the panchayats concerned.

The table below elaborates on the achievements with respect to these indicators.

	Work Applications Made			
	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase	Increase %
Adhikar	208	480	272	131
AJSA	52	415	363	698
BBP	306	416	110	36
BGS	312	784	472	151
JMA	9	9	0	0
SSS	146	917	771	528
Lokdrusti	1800	5200	3400	189
Vikalpa	350	765	415	119
Total	3183	8986	5803	182

Overall there was a 182% rise in work demand applications, with AJSA recording a nearly 7-fold increase and SSS recording a 5-fold increase.

Works Sanctioned and Implemented

Increasing pressure from partners on the system led to widespread increase in work creation as the table below shows.

- The total value of works sanctioned before partner interventions was nearly Rs.83 lakhs. After partners intervened, this went up to nearly Rs.698 lakhs.
- The total value of works implemented before partner interventions was Rs.73 lakhs. After interventions it went up to Rs.215 lakhs.
- The above means an increase of Rs.6.14 crores in sanctioned works and Rs.1.41 crores in implemented works

Organization	Value of Works Sanctioned			Value of Works Implemented		
	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase %	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase %
Adhikar	886894	3355000	278	776594	2535000	226
AJSA	1000000	2345000	135	1000000	1560000	56
BBP	786594	2955000	276	786594	2955000	276
BGS	1200000	3900000	225	808408	2582752	219
JMA	533943	1308164	145	153848	1308164	750
Lokadrusti	2029000	4547396	124	2029000	4547396	124
SSS	1000000	1915670	92	1000000	3060000	206
Vikalpa	866593	49453008	5607	786594	2955000	276
Total	8303024	69779238	740	7341038	21503312	193

¹ See Ambasta et.al (2008) and Chapter 1 of this report for a more elaborate discussion on this. Such mechanisms have not been uncommon across the country, given reports of widespread fear among elected GP office bearers that they will be held responsible if work is not started on time and that the unemployment allowance will be paid by them. It is also a fear which has been fanned and played upon by unscrupulous elements in a moribund bureaucracy bent upon sabotaging the changes in the *status quo* that NREGA potentially can bring about.

NRM Focus in Works

Given the precarious livelihoods base of the villages, a concern of all partners was to give a decided thrust to NRM activities in the sanctioned works. The table below shows the results of these efforts as far as government planned works are concerned.

Overall, the share of NRM activities in works implemented rose to 46% from 24% over the base situation. In the initial stages of NREGA work, considerable emphasis was given to road construction in most parts of the state. The attempts of partners seem to have changed this

	% Share of NRM in Value of Works Implemented	
	Before Interventions	After Interventions
Adhikar	15	25
AJSA	3	64
BBP	21	28
BGS	43	70
JMA	28	94
Lokadrusti	39	44
SSS	8	52
Vikalpa	23	26
All	24	46

However, partners also decided to go one step further and help GPs in the micro-planning process as well. These micro-plans focus on soil and moisture conservation activities and water harvesting structures.

- Overall, detailed micro plans worth Rs.18.44 crores have been prepared by all partners put together in the concerned panchayats.
- Of these, plans worth Rs.1.73 crores are in the process of implementation.
- Rs.77 lakhs have been budgeted for soil and moisture conservation and erosion control measures such as contour bunds, trenches, farm bunds and so on.
- Rs.105 lakhs have been budgeted for plantation
- Rs.16 crores have been budgeted for water harvesting structures for percolation and irrigation.
- Another major task has been assisting banks to handle the massive task of opening bank accounts for all job card holders. In all panchayats team members of partner organisations have functioned as extensions of banks, scrutinizing and preparing papers, filing applications and getting zero-Balance accounts opened in the names of the job card holders
- The result of increasing job opportunities at home has meant that in a traditionally migration-prone area, at least 38% of families who are traditional migrants and got job cards did not migrate.



Women members of SHGs promoted by Jan Mukti Anushthan involved in micro-level planning for NREGA

The Lokadrusti team conducts a micro-level participatory planning exercise in villages of Nuapada district



WONC partners supported GPs in technical surveys and planning of NREGA works. The Lokadrusti team is seen in one such survey

Shramik Shakti Sangha team members prepare a village resource map as part of their micro-planning exercise for NREGA





Farm Ponds have great promise for protective irrigation, covering not just the beneficiary's fields but also several farms downstream. WONC partners have advocated their widespread dissemination throughout their work area. A farm pond is being constructed in Nuapada district by the GP with Lokadrusti's support

Ucchab Kumar's family has been migrating out of their village in distress for the past three generations to work in Andhra's brick kilns. WONC partner Adhikar helped the GP plan and construct this farm pond under NREGA on Ucchab's land in Juba village. This minor investment has helped to completely stop this migration



Ucchab's farm pond not only protects the main paddy crop on his own 2.5 acres but also provides protective irrigation to 5.5 acres of adjacent farm land belonging to his neighbours



A farm pond constructed in Gandharla GP with support from Aanchalik Jan Sewa Anushtan, just before the rains



This farm pond belongs to Mangladeep of Village and GP Gunes and was constructed with support from Vikalpa. It provides assured irrigation to the paddy crop over 2 acres of land. After the rice harvest, if water still remains in the pond, Mangladeep cultivates tomatoes, onions, beans and radish. He also releases fish fingerlings for a harvest of fish



A water harvesting structure (WHS) planned by Jan Mukti Anushthan under construction in Balipadar village of Bankel GP



This pond in Khalipathar village of Juba Panchayat was deepened under NREGA by the GP with planning and implementation support from Adhikar. In a village with no community pond or well, all 550 families use this pond for bathing



This WHS was constructed by the Badbanki GP in Village Mundkani with support from Shramik Shakti Sangha. Rs. 3 lakhs was spent under NREGA for the earth work involved. A masonry surplus weir was constructed with BRGF funds



The WHS has helped to assure paddy crops in about 20 acres of land downstream which would otherwise have been at the mercy of rains



This earthen water harvesting structure was constructed by the Kuibahal GP in village Semla. It was planned by the team of the Bolangir Gramodyog Samiti which also helped the GP to construct it. This WHS has helped to reclaim nearly 30 acres of agricultural land adjacent to it. Upstream of this structure, farm bunds have been constructed in the catchment to conserve soil and moisture and prevent silt deposits in the structure

This well upstream of the Water Harvesting Structure at Semla retains water upto the month of April. Before the WHS was constructed, it used to dry up much earlier





This ring well was constructed with Vikalpa's support in Gurlaguda village of Baddokla GP at a cost of Rs.33,000 and belongs to Teertha Sagaria. This well has a diameter of 8 ft. and a depth of 20 ft. It irrigates about 2 acres of land

Teertha shows how he draws water out of the well



Vikalpa has also been assigned the responsibility of plantation work under NREGA by the Bolangir district administration. This plantation, with a more than 90% survival rate, has bamboo, cashew, teak, glyrecidia and *gombhari* among other plants.

The table below presents highlights of the plans prepared and implemented:

Activity		Loka-drusti	AJSA	JMA	BGS	BBP	Adhikar	Vikalpa	SSS	All
Staggered Trench	Planned (Nos)		0			134				134
	Planned (Rs.)	0	0	0	0	2,680,000	0	0	0	2,680,000
	Implemented (Nos)					0				0
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Miscellaneous Plantation	Planned (acres)	27	8	11		256	25	47	86	460
	Planned (Rs.)	675,000	200,000	275,000	0	6,400,000	625,000	1,175,000	0	9,350,000
	Implemented	0	0	0		40	0	0	0	40
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	1,000,000	0	0	0	1,000,000
Field Bunding	Planned (acres)			63	305	705	61	79	79	
	Planned (Rs.)	0	0	126,000	915,000	2,115,000	183,000	158,000	158,000	3,655,000
	Implemented			0	0	0	0	0	5	
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,000	10,000
Contour Bunding	Planned (acres)				62	0				
	Planned (Rs.)	0	0	0	372,000	0	0	0	0	372,000
	Implemented				0	0				
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Loose Boulder Check Dams	Planned (Nos)	67	10			167	25	152	110	
	Planned (Rs.)	67,000	20,000	0	0	334,000	50,000	228,000	330,000	1,029,000
	Implemented (Nos)	0	0			0	2	0	0	
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	0	4,000	0	0	4,000
Masonry Check Dams	Planned (Nos)		8	2		20				
	Planned (Rs.)	0	1,600,000	40,000	0	4,000,000	0	0	0	5,640,000
	Implemented (Nos)		0	0		0				
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Water Harvesting Structures	Planned (Nos)	10		7		32	42	23	23	
	Planned (Rs.)	3,000,000	0	700,000	0	16,000,000	21,000,000	5,750,000	11,500,000	57,950,000
	Implemented (Nos)	3		1		1	2	3	3	
	Implemented (Rs)	900,000	0	100,000	0	500,000	1,000,000	750,000	1,500,000	4,750,000

Activity		Loka-drusti	AJSA	JMA	BGS	BBP	Adhikar	Vikalpa	SSS	All
Pond Renovation	Planned (Nos)	12	18	45		35		18	20	
	Planned (Rs.)	600,000	3,600,000	13,500,000	0	7,000,000	0	1,800,000	3,000,000	29,500,000
	Implemented (Nos)	1	7	8		3		2	5	
	Implemented (Rs)	50,000	1,400,000	2,400,000	0	600,000	0	200,000	750,000	5,400,000
Ring Well	Planned (Nos)	157	184	116		264	153	134	292	
	Planned (Rs.)	3,140,000	6,256,000	1,740,000	0	8,976,000	5,202,000	2,680,000	5,840,000	33,834,000
	Implemented (Nos)	5	0	0		0	5	5	10	
	Implemented (Rs)	100,000	0	0	0	0	170,000	100,000	200,000	570,000
Farm Pond	Planned (Nos)	118	76	92		188	54	117	190	
	Planned (Rs.)	4,130,000	2,660,000	4,140,000	0	6,580,000	1,890,000	4,095,000	6,650,000	30,145,000
	Implemented (Nos)	26	11	1		19	15	26	24	
	Implemented (Rs)	910,000	385,000	45,000	0	665,000	525,000	910,000	840,000	4,280,000
Compost Pit	Planned (Nos)	116	85	120		1,105	297	218	103	
	Planned (Rs.)	1,740,000	170,000	180,000	0	2,210,000	594,000	327,000	0	5,221,000
	Implemented (Nos)	33	32	15		300	27	27		
	Implemented (Rs)	495,000	64,000	22,500	0	600,000	54,000	40,500	0	1,276,000
Avenue Plantation	Planned (kms)	5		5		48				
	Planned (Rs.)	100,000	0	100,000	0	960,000	0	0	0	1,160,000
	Implemented (kms)	0		0		3				
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
Percolation Tank	Planned (Nos)					78				
	Planned (Rs.)	0	0	0	0	3,900,000	0	0	0	3,900,000
	Implemented (Nos)					0				
	Implemented (Rs)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Planned (Rs lakhs)	134.52	145.06	208.01	12.87	611.55	295.44	162.13	274.78	1844.36
	Total Implemented (Rs lakhs)	24.55	18.49	25.68	0	34.25	17.53	20.01	33	173.5

4.1.5 Convergence

On the water infrastructure being built with funds leveraged from NREGA, the Western Orissa NREGA Consortium is also engaged in building synergies with other areas of intervention. Prime among these is a focus on location-specific agriculture and micro-credit.

Agriculture

Chetna Organic (CO) is providing technical and financial support to enable the NREGA Consortium to build viable and sustainable an agricultural program in the project area. Under this agriculture programme, the following activities have been done:

- Baseline data on cropping pattern and agricultural practices has been collected and compiled in 59 villages.
- 28 village level training programmes for farmers on organic farming, bio- pesticides and composting have been organized.
- Technical inputs have been provided by the agriculture team to the farmers as and when required during the cultivation.
- Initially 349 farmers had shown interest in being included in the organic cotton farming programme. The farmers were selected on the basis of land (focusing on small and marginal farmers), compact area and positive response towards organic agriculture. Finally, 310 farmers have been included in the program.
- Monthly meetings and savings are regular activities of farmer's groups in the operational area. In the meeting the members discuss organic farming practices and different developmental activities.
- All 50 farmer's groups have been able to save upto Rs1,77,117.
- Looking at the need for marketing of organic produce of small and marginal farmers, it was decided that a Farmers Self Help Co-operative for Bolangir district be formed. Prior to cooperative formation, a meeting was organized in the month of September to seed the concept of cooperatives and also to assess whether the farmers are interested in the formation of a cooperative or not. As a result of these efforts, a co-operative was formed and named Chetna Self Help Co-operative Ltd.
- 15 members were nominated to the executive body of the cooperative and Mr. Chittman Tandi was nominated as Chief Promoter. Then it was decided to complete all processes to give legal shape to the co-operative as fast as possible. A bank account was opened in Turekela. Bye-laws were prepared with all the supporting documents and a cooperative was registered on 15th Jan, 2009.
- A total of 3 Krushak Sampark Melas have been organized at block level where 121 farmers have participated. The farmers shared their experience and learnt from each other on cultivation of different crops in organic method, preparation of bio- fertilizers and bio pesticides.
- 23 village-level training programmes were conducted for farmers on the following topics in which 644 farmers participated:
 - Organic Agriculture
 - Cotton cultivation practices
 - Vegetable cultivation

- Onion cultivation
- SRI Paddy cultivation.
- 2 exposure visits to Sambhav Nayagarh on Organic Agriculture were conducted in which 19 staff and 57 farmers participated. They learnt about preparation of bio-pesticides, bio-fertilizers, vermicompost, SRI paddy cultivation and nutrient management.
- Organic Farm Diary was maintained regularly by the 310 cotton farmers and 306 No Pesticide Management (NPM) farmers. The farmer monitor helped the farmers in this.
- Field map was prepared for all 310 farmers highlighting different crops of different fields of the same farmer. The different identification marks in different directions of organic land were shown. The fields of the neighbour were shown in the maps which helps the external visitor to identify the certified land.
- 5 farmers were selected from each village to implement all standards of Organic Agriculture with an intention that other farmers will be learning from the model farmers on different organic cropping practices.
- A cropping plan was prepared for cultivation of different crop throughout the year and farmers have followed the same.
- 16 farmer monitors were selected to monitor the farmer in the application of organic inputs and inspection. They also helped the farmers in filling the farm diaries.
- Inspection of 308 farmer was completed in 2 phases at the stage of sowing and boll formation. Scope Certification of 308 farmers for the year 2008-09 was done
- 206 traditional compost pits were dug and filled up with required bio materials. Farmers applied the same compost on different crops and got satisfactory results.
- 47 bio-pesticide units were established for using bio-pesticides during the time of pest attack. Bio-pesticide was a good antidote to different crop diseases and pests. As a result of which farmers saved money from the purchase of chemical pesticides.
- As per the Orissa Seed Act, seeds sold in the market should be treated. As cotton seeds are treated with chemical, the farmers treated it organically before sowing. This resulted in a good impact on the plant growth and production.
- 11 crop demonstration plots have been developed on SRI Paddy cultivation, vegetable cultivation and turmeric cultivation. In the demo plot, project staff directly support the farmer in cultivation.
- Yield estimation was done in the fields of all model cotton farmers on the basis of the calculation of plant population, number of existing bolls and the weight of bolls.
- As a result of all the efforts made, 2496 quintals of cotton belonging to 30 farmers was marketed to CCI, local buyers and ginners.
- 13 farmer clubs were linked with NABARD for agricultural activity.
- 3 farmers constructed the onion storage unit from the NHM Scheme.
- 12 farmers were supported by the Horticulture Department for construction of vermicompost units.
- 8 farmers were given seeds of paddy and onion and also pumpsets from the agriculture department in the Atma project
- 12 farmers of Bankel GP were issued Kissan credit card
- Financial support for 20 farm ponds has been allocated to 20 members of farmers groups under NREGA. 39 more farmer s have applied for the same.

Micro-Credit

The WONC partners have a running micro-credit programme based on the SHG-Bank Linkage model. The table below give major highlights of this programme:

1	Total groups	756
2	Total members	5120
3	Total saving (Rs.)	5525020
4	Total loan outstanding (Rs.)	3988726
5	Total bank loans (Rs)	8339402

As can be seen from the table, the groups have mobilized savings upwards of Rs.55 lakhs and have also mobilized Rs.83.40 lakhs as bank loans. As a clear thrust of strategy, it was felt that along with NREGA and agricultural interventions in these villages, steps should be taken towards strengthening this SHG programme as this is another critical link in the chain of poverty and indebtedness leading to heavy distress induced migration from the area.

Under this effort, 48 SHG cluster-level federations have been formed and several training programmes conducted for the capacity building of federation leadership. A recent review of the SHG initiatives of the WONC by Samaj Pragati Sahayog also suggests that there are several ways in which the programme needs support for further strengthening:

- Capacity building of SHG teams so that they are able to understand and promote SHGs in a proper and structured manner
- Greater organisational discipline in the groups so that meetings are held at fixed times and in fixed venues
- Strengthening of the book keeping and accounts and audit practices
- increasing the number of members in a group which has remained low and static
- increasing the per member savings rate
- increasing the rotation of group funds so that the same funds are loaned and used more often and thereby a greater quantum of funds is made available to groups
- instilling the importance of saving as the fundamental building blocks of the programme rather than an income-generation orientation

The second phase of the programme will see an intensification of efforts for removal of these lacunae.

4.2 Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN)

4.2.1 Profile of PRADAN

Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN) is a voluntary organization registered under the societies registration act, in 1983. It currently works with over 1.25 lakh

rural poor spread over selected villages in 28 districts across 7 states in India through small teams, based close to the villages, comprising professionally trained people, with motivation to change the qualities of life of rural poor. There are presently 427 personnel in PRADAN of whom 250 are trained in professions like agriculture, engineering, management, rural management and social work at reputed institutions in India and abroad. The 177 support staffs provide office, logistical and implementation support.

PRADAN seeks to secure livelihoods of rural poor families to enable them to live a life with dignity. Its mission is “Impacting Livelihoods to Enable Rural Poor”. It has a plan to reach 1.5 million rural poor by the end of 2017. PRADAN’s work involves organizing the rural poor into an informal group to enhance their capacities, introducing ways to improve their incomes and creating linkages with various economic services.

In West Bengal, PRADAN started working in the district of Purulia in 1986. PRADAN’s focus in the state has been Integrated Natural Resources Management (INRM) for sustainable livelihood promotion among mainly SC (Scheduled Caste), ST (Scheduled Tribe) and OBC (Other backward Class) families. With the success of the watershed programme implemented by PRADAN in Purulia, the district authorities of Bankura invited PRADAN to take up similar work on a larger scale in the district in 2005.

Main Areas of Work

Formation of women SHGs is PRADAN’s core community organization focus. It also searches for existing sectors in its operational area that could be improved or new sectors that have potential. With this strategy, PRADAN’s projects in different states builds synergies between different sectors and activities. The major activities are introduction of improved agriculture, land and water management, promotion of tussar sericulture, poultry, dairy, goat rearing, mushroom cultivation, Siali leaf plate making are major interventions. Major activities taken up by PRADAN in Bankura are promotion of women SHGs and linking them with INRM based livelihood promotion activities like land and water development, horticulture and timber plantation with soil and moisture conservation, introduction of improved agricultural technology for paddy and vegetable cultivation, lac culture, fish rearing, vermicompost production etc.

4.2.2 PRADAN’s NREGA Initiatives in Mayurbhanj and Kandhamal Districts

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), GoI, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) engaged PRADAN to implement a pilot project for capacity building of Gram Panchayats (GPs) in implementing NRM activities under NREGA. This project was for six months from October 2007 to March 2008 and was to be implemented in 10 selected panchayats of Mayurbhanj and Kandhamal districts of Orissa. What follows are details of the activities carried out under the project as well as its outcome in Mayurbhanj and Kandhamal districts of Orissa as regards the objectives and the work plan set out in the agreement. The initiatives were carried out in the following gram panchayats:

District	Block	Gram Panchayats
Kandhamal	Balliguda	Budrukia
		Salaguda
		Sudra
		Barkhama
		Bataguda
		Rutungia
	Dairingabadi	Kirkuti
	Nuagaon	Sirtiguda
		Kurtili
		Mahasing
Mayurbhanj	Karanjia	Kerkera
		Miringinendi
		Chitropashi
		Rasamtola
		Kuliposhi
		Dari
		Tangabila
	Jashipur	Rugudi
		Ektali
		Maudi

Objectives

The broad objectives of the project were:

- to enhance capacities of the NREGS implementation machinery at the Block, Gram Panchayat and Gram Sabha levels in planning, executing and monitoring integrated natural resource management (NRM) activities under NREGS.
- to set up a sound demonstration of NRM based livelihoods enhancement under NREGS to create sustainable livelihood assets for poor NREGS workers in selected villages.

4.2.3 Work Done and Major Achievements

Orientation of the Personnel at District, Block and Panchayat Levels

District level and block level workshops were organized to share the proposed activities under the project with the district, block and PRI personnel and incorporate their suggestions. These workshops also helped to create awareness among participants on the possibility of

NRM based livelihoods through asset creation under NREGS by sharing the movie and the manual made by PRADAN. The following table shows the district wise number of events (E) arranged and number of participants (P) attended.

	Kandhamal		Mayurbhanj		Total	
	E	P	E	P	E	P
District level meeting	1	45	1	49	2	94
Block level orientation	0	0	2	60	2	60
Exposure of Block level officials	1	8	2	60	3	68
Panchayat level orientation	14	200	10	460	24	660
Exposure of panchayat level personnel	4	170	10	150	14	320
Orientation of engineers	1	6	1	15	2	21

In Kandhamal, due to the communal riot, it was difficult to organise the district or block level meetings. Through this effort, the attention of the district administration was drawn and the collector called a meeting of 45 district and block level officials to understand the manual prepared by PRADAN for promoting the NRM approach under NREGA. PRADAN was requested to make a presentation of the NRM approach to create livelihood assets for poor under NREGS. Following the presentation and discussions on the proposed models it was decided that a multidisciplinary team constituting representatives from agriculture, soil conservation, forest and panchayat raj departments would visit the project where PRADAN has demonstrated the approach and submit an action plan for replicating it in the district. After the visit, it was decided that the NRM approach would be followed under NREGA and PRADAN would act as the resource agency to support it. Subsequently plans were drawn to adopt the strategy. In Mayurbhanj, state officials from NREGS cell along with the block, panchayat level staff and PRI members attended the district level workshop.

The maximum focus of this activity was on orientation of the panchayat level personnel who are at the cutting edge of NREGA implementation. More than 600 VLWs, secretaries, ward members, sarpanch attended the events. In addition to the movie and the concept of integrating NRM with NREGA, the provisions under the act and their roles were shared with them in detail, which they were not aware of. Since NREGA assistants were not in place in several areas, their training had not been undertaken.

Also organised were exposures of both block and panchayat level personnel to the nearby work areas of PRADAN where it had already demonstrated the approach with support from other sources. This helped to convince the panchayat personnel.

Awareness Campaigns

At the start of its activities, this was not considered to be a major issue by PRADAN and hence not much time had been budgeted for this. However, as contact with village communities

grew around the NRM concept and its interface with NREGA, it was realised that people needed knowledge of NREGA and its radical provisions to stake a claim to what is theirs. Consequently:

- a communication drive was undertaken in nearly 100 villages of the identified panchayats to make the villagers aware about their entitlements under NREGA and the pilot project.
- Through rallies, street plays and posters the people were informed about NREGA and the prospect of livelihood asset creation with an NRM approach.
- In addition, pamphlets, portraying the important features of NREGA and the pilot project in the local language, were distributed among the villagers.
- The PRI members and contractors became apprehensive in the beginning and tried to discourage PRADAN team members. However, with support from SHG members, this resistance was overcome and people could be reached.

The following table shows the number of events and participation of villagers in those events.

Events	Mayurbhanj		Kandhamal		Total	
	Number	Attendance	Number	Attendance	Number	Attendance
Rally	65	45000	0	0	65	45000
Skit	51	18922	125	12500	176	31422
Exposure on NRM	40	3600	12	1100	52	4700

Nearly the whole population of the selected panchayats were covered under the above programmes. About 4700 villagers were taken on exposure visits to appreciate the NRM approach for livelihood enhancement. Following the visits they became very excited about planning similar assets under NREGS. Posters on NRM were made and put in noticeable places. In addition they were shared with the spokespersons of the community.

Job Cards

Before PRADAN's interventions, some interested families could not get job cards because of the following reasons:

- the functionaries demanded money for issuing them
- limit set by the VLW for the number of cards to be issued
- lack of information among village persons
- misconception among all that only BPL families were entitled to the cards.
- migration of families outside in search of work.

Following the awareness programmes things have shown substantial improvement. Many families applied for job cards and nearly 5000 households have received them.

Building a Cadre of Local Resource Persons

Recognizing that such a cadre of Local Resource Persons (LRPs) should be available with the community, PRADAN identified capable youth from the villages with support from villagers and groomed them as local resource persons for sustainable support to villagers.

- 100 LRPs were first trained on the provisions under NREGA and their roles to support community know the act and make claims accordingly.
- They learnt about filling up of different forms like job card application, job application etc.
- Once they started mobilising the community to claim their rights under NREGA, through regular monitoring, further training needs were identified and addressed.
- Subsequently they were trained on NRM approach for livelihood asset creation under NREGS.
- They learnt about hamlet level participatory planning processes, documentation of plans, estimation and implementation of different components of NRM.

Events	Mayurbhanj		Kandhamal		Total	
	N	P	N	P	N	P
Identification and training of LRPs	7	439	5	160	65	45000

Note: N: Numbers; P: Persons attending

Work Demand

The practice of applying for jobs, as per the provision in the act, is not presently encouraged by the administration. Normally before work is started, job applications are filled up. The trained LRPs however supported the gram sabha members to fill up job applications and submit them in the GP office to demand work as per their convenience. Again villagers learnt that they needed to demand receipts with proper dates against their applications.

More than 3,000 people applied for jobs with the support from LRPs. However either the applications were not accepted or the receipts were not issued. Only about 30% of the applicants got the receipts.

The villagers, who had been issued receipts but did not get jobs in the stipulated time, were helped to claim unemployment allowance. But the applications for unemployment allowance were neither accepted in the GP office nor in the block office.

Work availability to villagers as per their demand is still a problem everywhere. Fund availability with panchayat is a genuine problem for which they are not able to engage all the interested job-card holders at any point in time.

After a lot of persuasion the villagers of Kholadi, Anlabeni, Maudi and Itamundi villages in Mayurbhanj district had got the receipts against their job applications. When they did not get work in the stipulated time, they wrote to the Sarpanch, BDO and Collector for unemployment allowance but all their efforts went in vain. Being frustrated, they finally locked the GP office on a protest against non-payment of unemployment allowance.

Capacity Building of Gram Sabha NRM Planning for NREGA

Exposure visits to NRM activities had boosted the confidence of the villagers to plan for similar schemes under NREGS. So immediately after the exposure trips, village level meetings were organised to develop a common understanding among all villagers on NRM based asset creation for sustainable livelihood generation. Posters, presentations, movies etc. were used in such meetings to address the purpose. Then visits were made to fields along with the

villagers to understand the problems in each patch of land and alternatives to tackle them. The whole planning process comprising preparation of resource map, ownership map, intervention map and plan document was explained to the villagers. The LRPs and some more villagers learnt to carry out the exercise in the hamlets by using the revenue maps.

Preparation of NRM Plans

Prior to PRADAN's involvement road construction and pond digging were the main activities under NREGA. However the efforts under the project have resulted in significant addition of NRM activities like:

- ponds in individual plots
- horticulture,
- tank construction
- irrigation channels
- land leveling
- tasar plantation
- construction of well/repairing of well
- new pond or renovation of old ones
- in situ soil moisture conservation in sloping lands

Participation of villagers in gramsabhas has significantly increased from 10-15% to 80%. With help from the LRPs, participatory planning exercises were carried out in about 41 villages of the selected panchayats. Normally such exercises started with "icebreakers" followed by wealth ranking, resource mapping, land use mapping, problem analysis, option generation and plan finalisation. Such exercise took 1-1.5 days per hamlet.

Many ward members carried out the participatory planning in their respective hamlets to come up with the NRM based gramsabha plans. The plans of these villages are ready and are submitted with the GP as well as the block for approval and execution.

In Badbil and Tangabilla villages of Mayurbhanj district attendance in the pallisabha was nearly 100%. Pallisabha planning was done in a participatory and transparent way. People submitted their plans to the sarpanch. The sarpanch was not entering the plans into the gramsabha plan register. So 20 representatives of Badbil village and 16 representatives of Tangabilla village went to the Sarpanch and with group pressure made him enter the plans in the register.

The district wise number of events as well as participation are indicated in the table below.

Events	Kandhamal	Mayurbhanj	Total
Participatory Planning	25	47	35
Participants	900	3300	4200

As shown in the table asset creation plans are ready for about 4200 families who have demanded one or more of the above listed interventions. Afterwards, PRADAN shared the report of the pilot project with the Commissioner-cum-Secretary, Panchayat Raj, Govt of Orissa. He instructed the District Collectors in writing to execute the plans made during the pilot project. Subsequently the team met the Collectors and discussed the process of executing the plans. The Mayurbhanj Collector instructed the concerned BDOs to release the work

orders for the ponds to begin with. Accordingly the BDOs have so far started the work in 35 ponds. However, due to disturbances in Balliguda the Collector got engaged in law and order issues and could not attend to PRDAN's requests. Of late he has involved PRADAN as a resource agency to train the Gram Rozgar Sevak on execution of INRM plans. He has promised to execute the plans prepared thus far after monsoon.

Ensuring Transparent Processes

The villagers are taking keen interest in ensuring transparent processes in the implementation of the activities by GPs under NREGS. They have been made aware of all the systems to be adhered to by the implementers.

Earlier people were not receiving the recorded wages and sometimes more days of employment was shown in the job-cards than was actually provided. However, the villagers are now demanding that proper entries be made in their job cards and are not giving them to the contractors or VLWs as was a practice before. They are also demanding the right wage and are getting it. Nowhere is the payment made within a week. Normally it takes 15 to 30 days. PRADAN's efforts are to ensure payments within 15 days.

Provision of work site facilities like crèche, first aid, drinking water and shade for workers are hardly made anywhere. People are now demanding these and drinking water availability is ensured everywhere. Once people of Ektali village in Mayurbhanj district became aware of their prerogatives, they stopped working in pursuing their demand for a shade and drinking water facilities at the worksites. Finally only when the Junior Engineer ensured that these were provided, they returned to work. In another incident, 20 villagers of Kumdabadi village of the same GP went to a contractor's house and rescued their job cards from his clutches.

Outcomes of the Project

There are significant outcomes at the level of households, community and panchayat as far as awareness on NREGA is concerned. But it needs some more time to ensure NREGS workers' full employment and livelihood asset creation. Some of the outcomes, which show that the movement has begun, are outlined below.

- Many personnel at district, block and GP level have been able to appreciate the NRM approach for livelihood asset creation for poor under NREGS.
- Awareness of Gramsabha members on their privileges under NREGA and NRM-based livelihood generation activities have remarkably gone up which is quite evident from the kind of actions they are taking to claim what they deserve.
- Attendance in gramsabha meeting has considerably increased to ensure participatory planning and transparent practices.
- People at the hamlet level are now more organised to make them heard by the administration.
- All the villages have at least two LRPs to support the villagers in understanding rules and regulations and claiming rights accordingly. The LRPs are helping them in the paper work too.
- Ward members now know their roles and responsibilities and are taking interest in gramsabha planning. The villagers are willing to include them in the decision making process as well.
- Now people are not only planning for tanks and roads, but also plantation, land leveling,

soil-moisture conservation works, diversion channels, small farm ponds and so on to ensure better return from their lands.

- People are pressurizing the panchayats to receive their job applications as well as pay unemployment allowance on failure of providing jobs on time.
- People are also demanding proper wages, proper record keeping and the explicit worksite facilities.
- People are keeping their job-cards with themselves and demanding proper entries be made in them.
- Overall employment under NREGA has increased but is yet to reach 100 days for all households. However, if the gramsabha plans, developed during this project, are executed, the job demand of all households would be fulfilled.

FIVE

WEST BENGAL

In West Bengal, Consortium partner PRADAN¹, is working in 3 blocks of Bankura district. In partnership with the Gram Panchayats, it has worked to create Natural Resource Management oriented plans under NREGA.



5.1 Profile of Selected Area

The INRM based livelihood promotion activities in Bankura are being leveraged through NREGA. PRADAN is working with families in 107 villages of 9 Gram Panchayats of Hirbandh, Ranibandh and Bankura – 1 blocks of Bankura districts.

¹ This chapters draws on inputs received from Vasant Saberwal, Ford Foundation after a field visit to Bankura. See Chapter 4 for an introduction to PRADAN

The tables give a detailed list of these villages:

Block Hirbandh, District Bankura

Gram Panchayat	Villages			
Gopalpur	1	Chalka	10	Jhariakochoa
	2	Chatanibad	11	Fatepur
	3	Bongopalpur	12	Tilabaid
	4	Guniada	13	Nanda
	5	Elora	14	Kedia
	6	Saluipahari	15	Harirampur
	7	Batikara	16	Lochipur
	8	Dhanarangi	17	Korapara
	9	Gopalpur		
Mosiara	1	Lutia	10	Chakadoba
	2	Bhedua	11	Sitarampur
	3	Paira	12	Jhapandih
	4	Biradi	13	Mosiara
	5	Digitod	14	Monora
	6	Bamni	15	Bhutardih
	7	Rangamati	16	Bijardih
	8	Solponamara	17	Amjhuri
	9	Simlabandh		
Molian	1	Ashatora	8	Shyamnagar
	2	Noardi	9	Koshakedi
	3	Ranga	10	Kaherkedi
	4	Chanpasol	11	Pakuria
	5	Bramhadanga	12	Benagoria
	6	Mouhaldanga	13	Noria
	7	Damodar pur		
Hirbandh	1	Gobordah	4	Tilakanali
	2	Bhojda	5	Tilaboni
	3	Tirshulia		
Bohramuri	1	Itamara	6	Keliahutta
	2	Dighi	7	Jadur Bankata
	3	Bagaldhara	8	Bhagra
	4	Bhupurdih	9	Husumdanga
	5	Jibon pur		

Block Ranibandh, District Bankura

Gram Panchayat	Name of villages	
Haludkanali	1	Valukadungi
	2	Malbera
	3	Haludkanali
	4	Madandih
	5	Churapathar
	6	Nachna
	7	Janleja
	8	Surulia
	9	Suknibasa
	10	Puada

Block Bankura-1, District Bankura

Gram panchayat	Name of Village			
Andharthole	1	Andharthole	13	Natungram
	2	Andharthole	14	Panchaldih
	3	Bhagawan Pur	15	Puramouli
	4	Bhalukganjar	16	Ranjibinpur
	5	Chelema	17	Shyampur
	6	Dabar	18	Sunukpahari
	7	Dumuria	19	Supurdi
	8	Golamitora	20	Toribotordih
	9	HM Bankata	21	Khap
	10	Jamboni	22	Chailabakra
	11	Kaludi	23	Dhabargram
	12	Kankradih	24	Feguakanali
Kalpathar	1	Nekragoriya	5	Feguakanli
	2	Pathrakata	6	Nagalbera
	3	Saluni	7	Junkanali
	4	Dhuladih	8	Batdeoli
Kenjakura	1	Bankta	3	Pachirdnga
	2	kesadoba	4	Dubsora
Total GPs: 9			Total Villages: 107	

PRADAN works with mostly SC, ST and OBC poor families. First the poorer blocks in the district and then pockets within such blocks where there is a concentration of such groups are identified. Information is collected from secondary data, through village visits and inputs received from PRIs and leaders for selection of villages.

Presently PRADAN is working with 3,529 households in these three blocks. The community-wise break up of these households is given in the table below:

Name of community	SC/ ST/ OBC/ Minority/ Other	% Share in Total households
Santal, Singh sardar, Mudikora	ST	31
Bauri, Sunri, Ruidas	SC	41
Mahato, Mandal,	OBC	21
Gowala, Muslim	Others	7

- The average annual rainfall of the district is 1350 mm. The rainfall does not vary much from block to block in the district.
- All the three blocks namely Hirbandh, Ranibandh and Bankura-1 have undulated hilly terrain with laterite soil. The Ranibandh block has large forested area. Large parts of these blocks have sandy loam soil and very little area is covered with sandy clay.
- On an average about 50% of the district's population is ST and 24% is SC. Bankura -1 has the highest concentration of ST population with 67% of the population belonging to this

group. In Ranibandh, 47% population is ST.

- The table below gives the ratio between GSA and NSA in the selected blocks:

Bankura - 1	12713	1.17
Hirbandh	13623	1.23
Ranibandh	19517	1.29
Total	45853	1.24

On an average for these 3 blocks, the ratio of Gross Irrigated Area to Gross Sown Area is 26%. The highest ratio is observed in Ranibandh (35%) with Bankura -1 at 23% and Hirbandh at 17%

- For the district as a whole, paddy is the major crop, with a share of 82% in the GSA. A minor share of the GSA is attributable to wheat (3%). The rest of the area is largely devoted to vegetable cultivation.
- Surface flow irrigation through irrigation channels is the major source of irrigation in the blocks accounting for 90% or more of the Net Irrigated Area. Dug wells and surface lift irrigation methods occupy second place.
- Nearly 80% of the population in Hirbandh and Ranibandh are dependent on agriculture or agriculture labour. In Bankura -1 the share of agriculture and agricultural labour is somewhat lower at 58%. People work as construction workers or are employed in cottage industries or off-farm activities as supplementary occupations.
- A survey of selected hamlets in Hirbandh and Ranibandh reveals that the share of households migrating due to distress reasons are very high, standing at 54% and 68% respectively.

5.2 Work Done and Impacts

5.2.1 Broad Strategy of Work

In Bankura PRADAN has adopted the following broad strategies for addressing poverty in the undulating terrain of this district:

- Organising women in Small Self Help Groups (SHG), helping them in livelihoods planning, enabling them to approach PRIs, administration and banks for getting fund and loan for implementation of the livelihood programmes
- Water is the focus of the livelihoods development strategy. In-situ conservation of soil and water, checking surface run-off, harvesting of rain-water on the surface, economizing the use of ground-water, rejuvenation of sub-surface water, livelihoods planning through participatory approach at village/hamlet level (based on micro-watershed level flow) have been at the core of the strategy. Livelihoods plans are made to intensify household natural resource husbandry embedded in the concept of micro-watersheds development.
- Working together with government departments to strengthen farming system support services
- Influencing local governments to invest on Integrated Natural Resource Management (INRM) based livelihood activities for directly addressing poverty and helping them to

develop efficient system of implementing activities under INRM.

- Training and capacity building of the community

5.2.2 Job Cards

PRADAN's focus is on hamlet level planning of INRM and implementation of the same through SHGs while leveraging funds from NREGA. PRADAN ensured that all the labourers who were engaged in the work had job cards and had a bank account for quick payment.

In particular, the impact of interventions on job cards was observed in the following panchayats:

Block	Panchayat	Job Cards Before Intervention	Job Cards After Intervention
Bankura -1	Andharthole	0	2750
Hirbandh	Molian	0	3000
	Gopapur	0	2767
	Mosiara	0	2640
	Bohramuri	0	1100
	Hirbandh	0	3108

5.2.3 INRM Planning Process for NREGA

PRADAN focused on installation of effective systems at different levels from hamlet/ village to GP and PS (Panchayat Samiti) for proper planning, execution, monitoring and smooth flow of funds. PRIs have almost limitless resources in the form of NREGA funds to finance the largely labour intensive activities leading to INRM. They had so far only focused on construction and renovation of big ponds and construction of roads.

In this context PRADAN thought of building a system at different levels to facilitate a village development plan linked to livelihood assets creation for the poor based on INRM planning and implementation of the same through convergence of various kinds of funds, especially NREGS, available to the district administration and PRI. Broadly, the following are adopted by PRADAN (although they may vary a little from Gram Panchayat to Gram Panchayat):

- PRADAN conducts village level meetings to influence villagers and local leaders about INRM planning in concerned villages
- Local leaders assure the SHGs of that village that they can go ahead with planning process
- PRADAN staff helps SHGs and villagers in planning by providing training and exposures around INRM. During the planning process, villagers finalize the activities to be taken up plot/patch wise.
- Several SHGs (depending up on number of SHGs organised in the village/ hamlet) put together their plans for the lands located under one patch identified with a name with a



Training of Local Resource Persons on NREGA plan formulation

Villagers in a meeting with their Panchayat representatives to discuss planning and strategy

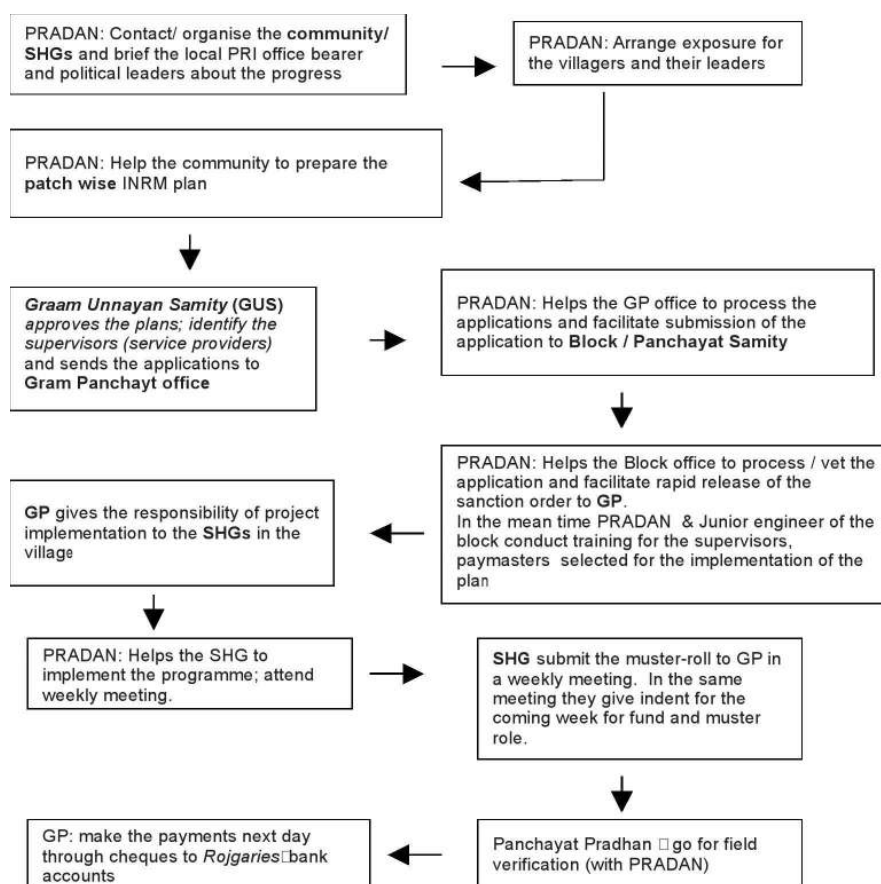


A village meeting in progress to discuss the INRM plan under NREGA

well defined area.

- Applications formats are supplied to the SHGs.
 - Applications are grouped/collated /bunched together in such a way that total budget for one group proposal does not exceed Rs.2.5 lakhs (the panchayat samiti does not have the authority to approve an estimate beyond Rs. 2.5 lakh).
 - The plan is approved by the Gram Unnayan Samity (GUS)
 - GUS decides
 - which SHG will be taken up first
 - who will make the payments (pay master)
 - One SHG is given responsibility to implement work in one patch to avoid any confusion, as several SHGs will be working in the same villages but in different patches
 - The Sub-Assistant Engineer (SAE), Panchayat Pradhan and local influential people attend the orientation programme to understand the whole system of planning and implementation
 - Gram Panchayat Pradhan approves the plan
 - Four supervisors are selected by the GUS (unofficially two from the ruling party and two from opposition party active in the village)
 - Supervisors, pay masters, SAEs/junior engineers are trained by PRADAN in estimation, field lay-out, execution, measurement and muster-role preparation
 - SAE prepares the estimates and the proposal
 - GP submits the proposal to the BDO
 - BDO (in consultation with the NREGA Cell Executive) issues the sanction order to GP
 - Three copies of sanction order are made:
 1. One copy goes to Gram Panchayat office
 2. One copy goes to PRADAN
 3. One copy goes to selected SHG (addressed to the president of the SHG)
 - Panchayat Pradhan issues the work order to the paymasters
 - SHGs implement the work and maintain registers of work progress
 - PRADAN facilitates a weekly meeting involving all the supervisors (e.g. 32 supervisors selected by 8 GUS in 8 gram samsads) under a GP and the SAE and Panchayat Pradhan. In that meeting:
 - work progress report are reviewed, muster rolls are verified (one set of supervisors verify the muster rolls of another set of supervisors and vice versa)
 - SAE does the final verification of muster roll and fills up Measurement Book
 - GP hands over muster rolls to the supervisors to be filled up for the next week's work
 - Indents are generated for the next week
 - Plan is drawn for next days field visit by the SAE
 - Next day SAE makes field visit for verifications
 - Payments are made (by the GP) next day through individuals' bank account
- The system mentioned above is tuned to ensure that:
- resource development of poor with specific planning interventions takes place
 - panchayats play an active role
 - and women's participation is made effective

The diagram below captures the above process flow:

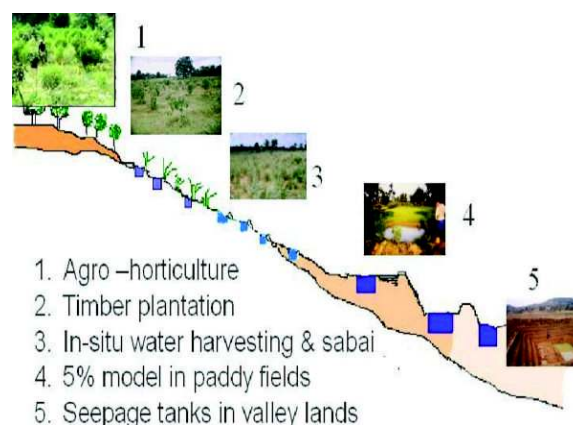


5.2.4 NRM Focus and Impacts

Model for Promotion of INRM-Based Livelihoods

The topography of Bankura district is undulated, hilly and mountainous. The following figure illustrated the INRM based interventions that need to be taken up with marginal and small farmers for enhancing the farm productivity and thereby enhancing incomes of the poor in sustainable way:

Over the years, PRADAN has worked on and advocated for a couple of models aimed at stabilizing small holder/ marginal land agriculture. PRADAN has referred to these as the 5% model and the 30 by 40 model. The 5% model essentially asks the farmer to dig a farm pond of a size that is approximately 5% of the land she wants to irrigate. So 5% model farmers



dig a WHS in 5% area of land of the total plot to be irrigated. The pond is expected to serve two purposes:

- it holds enough water to ensure that during a dry spell, the farmer has access to protective irrigation, and,
- if undertaken by large numbers of farmers, it ensures a dramatic reduction in the speed at which water flows through the watershed, in the process ensuring re-charge of the ground table, increase in biomass, etc.

Typically, the 5% model is undertaken by farmers with fields in the mid-level slopes. The farm pond is locally referred to as a *Hupa* as the depth of a *hupa* is 10 feet. After protective irrigation also farmers get enough water in those *hupa* to irrigate their second crop. A positive dimension of the *hupa* technology is its simplicity. Because the dimensions of the *hupa* are a function of the size of the plot of land, the cost estimate on a *hupa* is relatively straightforward. PRADAN has developed a simple spread-sheet that produces the costing estimate based solely on the size of the land holding. The soil substrate that has to be worked with is fairly uniform, and hence is not considered a factor in shaping cost estimates. Cost estimates are being produced by Panchayat *rozgar sahayaks* with a Class X education and they take less than a minute per estimate. In contrast, very often micro-planning in villages may require several different types of complex estimation and surveying methods, which in turn will require technically qualified people. While it may not be possible to simplify all NREGA work to the same level, the fact that the *hupa* is an appropriate technology in the specific locations where PRADAN is working, has helped its dissemination.

Farmers on the high lands are asked to undertake the 30x40 model, which is basically the establishment of rectangular bunds that are 30 feet in length (along the slope) and 40 feet in breadth (across the slope). The land is subject to a variety of other treatment forms, including the establishment of a pre-configured water conservation pit at the lowest point of the plot. Since the plot is not suitable for intensive cultivation, the farmer is encouraged to plant fruit trees, and to inter-crop these with a cash crop of vegetables.

Specific Interventions in Bankura

At the family level, Pradan's interventions are as following:

- *Creation of horticulture/ timber plantation with soil moisture conservation in uplands:* The area has a large chunk of uplands which remains fallow through out the year. A few farmers take pulses or maize during kharif in that land. Over the years these land have started degrading due to top soil erosion. In order to conserve soil and moisture as well to provide regular income to the family, agro-horticulture solutions like creation of mango orchards have been carried out. The orchard is also



Mango orchard being treated with the 30X40 model, which is basically the construction of rectangular bunds, 30 feet in length (along the slope) and 40 feet in breadth (across the slope)

treated with soil moisture conservation measures like the 30x40 model. Farmers are also growing vegetables as intercrop during kharif. Timber plantation like Teak, Sal, Akashmooni etc have been planted with 30x40 model in the most degraded uplands to meet up timber and fuel needs of the community.

- *Creation of small water harvesting structures (WHS) in medium upland, medium low land and low land:* Paddy is the major kharif crop grown in the area which is dependent on the monsoon. Although the annual rainfall average rainfall is above 1200mm, erratic rain fall and small dry spells lead to failure of paddy mainly in medium upland and medium low land. Most of the small and marginal farmers suffer the most every year. So a series of small WHS (5% model) have been created in a decentralized manner to ensure life-saving irrigation to paddy. Farmer are growing kharif vegetables in bunds of water bodies, rearing fish for a short period, growing mustard, pea etc as a second crop in the medium low land. In the low land these water bodies act as seepage tank and water remains available for longer period. Farmers are taking vegetables in winter around the seepage tank.

INRM Works Planned and Implemented

- PRADAN has prepared action plans worth Rs. 562.9 lakhs (Rs.5.63 crores)
- Total fund mobilized from NREGA and spent for INRM activities thus far: Rs 253.07 lakh (Rs.2.52 crores)
- Total person days of empolyment generated: 285,253
- No. of families for whom productive assets created: 1,805

The table below gives details of the action plans formed and implemented

Block	Activity	Unit	Sanctioned		Implemented	
			Units	Value (Rs. Lakhs)	Units	Value (Rs. Lakhs)
Bankura I	Hupa Constructon	No	215	39	102	12.2
	Timber plantation	ha	11.5	4	11.5	7
Hirbandh	Hupa Constructon	No	2793	450	1163	182
	Mango Orchards	ha	37.5	45	37.5	45
	Soil Moisture Conservation (30x40 model)	ha	34.5	3.5	34.5	4.17
Ranibandh	Hupa Constructon	No	120	21	12	2.3
	Soil Moisture Conservation (30x40 model)	ha	1.88	0.4	1.88	0.4
	Total			562.9		253.07

Impacts

The impact of PRADAN's intervention is particularly evident when comparing NREGA utilization in two Gram Panchayats before and after PRADAN's involvement:

- In Molian GP, Rs. 3 lakh was spent as part of NREGA before PRADAN intervened and Rs. 82 lakh in 6 months after PRADAN started interventions.

- In Moshiara GP Rs.15 lakhs is what the panchayat was able to spend before and the value of works undertaken tripled to Rs.45 lakhs after PRADAN's interventions.
- The ability of this system as set up by PRADAN to generate continuous work over the course of a year combined with minimal delays in release of funds has meant that traditionally migrant workers have been able to stay back in the village, leverage NREGA funds as wages, and use these funds to build agricultural assets. Over time, this should lead to generally enhanced levels of agricultural productivity and, potentially, to an extended agricultural season. It is too early to tell whether this will generate demand for agricultural labour (and hence work for the landless), but that is the proposition that Pradan and the state administration are working towards.

- *Plantation:* The survival rate of plants is more than 90% and SHGs (Self Help Groups) of the villages have taken responsibility of nurturing and protection of it. But the fruit is yet to be tested.

- *Soil and moisture conservation:* The visible impact of the 30x40 model constructed in 25 ha of old Arjuna plantation (*tasar* silk host plant) in village Tilabaid, Korapara, Lochipur of Hirbandh block is very good. More foliage with



An Arjuna plantation

- bigger size quality leaves are found in the plants this year unlike other years. Farmers would have a good harvest of *tasar* silk this year. Secondly, the crop field in the lower region is moist for a longer period because of sub-surface flow of water which will be helpful for the paddy crop in the coming year.
- *Construction of Hupas:* Elora is a village under Gopalpur GP of Hirbandh block where 30 *hupas* (5% model, average size 40'x40'x10' with an average cost of Rs.15,000) were completed in February 2008. With assured water in the paddy fields, farmers followed the System for Rice Intensification (SRI) method of paddy cultivation and harvested an average yield of 6 MT per ha of paddy which is 1.5 to 2 times more than their traditional yield. In the winter they cultivated winter vegetable and mustard. Farmers like Kiriti Sardar, earned an additional Rs 8,000 from vegetable (Brinjal, Tomato and chilli) cultivation around their WHS. Most of the farmers including farmers of Bankura-1 got at least Rs 7,000 cash income from vegetable cultivation and fish rearing. More impacts from *hupas* will be visible in this monsoon.



A *Hupa* under construction. Typically, the 5% model is undertaken by farmers with fields in the mid-level slopes. The farm pond is locally referred to as a *Hupa* as the depth of a *Hupa* is 10 feet. After protective irrigation also farmers get enough water in those Hapa to irrigate their second crop

Newly excavated Hupa (5% model)



The *Hupa* method assures water for paddy.



Farmers were encourage to follow the System for Rice Intensification (SRI) for paddy cultivation

Additional earnings are made possible by growing vegetables near the bund of the *Hupa*



5.2.5 Interface with Implementation Structure

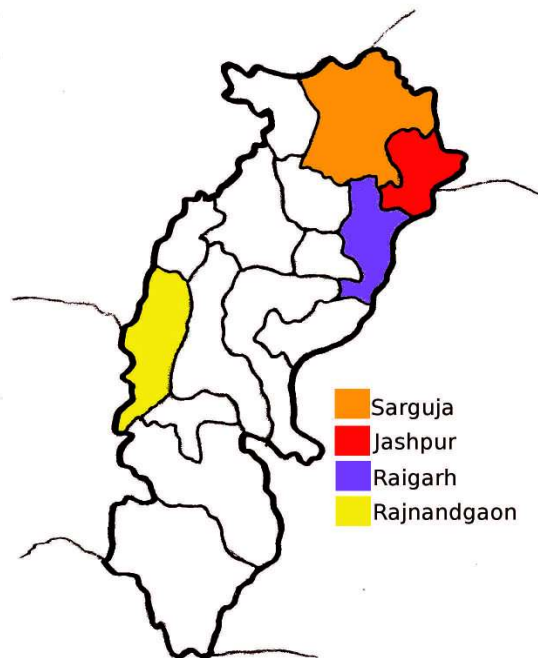
PRADAN has constantly tried to play an advocacy role with regard to its efforts on NREGA. It has also tried some innovations in the systems of NREGA implementation which have imparted a high degree of success to their ventures. Below are some highlights:

- Owing to the fact that PRADAN has been working in the Purulia and Bankura districts in West Bengal for a number of years, their 5% (*hupa*) and 30x40 models are well known in the administration. Several district officials including the District Magistrate (DM) of Bankura district visited the work sites and understood the importance of these technologies. Now the NREGS cell, Bankura is advocating the same model to be replicated in other blocks of the district. In fact they have incorporated the model in their NREGS guidelines.
- Dr. M.N. Roy, the principal secretary of PNRD, GoWB, visited the NREGS work done in Hirabndh block and in response he issued a letter to DMs of other districts like Purulia and Medinapur to follow the PRADAN model for planning and implementation of NREGS works. The Principal Secretary Panchayats and Rural Development recently issued a letter requesting all BDOs to start releasing NREGA funds in support of the construction of *hupas* on individual lands.
- PRADAN has worked with Gram Panchayats to ensure that all claims from a panchayat are under the Rs.2.50 lakhs cap that the GP is authorized to approve. Thus if the work estimate for a large number of *hupas* comes to Rs.20 lakhs, the work orders are clustered in 8 batches of Rs.2.5 lakhs. Once approval comes from the GP, a key reason for funds not being released by the BDO is removed.
- PRADAN has worked closely with the BDO and the district administration to request that individuals on whose land *hupas* are being built not be required to furnish proof that they own the land. The logic is simple – even if the land does not belong to the individual claiming to own the land, the construction of the *hupa* serves to generate labour and improve rates of recharge in the watershed.
- PRADAN has prepared computerized work application forms that need minimal details to be filled in for the completion of a demand for work.
- *SHGs as paymasters*: The Gram Panchayat appoints the SHG as the official paymaster. Payments are released to the SHG which deposits funds in its account. The SHG then withdraws cash from its account and deposits it with the post office where the individual members have an account, along with an invoice regarding the amounts that are due to each job card holder. The invoice has been prepared by the panchayat. The SHG is then expected to submit the deposit slips to the panchayat as proof of deposits in individual accounts. Only upon receipt of the deposit slips will the panchayat consider the payment as formally settled. PRADAN's staff feels that because it is the SHG that is acting as the paymaster, it minimizes the possibility of corruption.
- *The role of supervisors*: The fact that supervisor salaries are tied to amount of work that is released by the BDO, creates an incentive for the supervisor to facilitate a continual process of generating demand for work. Also, PRADAN's efforts in forming a supervisor's forum, that meets once a week to take stock, compile a panchayat-wide list of completed works that are fit for inspection by the sub-divisional engineer, based on whose report final funds will be released by the BDO, has paid dividends.

CHHATTISGARH

6.1 Profile of Partners

The Consortium's work in Chhatisgarh is being carried forward by 4 partners working in 4 districts of the state.



District-wise spread of partners in Chhattisgarh

The partners are:

- Lokshakti Samiti
- Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha
- Margdarshak Sewa Sanstha
- Vardaan Samajik Sanstha

A brief profile of all organizations is given below.

6.1.1 Lokshakti Samiti

Lokshakti Samiti was formed in 1996 and has been active for the last 13 years in more than 400 villages of Jashpur and Raigarh districts of Chhattisgarh. The genesis of the organization can be traced back to the Total Literacy Campaign, which brought together several like-minded youth who resolved to work beyond the campaign on issues of empowerment and sustainable development. The campaign helped Lokshakti make mass contact with several thousand people in the rural areas. Lokshakti Samiti has since worked on a 3-fold agenda of compassion, mobilisation and development. Its experience ranges from running a home for old women to working with mentally challenged persons to development and mobilization work. It has mobilized people in its rural, tribal areas of operation for justice and organized them for collective action. It has taken up cases where tribal lands have been alienated from the tribals through improper means and mobilised both the village community and the administration to redress the grievances of the local people. In addition, its development activities in Raigarh district range from formation of self help groups for credit, to watershed development under the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh government's Rajiv Gandhi Mission for Watershed Development and CAPART's watershed scheme. Lokshakti has spearheaded the literacy campaign in Raigarh district. As the implementing agency for the UNDP sponsored Lokshakti project, it has placed central emphasis on capacity building for its activists, in particular, its village-level animators. Lokshakti Samiti is also a partner in the prestigious IFAD supported Chhattisgarh Tribal Development Project being implemented in Sarguja and Raigarh districts of Chhattisgarh. Under the project, it is taking up several activities on natural resource management and sustainable livelihoods in its tribal areas of operation.

In all its project villages, Lokshakti Samiti attempts to check alcohol abuse by men by involving women in creating a suitable atmosphere in the village against the practice. This campaign has been a major factor in bringing women out of their homes and organising them in support of the VO's activities. The VO now enjoys firm support base among women.

6.1.2 Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha

Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha was set up by social activist P.N. Singh (or Pratapbhai, as he was popularly known, who passed away in February 2009). Pratapbhai's engagement with the poor and marginalised of our country began when he was very young. He worked as a close associate of the respected Gandhian Prembhai in the Vanwasi Sewa Ashram, Sonebhadra district, near Varanasi, UP. Prembhai himself is often remembered as one of those who championed and initiated the concept of the Lok Adalat. Pratapbhai worked on issues related to acquisition of land rights by the tribals and was also involved in the struggle for the rehabilitation of the oustees of the Rihand dam. After nearly 15 years of intensive work with Prembhai as a leading activist of the Vanwasi Sewa Ashram, he moved to nearby Wardrafnagar in Sarguja district of Chhattisgarh towards the beginning of the nineties. There he set up the Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha (SGVS) to work on issues which had a direct bearing on the lives of the poorest communities of the country.

The villages of Wardrafnagar block are inhabited predominantly by tribals belonging to

the Gond, Karwar, Pando and Korva groups. Large scale seasonal and permanent outmigration is a key feature of the area. Working in an area with very low irrigation, high gradients, drastic reduction in forest cover and heavy soil erosion, he saw NRM and watershed related activities as a possible way forward. He also constantly sought to draw public attention around the country to some of the critical problems of malnutrition, drought and hunger in Sarguja district. SGVS was a partner in the CAPART watershed programme and has implemented other watershed programmes as well.

Taking forward this work on watershed development, SGVS also launched a '*Jal Biradari*' Campaign in the most drought-prone 40 villages of its work area. Under this, each village would have a committee named '*Jal Biradari*', which would lead the community on the prime issues of rainwater harvesting and management, regeneration of forest resources, functioning and activation of the gram sabha, rural employment, proper health and education amongst the women and children, awareness of and utilization of provisions of various government's schemes and so on. The organization is currently working on following thematic areas:

- Watershed conservation and sustainable development with innovations
- Empowerment of local-self governance and the community
- Biodiversity conservation/sustainable agriculture/horticultural practices including promotion of bio-fertilizers
- Child labour abolition, welfare, education and nutrition
- Women's Empowerment and development
- Promotion of social forestry
- Technical training and consultancy
- Promotion of Income Generating Activities
- Facilitating the execution of government programmes such as NREGS, *Narwa Anjor* and so on

6.1.3 Margdarshak Sewa Sanstha

Margdarshak Sewa Sanstha (MSS) works in the tribal areas of Sarguja District of Chhattisgarh. Working in the deep tribal interior areas of Sarguja and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh, the organisation has concentrated its activities among the tribals of the area - the Gonds, the Pundos and the primitive and protected Pahari Korbas. The interventions of the organisation primarily concentrate on formation of groups at the village-level. These groups become centres of action, which meet regularly, discuss the problems of the village, take decision on what is to be done and execute these decisions. Formation of such groups has helped to build a cohesive grass roots platform from which all development interventions of MSS can be effectively launched.

The tribal villages are located very close to the forest. Thus, a large part of the tribal economy depends on NTFP such as *tendu*, *mahua* etc. The marketing of *mahua* has traditionally been the monopoly of a few traders. This dependence on middlemen has implied that the tribal population has never been paid a fair price for its harvest of *mahua*. Moreover, the interlocking of different modes of exploitation has meant that the tribal depends on the same person for the marketing of *mahua* as well as for loans for agricultural operations, thus

getting caught in an exploitative stranglehold. Margdarshak Sewa Sansthan has focussed on marketing support, arranging for the *mahua* to be marketed directly, so as to bypass middlemen. Combined with a strategy for provision of credit, this will effectively mean the liberation of the tribal population from the clutches of its exploiters.

To break the stranglehold of these traders and to ensure proper rights of the tribals over their own forests, MSS has also been at the centre-stage of several struggles against indiscriminate commercial felling of trees in the forest areas. Village communities have resisted this type of felling by adopting a mode of agitation known as the *Jungle Bachao Abhiyan*. Arguing that the forests are their lifeline, being repositories of a rich treasure house of minor forest produce and the means of controlling soil erosion and runoff and maintaining critical balances in the ecosystem, the tribal people in Premnagar Block, where the NGO has used a variety of means of peaceful protest to drive home their point, including the method immortalised by the *chipko* movement. Entire families, including women and children, offered peaceful *dharnas* in the forest and hugged the trees in an effort to foil the plans of the department for commercial exploitation of forest timber. These were followed by a series of rallies and meetings at the district headquarters at Ambikapur. The forest department had to cancel its coupe cutting plans as a result of these campaign and as many as 78,000 trees were prevented from being cut.

MSS has also worked on watershed development activities as a partner of the CAPART watershed programme and other livelihoods programmes.

6.1.4 Vardaan Samajik Sanstha

Vardaan has been active in Rajnandgaon district of Chhattisgarh for more than a decade now. It has been involved in both development and mobilization issues since inception. In its initial years, it carried out an innovative programme of *Bal Chaupals* aimed at creating environmental awareness and the spirit of nation-building among children aged 10-16 years in 100 villages of 4 blocks of Rajnandgaon district. This has also become a medium of carrying the problems of the village to the tehsil and district headquarters. The process has led to the creation of a well-motivated cadre of rural development workers in each village. Vardaan's efforts have also been towards mobilization of public opinion against issues such as corruption and irregularities in the appointment of *shiksha karmis*.

Vardaan has been involved in implementing several NRM projects including watershed development activities with support from CAPART, CASA, NABARD and also under the state government's Rajiv Gandhi Mission for Watershed Development. It has been a partner in the PACS programme and worked intensively with gram panchayats in disseminating information and creating awareness. Indeed, working with panchayats at different levels and creating partnerships with them may be seen to be a unique strength of Vardaan's work.

Among Vardaan's extremely successful mobilization efforts have been the *Jal Jeewan Padyatra*, and the *Lok Partal* initiatives. In the Jal Jeewan Padyatra, Vardaan activists went across through several villages with the message of water conservation and thousands of village people were mobilized to participate in shramdaans wherein they would take up construction or renovation of water harvesting structures in their villages. The *yatra* also elicited huge support from the local intelligentsia since voluntary contributions at such a large scale had not been witnessed earlier. Another enormously successful programme was the '*Lok Partal*'

(Public Scrutiny) programme of Vardaan. As part of this programme, on each work site of Vardaan's projects, all accounts and financial details were opened up in public meetings for the perusal of the villagers and panchayat members. Apart from opening up its own work to scrutiny, the effort was also to involve panchayat members in such efforts to promote the message and ethos of transparency and accountability in public life.

6.2 Profile of Selected Villages

The work of the partners in Chhattisgarh is being carried out in 56 villages of 33 Gram Panchayats spread across 5 blocks and 4 districts of the state as the following table shows:

Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha			
District	Block	Gram Panchayat	Village
Sarguja	Wardrafnagar	1. Girwani	1. Girwani
		2. Kesari	2. Kesari
		3. Babhani	3. Babhani
			4. Charchari
		4. Jourahi	5. Jourahi
			6. Chanwarsari
		5. Gaina	7. Gaina
			8. Beto
		6. Sama	9. Sama
		7. Raghunathnagar	10. Raghunathnagar
		8. Rameshpur	11. Rameshpur
			12. Bagainar
Lokshakti Samiti			
Raigarh	Pusor	1. Kesla	1. Kesla
			2. Dumurmuda
		2. Midmida	3. Midmida
		3. Jhalmala	4. Jhalmala
			5. Bhatanpali
		4. Darramuda	6. Darramuda
			7. Gurgahan
Jashpur	Pathalgaon	1. Bildegi	1. Bildegi
		2. Shekharpu	2. Shekharpu
		3. Bangaon B	3. Bangaon B
		4. Dumarbahal	4. Dumarbahal
		5. Chandrapur	5. Chandrapur
		6. Ludeg	6. Ludeg
		7. Saraitola	7. Saraitola
Margdarshak Sewa Sanstha			
Sarguja	Premnagar	1. Chandan Nagar	1. Chandan Nagar
		2. Koteya	2. Koteya
			3. Mahora
		3. Maheshpur	4. Maheshpur
			5. Chitarwai
		4. Hariharpur	6. Hariharpur
			7. Rameshwar Nagar

Vardaan Samajik Sanstha			
Rajnandgaon	Churia	1. Pangnikhurd	1. Pangrikhurd
			2. Pangrikalan
			3. Pathri
		2. Sitakasa	4. Sitakasa
			5. Lalutola
			6. Dhobni
		3. Chikhlakasa	7. Chikhlakasa
			8. Uchaipur
			9. Danitola
		4. Badgaon	10. Badgaon
			11. Parewadih
		5. Godalwahi	12. Godalwahi
			13. Chiklamatia
		6. Barbaspur	14. Barbaspur
			15. Sambalpur
		7. Gidarri	16. Gidarri
			17. Chandia
		8. Laamleta	18. Laamleta
			19. Kumranchuria
		9. Dharmutola	20. Dharmutola
			21. Kallutola
		10. Bairagibedi	22. Bairagibedi
			23. Diwantola

Some basic characteristics of the chosen panchayats and villages are given below:

	Population	%SC	%ST	NSA (ha)	GSA (ha)	GIA/GSA	Rainfall (mm)
Vardan	13238	13	54	5459	5860	9.4	1200
SGVS	16022	15	48	4623	4736	8	1500
MSS	6971	2.5	75				1500
LSS	22289	16	36	6204	6947	29	1500
All	58520	14	48	16286	17543	17	

The criteria for selecting these panchayats and villages are outlined below:

- Most of these villages have a fairly high share of ST or SC communities in the population. In the case of Margdarshak Sewa Sanstha, the share of ST population goes up to 75%. Overall, roughly about half the population is tribal
- There is significant outmigration from the areas during the lean season in search of employment. As such, an employment guarantee programme, well implemented, will help to redress such a situation
- The villages are poor and backward and people are under-nourished and have a fairly high level of indebtedness driven by poverty
- There has been a lack of sufficient awareness among GP functionaries about the provisions of NREGA. Consequently, there has also been an inertia regarding its implementation.
- While the areas have a rich resource base, the potential of this resource base is underutilized.

For example, barring the areas of Lokshakti Samiti's operation (Jashpur and Raigarh districts), Gross Irrigated Area as a percentage of Gross Sown Area is below 10%. Overall, this share is below 20%

- All partners were formally invited by the concerned GPs to work in their panchayats
- A majority of the population is dependent on agriculture and agriculture labour as its primary occupation and secondary occupation as the table below shows:

Partner	Percentage of Households for whom			
	Primary Occupation		Secondary Occupation	
	Agriculture	Agriculture Labour	Agriculture	Agriculture Labour
Vardan	66	12	32	18
SGVS	55	20	30	25
MSS	90	10	10	70
LSS	57	34	38	22
All	63	22	31	28

6.3 Work Done and Impacts

6.3.1 Awareness Generation and Mobilization

In the initial phase, the work of the partners concentrated on creating awareness about the Act and its provisions. This entailed intensive door-to-door contact, meetings, rallies, mobilization campaigns, video film screenings, wall writing, capacity building and exposure tours and participatory planning exercises:

- All partners began work by doing a baseline survey to ascertain the situation of NREGA in their chosen panchayats.
- SGVS organized 36 meetings in the gram panchayats attended by 1,956 persons
- Lokshakti Samiti held 68 meetings attended by 2,812 people in its Jashpur GPs. It also made door-to-door contact with all 4,448 families in its chosen panchayats
- Lokshakti Samiti also held rallies on NREGA in 14 villages of its area (where it is working intensively with the GPs). These rallies involved school children, youth clubs, women, anganwadi workers, panchayat members, sarpanchs and ward members and village persons, who participated in large numbers
- Vardaan organized a massive *Gaon Garib Samvad Yatra* which covered 80 villages of Churia Block in Rajanandgaon district. This Yatra provided the platform on which intense contact was made with panchayat members, panchayat functionaries and village people in which the message of employment guarantee as a right was reinforced.
- Vardaan also prepared an audio cassette of songs on NREGA which drive home the message of the act along with the need for people to come together to use this act for their development
- MSS organized a huge padyatra covering 45 villages of Prem Nagar Block in which nearly 10,000 people participated. The padyatra focussed on the provisions of NREGA and how people must come forward to use it as a right.

- All organizations made use of methods such as wall writing, pamphlets, posters, and slogans to drive home their message.

The meetings and events were also an occasion to bring to the centre-stage concerns regarding NRM activities and the importance of leveraging NREGA to carry out such activities which would help consolidate basic water infrastructure in the villages.

This idea was further strengthened through a series of exposure visits of key panchayat personnel to successful watershed work done in other parts of the country. When panchayat representatives saw the benefits of such work, with respect to sustainable livelihoods, high labour absorption, reduction in migration and came face-to-face with beneficiaries of such work, they went back convinced that this was a good avenue to spend NREGA money on. Simultaneously, pressure of the gram sabhas on the panchayats ensured that the NRM agenda could not be bypassed by the panchayats.

6.3.2 Job Cards and Work Demand

The first and immediate impact was felt on a larger coverage of people w.r.t job cards. While the administration had moved in to cover a substantial number of families with job cards, there were still those who had no awareness about the cards. Most partners in their meetings and rallies concentrated on extending the coverage of these cards and explaining the significance of the “blue cards” in their lives.

The tables below show the increase in job card applications and job cards received:

	Job Card Applications		Increase	% Increase
	Before Interventions	After Interventions		
Vardan	2320	2520	200	9
SGVS	3627	3906	279	8
MSS	1543	1749	206	13
LSS Jashpur	2350	3224	874	37
LSS Raigarh	771	925	154	20
All	10611	12324	1713	16

- 1713 fresh job applications were generated as a result of the incessant campaign of the partners and 2,552 new cards were actually issued to work-seekers
- Overall, this meant a rise of 25% over the base period
- The observed increase was maximum (87%) in the Jashpur panchayats of LSS

	Job Cards Received			
	Before Interventions	After Interventions	Increase	% Increase
Vardan	2373	2512	139	6
SGVS	3432	3631	199	6
MSS	1543	1749	206	13
LSS Jashpur	2121	3975	1854	87
LSS Raigarh	771	925	154	20
All	10240	12792	2552	25

6.3.3 Work Demand and Work Created

Given the initially low level of awareness about NREGA as a right, it should come as no surprise that work demand was not very high. Most people were under the impression that they will get work when the panchayat starts it. And certainly, the fact that they had job cards did not translate into a right to demand work for them.

On the other hand, very often sarpanchs and panchayat office bearers were found to be in a state of fear regarding the provisions of the act. They felt that if they made too much of the fact that work under NREGA was a right of the people, the situation could be turned against them, since people would demand work and if funds were not released from above in time, they might well have to pay unemployment allowance.

The task that partners took upon themselves in their awareness campaigns and meetings was to tell people that they must come forward and demand work from the panchayat. This simple agenda had dramatic impacts as can be seen from the table below:

- Across all panchayats, there was a 34-fold rise in the demand for work from a mere 211 job applications in 56 villages to over 7,000 work demand applications.
- The rise was equally dramatic in all project areas, showing that lack of work demand and indifference among the people about the act was indeed ubiquitous.
- These figures cited above relate to the selected panchayats where partners have worked intensively. However, the impact of their efforts have been more widespread. For instance, during the *Gaon Garib Samwad Yatra* organized by Vardaan, more than 9,000 work applications were generated and submitted to the concerned gram panchayats in the course of a month.
- Work sanctioned and started rose 3-fold in all. In Sarguja district, these numbers have to be contrasted with a very low initial base. In Rajanandgaon, Jashpur and Raigarh, while work demand existed, it needed to be stepped up.
- Overall, the efforts of consortium partners led to a 7-fold rise in the value of works sanctioned in the gram panchayats from Rs.97 lakhs to Rs.7 crores.
- In terms of works implemented, the rise was lower but equally dramatic from Rs.73 lakhs to Rs.2.81 crores, or about 4 times
- Here again, the most dramatic impacts were felt in the two blocks of Sarguja district where SGVS and MSS are working

Vardan	Work demand generated (applications)	Sanctioned works (no.)	Works started (no)	Sanctioned works (Value) Rs lakhs	Works finished (value) (Rs. Lakhs)
Before	74	32	26	28	25
After	2340	70	56	101	84
Increase	2266	38	30	73	59
Increase Factor	32	2	2	4	3
SGVS					
Before	13	0	0	0	0
After	818	23	19	94	45
Increase	805	23	19	94	45
Increase Factor	63	23	19	94	45
MSS					
Before	0	0	0	0	0
After	538	45	17	355	40
Increase	538	45	17	355	40
Increase Factor	538	45	17	355	40
LSS					
Before	124	85	31	69	48
After	3578	172	76	154	113
Increase	3454	87	45	85	64
Increase Factor	29	2	2	2	2
Overall					
Before	211	117	57	97	73
After	7274	310	168	704	281
Increase	7063	193	111	607	208
Increase Factor	34	3	3	7	4

6.3.4 NRM Orientation of Panchayat Plans

In this respect, there have been two types of interventions by the Chhattisgarh partners:

- Giving an orientation to the planning process already under way by the gram panchayats so that the plans increasingly become focussed on creating basic water infrastructure and give a boost to agricultural productivity in their area
- Get involved with panchayats to actually make detailed plans on the basis of extensive technical surveys, costing and estimation
- The efforts to reorient the panchayats towards NRM activities under NREGA has registered success though in different degrees.

	Share of NRM in Sanctioned Works		Share of NRM in Implemented Works	
	Before Interventions	After Interventions	Before Interventions	After Interventions
SGVS	0	57	0	63
MSS	0	17	0	5
Vardaan	16	65	12	58
LSS	37	76	28	61
All	31	42	23	52

In its operations in Raigarh district, Lokshakti has steadfastly tried to take panchayat plans in the direction of greater NRM-orientation, although it has not got involved in the planning process itself. This is reflected in the rise in such activities in the plans made by the concerned panchayats, as shown in the table below:

Gram Panchayat	NRM and Water Harvesting	Social Infrastructure Including Rural Connectivity	Total	% NRM in Total
Darramuda	1517200	1615209	3132409	48
Keshla	3341810	871307	4213117	79
Midmida	1050000	480000	1530000	69
Jhalmala	1530000	500000	2030000	75
Total	7439010	3466516	10905526	68

Overall, the share of NRM works is 68% of the total cost of activities budgeted by the GP. In Keshla panchayat, it is as high as 79%. In the above table, the social infrastructure expenditures are on items which the community has prioritized after a careful and intensive process of understanding all options available to them. Once it was clear that certain ponds and water harvesting structures had been budgeted for, they turned their attention to certain items of importance to them such as connecting roads, common platform or *chabuttra* for holding village meetings, a bathing *ghat* for women and drinking water sources. This process of decision-making and inclusion of certain activities is vastly different from an imposition of certain types of work from above, such as metal road construction, which was quite common in Chhattisgarh and other parts of the country in the early days of NREGA.

6.3.5 NRM-Centred Micro-Plan Preparation

In three locations partners got together with Gram Panchayats and made detailed action plans for all villages. This followed intensive PRA exercises, meetings and surveys. These locations are:

- Wardrafnagar, Sarguja (SGVS)
- Pathalgaon, Jashpur (Lokshakti)
- Churia, Rajanandgaon (Vardaan)

Total micro-plans worth Rs.7.71 crores were made in these 3 locations as the following summary table shows:

Block/District	Agency	Amount (Rs.)
Wardrafnagar, Sarguja	SGVS	20214144
Jashpur	Lokshakti	27709000
Rajnandgaon	Vardaan	29164000
Total		77087144

These plans were created in a process which centrally involved and empowered the village community. For instance, SGVS worked closely with PRIs and women. It brings together

PRIs and women in the gram sabha. During the participatory exercise for preparation of action plan of each village, the ward panch along with women of the ward drew their village maps (resource map and social map). They jointly selected and proposed the work and sites for NRM work under NREGA. They also did in-depth exercises for preparation of beneficiaries list and areas to be benefited with the guidance of the SGVS team. Capacity building of PRIs on NREGA and NRM along with planning, estimation and costing also took place *pari passu* with the planning process. Later, the PRIs of each village took active part in preparation of action plan with the active cooperation of villagers.



Late Pratapbhai of Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha in a village planning exercise on NREGA

Lokshakti Samiti organized a series of training programmes for panchayat functionaries, employment assistants, vigilance committee members and people from all panchayats. Along with various provisions of NREGA, these programmes covered participatory planning for NRM, site selection and identification of activities for inclusion in the NREGA plan. Selected persons were also taken on an exposure tour to Samaj Pragati Sahayog to see watershed programmes and their results.

Vardaan too organized first a series of training workshops for panchayat functionaries on planning for NRM activities in the context of NREGA. Panchayat representatives from all tiers of the PRI system were taken for an exposure tour to Samaj Pragati Sahayog to see watershed programmes in action.

After this intense process of dialogue, probable sites were identified where NRM centred activities could be undertaken. After site identification, teams from partner organizations and village people got together to do joint technical surveys and estimations. Once this process

was over, the draft action plan was ready and was presented before the gram sabha in a special meeting called for this purpose. Once the village ratified the plan, the plan was finalized and the plan documents were put up to the Gram Panchayat for inclusion in its NREGA works. This was further approved by the GP.

The following tables provide some highlights of the major activities and their costs under each action plan prepared:



A training programme for Vigilance Committee Members organized by Lokshakti Samiti

Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha, Wardrafnagar, Sarguja		
Item	Units	Cost
Check Dams	358 nos	22,07,846
Gully plugs	44 nos	2,96,568
Farm Bunding	110 ha	6,60,000
Dabris (Farm Ponds)	101 nos	50,50,000
Irrigation wells	120 nos	120,00,000
Total		202,14,144

Lokshakti Samiti, Pathalgaon, Jashpur			
Activities	Units	No. of units	Amount (Rs. lakhs)
Land Improvement	Ha	106.16	14.84
Dabris	No	16	31.15
Farm Ponds	No	19	43.7
Dugwells	No	69	51.75
Earthen Nala Bunds	No	4	5.19
Stop Dams	No	3	57
WBM Road	No	7	53.66
CC Gully Road	No	6	19.8
Total			277.09



The Lokshakti team surveys a site for possible interventions

A pond deepened under NREGA in Kesala village, Pusor Block, Raigarh District by the Panchayat with support from Lokshakti Samiti



This pond in Village Dumarmuda, Block Pusor, District Raigarh, was deepened by the Gram Panchayat with support from Lokshakti Samiti



Vardaan Samajik Sanstha, Churia, Rajndandgaon				
	Item	Units	No.	Cost (Rs. lakhs)
1	Field Bunding (farmers	farmers	358	28.64
2	Irrigation Tanks construction and repair	number	21	105.00
3	Construction of irrigation channels	number	4	20.00
4	Land Levelling (pasture land and open common land)	fields	18	57.00
5	Internal roads (earthen)	number	7	20.50
6	Internal roads (WBM)	number	7	31.00
7	Internal roads (CC)	number	8	29.50
	Total			291.64



Suresh Sharma, Sarpanch of Chircharikala GP, District Rajnandgaon, at the site of a village pond being desilted under NREGA with support from Vardaan. Pointing to the crucial role that Vardaan has played in making NREGA reach the people in his panchayat, the sarpanch completely endorses the Consortium model of partnerships between CSOs and PRIs

6.3.6 Transparency and Vigilance

An extremely important qualitative impact of this entire process has been the activation of the village communities in each of the panchayats. The communities are now more aware than before about their entitlements and are also active in giving voice to what they feel is best for their lives.

- Vardaan reports that before their interventions there were at least 17 cases of delayed payments in these panchayats which fell to 4 after they worked intensively with the panchayats. The organization raised and followed up 5 cases of delayed payments which helped to put a check on such delays
- Similarly, in the Lokshakti panchayats, there were 15 such cases of delayed payments which fell to 3 after their interventions. All 3 were followed up and redressals achieved
- Similarly, in the panchayats of MSS work, no cases of delayed payments were taken up by the people before the organization's work picked up. After that, 37 cases were taken up and followed to their logical conclusion.
- Lokshakti Samiti reports that in all its panchayats in Raigarh and Jashpur, the attendance

in Gram Sabha meetings has increased dramatically. The following table, from data in the panchayat's meeting register points to this:

	Block and District	Past attendance in Gram Sabha			Present Attendance in Gram Sabha		
		F	M	Total	F	M	Total
1.	Pusor, Raigarh	24	226	250	189	353	542
2.	Pathalgaon, Jashpur	25	170	195	210	257	567
Total		49	396	445	399	710	1109

What is particularly striking is the fact the the attendance of women in these meetings has risen sharply (nearly 10-fold).

- Another achievement has been the change in the quality of discussions in these meetings wherein people now actively discuss their entitlements and the plans that they would like the GP to execute under NREGA.
- In Vardaan's panchayats, there were 11 vigilance committees in existence before they started work. The number increased to 16. In social audits, the attendance was earlier less than 250 people, whereas after their interventions the number rose to 586.
- In the MSS area, only 45 persons attended the single social audit held in the panchayats. After their interventions, 6 such audits were conducted attended by 800 people.



Following intense mobilization campaigns around NREGA by Lokshakti Samiti, attendance in gram sabhas, especially of women, has risen sharply

6.4 Selected Case Studies

6.4.1 Delayed Payments in Prem Nagar Block

Though several WBM road development, pond deepening, new pond digging and fair-weather road development works were done undertaken as part of NREGS in villages of Hariharpur, Maheshpur, Koteya, Mahora, Kantaroli and Chandan Nagar, people were not given their wage for more than six months.

Taking up the issue, MSS organized a meeting of all the villages on the issue at Mohra on Sept 25, 2008 in which 175 people participated. During the meeting Mahabali of Khekhranala said that no wage payment had been made for six months even though works were completed. Petitions were prepared and submitted to the Gram Panchayat, Janpad Panchayat, Zila Panchayat and the district collector. Some five days latter, the wage were paid to the villagers. In total a sum of Rs.2,54,663 was paid. Following this villagers decided not to pursue the

matter further.

Similarly, in Village Kantaroli of Prem Nagar Block, WBM road construction work was started on 21.11.2007. The sanctioned value of the works was Rs. 5 lakhs and 293 male workers had worked on this construction site. 9 months after the completion of the work, the payment was not made by the panchayat. Once MSS activists came to know about this, they submitted a petition to the GP with a copy to the Janpad Panchayat. Such petitions were submitted twice. The block office then issued a show-cause notice to the GP. Within 3 days the panchayat secretary replied to this notice saying that the delay had taken place because of non-valuation of works by the concerned engineer and delay in release of funds from the block. Sensing the situation the CEO exerted pressure on the engineer and funds were quietly transferred to the bank. However, the workers were still not paid their dues. The people went to the police station and filed a case against the implementing agency. The sarpanch and the panchayat secretary were kept in lock-up for one day. However, they pleaded that the fault was really that of the engineer's because of which the delay had taken place. The sarpanch and secretary were released. But the impact of this was that the CEO, Prem Nagar immediately ensured that an outstanding payment of Rs.1.54 lakhs was disbursed to the 293 workers.

The impact of this was felt in Prem Nagar block as all workers started getting their wage in time. Another spinoff of this was that the capacity of the villagers to take up such issues was enhanced and it made them aware about the act and how to get work and timely wages under it.

6.4.2 Delayed Payments in Raghunathnagar

A similar story from SGVS highlights how empowering the pro-people provisions of the act truly are and if used by the people, they can effectively ensure that good and responsive governance takes place in their village.

Raghunathnagar GP is situated 130 kms from the district headquarters of Sarguja and 35 kms from the block headquarters of Wardrafnagar. In the financial year 2006-07, dam construction work worth Rs.5 lakhs and in 2007-08, earthen road construction work worth Rs.5.69 lakhs was approved for the GP. This road construction work started in November 2007 but no wage payment was made until March 2008. Repeated entreaties with the GP did not yield any result. Frustrated, the villagers lodged a complaint in the Raghunathnagar Police Station. After this, they contacted MSS activists who advised them to lodge a complaint in a proper format with the SDM. The villagers submitted the complaint to the SDM and also told him that they would not allow any NREGA work in their panchayat unless payments were made. The SDM took this matter seriously and ensured that payments were made within 15 days.

6.4.3 Checkmating Wrong Designs in Rameshpur

In the Rameshpur GP of Wardrafnagar Block, in the financial year 2006-07, a stop dam was approved at the cost of Rs.35 lakhs under NREGA and the work was entrusted to one line department of the district. It was felt by several people in the village and by MSS activists that for one, a structure of such a high cost would exhaust the entire GP budget for the whole

year. Also, the cost being high, the structure would be one which the GP would not be empowered to implement. This might open up doors for the involvement of contractors and also for misappropriation of funds. With these misapprehensions in mind, the people of Rameshpur GP got together to decide on what to do. They deliberated the pros and cons of construction of this large masonry stop dam. It was felt by the people that such a dam would not have benefits commensurate to costs. Since they had seen smaller earthen structures made by SGVS as part of its watershed activities in the area, they felt that in the same budget smaller earthen water harvesting structures should be built which would also help in maximizing employment.

With this idea, they met the SGVS team. The Secretary of SGVS helped the people draft a petition to the SDM demanding that the proposed work be scrapped. Despite heavy pressure from some sections of the political machinery which was banking on the stop dam construction taking place, the opposition of the village forced the SDM to scrap the proposed work.

6.4.4 We Will Not Migrate Now

Dumarbahal village of Pathalgaon block, District Jashpur, is 25 kms from the block headquarters. Its total population is 833 people. 77% of the population belongs to Scheduled Castes and 7% to the Scheduled Tribes. The village is poor and backward in terms of all socio-economic indicators. Under the circumstances, the majority of the village has to depend on wage labour for survival. Lokshakti Samiti activists held several rounds of meetings with the people of the village along with their PRI leaders and initiated discussions on how migration could be stopped if NREGA works were properly planned. Lokshakti also selected one person from the village to work as *rozgar mitaan* ("employment friend") who would act as a bridge between the people and the organization and constantly reinforce the message of NREGA planning and implementation among the people.

In November 2007, 30 workers of the village packed their meager rations and tools and started to embark on a journey for employment outside. Word reached the *rozgar mitaan*, Shri Jeetram Bhagat. He immediately went and met these workers and discussed their plans with them. They explained that they were being forced to go out of the village because there were no employment opportunities in the village. Shri Bhagat also found out that they had not been registered as workers under NREGA. He took them to the panchayat and made them submit registration applications. He discussed the issue of opening NREGA works with the panchayat secretary and the sarpanch. The secretary explained that land levelling work had been sanctioned for the GP but no employment assistant had been appointed. As a result, the entire burden of looking after NREGA works was on his shoulders and he was finding it difficult to manage. The sarpanch and the secretary both agreed though that the people who were migrating are entitled to work in their own village. Shri Bhagat explained to them that until such time as the employment assistant was appointed, he would help the GP in its NREGA work. The panchayat agreed and a vigilance committee was formed around the activity and work was announced. The workers who had decided to step out like every year, decided to stay back.

6.4.5 Harbinger of the Good Times

When Vardaan began its work on NREGA, it sensed that despite the radical provisions of NREGA, people were not enthusiastic about it. At best, it seemed as if they maintained a silent indifference towards it. At worst, they were probably cynical and disbelieving. In Churia Janpad Panchayat, there were 30,623 registered households of whom about 10,000 had never demanded work and about 15,000 had only managed to get 25 days of employment.



Participants in a village meeting during the *Gaon Garib Samvad Yatra*. During the *yatra*, more than 9,000 work demand applications were generated and submitted to the concerned panchayats

To find out why the Act which had the potential to put so much power in the hands of the people did not seem to have really taken off, Vardaan decided to organize a door-to-door campaign by the name of *Gaon Garib Samvad Yatra*. The *Yatra* covered 80 villages of Churia block in the district and brought Vardaan face-to-face with people, panchayat leaders, government functionaries and civil society. During the *Yatra*, it became obvious that the reality on the ground was quite different from the picture that the law-makers had in mind when they framed the Act. For one, sections of the panchayat leadership which wanted to do something were living in a state of fear about the Act, reinforced by sections of the bureaucracy which wanted the status quo to be maintained at any cost. They feared that if they used NREGA for their panchayats, they will open themselves to penal action in case of delays in wage payments or delays in start of work. On the other hand, those with intentions of misusing government schemes found that getting past NREGA would not be as easy as with other



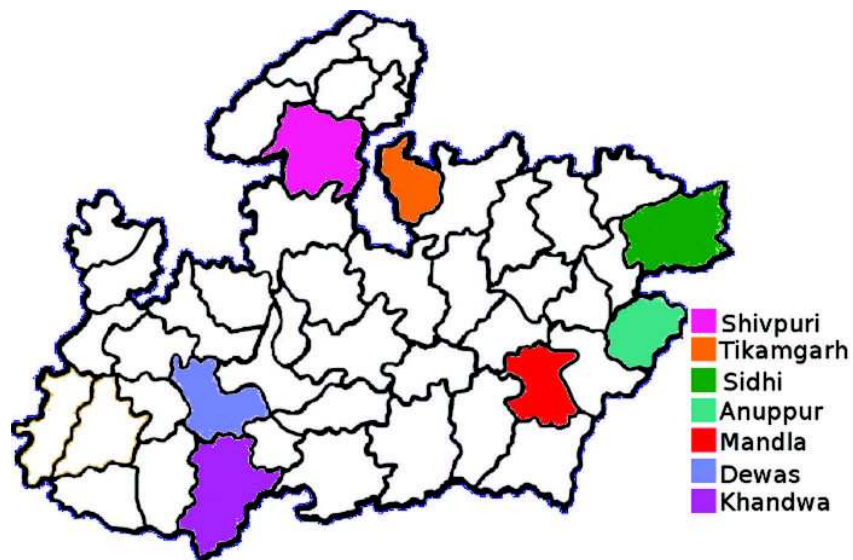
The sarpanch of Chikhalakasa GP, District Rajnandgaon, addresses a meeting during the *Gaon Garib Samvad Yatra*. The sarpanch also strongly feels that support from Vardaan has been crucial in making NREGA effective in his panchayat

government programmes because of its insistence on transparency and best practices and the possibilities of legal liability in case these were not observed. Also, finally, if the Act were made a reality on the ground in spirit, the power balance would unequivocally be tilted in favour of the poor and the applecart would really be upset.

Among the countless people, young, old, men and women with whom Vardaan activists had intense discussions, it turned out that they either did not know about the Act or were angry with their own panchayat leadership for not putting it into practice. It seemed that functionaries of the same machinery which had enacted the law were also the greatest conspirers plotting to defeat and discredit it.

Slowly, however, the Yatra managed to break this apathy and injected energy to the idea that NREGA belonged to the poor of the country and they had perhaps nothing to lose but their chains if they set out to claim it. The tangible result of this effort was that across these villages where work demand was negligible, and people did not even know that it was upto them to demand work, 9,000 work demand applications were generated in the course of one month and handed over to the panchayats with the obvious message that these jobs must be created. The number of applications apart, the single most important outcome of the Yatra was the shift in the mindset of the people and the breaking of the silence around the Act. This shift has been irreversible. NREGA and the Yatra, according to Vardaan, thus became a positive message, a *Sukal Ke Sandesh*, a harbinger of the good times for a people who seemed otherwise destined to be caught between *akal* (famine, drought or other unforeseen tragedies) and *dukhal* (bad times).

MADHYA PRADESH



7.1 Profile of Partners

In Madhya Pradesh, there are 8 consortium partners working in different districts. These partners, depending on their core focus, can be categorized as working primarily on mobilization issues relating to NREGA implementation or working intensively with selected Gram Panchayats to help them prepare micro-plans and implement these plans. Needless to say, these are not very water-tight compartments so that organizations working on planning issues have also naturally had to move through a process of mobilization and those working on mobilization are looking forward to further supporting panchayats in micro-planning related work. The categorization reflects core engagements as of the present moment and is made more with a view to facilitate a clearer yardstick for measuring the impact of partner work.

The following table provides details of partners and their core areas of involvement with respect to NREGA:

	Organization	District	Core Areas of Support to GPs
1	Niswarth Sarthak Prayas Evam Parivar Kalyan Samiti	Shivpuri	Planning
2	Sambhav Social Service Organization	Tikamgarh	Mobilization
3	Parhit Samaj Sewi Sanstha	Shivpuri	Mobilisation
4	Gram Sudhar Samiti	Sidhi	Planning
5	Holistic Action Research Development (HARD)	Anuppur	Mobilization
6	Nirmaan	Mandla	Mobilization
7	Foundation for Ecological Security	Mandla	Planning
8	Samaj Pragati Sahayog	Dewas	Planning and Implementation
9	Spandan Samaj Sewa Samiti	Khandwa	Mobilization
	Total	7	

What follows is a brief introduction to each of these organizations.

7.1.1 Niswarth Sarthak Prayas Evam Parivar Kalyan Samiti

Niswarth has been formed and is led by a very senior activist of the Chambal region who has devoted over two decades to the service of the Sahariya primitive tribal group. The Sahariyas are perhaps India's most fragile and vulnerable tribal group, whose livelihoods basis is so severely undermined and whose nutritional status so severely threatened that they are now teetering precariously on the edge of extinction.

Niswarth believes in mobilizing these tribal groups to get what is their due while at the same time sees itself as engaged in development work on the ground. It engages with PRIs, works with women and children on issues of health, nutrition, education, and empowerment. It hopes that through its work a strong, empowered, self-confident and self-aware community of Sahariyas is established.

7.1.2 Sambhav Social Service Organization

Sambhav Social Service Organization has been working for more than twenty years in the districts of Gwalior, Morena, Shivpuri and Tikamgarh. watershed development programmes, right to food, education, health and sanitation. Its work focusses on empowering the poor, especially the Sahariya tribal community of the region. While working intensively in the region on issues of health, credit, education, land and water management, mother and child care, it has retained a clear focus on issues of people's organisation, mobilisation and empowerment for justice and equity. Sambhav runs many Non-Formal Education Centres. These schools, which function for 265 days in a year, have a drop out rate of only 5%. In the health sector, the NGO is working on immunisation of mothers and children, training of dais and support to traditional dais, nutrition and reproductive health on a large scale. It is also running curative and referral services.

7.1.3 Parhit Samaj Sewi Sanstha

Parhit has been working in Madhya Pradesh for more than a decade. The first few years

of the organisation were largely spent in Datia district but it has extended its activities to Shivpuri district also. The organisation is committed to a development process, which is based on the principles of equality, fraternity and empowerment for weaker sections of society. They are currently working on community organisation in Pichhor and Pohri tehsils of Shivpuri district under the DPIP (District Poverty Initiatives Programme/Indira Gandhi Gareebi Hatao Yojana). Its core areas of work include Panchayat Raj and Local Self-Governance, Natural Resource Management and Women's Empowerment and Right to Food.

7.1.4 Nirman

Nirman is an organisation dedicated to the development and empowerment of the extremely poor, marginalised and most backward *Baiga* (a primitive tribe) and *Gond* tribes in Mandla and Dindori districts of Madhya Pradesh. Their work mainly focuses on development activities, community organisation and awareness generation. The *Baiga* community is unique in its problems as most of them, unlike their other tribal counterparts, are landless labourers. These tribals have traditionally practised *jhum* cultivation in the forest and as a result today they are totally deprived of any ownership rights. After putting a ban on Jhum cultivation the Government made no alternative arrangement for livelihood security for those communities which were dependent on it for their subsistence. Forest Department's forcible eviction of these people from their own land has worsened the crisis. In an historic event on 23rd of September, 2000 in village Chada of the Baiga Chak region (an area with a dense Baiga population in Dindori district) the Baigas gathered in huge numbers, probably for the first time in their history, to form the *Baiga Mahapanchayat*. This Baiga Mahapanchayat comprises 27 Baiga villages from both Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh and meets on the 7th of every month to address various problems and social issues. The organisation has worked to provide employment to *Panika Bunkars* (weavers) who have lost their traditional employment over the years. Nirman is also actively involved in working on issues related to the Right to Food.

7.1.5 Holistic Action Research Development (HARD)

HARD is based in the Kotma block of the newly formed Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh. It is also working in Shahdol district. The organisation has been in the area for the last decade, working on the issues of food security, women's empowerment, local self-governance and water conservation among the tribal communities. Development based on equity is the main thrust of their work. They are working in close co-ordination with the district administration. HARD also believes that in order for the situation on the ground to change, several like-minded organizations and agencies have to come together and work for a common goal. So it strives to maintain a live and organic contact with similar organizations working in the field.

7.1.6 Spandan Social Service Organization

Spandan have been working for dalit and adivasi empowerment in the Dhar and Khandwa districts of Madhya Pradesh for the past eight years. The dalits and adivasis, especially women

wage earners, are organised and mobilised to demand their right to work and wages. Spandan has worked to make PRIs and administration more sensitive to the needs of the local communities and to highlight their issues. It has gone through several struggles based on these issues of entitlements and achieved a positive impact. It has been active in issues related to food security and employment guarantee, particularly in keeping an eye on irregularities and malpractices that may have crept in in the implementation of NREGS schemes.

7.1.7 Gram Sudhar Samiti

Gram Sudhar Samiti (GSS), with around two decades of association with the Sidhi, Satna and adjacent areas, has a vision which encompasses a synergy between efforts of social reconstruction and democratic mobilisation for justice. This has created the basis for a potentially rich participatory development programme. A major mobilisation effort of the Samiti has related to the displacement of tribal people on account of national parks. Sidhi district is heavily forested, particularly in the areas bordering Sarguja district, such as the Kusmi Block. In its project area, the Samiti actively mobilised the village people to resist displacement from their homes and fields due to one such national park project. This resistance met with the approval of the gram sabha, the gram panchayat, the Janpad and Zila Panchayats and their resolutions to this effect were forwarded to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, the Human Rights Commission and the Council for Tribal Self-Rule. The pressure due to this process led to the recommendation that the displacement should be stopped.

GSS is working on formation of women's SHGs, and is running non-formal education centres in the villages for working children in the 6-14 years age group, RCH programme and the DPIP. It has been an implementing agency in various watershed development programmes, including the CAPART watershed programme and the GoMP's Rajiv Gandhi Mission on Watershed Development. For its various efforts for the tribal, dalit and neglected people of the area, the Gram Sudhar Samiti has received the prestigious Thakkar Bapa Smarak Trust Award, Bharat Excellency Award from Forum India and Red and White Bravery Award.

7.1.8 Foundation for Ecological Security

Foundation for Ecological Security (FES) carries out activities to promote the conservation and sustainable management of natural resources, forests and water in particular, through local self-governance institutions¹. FES has been working in the area of Natural Resource Management since the last fifteen years and its activities have spread to 26 districts in different eco-zones across six states (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, and Rajasthan) in the country. FES is engaged in helping communities draw up perspective plans for natural resource management and leveraging the NREGA to systematically implement their plans. With the expansion of NREGA to cover all districts in the country from 1st April 2008, FES is presently involved in facilitating the implementation of NREGA in all its project locations.

¹ See Chapter 2 for a detailed introduction of FES

7.1.9 Samaj Pragati Sahayog

Over the last two decades, Samaj Pragati Sahayog (SPS) has grown to be one of India's largest grass-roots initiatives for water and livelihood security, working with its partners on a million acres of land across 72 of India's most backward districts, mainly in the central Indian Adivasi belt. It takes inspiration from the life and work of Baba Amte who rejected charity and successfully empowered even the most challenged. SPS is headquartered in a drought-prone, tribal area in the Dewas district of Madhya Pradesh, which typifies the most difficult problems of the country. It concentrates all its direct interventions in about 220 villages and towns of this area. This work is not so much a model as a living laboratory of learning for others to adapt to their own areas. To facilitate this mutual learning, in 1998 SPS set up the Baba Amte Centre for People's Empowerment in tribal village Neemkheda, where it started its watershed work.

7.2 Profile of Villages

Partners are working in 9 blocks of 7 districts. Within these blocks, there are 279 villages in 139 Gram Panchayats which have been selected for interventions. The table below summarizes this information.

	Organization	District	Block	No. of GPs	No. of Villages
1	Niswarth Sarthak Prayas Evam Parivar Kalyan Samiti	Shivpuri	Baderwas	6	18
2	Sambhav Social Service Organization	Tikamgarh	Prithvipur	5	5
3	Parhit Samaj Sewi Sanstha	Shivpuri	Pohari	35	90
4	Gram Sudhar Samiti	Sidhi	Kusmi	4	18
5	Holistic Action Research Development (HARD)	Anuppur	Kotma	4	5
6	Nirmaan	Mandla	Bichiya	21	43
7	Foundation for Ecological Security	Mandla	Niwas	10	28
8	Samaj Pragati Sahayog	Dewas	Bagli	10	10
9	Spandan Samaj Sewa Samiti	Khandwa	Khalwa	5	5
	Total	7	9	100	222

The total population covered by the partners in Madhya Pradesh is 1,45,424. Of this, nearly 48% overall belong to scheduled tribes and 14% to scheduled castes.

The villages have been chosen for a wide variety of reasons. One major reason has been the preponderance of ST and SC communities (see table below) in the population. ST communities as a proportion of total population in the villages is very high in Mandla (FES and Nirman), Dewas (SPS), Sidhi (GSS) and Anuppur (HARD). In the Chambal region too, Parhit, Sambhav and Niswarth have a high share of SC and ST population. In particular, we need to mention here that Shivpuri and Tikamgarh are home to the Sahariya primitive tribe and Mandla to the baiga primitive tribe.

	Organization	Population	Share of ST %	Share of SC %	Total
1	Niswarth	9499	35	13	48
2	Sambhav	9834	12	20	32
3	Parhit	48911	19	28	47
4	HARD	5310	53	23	76
5	GSS	6654	90	1	91
6	Nirman	29493	64	5	69
7	FES	14671	81	2	83
8	SPS	11065	87	2	89
9	Spandan	9987	66	5	71
	Total	145424	48	14	62

The table below shows that average annual rainfall is high in the eastern districts of Anuppur and Mandla. However, the rest of the districts have medium or low rainfall (particularly, Shivpuri and Tikamgarh). In terms of irrigation development too, barring Tikamgarh, all districts are quite backward. In particular, the low irrigation share coupled with high rainfall in Anuppur and Mandla districts points to the unrealized potential of these areas.

	Partner	Rainfall (mm)	GIA/ GSA
1	Niswarth	625	15.57
2	Sambhav	450	52
3	Parhit	400	9
4	HARD	1310	18
5	GSS	1000	10
6	Nirman	1577	10
7	FES	2000	6
8	SPS	955	22
9	Spandan	880	20

The major reasons for these panchayats being selected are different for different partners:

- For FES, the primary reasons are predominance of tribal population, low literacy rates, limited livelihood options, vulnerability of women and fairly high levels of out-migration
- For Niswarth, the vulnerability of the Sahariyas and the low rainfall, low irrigation situation was primary
- For Nirman, the major reasons were the low levels of awareness in the village community about NREGA and government schemes in general, neglect of villages by the implementation machinery and lack of sustainable livelihoods opportunities
- The Parhit villages are characterized by distress migration of Sahariya tribes whereby 50% of the Sahariya population migrates in search of work opportunities, most of them becoming bonded labourers as a result. Average landholding size of these tribals is about 1-2 acres and most of this land is stony, unirrigated and undulating.
- In the HARD villages, the share of SC and ST populations is high. There is a high degree of soil erosion and the productivity of land is low. There is a lack of employment opportunities within the village.
- Gram Sudhar Samiti's villages have a tribal majority and a low level of development of irrigation sources.
- In the SPS villages, lack of irrigation sources and employment opportunities, severe drinking water problems, lack of fodder and high levels of soil erosion were the deciding factors

Migration in the villages is quite high. In the villages of Niswarth's intervention, about 80% of families who migrate do so because of distress factors. This means at least about 28 to 30% of the population. Similarly, in Spandan's area, 250 families are known to migrate regularly for distress reasons. In Sidhi, GSS reports that about 2% families migrate due to distress reasons.

In terms of primary and secondary occupations, most of the population is dependent on agriculture as the table below shows:

	Partner	% Population Reporting Primary Occupation as:	
		Agriculture	Agricultural Labour
1	Niswarth	50	40
2	Sambhav	55	38
3	Parhit	91	7
4	HARD	35	69
5	GSS	15	80
6	Nirman	51	41
7	FES	80	20
8	SPS	84	16
9	Spandan	70	29

7.3 Work Done and Major Achievements

Work done and major achievements will vary from partner to partner, due to:

- partner's own orientation in terms of work done by them
- variations in the base situation from partner to partner and village to village.

Keeping this in mind, we need to read what follows which provides highlights of work done by these partners in their chosen villages and their chosen thrust areas.

7.3.1 Meetings and Awareness Campaigns

Achievements come after prolonged and sustained effort and Madhya Pradesh has been no exception to this. Despite the passage of the Act, partners found that there were several areas where their interventions were crucial. Prime among these was the activation of those for whom the act was meant.

To achieve this several modes of awareness generation were adopted by different partners. These included *padyatras*, door-to-door campaigns, village meetings, posters, leaflets, pamphlets, exposures and training programmes. For instance,

- team members of Niswarth offered themselves to the Gram Panchayats so that they functioned for several months as *de-facto* "staff" of the GPs to ensure that the entire ground work and preparation for bringing the Act out of the statute book and onto the ground was done. Niswarth held a total of 360 meetings attended by more than 9,000 persons in its chosen panchayats. The agenda of these meetings ranged from creating awareness about



Training of vigilance committee members conducted by Niswarth Samiti

the provisions of the Act to conducting participatory PRA exercises with village communities to facilitate planning, to identifying sites for construction work, creating job applications and so on.

- Spandan carried out a month-long drive across 50 villages of its area to tell people about the Act, collect job applications and pressurize the administration to open works.
- HARD organized a rally covering 20 villages in its area, which helped it to cover several thousand people.
- Parhit organized more than 240 village meetings attended by 6,248 people. These meetings were inspired as much by the desire to learn about the status of NREGA on the ground as to create awareness about NREGA. The meetings were also occasions for cultural programmes and collection of job applications. It also carried out wall writings across 20 remote villages where the administrative machinery had not yet begun to reach.
- SPS organized 67 meetings attended by more than 2,000 people. SPS teams tried to drive home the message that the NREGA was an unprecedented opportunity which needed to be capitalized upon. A dialogue was also set up with the village communities on the possibilities of integrating NRM works into NREGA implementation. In similar meetings with Gram Panchayats, dialogues were opened up with panchayat leaders on implementation of watershed projects in their panchayats. Once the dialogue around NREGA and NRM activities became more alive after the preliminary ground was prepared, the village people were involved in identifying the major problems and the possible work that could be undertaken in their villages.
- Several meetings were conducted by FES in its gram panchayats to spread awareness about NREGA, the importance of NRM based action plans under NREGA and the need for panchayats to participate in these action plans. These meetings, numbering 72 in all, were attended by 2,747 persons. The meetings provided the platform on which interventions could be planned participatively with the people.
- In a massive drive in its area, GSS was able to cover more than 7,000 people, informing them about NREGA, their entitlements and building their confidence to demand what is their due
- Sambhav organized street plays across more than 20 panchayats highlighting NREGA and other government programmes. It also carried out wall-writing campaigns across more than 20 panchayats. This was followed up by rallies and more than 300 meetings across 35 villages.



A village meeting on NREGA organized by Gram Sudhar Samiti, Sidhi

7.3.2 Job Cards

The following table highlights some of the major achievements with respect to job cards:

		Job Card Applications			Job Cards Obtained		
		Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase	Before Intervention	After Intervention	Increase
1	Niswarth	2055	2819	764	2055	2819	764
2	Sambhav	55	401	346	1209	1786	577
3	Parhit	12820	17869	5049	13217	16888	3671
4	HARD	365	1180	815	345	1155	810
5	GSS	765	922	157	319	922	603
6	Nirman	6598	6648	50	6598	6648	50
7	Spandan	0	2307	2307	0	2307	2307
Total		22658	32146	9488	23743	32525	8782

Note: In the areas of FES and SPS the job card coverage had already been maximized by the administration

- A total of 9,488 new job card applications were made by the efforts of the partners.
- A total of 8,782 new job cards were distributed among households as a result of partner interventions.
- In terms of absolute numbers, the highest increase in job cards obtained was recorded in Parhit's villages. This must also be qualified by the larger number of villages and population covered by Parhit as compared to other partners.
- Parhit's campaigns also revealed that job cards were uniformly in the possession of the sarpanch or the panchayat secretary or functionaries of the line department who were entrusted with getting the work done. Their campaigns made it possible for
- In terms of rise compared to the base situation, the highest rises have been recorded by HARD (more than 3-fold) and GSS (nearly 3-fold). These are due to very poor base situations to start with. In the case of GSS, more than new applications for job cards, it is redressal of applications received which is remarkable.
- Niswarth and Sambhav have recorded 37% and 48% increase in the number of job cards obtained. In Niswarth's panchayats, there is also 100% registration of workers in the panchayats now as a result of the efforts of the partner.
- Overall there was an increase of 37% in the coverage of job cards across all partners.

7.3.3 Work Demand and Work Creation

In terms of creation of work demand, the major highlights have been:

- In the panchayats where Niswarth is working, 3,177 fresh job applications were created. What is more remarkable is that before interventions there was not a single job application made by any wage-seeker in all 18 villages where it has worked intensively.
- Sambhav created 483 fresh job applications with the number of such applications rising from 189 before their interventions to 672 after.
- Spandan was able to generate 467 fresh applications. Here again, there were no formal applications for work before their interventions began. In its more extensive campaign covering 50 villages, Spandan estimates that job applications which had the potential to create work worth Rs.9 crores (in terms of the number of wage seekers, the days they wanted to work for and the minimum wages) were created
- Gram Sudhar Samit created 319 fresh job applications through its campaigns.
- Nirman's villages too began the process of demanding work through proper applications after Nirman's team made intensive campaigns. Here 795 wage-seekers applied 3 times for work with the Gram Panchayat.
- Across all its villages of work, Parhit's efforts led to additional 3,565 job applications being created. The total number of job applications after their interventions rose to 11,866
- Similarly, HARD's efforts to make wage-seekers submit work demand applications resulted in 370 fresh applications being made.
- In the panchayats where GSS is working, 39 new works worth Rs.76 lakhs were sanctioned and implemented as a result of sustained campaigns. The value of works implemented before interventions was zero.
- In Niswarth's panchayats, before their interventions, sanctioned works numbered 55 and were worth Rs. 95 lakhs. Their number rose to 90 as a result of their interventions and the value Rs.1.82 crores. In terms of work implementation, 15 of the sanctioned 55 works worth about Rs.30 lakhs were executed before their interventions. These doubled to 30 works worth Rs.85.9 lakhs actually being implemented as a result of their interventions.
- In HARD's panchayats, there were 30 works worth Rs.25 lakhs sanctioned before interventions, of which 20 (worth Rs. 6 lakhs) had seen the light of the implementation day. After their interventions, works sanctioned rose to 80 and their value rose to Rs.59 lakhs. Works implemented rose to 63 and their value to Rs.18 lakhs.
- In Sambhav's panchayats, there were only 9 sanctioned works worth Rs. 21.88 lakhs before they began their campaign. As a result of their campaign, sanctioned works rose to 22 and their value to Rs.40.96 lakhs. 6 of the sanctioned works valued at Rs.16.84 lakhs were actually taken up for implementation before Sambhav's work. As a result of their efforts, the number of implemented works rose to 14 and their value to Rs.38 lakhs.
- In Spandan's work area, the rise was very dramatic. Since their panchayats were part of NREGA from Phase I and the organization also began its work soon after the passage of the Act, they got a headstart in terms of mobilizing the people and the state machinery. While there were no sanctioned works before they began work, 221 works worth Rs.41 lakhs were sanctioned after their interventions and of these 195 were implemented.

More important than numbers however, are the qualitative aspects of this drive to raise

work demand. In Niswarth's panchayats, for example, people were similarly not aware of the fact that work under NREGA depended on their demanding it. They used to wait to be called by panchayat functionaries for work. There was also no system for written work applications being submitted to panchayats. Door to door campaigns for work demand, intensive village meetings and mobilisation of village social units such as youth forums, along with poster exhibitions etc. have had the desired impact. Those willing to work have for the first time submitted written applications for work and for the first time, panchayats have acknowledged these applications in writing. About 1500 such fresh applications have been submitted.

In Mandla district too, the awareness level has increased and people are now recognising their right to get employment. Earlier things were dependent mainly on proactive initiatives of sarpanch and the panchayat secretary, but now common people have also started questioning the way the schemes should be implemented. Before the initiation of the awareness campaign people used to wait for some one to call them for work not realising the fact that the work under the act is demand driven.

HARD also reports that among their primary achievements has been to give direction to a situation where the notion that work has to be demanded did not exist. The wage-seekers simply did not have a voice.

7.3.4 NRM Focus and Micro-Planning

This has been a major concern for all partners, particularly because it was observed that almost uniformly, there was no attempt at involving people in the planning process. As a result works were implemented without careful and clear prioritization and understanding of needs. Also, since there was generally a lack of awareness about NREGA and its provisions, very often machinery and contractors were being used in violation of the law.

A concerted effort was made by partners to make planning more participatory, focus it around NRM activities and ensure that GPs were sensitive to such activities when they envisioned development plans for their areas.

This resulted in fairly clear impacts:

- In SPS, GSS and FES panchayats, plans were 100% NRM-friendly. Each activity was identified on a watershed basis, detailed baseline surveys were carried out and proper micro plans made on their basis.
- HARD influenced the direction of panchayat planning so that it became more NRM-centred. As a result of its efforts, 46% of the value of sanctioned works and 34% of the value of implemented works was focussed on NRM activities. Before their work, the shares were 36% and 11% respectively.
- For Sambhav, the share of NRM works in sanctioned activities was 42% which rose to 70%. In terms of value of work implemented, the share rose from 45% before intervention to 65% after their work
- Niswarth's efforts resulted in remarkable increases in the NRM component of works adopted by panchayats. NRM works were non-existent in the value of either sanctioned or implemented works and their share rose to 40% and 55% respectively.



The Nisawrth team involved in technical surveys along with the village community



Work on an earthen dam designed with support from Gram Sudhar Samiti in progress in Sidhi

Gram Sudhar Samiti, FES, SPS and Nisawrth also prepared detailed action plans for their panchayats. The total value of these plans is nearly Rs.15 crores. The plans were made after detailed PRA exercises, intensive village meetings and orientation of GP office-bearers towards utilizing the NREGA funds for such activities, technical surveys for understanding the topography and soil conditions and so on. In each of these locations, teams of the partner organizations joined hands with the gram panchayat to create plans, to have them ratified by the gram sabha and begin their implementation, albeit in varying degrees. Presented below are highlights of the plans prepared for these locations:

Gram Sudhar Samiti

Gram Sudhar Samiti prepared plans for 18 villages of 7 Gram Panchayats in the Kusmi and Sihawal blocks of Sidhi districts. The total value of the plans was Rs.1.42 crores

	Item	Units/ area	Amount Planned (Rs. Lakhs)	Amount Spent (Rs. Lakhs)
1	Pond construction	25	57.96	57.96
2	Earthen dams	7	15.63	15.63
3	Stop dams	10	31.35	31.35
4	Naala deepening	11	11.87	11.87
5	Pond deepening	4	5.11	5.11
6	Earthen check dams	29	7.8	7.8
7	Farm bunding	115 ha	13.05	13.05
Total			142.77	142.77



Water fills up after the monsoon in these earthen water harvesting structures built with the support of Gram Sudhar Samiti



Foundation for Ecological Security

Plans were prepared for 10 Gram Panchayats of the Niwas block of Mandla district. The total value of these plans is Rs.2.60 crores. The table below gives details of the plan:

	Panchayat	Village/ Panchayat	Activity	No/ Area in Ha	Estimated Cost	
1	Pathadevgaon	Pathadevgaon	Field bunding	33.4ha	276343	
2		Karondi	Stop dam	2	500000	
			Pond deepening	1	50000	
			Field bunding	16ha	256000	
			Desiltation of Dam	2	60000	
3	Harisinghori	Kusmi	Field bunding	27.21ha	226834	
			Dug well	6	810000	
4		Harisinghori	Field bunding	32.5ha	260000	
		Dug well	25	3375000		
		Horticulture	16ha	320000		
5	Jhurki	Jhurki	Field bunding	18.29ha	152039	
6	Bastari	Bastara	Field bunding	9.11ha	75165	
7		Bastari	Field bunding	21.28ha	174804	
8		Rausar	Field bunding	49.14ha	401087	
9		Umaria	Field Bunding	3.5ha	28000	
			Dug well	3	405000	
		Land levelling	1	4000		
10	Jangaliya	Jangaliya	Field bunding	30ha	240000	
			Pond	2	100000	
			Dug well	16	2160000	
			Land levelling	3ha	24000	
11	Mohpani	Mohpani	Field bunding	28.5ha	228000	
			Pond	3	150000	
			Farm Pond	2	64000	
			Dug well	17	2295000	
			Land levelling	2ha	16000	
			Horticulture	2ha	40000	
			Stone fencing	3ha	24000	
12	Gajjudeori	Khaddeori	Field bunding	8ha	64000	
			Dug well	7	945000	
			Land levelling	1ha	8000	
13			Gajjudeori	Field bunding	8ha	64000
			Dug well	5	675000	
14			Bishanpura	Field bunding	3ha	24000
			Dug well	2	270000	
15			Katangseoni	Horticulture	2ha	40000
			Field bunding	49.21	402797	
			Check dam	2	400000	
16	Katangseoni	Bhardwara Maal	Field bunding	5ha	40000	
			Dug well	2	270000	
			Land levelling	2ha	16000	
17			Bhardwara Ryt	Field bunding	7ha	56000
18			Mawai Ryt	Field bunding	20ha	160000
			Dug well	10	1350000	
			Stone fencing	2ha	16000	
			Check dam	1	200000	
19			Mawai Maal	Field bunding	15ha	120000
			Dug well	5	675000	
		Stone fencing	2ha	16000		
		Horticulture	1ha	20000		
20		Padarpani	Field bunding	14ha	112000	
		Dug well	2	270000		
		Stone fencing	3ha	24000		

	Panchayat	Village/ Panchayat	Activity	No/ Area in Ha	Estimated Cost	
21	Singhpur	Singhpur	Field bunding	20ha	160000	
			Dug well	14	1890000	
			Land levelling	7ha	56000	
			Plantation	1ha	20000	
			Horticulture	1ha	20000	
			Farm Pond	1	32000	
			Gully check	5nos	25000	
			Check dam	1 no	200000	
			Pond	1	50000	
22			Khudri	Khudri	Field bunding	6ha
	Dug well	7			945000	
	Farm Pond	1			32000	
	Horticulture	2			40000	
	Stone fencing	1ha			8000	
	Land levelling	1ha			8000	
	Samaiya	Stop Dam			2	500000
23	Samaiya	Samaiya			Pond deepening	1
			Pond	2	100000	
24			Thanamgaon	Thanamgaon	Land levelling	2ha
	Dug well	12			1620000	
	Field bunding	28ha			224000	
25	Redum	Redum	Field bunding	18ha	144000	
			Dug well	2	270000	
26	Malhari	Malhari	Field bunding	28.36	236032	
			Dug well	3	405000	
	Grand Total				26052101	

Niswarth

Detailed plans were prepared for 6 gram panchayats of the Baderwas block of Shivpuri district. The cost of these plans was estimated at Rs.5.84 crores. The storage capacity of the water harvesting structures is estimated at over 7 lakh cums. The highlights of these plans are as under:

	Activity/ Work	Total Number	Cost (Rs.)	Capacity Cu. Mtrs
1	Earthen Chek Dam	62	23056340	558000
2	Gully Plug - 4 Mtrs Length	270	2160000	3831
	Gully Plug - 6 Mtrs Length	300	3210000	5676
	Gully Plug - 8 Mtrs Length	165	2343000	4135
3	Dugwell	120	23940000	
4	Farm Bund - Bigha	750	4060800	
5	Farm Pond - 80 Mtrs Length	90	4401000	46530
	Farm Pond - 120 Mtrs Length	60	3660000	46530
6	Plantation	30000	750000	
7	New Pond	1	1261600	67500
8	Check dam/ Cause Way	1	266100	
	Total		58474890	732202

Samaj Pragati Sahayog

Samaj Pragati Sahayog prepared plans worth Rs.5.08 crores for 10 panchayats of Bagli block in Dewas district. These plans are to be implemented over the next five years. Already, an expenditure of Rs.71 lakhs has been made. Highlights of the plan prepared and implemented are as follows:

	Unit	Proposed		Achieved	
		No. of Units	Cost (Rs.)		
Land Improvement and Soil Conservation					
Contour Trench	Hac.	160	1230635	0	0
Contour Bund	Hac.	585	3630934	2.5	12450
Boulder Check 7 m	No.	715	442123	0	0
Boulder Check 12 m	No.	735	562050	15	14355
Farm Bunding	Hac.	1780	10167820	514	3729185
Composting/Biogas	No.	378	1934326	143	582021
Water Harvesting					0
Stop Dam New	No.	9	6182191	0	0
Stop Dam Repair	No.	3	832096	0	0
Earthen Bund Repair	No.	4	1572010	0	0
Earthen Bund New	No.	50	13097248	5	1105969
Farm Ponds	No.	56	2730918	12	758547
Afforestation, Plantation and Horticulture					0
Ratanjot	No.	336500	2251943	264853	378094
Horticulture	No.	14800	2899269	3996	425895
Others	No.	51600	644407	9760	48798
Agricultural Improvement	Lumpsum	0	425000	0	20944
Vegetable farming	Lumpsum	0	95000	0	0
Fodder Development					0
Grass plantation on bunds and field bunds	Lumpsum	80000	465000	0	29660
Fodder plot development on common land	Lumpsum	100000	700000	0	0
Irrigated and unirrigated varieties of fodder on private lands	Lumpsum	170000	1035000	0	15470
Total		0	50897969		7121388

7.3.5 Case Studies

Works are Opened in Badokhra GP, District Shivpuri

Even after 18 months had elapsed since the passage of NREGA, only one road construction had started in this panchayat. Although the perspective plan for the panchayat for the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 had approved 20 works amounting to Rs.1 crore. Sahariya adivasis of the panchayat had no option but to migrate in distress twice in in 12 months, once in during July-August and then during May-June.

In this situation, Niswarth decided to mobilize work demand among the village people and they started working in this direction from October 2007. The campaign covered not only Badokhra but also the Geedkheda, Hatnapur and Semri Buzurg Panchayats. A collective application on behalf of 250 job card holders was submitted and the pressure resulted in sanction and implementation of works such as pond construction, rural roads and dugwells. Worksite facilities such as drinking water and shades were provided on all work sites.

However, the problems did not end here. The 8 families for whom dugwells were sanctioned had to face long delays in payment of their wages. Despite several attempts, The

sarpanch, a *dalit*, made several attempts to get the requisite funds from the Janpad Panchayat, but failed. He was told repeatedly by the Janpad officials that unless valuation takes place, funds cannot be released.

In this context, the film team from SPS arrived to shoot for a film that they were making on NREGA. The sarpanch gave an interview which was recorded on camera, detailing his problems in making timely wage payments. This news travelled to the Janpad panchayat *via* the panchayat secretary. The Janpad immediately ordered wage payments worth Rs.2.5 lakhs! What is important however, is that this did not remain a one-off affair. A precedent was set through this incident whereby all wage payments in the panchayat after that have been made on time. What this incident also illustrates is that with a powerful law backing the entitlements of the poor, if there is a sufficient pressure exerted on the implementation structure and the possibility of punitive action is perceived by those responsible for implementing, good results will follow.

The Chief Minister Intervenes

Dhaurra Gram Panchayat, Tikamgarh

In the Dhaurra GP of Prithvipur Block, Tikamgarh district, a stop dam was built under NREGA. However, 28 workers were not paid for work done by them. The aggrieved workers brought this to the notice of Sambhav field activist, Rameshwar Prasad. It was decided that SHG women will get together and write a joint petition on this issue to the District Collector. The petition was drafted out and sent to the Collector and a copy was sent by registered post to the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. The CM ordered an immediate enquiry by the Vigilance Committee, which was carried out and on the basis of the report of the committee, payments were made to the workers and action initiated against the panchayat secretary and sarpanch.

In Urdaura village of Banyani GP in Prithvipur Block, Tikamgarh district, 55 wage seekers were granted work by the forest department under NREGA. However, after 5 days, the work was suddenly stopped and the job cards were held by the department functionaries. Repeated entreaties with them did not yield any result. The wage-seekers filed a complaint with the Collector, who immediately issued orders for payment of wages and release of job cards.

Medhatal Gram Panchayat, Mandla

Workers in the Ratanpur, Shahpur and Bundelakhoh villages of Medhatal GP of Bichiya Block of Mandla District had not been paid their wages for NREA work even after the passage of 18 long months. These wage seekers petitioned the Gram Panchayat and the Janpad Panchayat but to no avail. In the meantime, the Chief Minister of MP arrived in Bichiya to preside over a community wedding programme. The people of these villages decided that they will present a petition to the CM. They came to the CM's programme with a banner on which they had written their demands. However, the local police stopped them from unfolding the banner in the presence of the CM. When the people insisted that they will, the CEO Janpad apologized to the people for the delay in payments and these payments were made within three days.

Leveraging NREGA for Drought-proofing in Bagli Tehsil



Even in a drought year the tribal farmers of the drylands in Bagli Tehsil, Dewas district (MP) are not worried.

The farm ponds constructed under NREGA on their fields with support from Samaj Pragati Sahayog would be able to provide protective irrigation for the kharif crop.





Reshambai, is one of the 2 families from Agra village, Bagli Tehsil, who have finally managed to come back to their village after 12 years serving as bonded labourers. Construction of earthen dams on their farms under NREGA, planned and implemented with SPS support, has not only provided them employment but has rejuvenated their once unproductive land. They are hoping to not only give protective irrigation to their kharif crops but also go for a second crop.



Earthen dams constructed on or near farmlands (*such as the ones above planned and implemented with SPS support*) not only generate employment, but they also drought-proof the village by recharging ground water, reviving nalas and wells downstream. The water in the dams provides possibility of direct irrigation for farmers, opening the prospect of second crops.

As part of the SPS action plans under NREGA, 132 km of farm bunds were constructed under NREGA in the villages of Agra, Borkhalia, Koutyapani, Patpari, Kardi, Dharditalab, Raisingpura and Imlipura. Apart from providing 4400 person-days of employment, these simple earthen structures will help in arresting tonnes of fertile topsoil erosion. Many plots of wastelands can be brought under cultivation by the construction of these earthen bunds.



7.4 Samaj Pragati Sahayog as a Support Agency

Apart from working on direct implementation, Samaj Pragati Sahayog has also played the role of support agency, extending capacity building and field support to partners, while also playing the role of advocacy with the government. Some highlights of each of these roles is presented below.

7.4.1. Capacity Building

The table below gives detailed of the more important training programmes held in the context of NREGA at the Baba Amte Centre for People's Empowerment (BACPE), Samaj Pragati Sahayog.

No	Period	Theme	Target Group	Persons	Days	Person-days
1	26/9/07 to 29/9/07	Exposure on watershed development for development professionals	Pradan professionals and village level activists	14	4	56
2	3/10/07 to 7/10/07	Exposure on watershed development for development professionals	Pradan professionals and village level activists	25	5	125
3	4/10/07 to 7/10/07	Exposure on watershed development in the context of NREGA	Farmers of Khandwa	16	3	48
4	November 26 to December 15	Basic Training Course on Watershed Development in the context of NREGA	National Consortium on NREGA CSO partners from Gujarat, Rajasthan, Orissa	28	20	560
5	December 17, 2007 to 26 December 2007	Special Training Course on Watershed Development in the Context of NREGA	National Consortium on NREGA CSO partners of Madhya Pradesh, Chhatisgarh and Orissa	41	10	410
6	3-4 February 2008	Orientation on Integration of NRM Work in NREGA for Foundation for Ecological Security	PRI members from Mandla district, MP	32	2	64
7	5-6 February 2008	Orientation on Integration of NRM Work in NREGA for Niswarth Samiti	PRI members from Shivpuri district, MP	27	2	54
8	12-13 February 2008	Orientation on Integration of NRM Work in NREGA for Vardan Samajik Sanstha	PRI members from Rajnandgaon district, Chhatisgarh	29	2	58
9	23-24 February 2008	Orientation on Integration of NRM Work in NREGA for Sarguja Grameen Vikas Sanstha	PRI members from Sarguja district, Chhatisgarh	36	2	72
10	27-28 February 2008	Orientation on Integration of NRM Work in NREGA for Lokshakti Samiti	PRI members from Jashpur district, Chhatisgarh	30	2	60
11	20/10-26/10/2008	Orientation on Watershed Development	Social Activists from various states	14	7	98
12	18/12-19/12/2008	NREGA: Strategies and Work Done	Partner Organisations of the National Consortium on NREGA in Gujarat, MP and Chhatisgarh	23	2	46

No	Period	Theme	Target Group	Persons	Days	Person-days
13	5/1-14/1/2009	Watershed Management in the Context of NREGA	Social Activists of Anandi Gujarat	33	10	330
14	28/1-30/1/2009	Exposure, Watershed	Social Activists from various states	19	3	57
15	4/2-6/2/2009	Exposure, Watershed	Social Activists from various states	20	3	60
16	6/2-7/2/2009	Exposure, Watershed	Social Activists from various states	16	2	32
17	12/2-15/2/2009	Exposure, Watershed	Social Activists from various states	20	4	80
18	26/2-28/2/2009	Exposure, Watershed	Social Activists from various states	30	3	90
19	2/3-4/3/2009	Exposure, Watershed	Partners from Andhra Pradesh of National Consortium on NREGA	8	3	24
20	20/3/09 to 29/3/09	NREGA and the Water Problem	Social Activists of Partners of the National Consortium on NREGA from UP, Bihar and Jharkhand	21	10	210
21	02/05/09 to 6/5/09	Specialized Training Course on Significance of Hydrogeology in Watershed Development in the Context of NREGA	Partners of the National Consortium on NREGA from Rajasthan, Gujarat, UP, MP and Chhattisgarh	27	5	135
				509	104	2669

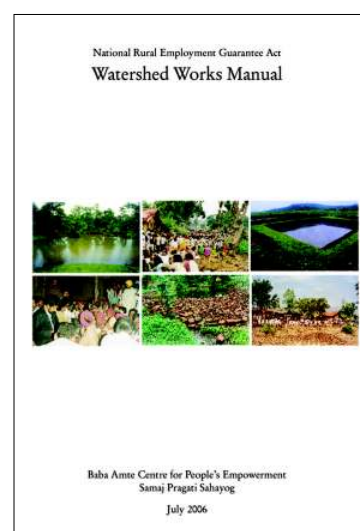
As the table above shows, 2,669 person-days of training and exposure have been logged by SPS since September 2007, whose beneficiaries have been 509 persons. The aim of these training programmes is to explain the provisions and guidelines of the Act. Simultaneously, they seek to empower trainees to understand the social and technical intricacies of watershed conservation and development which are the main focus of works to be taken up under the NREGA. The idea is that armed with this understanding, these trainers will both help implementing agencies in better implementation of NREGA works and, acting as master trainers, further empower local leadership to do the same.

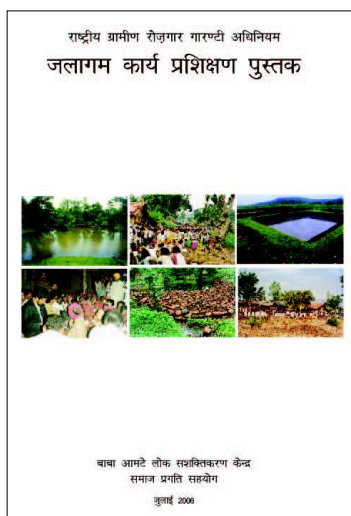
7.4.2 Training Manuals on NREGA

A key role of the BACPE has been to constantly prepare high quality training material on watershed development. At the specific request of the Ministry of Rural Development, GoI, in 2006, SPS prepared:

- A 308-page fully illustrated training manual on NREGA and Watershed works in Hindi
- A 320-page fully illustrated training manual on NREGA and Watershed works in English

This manual is meant for those individuals and organisations who will be involved in planning, implementing and/or monitoring NREGA. These can be PRI representatives, grass-roots NGOs or government officials engaged with this process at different levels. The manual is





focused on earthen water harvesting structures that will be built under NREGA. These are likely to form the bulk of the work done under the scheme.

- 10,000 copies of the manual were specially printed at the request of the Government of Chhatisgarh. These manuals were distributed to all gram panchayats in the state
- Another 1100 copies of the manual were requested by the Government of Bihar for distribution to various officials.

The manuals on NREGA published by SPS in 2006 have been a huge success. The Ministry of Rural Development, GoI felt that they should be further popularised and disseminated at the grassroots level. A simple and effective way of doing this would be the publication of smaller booklets based on chapters of the manual. While the manual would serve as a desk reference, these booklets would be an

indispensable part of a handy field kit. Given their smaller size and lighter weight, it would be possible to carry the field booklets around in shoulder bags by field activists and PRI leaders involved in planning and execution of NRM related works in the context of NREGA. This would give a major boost to much wider acceptance of the manual and would aid in proper planning and implementation of works under NREGA. Publication of 1,000 copies each of the first 16 chapters of the Hindi and English manuals as separate field booklets has been completed.

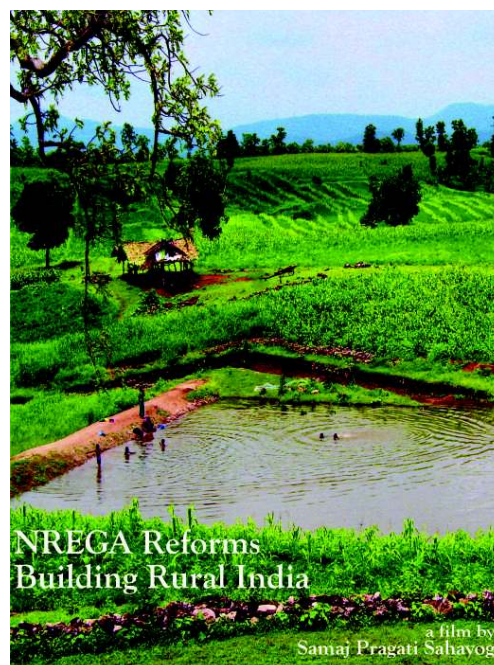
7.4.3 Films

On NREGA

Samaj Pragati Sahayog has made a film on NREGA in both Hindi (*Rozgaar Gaarantee: Nayi Azaadi Ki Or?*) and English (NREGA Reforms: Building Rural India).

This 56 minute film traces the historical roots of NREGA to the Great Depression of the 1920s. It brings to you myriad voices of the people of India's remote rural hinterlands who speak of the distress that led to the enactment of NREGA, the problems facing the implementation of the program and their efforts to make it a success on the ground.

Implemented well, the NREGA can regenerate the environment and create millions of sustainable livelihoods, thereby kick-starting a stagnant rural economy. The film provides powerful visual evidence of the enormous potential of NREGA and outlines the reforms required to help realize this potential.



On Watershed Development in the Context of NREGA

SPS has made 5 training films (in both Hindi and English) based on the training manuals. This set of 5 films describes very simple, low-cost methods to address the problem of water — methods that can easily be used by local people, utilising locally available natural resources. The films demystify the seemingly complex technical details of location, design and construction of watershed structures. They illustrate the creativity and meticulousness involved in fine-tuning interventions to match the immense diversity of nature.

One of the films “Earthen Dams” won the Magna Mater Award at the 25th International Agrofilm Festival in Slovakia in October 2008. This is the highest award given to the best film of the festival across all categories. In addition, the film “Earthen Dams” was also nominated in the competitive section of Eko Films (34th International Film Festival on the Environment and Natural and Cultural Heritage of the Czech



Republic), the film “Ridge Area Treatment” was nominated in the competitive section of CineEco (14th International Environmental Film Festival, Portugal) and the film “On Farm Interventions” has been nominated in the competitive section of Wildlife Vaasa 2008 (International Nature Film Festival, Finland).



7.4.4 Research and Advocacy

- SPS has been involved in advocacy for NREGA through several research papers and articles in newspapers and journals.
- SPS has also been actively participating in meetings and workshops at the state and national level in which it has advocated for changes in NREGA based on the field experiences of the consortium partners.

- At the specific request of the GoMP, SPS prepared a note for reforms and professionalisation of the MPREGS implementation structure. Parts of Chapter 9 of this report draw from this note.
- SPS has also prepared a draft guidelines for a CAPART NREGA scheme which can be used to upscale the involvement of CSOs in NREGA implementation in different ways

The following table highlights the articles and papers written by SPS resource persons on NREGA and published in the country's premier newspapers and journals:

Date	Title	Author	Newspaper/ Journal/ Book
24/8/04	A Workable Right to Employment	Mihir Shah	The Hindu (leader page)
11/12/04	NREGA: A Historic Opportunity	Mihir Shah	Economic and Political Weekly
12/2/05	Saving the Employment Guarantee Act	Mihir Shah	Economic and Political Weekly
10/8/05	Employment Guarantee—MPs Lead the Way	Mihir Shah	The Hindu (Op-Ed page)
29/4/06	Revising the Schedule of Rates: An Imperative for NREGA	P.S. Vijay Shankar, Rangu Rao, Nivedita Banerji and Mihir Shah	Economic and Political Weekly
10/5/06	Delivering on Employment Guarantee	Mihir Shah	The Hindu (leader page)
17/11/07	Employment Guarantee, Civil Society and Indian Democracy	Mihir Shah	Economic and Political Weekly
23/2/08	Two Years of NREGA: The Road Ahead	P. Ambasta, P.S. Vijay Shankar and Mihir Shah	Economic and Political Weekly
14/3/2008	Governance Reform Key to NREGA Success	Mihir Shah	The Hindu (leader page)
22/5/08	The Real Radicalism of NREGA	Mihir Shah	The Hindu (leader page)
7/6/08	Radicalism of NREGA	Mihir Shah	Economic and Political Weekly
8/9/08	NREGA: Andhra Pradesh shows the way	Mihir Shah and Pramathesh Ambasta	The Hindu (leader page)
30/4/09	Multiplier Accelerator Synergy in NREGA	Mihir Shah	The Hindu (leader page)

7.4.5 The Website and E-Group of the Consortium

SPS has designed and put up a website for the National Consortium on NREGA at <http://www.nregaconsortium.in>. The website is available in English and Hindi. Further development in additional Indian languages will be driven by partner initiatives. The website is seen as a collaborative effort of consortium partners by consortium partners.



The ideas behind the website have been to:

- provide a platform for consortium partners to exchange ideas, share experiences and resources which can have significant learning benefits for each partner's work

- to provide a layer of visibility to the Consortium's efforts as its partners struggle in their field areas with making NREGA better.

The website has a section detailing out partner locations across the country. Its Resources section hosts several manuals, papers and articles on NREGA in electronic format for download. Its News section is aimed at sharing partner experiences. The idea is to develop this section further based on contributions from partners.

The consortium also has an e-group (<http://groups.google.co.in/group/nrega-consortium>) where much of the experience sharing and discussions take place. This is presently a group whose membership is restricted to partners. This allows consortium partners a needed space to discuss strategy, debate issues and share experiences before they are articulated to the rest of the world.

7.4.6 National Coordination

Another role played by SPS has been coordination of the Consortium at the national level. This has involved:

- ensuring that the consortium annual meetings take place and also that discussions are structured and focussed. The Consortium has held two annual meetings thus far.
- Bringing more and more partners into the consortium fold by expanding the consortium approach to prospective civil society partners and prospective funding partners. In the coming future this will also entail taking the initiative in setting up of regional consortia
- Act as a bridge between implementing and funding partners so that problems and issues arising between them are sorted out while maintaining best practices.
- preparing formats in collaboration with partners for the preparation of reports of the Consortium.
- Preparing the annual reports on the Consortium's work. This report, which is the first annual report of the Consortium, has been prepared by SPS based on inputs and feedback from its partners

EIGHT

RAJASTHAN



District-wise spread of Consortium partners in Rajasthan

8.1 The Jaisamand Consortium

8.1.1 Background

Jaisamand Lake (earlier known as Dhebar Lake) is a water structure situated in Udaipur-Banswada road and around 52 kms from Udaipur town in Rajasthan. The lake was constructed during 1711-30 AD in the regime of Maharana Jai Singh Ji of Mewar in whose memory the lake has been named. It was the largest artificial lake of the country for quite some time. The purpose of construction of this lake was to provide facilities for regeneration and preservation of wildlife. Till 1954 no attempt was made to use the water for irrigation purposes. The gross catchment area of this lake is 1813 sq. km. out of which 160.06 Sq. Km is intercepted by small tanks. The gross capacity of lake is 568.18 mcum out of which only 172.84 mcum is live. The average actual yield received in the lake over the period 1959 to 1978 is of the order of 162.4 mcum.

During 1954 to 1961 a canal system was constructed to serve a culturable command area of 16,433 ha. There are two main canals i.e. one each on the left and right banks, which together command a gross area of 27,374 ha. The culturable command area and irrigable area of the existing canal system is 16,633 ha and 8,369 ha respectively. The maximum irrigation done so far is 13,249.6 ha in the year 1978-79.

However, after the drought of 1986-87, and the drying up of lakes in Udaipur, a plan was made to transfer water to Udaipur City from Jaisamand Lake. This led to a heightened consciousness among people in the Jaisamand area (both catchment and command). A plan was made for revival of the catchment area by concerned NGOs and activists of the region. But this plan never saw the light of day.

8.1.2 Characteristics of the Region

Drought is a normal feature of Rajasthan. In the southern region context its intensity is once in three years, though this is valid only when long term rainfall data is considered. During the last 15-20 years, more than half the period was affected by drought, with drought being continuous between 1998-2004. To make matters worse, as it were, on the one hand towns require more and more water, on the other, existing irrigated areas are under pressure. Irrigation water to Sarada Block of Udaipur District, which is a part of the Jaisamand command area, was affected because of the drought and supply of drinking water to Udaipur from Jaisamand Lake. The situation in the catchment areas is even more precarious. Over the years a steady decline in the water tables has been observed. This is resulting in the decline not only of the *rabi* crop but *kharif* as well. This further affected the fodder availability in the region. The instances of fodder purchases have increased. In some villages even water has to be purchased for household needs. Despite the financially tight scenario, the middle peasantry has gone in for well-deepening, with some of them even taking loans for this purpose.

The unkindest cut comes when moneylenders refuse to provide loans to farmers without mortgaging their land or jewellery. Since this is a common phenomenon across the state, we need to work towards evolving a sustainable strategy to tackle the situation.

8.1.3 The Jaisamand Initiative

SPWD started working in Jaisamand catchment area since the nineties with its partner organizations Prayatana Samiti (PS) and Hanuman Van Vikas Samiti (HVVS). Initially the work centred around Joint Forest Management, pasture development and then slowly moved towards watershed development. Subsequently a study on small water harvesting structures was done, which attempted to establish the link between the watersheds and the basin level data. This formed the basis for discussions among civil society institutions and CBOs about the need for looking at various aspects of natural resource management at the basin and sub basin level in order to bring in synergy in the efforts of various NGOs, activists and CBOs. A few villages were selected outside the Jhamri basin but within the Jaisamand Catchment area, that would bring to bear the different types of land use conditions within the basin (the sand mining area and the forest area). These organizations were later joined by Samarthak Samiti, an organization which facilitates marketing of NTFPs.

Land Use	Watershed Atlas	Census Data Jaisamand	Census Data Jhamri	Census Data villages selected for work on GP
Total Area	1,63,000 ha 37 macros 257 micros	1,80.974 has	63,337 has	35,069 has
Cultivated Land	36,660 has			4,831has 14%
Irrigated		11,209 has (6.1 %)	4,515 has (7.13%)	1,425has (4.07%)
Unirrigated		28,946 has (15.99 %)	8116 (12.81%)	3,406has (9.71%)
Forest	31,125 (19%)	28,494 (15.74%)	10,412 (16.44%)	8,187has (23.45%)
Culturable waste		45,353 (25.06%)	12,790 (20.21)	5,596has (15.96%)
Not available for Cultivation		66,963 (37.0%)	27,476 (43.41%)	16,456has (46.92%)

As the table shows, only 19.94% of Jhamri river basin is cultivated (21.85 % for Jaisamand Catchment area). Under the area shown as not available for cultivation a large part of it is either private pasturelands or encroached private pasturelands. Some clarity will be available once the survey and other information is analysed.

8.1.4 The Partner Organizations

Prayatana Samiti (PS) has been active since 1989 in 60 villages of 18 Gram Panchayats of the Girwa, Bhinder and Salumber Tehsils of Udaipur District, Rajasthan. The Samiti has organised 240 men and women SHGs with a total saving of around Rs. 50 lakhs (these are now organised in clusters and the plan is to later federate them). PS is also working on various aspects of natural resource management like pastureland development, improvement of agricultural productivity, vermicomposting and collection of NTFP. It has also organised the local community for collective purchases of buffaloes, goats, foodgrains and fodder. Prayatn Samiti believes that people have the power and strength to change their lives. They need to be organized in order to give themselves a voice.

Hanuman Van Vikas Samiti (HVVS) began its work in 1984 in Kargate village of Girwa Tehsil. At that time, the Samiti observed that the forest land adjacent to the village was under the control of the richer groups of the village and they were cutting trees from the forest and selling the wood. The tribals in the village felt that if this tree-felling goes on unabated, it will seriously undermine their livelihood base. They got together and formed a Van Suraksha Samiti and with the efforts of this Samiti, the illegal felling of trees was stopped. The Samiti was registered and formed into the HVVS. The organization has organised around 208 women's SHGs (also organised in clusters with the plan of forming a federation). The total saving is around one crore 35 lakhs. HVVS has also organised a Jan Sangharsh Manch with 35 CBOs to take up issues like child rights to education, pollution in the upper catchment of Jhamri due to the tailing dam of Jhamar Kotra Mines, issue of right wage and payment for wage labour work undertaken under NREGA, mining etc. Apart from this HVVS, has worked on various issues of natural resource management like pastureland development, watershed development, vermicomposting and Joint Forest management.

Jagran Jan Vikas Samiti (JJVS) have been working in Jaisamand catchment for the last 23 years. The major work in the catchment has been on reviving the traditional health practises as practised by the *Gunis* (traditional medicinal men), watershed development work and agitation against polluting factories in the upper catchment area of Jaisamand. Jhamri Bachao Andolan comprising members of 40 villages has been created to give shape to the agitation relating to pollution and revival of the Jhamri river. The work of reviving traditional health practises and health practitioners is spread in the 8 states of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand. JJVS has also developed Gram Kosh in every village and is exploring the possibility of federating them. The total saving is about Rs 25 lakhs. JJVS has organised 125 SHGs in Jaisamand Catchment with a total saving of 18 lakhs.

Samarthak Samiti is a resource agency for the Jaisamand Consortium, with expertise in the collection and marketing of NTFPs. Its work area is spread mainly in Udaipur Division comprising of Udaipur, Dungarpur, Banswara, and Chittaurgarh. Samarthak also has a presence in Sirohi and Jhalawar. Samarthak Samiti works through its partner organizations in terms of the collection of NTFPs. These are marketed centrally, to get economies of scale.

The entire effort is being coordinated by the Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, a national organisation, working in 12 States on issues related to Natural Resource Management in different agroclimatic and thematic areas. SPWD is providing backstopping support to the four organizations on various aspects of Natural Resource Management.

8.1.5 Selected Panchayats and Villages

The following are the panchayats and villages selected by the partners for their work on NREGA:

Partner	District	Block	Gram Panchayat	Village
Prayathn Samiti	Udaipur	Girwa	Fila	1. Fila 2. Hathido 3. Jamun 4. Ratanpura
Jagran Jan Vikas Samiti	Udaipur	Girwa	Vali	1. Vali 2. Vela 3. Khedi
Hanuman Van Vikas Samiti	Udaipur	Girwa	Bhalo Ka Guda	1. Bhalo Ka Guda 2. Chhota Guda 3. Bhaikda 4. Kargate

The villages and panchayats were chosen broadly on the following criteria:

- They belong to the Jaisamand catchment
- there is a need for and possibility of working on NREGA and integrating natural resources into these works

8.1.6 Profile of Selected Villages

The average annual rainfall of all villages is only 425mm. The following table gives organization-wise details of average annual rainfall.

Organization's Operational Area	Average Annual Rainfall (mm)
Hanuman Van Vikas Samiti	400
Jagran Jan Vikas Samiti	525
Prayatn Samiti	350
All	425

The Net Sown Area of all 11 villages put together is 1537 ha. This means that on an average, the NSA per village is 140 ha. The total population being supported by this land is 13,962 persons.

Gross Irrigated Area as a percentage of Gross Sown Area is about 57%. The major source of irrigation is dug wells, followed by canals. However, this must be counter-balanced by the fact (as stated earlier) that all areas in the Jaisamand catchment and the Jhamri basin are under severe pressure of drought and thus, the irrigation sources are under threat, especially given the demands of urban settlements for water which has to be diverted from the lake.

The villages are largely dominated by Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes. In the villages where HVVS is working, ST population forms 36% of the population, and OBCs 47%. In the JJVS villages, STs are 59% of the population and OBCs 31% while in the project area of Prayatn Samiti, STs form 45% of the population and OBCs 52%.

8.1.7 Work Done and Major Achievements

Job Cards

The first task of all partners was to create awareness around the issue of registration of workers and grant of job cards to ensure that all households are covered. The table below shows the results of these efforts:

	HVVS	JJVS	PS	All
Job Card Applications (Before)	970	785	743	2498
Job Card Applications (After)	994	1115	850	2959
Change	24	330	107	461
%	2%	42%	14%	18%
Job Cards Received (Before)	735	785	743	2263
Job Cards Received (After)	994	1115	850	2959
Change	259	330	107	696
%	35%	42%	14%	30%

In the case of HVVS, while job card applications were very high before interventions, the number of job cards received was far below these applications. The organization stepped up the campaign for obtaining job cards with tangible results.

- In the case of other organizations, the job card applications themselves had to be increased and then steps taken to ensure that the applications resulted in job cards being issued. The most remarkable result in this direction was that of JJVS, where both job card applications and job cards received went up by 42%.
- Overall, there was an 18% rise in job card applications and 30% rise in job cards received.

Work Demand, Sanctioned and Implemented

- Relentless awareness campaigns with the village community to make them aware of their right to work and to organize them so that they ask for work resulted in a rise in work applications by a factor of 2.74.
- Particularly important were efforts in this regard made in the villages covered by HVVS and Prayatn Samiti. In both, there was no work demand before interventions. As a result of their interventions, in HVVS villages 685 fresh work applications were registered and in Prayatn Samiti villages 350 job applications were created. The table below sheds light on this:

	HVVS	JJVS	PS	All
Work Applications Before	0	785	0	785
Work Applications After	685	1115	350	2150
Increase Factor (After: Before)	685	1.42	350	2.74

- In all villages and panchayats there was a dramatic rise in works sanctioned and implemented rose dramatically.
- In all project villages, work worth Rs.4.07 crores was sanctioned under NREGA as a result of efforts of partners. Detailed data are available for HHVS and JJVS villages which are reproduced in the table below. In the areas of both partners sanctioned works amounted to Rs.3.07 crores. To this we add Rs.1 crore worth of micro-plans sanctioned by the Zila Panchayat for the villages covered under Prayatn Samiti.
- In HVVS villages, the number of works sanctioned increased by 133% while those implemented increased by 257%. In JJVS villages, the works sanctioned and implemented registered a 357% and 358% rise respectively.
- In all organizations, the share of NRM-centred works in the work plan registered a rise too. For instance, the share of NRM works in sanctioned works in HVVS villages showed a rise of 63% while those in JJVS villages showed a rise of 383%.
- The share of NRM works in works implemented showed a rise 300% in HVVS villages and 211% in JJVS villages.

HVVS	Before	After	Change	Change %
Sanctioned works (no.)	15	35	20	133
Works started (no.)	7	25	18	257
Sanctioned works (value Rs. Lakhs)	69	99	30	43
Work Done (Value Rs. Lakhs)	30	48	18	60
Share of NRM in Value of Sanctioned Works	40	65	25	63
Share of NRM in Value of Implemented Works	20	80	60	300
JJVS	Before	After	Change	Change %
Sanctioned works (no.)	26	119	93	358
Works started (no.)	14	64	50	357
Sanctioned works (value Rs. Lakhs)	91	208	117	129
Work Done (Value Rs. Lakhs)	45	78	33	73
Share of NRM in Value of Sanctioned Works	12	58	46	383
Share of NRM in Value of Implemented Works	9	28	19	211

The action plans prepared have focussed on land levelling, water harvesting, farm bunding, anicut construction and rural roads. They have been prepared through a process of dialogue and engagement with the village community and have been formally ratified by the gram sabha in each case.

Gram Panchayats	Unit	Bhalo ka Guda		Vali		Phila		TOTAL	
Activities Planned		No. of Units	Cost (Rs.)	No. of Units	Cost (Rs.)	No. of Units	Cost (Rs.)	No. of Units	Cost (Rs.)
Land Improvement and Soil Conservation									
Land Levelling and Farm Bunding	Hac.	375	9610000	310	7810000	340	8410000	1025	25830000
Irrigation Channal Construction	No.	9	5484000	4	881000	2	54000	15	6419000
Water Harvesting									
Stop Dam New	No.	11	3700000	26	7200000	11	3700000	48	14600000
Stop Dam Repair	No.	2	775000					2	775000
Earthen Bund Repair	No.					1	600000	1	600000
Canal Construction/Repair	No.	7	3900000			4	2200000	11	6100000
Well digging, deepening & renovation	No.	4	881000	1	200000	1	200000	6	1281000
Afforestation, Plantation and Horticulture									
Plantation and Common Pasture Development	No.	1	300000	1	300000	3	1400000	5	2000000
Others									
CC / gravel Road Construction		12	7400000	22	8300000	20	10000000	54	25700000
Total			32050000		24691000		26564000	1167	83305000

Constant effort was also made to interface with Gram Panchayat functionaries to ensure that works, whether public or private, were started on time. In addition, JJVS also helped in the preparation of all necessary papers wherever private works were planned. JJVS functionaries constantly made efforts to convince people of their villages that written applications for work should be given and receipt obtained for the same.

Wage Payments

All partners have tried to ensure that wage payments are not only made on time but are also just. Lack of awareness among the people and lack of adequate staff to make necessary measurements etc have been some obstacles in the path of timely wage payments. To rectify the situation, partners have interfaced with the implementation structure, organized training of mates and workers and engaged with the bank account opening process with good results.

For instance, in the villages where Prayatn Samiti is working, the wage rates paid out to workers were initially lower than the minimum wages. When the minimum wage was Rs.73 per day, workers reported getting Rs.55-65 per day. The organization launched a “*Nyari Napti Nyari Rate*” campaign whereby workers and mates were trained on the work site to understand the provisions of the Act and the nuances of the Schedule of Rates so that works were valued properly. This has brought about a change in the situation whereby with a minimum wage of Rs.100, people are reporting getting at least Rs.99 per day for the work done.

Similarly, HVVS observed and followed up 2 cases of delays in payments so as to ensure that they were redressed.

8.1.8 Case Studies

Some cases studies emerging from the ground reflect both the impact that partners work has had on the implementation of the programme and the sort of income generation forward linkages that can emerge from work done under NREGA.

In the Hathida village of Fila Panchayat, where PS is working, NREGA works started in 2005, when the organization was still not active there. At that time, workers were registered on the work site and the mate used to employ people according to his discretion. Once 50 workers found work on the site, he would stop enrolling more workers, even if there were people who needed work. In meetings held in the village, women workers brought up this issue of employment non-availability when it is needed. The organization made people aware of the importance of written applications for work and the fact that in case employment is not provided within a stipulated period of time, they are entitled to receive unemployment allowances. PS also engaged with the panchayat representatives to ensure that work applications were received and work started on time. As a result of these efforts, the habit of submitting work applications became widespread in the village and the formal applications also created pressure on the implementation structure to open works on time

Similarly, in Hathida and Ratanpura villages in the PS area, anicut and road construction works were taken up under NREGA by the government. The works were valued in such a manner that each worker would only be able to get Rs.55-60 per day. This issue was brought up by the women in the organization's sector review meetings. The women decided that they will not accept any payment less than the minimum wages that they were entitled to. When the Panchayat secretary Bhabar Mal came to the village the next time to make payments and informed the women that they would only receive Rs.55-60 for their work, the women expressed their anger and made it clear to him that they will not take these wage payments. They threatened the secretary that they will call the Junior Engineer for revision of measurements made. The women also told him that they would get fresh measurements done by the panchayat in which they would request PS activists to take measurements. Five days later, the secretary came back to take fresh measurements and paid the workers according to proper rates. Since then, a system was set up for timely wage payments in all NREGA works.

In June 2008, road construction work was going on in Ratanpura and in the heat, there was no provision made for workers for shades. PS activists talked to the workers who then pressurised the mate to create facilities for shade and rest on the work site. The mate said that there was no such provision in the Act. When workers talked to the panchayat secretary, he passed the buck onto the PWD. The workers met the Junior Engineer of the PWD who then talked to the panchayat secretary after which shades were provided on the work sites. The secretary further assured the workers that such mistakes would not be repeated in the future.

JJVS built upon the wage opportunities created by NREGA works to also build other activities around it. It organized training of farmers on composting methods and organic farming. It also worked intensively with 185 farmers to improve the feed given to cattle in their villages. The feed given to milch animals earlier was of inadequate quantities and nor was there enough awareness about right types of feed which should be given. JJVS launched a campaign wherein it informed all farmers about the right feed protocol. The main point was that the farmers were unable in the past to procure this feed in the absence of incomes.

NREGA enabled them to do so. As a result milk yields recorded a substantial increase.

8.2 Foundation for Ecological Security, Bhilwara

In Bhilwara, a financial and administrative sanction has been received by FES for a proposal for the development of 567 ha pasture land and for soil and moisture conservation measures to be implemented on 585 hectares of common lands across 23 villages of 10 Panchayats. FES is mandated to assist the Panchayats in effective implementation and governance of their natural resources through better utilization of funds allocated under NREGS. Implementation of this programme has begun in 5 villages in 2 Panchayats in Kareda cluster. The process also involves training and awareness creation within the habitations and the Panchayats with regard to NREGA - the components of the Act, its basic concepts, and responsibilities of different stakeholders, thereby help in building transparency and accountability.

8.2.1 Villages Selected with Panchayats, Block and District

All work is focussed in 17 villages of Mandal and Mandalgarh blocks of Bhilwara district as detailed in the table below

No.	Name of Village	Name of Panchayat
1.	Kangsa ka Badiya	Goverdhanpura
2.	Garwai	Goverdhanpura
3.	Goverdhanpura	Goverdhanpura
4.	Suliya	Goverdhanpura
5.	Gyangarh	Gyangarh
6.	Roopura	Gyangarh
7.	Barundni	Barundni
8.	Bikran	Bikran
9.	Motron ka Kheda	Moton ka Kheda
10.	Ralaita	Ralaita
11.	Amritya	Ladpura
12.	Bharenda	Ladpura
13.	Chaipuriya	Shyamgarh
14.	Tehla	Shyamgarh
15.	Shyamgarh	Shyamgarh
16.	Kekadiya	Sarana
17.	Kalikhoh	Singoli

NREGA is seen as an opportunity to responsibly address the village level perspective planning process, which the team has been facilitating through its interventions in the project villages since 10 years. NREGA is also seen as an effective tool to promote the ecological mandate of FES specifically in the context of its project Panchayats.

On the advice of the District Collector and District Planning Officer Bhilwara, FES submitted a proposal of Rs. 2.54 Crore under NREGA. A detailed technical estimate and technical sanction was also submitted to the Collector, Bhilwara. The Plan includes

- Development of pastureland plots in 567 ha of the total available pastureland and

- Undertaking soil and moisture conservation measures on 585 hectares of common lands spread across 17 villages under 10 Panchayats of the project area.

The plans were made with the active participation of village communities. The detailed plans thus prepared included the:

- Development of leftover commons,
- Undertaking SWC and WHS works within the plots and other locations of village and
- The repair of previous physical works.

A series of deliberations were initiated with the villagers prior to the implementation to provide them training and also for knowledge sharing. The objective was to develop capacities to ensure better planning and implementation of the ongoing NREGA works. Field trainings were also organized on the technical aspects of the work where the community members, mate/work supervisors were explained about the processes involved in the 'Ridge to Valley' perspective of watershed development. Practical onsite sessions were organized to make the participants aware of the procedures of site selection, construction of stone outlets, check dams etc. and also to build an understanding of the group for the monitoring of the implementation works.

8.2.2 Profile of Villages Area Selected

- The average annual rainfall of the villages is 597mm
- Soil is sandy loam and clay-loam.
- The total population is 18,068 of which SC comprise 12% and Sts 13%.
- The Net Sown Area is 981 ha and the Gross Sown Area is 3,123 ha. Gross Irrigated Area is 69% of Gross Sown Area.

8.2.3 Work Done and Major Achievements

- NREGA in the district was initiated in April 2008. At present, FES work is being undertaken in 5 villages of 2 Panchayats in the Karera cluster.
- In villages of Mandalgarh tehsil, where FES has proposed to develop revenue wastelands, forest land and pasture land, the permission for the same is yet to be received from the concerned departments.

Registration of Workers and Job Cards

In each of the five villages where FES initiated the implementation process, job cards were not found with any of the villagers, at the time of initiation. The process of generating job demand through filling of Form 6 has been facilitated. The completed forms have been submitted to the respective Gram Panchayat. This in turn has helped to build pressure on the panchayat and hasten the process of issuing job cards. Consequently, most of the households in the project villages are now in possession of job cards.

Works Identification and Provision

Before the initiation of NREGA in the district, the team's effort was directed largely towards strengthening of the village institutions for collective governance over natural resources

by preparing detailed comprehensive plans for the NREGA proposal, and also to address the perspective plans prepared during FES interventions over the last decade. The community focus has been on development of common lands, and undertaking Soil and Water Conservation and Water Harvesting Structures works within the plots and other locations of village. Work has been provided within 15 days of submission of Form 6.

The planning process has identified and planned work worth Rs.2.53 crores. These have been put into the implementation pipeline and against the budgeted amount, Rs.20.76 lakhs have already been spent on pasture land development.

The table below gives brief highlights of the work planned and done.

Number of Gram Panchayats	13
Number of Villages	31
Total Financial Amount Leveraged (Rs. lakhs)	253.22
Total Expenditure Achieved in lakhs	20.76
Approximate number of beneficiaries	19727
Major Activities Supported	Pasture Land Development
Expenses against Activities (Rs. lakhs)	20.76

Worksite Facilities

Initially when the work was started, worksite facilities like tent for shade, first-aid box for emergency treatment etc. were almost non-existent, though the community themselves made arrangements for drinking water. Persistent follow-up with the Panchayat Samitis helped in ensuring all these facilities although in the initial period some difficulties were encountered in this process.

Wage Payments

Ensuring timely wage payments have been a critical component of the programme. To ensure transparency in the process, separate bank accounts of the individual beneficiaries is mandatory for payments. The FES team has ensured that individual bank accounts for all beneficiaries have been opened. This was a time consuming process and initially delayed the payment by a few weeks. Some difficulty is also faced in streamlining the payment process, since the wage seekers change after every fifteen days.

Interface With Programme Implementation Structure

Encroachment by the neighboring villages and also within the village was a problem in some of the villages. The team facilitated Conflict Resolution Mechanisms by involving the tehsildar, patwari and the community to resolve the conflict related to village boundaries between villages. Program functionaries are helpful but at times delays in payments are caused because of some bottlenecks in the structure.

Ensuring Transparency and Accountability

- Vigilance committees have been constituted at the institutional level, and these committees monitor all the works under progress, ensuring proper record keeping and the timely processing of payments.
- Till date no case of corruption has been identified.
- Records and display boards have been made available on the site for the communities.

- Regular and periodic village level meetings are organized and payments made directly into the account of the beneficiaries. Institutions are also participating actively in the whole process.

Other Specific Interventions

- The team participated in planning and coordinating a 7-day Awareness Generation Program in all Panchayat Samitis of Bhilwara district in collaboration with the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan. This program involved awareness generation regarding the components of the act, its basic concepts, and responsibilities of different stakeholders such as villagers, administration, panchayats, media and other agencies. The team took it as an opportunity for learning and disseminating information and actively participated in the 2 blocks where NREGA has been sanctioned to FES by the district administration.
- Panchayat members were involved during the village and federation meetings, *chetna yatra* and training programmes which helped in generating awareness of Panchayat members on the Act and its overall implementation process.
- Women have been actively participating in village, federation and onsite meetings. They constitute a major work force during the implementation process.

8.3 Foundation for Ecological Security, Pratapgarh

Since this region is the origin of the Mahi and the Chambal rivers, there are great possibilities of working under NREGA on improving the natural resources of the areas which have been degraded over years of neglect and over-extraction. FES is working towards eco-restoration through NREGS. The team here is availing the opportunity to leverage NREGS by getting the village perspective plans accepted in the Panchayat shelf of activities.

A sum of Rs. 2.85 million was leveraged through NREGS by linking the Perspective Plans prepared by village institutions with the NREGS plan of the Panchayat. In addition, the Gram Panchayat of Kerwas passed a resolution in the Panchayat meeting recognizing seven village institutions acting as Vigilance Committees for monitoring the ongoing NREGS activities.

8.3.1 Profile of the Area

With the declaration by the Chief Minister, Rajasthan in the budget session on March 09, 2007 and with the gazette notification passed on 26th January 2008, Pratapgarh has been declared as the 33rd district of Rajasthan. Administratively, the district comprises the 5 tehsils of Pratapgarh, Arnod, Choti Sadri, Dhariyawad, and Pipalkhunt. The total population is 7,06,700 in 1002 villages comprising, five Panchayat Samitis, 152 Gram Panchayats and 145 Patwari circles. The district is situated in the southern part of Rajasthan with neighbouring districts: Udaipur in the west, Mandsaur (MP) in the east, Chittorgarh in the north and Banswara in the south. The co-ordinates of the district lie between 24002'N 74047'E and 24003'N 74078'E.

The following table spells out certain important characteristics of Pratapgarh district:

Minimum Temperature	2.50C
Maximum Temperature	44.90C
Average Temperature	32.60C
Average Rainfall	85.21cm
Number of rainy days	34 days
Rainy season	June (mid) - Sep. (mid)
Hottest month	June
Coldest month	January
Average Humidity	51.05%
Direction of wind flow	S-W (Summers), N-W (Winters)
Depth of water table	5-20 M
Quality of ground water	Sweet (Potable)
Soil type	Mainly black cotton (of Deccan trap).
Source of irrigation	Wells:80% Other: 20%

The geographical area of the district is 4,11,800 hectares and being situated at the junction of the Aravalli mountain ranges and the Malwa plateau, the area is characterized by the major features of both the ecological regions. It has an elevation of 491 meters (it is the second highest place in Rajasthan after Mount Abu). Geologically, the rock types belonging to Aravalli, Vindhyan and Deccan Trap characterize the region. The Sitamata Wildlife Sanctuary is located at western part of the Pratapgarh and the region is the northern most distribution limits of many species, teak being one of them.

The topography is undulating with hillocks and tablelands. The project area has around 120 revenue villages, which are predominantly inhabited by tribal communities. The catchment area of Erav and Baravarda watershed is dominated by forestland, mainly found on hill slopes. The catchment of Siwna mainly comprises agriculture land and revenue and pasturelands. Out of 41% common land, forest constitutes 31%. The rock profile of the area is dominated by a hard rock layer of Basalt, leading to very low groundwater recharge rates, except in pockets where vertical fractures are found. The average annual rainfall of the project area is around 850 mm. The soil type is mainly medium black soil in farmlands and in some areas it is red soil. The area is mainly rainfed with 23% area under irrigation. The source of irrigation is mainly through wells (80%) followed by streams and rivers. The major crops in Kharif are soybean, maize and pulses and in Rabi are wheat, mustard, gram and few pockets of opium.

In this district, FES is working in the following panchayats of Pratapgarh tehsil:

Panchayat	No. of Villages	Total Popn	Popn SC	Popn ST	Popn BC	Total HH	Total land Ha.	Forest Land Ha.	Total Agri Land Ha.	Agri -irrigated Ha.	Agri - unirrigated Ha.	Cultura-ble waste-land Ha.	Non culturable wasteland Ha.
				ST	BC								
Kulthana	6	4722	531	1797	1773	940	2178	0	1370	404	966	186	622
Kherot	3	2844	653	210	1320	554	831	37	501	125	376	234	59
Kerwas	11	3314	1	3088	135	624	1809	291	812	247	565	531	176
Gandher	7	4615	285	2113	1258	865	2386	37	1471	469	1002	593	285
Kachotia	8	3333	216	3054	50	618	1813	297	608	210	398	513	396
MotiKhedhi	8	2719	9	2710	0	511	1782	536	555	111	444	241	449
Total	43	21547	1695	12972	4536	4112	10799	1198	5317	1566	3751	2298	1987

The major characteristics of these panchayats are described below.

Kerwas Panchayat

This Panchayat has 11 villages (Kerwas, Jhauda, Dodiakheda, Khatodi, Jogi Kheda, Dindor Kheda, Salontok, Jahazpur, Nai ka Pathar and Borwana). All the villages in this Panchayat are tribal villages. The sizes of the villages are quite small ranging from 30 to 150 households. Most of the farmers are small and marginal and the average land holding size is 1 ha. The area has good forest cover and a major portion of the total area comes under forest land and some of the villages are either uninhabited or have very less population. The community is dependent on agriculture, forests and wage labour for their livelihood. A majority of people migrate on a daily basis for wage labour to Kherot and Pratapgarh. Soyabean and maize are the major crops in the kharif season and gram and wheat during the rabi season. Irrigation sources are few in the region with shallow wells and *naalas* comprising the major sources of irrigation. Most of the families were under BPL category but under the new list issued this year, a majority of them have been kept out due to which there is a lot of controversy and the list is still pending.

Kherot

This Panchayat has two villages (Kherot and Talab Kheda) where one village is a multi-caste village and another one is a tribal village. Kherot is the Panchayat headquarter and comprises general caste, OBC and SC families. The major occupations for general caste groups in this Panchayat are agriculture, business and service while the OBC, SC and tribals are mainly dependent on agriculture and wage labour. There is a dairy cooperative in Kherot village. The major crops during the kharif season are soyabean, maize, cotton and pulses while chief crops in the rabi season are wheat, gram, masoor and mustard. Out-migration to Mandsaur and Gujarat is basically for purposes of business while wage labour migrates to Pratapgarh and Arnod. The general and OBC families usually come under the big farmer category while the rest are small and marginal farmers.

Kulthana

This Panchayat has six villages (Sannoti, Bilseri, Kulthana, Bellari, Bellar and Raipuria). Apart from the Panchayat village of Kulthana, the other villages under this Panchayat are mostly tribal. People in tribal villages are dependent on wage labour and agriculture and there is lot of dependency on the commons for fuel wood and fodder. People generally migrate to Kulthana, Pratapgarh and Mandsaur for earning wages. Rajputs and the Patidars dominate Kulthana and generally the average land holding is around 3 ha for the big farmers whereas the tribals are marginal and small farmers. In most of the villages, opium cultivation takes place after a due license is obtained from the government. The major crops during kharif are soybean, maize and cotton while during rabi season it is wheat, gram, chilly and garlic. There is not much forest land but there is significant area under pasture land

Gandher

This Panchayat has five villages (Gandher, Akhepur, Ghaskheda, Sudal Puriya, Saila Pura, Sohanpura). Apart from Gandher and Akhepur villages, the remaining villages are mostly tribal. In Akhepur village there is a significant population of Muslims. Gandher is purely agricultural dependent and is dominated by the Anjana community. There is a big

pond in Gandher village, which acts as a source of irrigation for farmers from Gandher and nearby villages. A major part of this Panchayat comes under the rainfed region. There is a huge patch of forestland in this region, which is dominated by bamboo.

Kachotia and Motikhedi Panchayat

These Panchayats mainly consists of tribal villages. They are mainly dependent of forest, agriculture and wage labour. Most of the land comes is rainfed and the major sources of irrigation are shallow wells and *naalas*. Forest land is present in almost all the villages. The area of pasture lands in this panchayat is quite low. Average land holding size is around 1 ha. Productivity of the agricultural land is low due to high gradient and lack of proper irrigation facilities. The irrigation department has constructed one dam in the Parliya village of Kachotia Panchayat, which has led to an increase in the land productivity of this village.

8.3.2 Work Done and Major Achievements

NRM Works Planned and Executed

As stated earlier, a total budget of Rs.28.50 lakhs was leveraged by FES for these panchayats. Mainly, the following activities were planned after a careful assessment of the resources and needs of the villages:

- Pond Construction and Deepening
- Anicut desiltation and deepening
- Well excavation

In these activities, more than one lakh person-days of employment were generated

Total Financial Amount Budgeted (in lakhs)		Rs.28.50
Total Expenditure Achieved in lakhs		Rs.20.75
Approximate number of beneficiaries		125
List of Activities Supported	Expenses against Activities in lakhs	Person-days
Pond Construction	2	
Anicut desiltation and deepening	10.5	
Pond Deepening	2	
Well excavation	6.25	
		112,500

This in turn has helped the community to learn about the advantages of NREGS in supporting the village level developmental activities, besides providing employment and minimum wage payment.

Job Cards

The base situation with respect to coverage in terms of job cards and registration of workers is quite poor. From the data and field observations it is clear that a gap exists between the number of job cards issued and the number of applications made. The following reasons are understood to account for this lacuna:

- Low level of awareness among the community regarding the issue of job cards or the procedure of making the job cards. Due to this confusion and lack of awareness the number

of people turning up for applying for job cards is quite less.

- Panchayats are themselves unclear about details of the provisions under NREGS.

Along with the planning and implementation of NREGA works for NRM, FES is also actively engaged with the above issues so that the base situation can change. Towards this end, FES has moved on a strategy of creating and empowering village-level institutions to do the NRM work under NREGA:

- Village Institutions like Watershed Development Samitis, Village Forest Protection and Management Committees have been established as Monitoring Units in the Kerwas village. These institutions have performed quality work in terms of managing the different common resources of the villages and community participation in the management, decision making and availing of the facilities.
- In some of the villages, Village Institutions are planning the work for their own villages and are submitting these plans to the panchayat and engaging with the panchayats for proper implementation of work in their concerned villages.

Over time, these village institutions will also be empowered enough to address the lacunae in NREGA implementation.

8.4 Foundation for Ecological Security, Udaipur, Rajasthan

Initially FES' work in the Udaipur project area was associated with the preparation of perspective plans for Gogunda Taluka under the National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP). This plan was considered for implementation under the NREGS scheme. Presently, FES is involved in facilitating proper implementation of NREGS in a total of 8 Panchayats of Gogunda and Jhadol tehsils of Udaipur District.

The team facilitated the implementation of NREGS in two Panchayats of Udaipur District - Lunawaton Ka Kheda in Jhadol Block and Rawach in Gogunda Block.

8.4.1 Profile of Selected Area

- Lunawaton Ka Kheda Panchayat comprises four revenue villages namely Lunawaton Ka Kheda, Chatarpura, Dhimdi and Warad. A metal road cutting through the two revenue villages (viz Dhimdi and Lunawaton Ka Kheda) of the Panchayat connects the Panchayat to Tehsil/ Panchayat Samiti at Jhadol. Due to this, the panchayat has been able to access facilities like dairy, senior secondary school and government dispensary. But the interior villages are connected only through *kuccha* roads. The main occupation of the communities under the Panchayat is agriculture and animal husbandry.
- Rawach on the other hand is among the most backward Panchayats of Gogunda Tehsil. Rawach Panchayat consists of the three revenue villages of Rawach, Kundlawas and Tegra. Most of the area is accessible only by *kuccha* road. Only 8% of the entire land is arable and people of the Panchayat migrate to other places in order to earn their living. The

education standard of people is also low. The literacy is only 19% under the Panchayat.

8.4.2 Work Done and Major Achievements

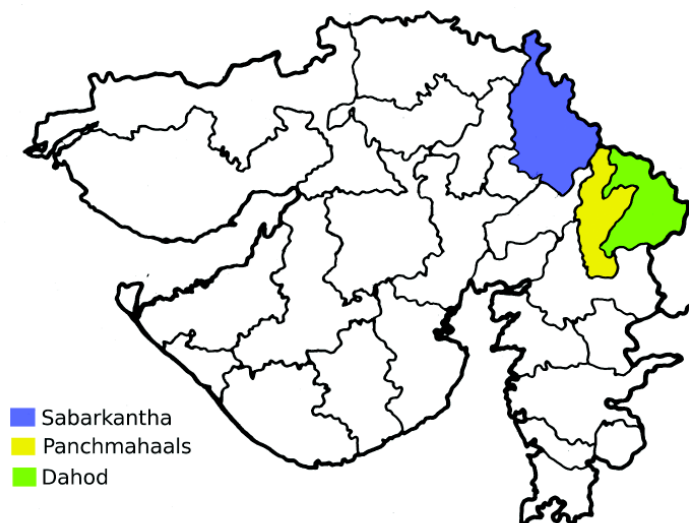
- Initially, the work in the Udaipur project area was associated with perspective planning for Gogunda Taluka under the National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP). The plans was later on considered for implementation under the NREGS scheme.
- Presently, FES is facilitating the effective implementation of NREGS in a total of 8 Panchayats of Gogunda and Jhadol tehsils of Udaipur District. The involvements are of varied nature and at different levels, extending from the hamlet level to that of the Panchayats and further extending to the two tehsil- level federations.
- The work done in the year 2007-08 focused on land development activities like contour trenching, check dams and gabions on the forestlands, as also regeneration activities like pitting, plantation and seeding. Numerous awareness building activities have also been undertaken for the communities to generate awareness amongst the communities. Knowledge about the various processes were aimed toward building awareness amongst the village communities and also the Panchayat representatives to provide them the maximum information about the NREGS Act and its provisions.
- JFM committee members were also provided assistance and support in implementing NREGS on forest lands in Gogunda area. Forest Department is the implementing agency in this case.
- The work has so far benefitted 11,922 persons and has leveraged Rs.14.05 lakhs as against which Rs.11.19 lakhs has been spent:

	Rs (Lakhs)
Plantation on forestland managed by VFPMC	9.2
SWC on leased revenue wasteland of a TGCS (Tree Growers Cooperative Society)	0.3
Anicut desiltation	0.02
SWC on forestland managed by VFPMC	1.67
Total	11.19

NINE

GUJARAT

In Gujarat, there are 2 consortium partners working in Sabarkantha, Panchmahaals and Dahod districts – Manav Kalyan Trust and Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI).



District-wise spread of Consortium partners in Gujarat

9.1 Manav Kalyan Trust

Manav Kalyan Trust (MKT) has been working since 1984 among the most marginalized and ignored communities and supporting them in achieving sustainable livelihoods. The organization's focus has been women's empowerment in the poorest and most deprived tribal belts of Sabarkantha, Banaskantha and Kutch districts of Gujarat. MKT has worked with pastoral communities, salt workers and charcoal workers in Kutch district and has a long history of awakening and motivating the tribal community towards attaining their rights, and organizing protests against exploitation and injustice. It has organised innumerable advocacy campaigns for this purpose and has challenged inadequate and inappropriate state

policies. MKT is integrating these campaigns with work on the ground to significantly improve livelihoods, natural resource base, health and overall status of the rural communities, through their meaningful involvement in planning, implementation and management of development activities. The core areas of intervention of MKT are:

- Advocacy
- Natural Resource Management
- Women Empowerment
- Health and Hygiene
- Disaster Mitigation
- Networking

Today MKT works in more than 400 villages spread across the three poorest and disaster prone districts i.e. Sabarkantha, Banaskantha and Kutch of Gujarat, enabling communities to become self reliant.

9.1.1 Profile of Villages

On NREGA, Manav Kalyan Trust is working in 31 villages of 5 GPs of Khedbrahma Block in Sabarkantha district. The total population covered by its work is 34,608:

	Panchayat	Village	Population
1	Didhiya	Didhiya	1971
		Jadisembal	1187
		Khergadh	1211
		Kherivav	508
		Vagheshwari	541
			5418
2	Lamabadia	Lamabadia	1574
		Kharaniya	558
		Polapan	692
		Dedaka	1017
		Tebada	1390
		Golvada	945
		Choliya	1388
	7564		
3	Dotad	Dotad	3622
			3622
4	Semabaliya	Sembaliya	677
		Bharamiya	1555
		Bandiyanu Talav	1849
		Patadiya	2266
		Pathora	699
		Danmahudi	464
		Bavalkanthiya	760
		8270	
5	Kheroj	Kheroj	1014
		Mithibili	1625
		Motabaval	1192
		Nanabaval	1132
		Changod	1709
		Ratanpur	2156
		Tebadi	906
		9734	
	Grand Total		34608

9.1.2 Status of NREGA Implementation

When it commenced work, MKT observed that while the Act had been passed, on the ground a lot more needed to be done. Primarily, the following problems were observed:

- The villagers were not completely aware about NREGA and its provisions.
- The community was not aware that without their demand, work under NREGA cannot be started in the village. They believed that the Gram Panchayat will start work and inform them.
- All families of the villages concerned had not obtained their job cards.
- The GPs were not aware about the act, their responsibilities within it and the kinds of activities that they can be undertaken in it. The GPs had mainly focused on construction of roads and to some extent, construction of ponds under the act. In their perception, it was the Taluka and District Panchayats which were supposed to pass orders for carrying out work under NREGA, only after which could work be initiated.
- Lack of awareness of the varieties of work that can be opened under the Act led to the general perception among the wage seekers that there were not enough works possible. So the question often asked was if enough work is not possible, how can work be started and employment generated?
- The GPs did not have the requisite capacity to plan and implement NREGA projects. The sarpanchs expressed the view that there is not enough technical staff at the Taluka Panchayat level so they could not prepare plans and estimates.
- Wage seekers complained that NREGA wages were very low. They were also not aware about the modalities of wage payment. So they were not willing to work under NREGA.

9.1.3 Work Done and Impacts



A village meeting organized by Manav Kalyan Trust as part of its community mobilization campaign



Manav Kalyan Trust organized cultural programmes to deepen awareness on NREGA

Awareness and Mobilization

- Initially a massive house to house contact programme was launched by MKT in which information about the implementation of Act as well as the components covered under the activities was collected. Based on this, an understanding was developed of the problems on the ground and the strategies needed to overcome these.
- MKT concentrated on mobilization campaigns to create greater awareness around NREGA and workers' entitlements. 41 Gram Sabhas and awareness campaigns in all villages of the five GPs were mobilized by MKT with the specific objective of creating awareness and generating demand for employment. To make this campaign more effective, methods such as role play were adopted.
- All village community and panchayat members were actively involved in this campaign, during which people from 16 villages applied in writing for employment.
- Awareness campaigns also focussed on the different basket of activities that can be taken up, and on minimum wages.

Job Cards

- During the mobilization meetings MKT focussed on coverage of all families through job cards. The impact of these initiatives can be assessed from the following table:

	Gram Panchayat	Job Cards Before Intervention	Job Cards After Intervention	% Increase
1	Didhiya	632	1150	82
2	Dotad	566	576	2
3	Kheroj	473	1568	232
4	Lambadiya	760	1244	64
5	Sembaliya	361	1461	305
	Total	2792	5999	115

- As the table above shows, the efforts of MKT resulted in an overall increase of 115% in job card coverage in the concerned GPs. In Kheroj, Sembaliya and Didhiya the increase has been particularly dramatic.

Capacity Building of Gram Panchayats

- MKT organized a series of capacity building programmes for GP sarpanchs, deputy sarpanchs and members. It made presentations in each of the GPs on NREGA and sensitized panchayat members on NREGA procedures. A focal point of these trainings was sustainable rural livelihoods through NREGA. So the GP members were made aware of the need to prepare long term plans under NREGA.
- The capacity building efforts were supplemented with exposure tours organized specially for GP members to enable them to see NRM centred work on NREGA.
- MKT also entered into formal relationships with the GPs, offering them support for the preparation of such plans, since the sarpanchs expressed the view that there was a shortage of technical and qualified staff at the taluka level to create these plans

Vigilance Committees

After the above efforts, each GP invited MKT to assist in the formation of Vigilance

Committee in each village, because these committees did not exist in these villages. As a result, 30 vigilance committees were formed and they were trained in their roles and responsibilities under NREGA. The capacity building effort focused on how to monitor the work going on, expenses undertaken, facilities provided at the work site and so on.

Interface with Administration

- A set of problems which the GP members brought up in their meetings with MKT related to the difficulties in obtaining requisite permissions from the Forest Department to work in forest areas. MKT assured the GP of their full support in following up with the department at the block and district level so that the necessary permissions could be obtained.
- After the decision for making labour payments through post office or bank accounts was made, job card holder accounts were opened in respective post offices. But due to limitations of staff and infrastructure, wage seekers were facing problems in opening accounts and receiving money from the post office. MKT strongly advocated with the block officials that labour accounts should be opened in the nationalized banks. It organized a district level workshop on NREGA on 9th of September 2008 which focussed on this issue and argued in favour of opening accounts in nationalized bank. The district authority then gave permission to open bank accounts.
- After this, MKT made every effort to open bank accounts for wage seekers. It organized a bank account opening camp at the panchayat level and invited the bank officers to fill up the form and take all necessary information from the beneficiaries.

Micro-planning and Implementation

MKT provided technical support to the five panchayats for preparing plans under NREGA with the active involvement of sarpanch and panchayat members. These plans cover a period of 5 years and focus on natural resource management and land development for sustainable rural livelihoods. The major activities which were identified in the plans were:

- Construction of ponds
- Desilting of Checkdams
- Construction of Farm Ponds
- Construction of *Bori Baandhs*
- Construction of Earthen Dams

An expenditure of Rs.1.01 crores has already been undertaken in these GPs with more than 1 lakh person-days of employment generated. *This expenditure represents 46% of the total budget of Rs.2.19 crores available for NREGA for the whole block at the beginning of the current fiscal.*

Panchayat	Expenditure (Rs.)	Person-Days of Employment Generated
1. Kheroj	4926256	35185
2. Lamabadiya	3007101	34505
3. Didhiya	605003	12829
4. Dotad	644779	9057
5. Semabliya	925369	10770
Total	10108508	102346

An earthen dam constructed under NREGA with MKT support just before the monsoons



9.1.4 Case Study: NREGA and Swajaldhara

MKT is also implementing various development programmes in the tribal area of Sabarkantha district including watershed development programmes, Swajaldhara Programme for Drinking Water, Legal Awareness and Reproductive Child Health. All team members working on such programmes have been trained on NREGA. After the training an effort has been made to create convergence between NREGA and other programmes during the course of implementation.

The impact of the linkage has been most visible in Valran village. The Government of Gujarat established the Water and Sanitation Management Organization (WASMO) as an autonomous institution in 2002. WASMO has taken up rural drinking water supply and sanitation initiatives in the rural areas of Gujarat. MKT is implementing the Swajaldhara Programme in 106 villages of Sabarkantha, Banaskantha and Kutch district of Gujarat. The project involves community mobilization through various participatory exercises and strengthening them through training, awareness programmes and exposure visits.

The first step towards implementation of the Swajaldhara Programme is to build institutions by forming effective *Pani Samitis* with the active involvement of the community, particularly women. After formation of such Pani Samitis, VAP/PRA process was undertaken by MKT. Simultaneously, 10% of the total scheme cost was also voluntarily contributed by the community in cash or kind and submitted to the district administration.

The village of Valran is 14 km far away from Khedbrahma, the taluka headquarters. The total population of the village is 2,595 and it has 400 households. The major occupation of the village is agriculture and agriculture labour. For drinking water, villagers were using handpumps and private wells. The women routinely travelled from 1 to 1.5 km for collecting drinking water.

MKT has implemented a Swajaldhara scheme in this village. The total cost of the scheme was estimated at Rs. 8.01 lakhs, including components like distribution pipe line, water tank, borewell, cattle tank and pumping machinery with electricity. As already stated, for these components, the rural community has to contribute 10% of the total scheme cost. The villagers were, however, not in a position to contribute the 10% share. The MKT team organized a number of meetings with the villagers for collecting this contribution. But due to the poor

socio-economic conditions of the community they were not able to deposit the contribution. And without the necessary community contribution the district administration would not sanction the scheme.

MKT then organized a community meeting in the presence of panchayat members for solving this problem. The plan worked out was that NREGA works would be started in the village in which the community would participate. From their wages, they could meet the amount needed for contributions. The GP had prepared a plan of pond deepening and submitted it to the block panchayat. MKT pressed upon the block panchayat the need for fast sanction and release of funds. The block panchayat gave permission in time and the villagers started the work of pond deepening. 600 people worked on the pond under the NREGA. The community, by working on NREGA sites was able to collect and contribute Rs.80, 000 (or 10% of the total cost of the Swajaldhara scheme) by contributing Rs. 200 per household from their NREGA wages. This amount was deposited in the account of the Pani Samiti so that the Swajaldhara scheme could be implemented in the village.

9.2 Area Networking and Development Initiatives (ANANDI)

ANANDI is a non-political secular organisation working with women's organizations and partner NGOs to promote an empowerment approach and gender mainstreaming in development activity. ANANDI works with the poorest women of the tribal and other marginalised communities in Saurashtra and Panchmahals-Dahod districts in Gujarat and also networks with other national and international NGOs. ANANDI was founded in 1995 by five young women development professionals who had worked for several years in various parts of India. Since then it has been involved in a number of programmes:

- A large field programme to facilitate and support women's groups and form self- managed women's federations addressing health, food security, livelihoods, savings and credit and capacity building of women panchayat members. In Panchmahals-Dahod over 3,000 women are members of these sangathans, which now plan and manage some of their own activities. In Saurashtra, this work is done through partner NGOs.
- Relief and rehabilitation: ANANDI has been promoting a clear focus on women's needs in relief and rehabilitation in the context of drought, earthquake and communal strife
- Area networking of rural women leaders and NGOs which is done by way intensive support of organisations based in 5 districts of Saurashtra to enable them to engage in dialogue with the state and civil society.
- Research studies on gender equity issues within different arenas/fields.

9.2.1 Profile of the Area

ANANDI has been working as part of the *Rozi Roti Lok Jumbish* (RRLJ) and the *Anna Suraksha Adhikar Abhiyan* (ASAA) and have focussed their activities on Panchmahaals and Dahod districts of Gujarat. Within these districts the Devgadhi Baria Block (Dahod district) and Ghoghumba Block (Panchmahaals) district have been the locus of their intensive

campaigns. ANANDI has also chosen to work with 6 GPs of Ghoghumba block with the objective of partnering the GPs and provide focussed inputs to the community to prepare plans and implement them under NREGA. Briefly the following are the major characteristics of the area:

- Panchmahaals and Dahod form part of the semi arid central tribal belt of India. Soil type of this region is deep black to loamy sand (*Goradu*).
- Ghoghumba block has undulating landscape with slope between 3-15%. The ground water table can be found at 40-50 feet, although due to hard rocks, sub- surface water sources are not harvested. Drought proneness, erratic rainfall and high runoff, undulating and rock-strewn land, fast degrading forest, rainfed agriculture and soil erosion are some of the critical issues of the region.
- There are no sources of irrigation in most parts of the block. In a good monsoon period, the water bodies are harvested for support irrigation which is used for dry spells in kharif and sometimes for the rabi crops for one or two watering.
- Thus only 30-45% of the area is irrigated with the support irrigation facilities. Dug wells are the main source of irrigation in the region.
- The irrigation tanks in the block could be repaired and renovated to improve irrigation facilities during periods when rains are delayed.
- Average rainfall of the block and district is 800 to 1,000 mm. In the past four years, the pattern of rainfall of this region has changed. Heavy and erratic haphazard rains followed by long and dry spells in the area affect the rainfed agriculture crops.
- The major crops during the kharif season are maize, *tuar* and *urad*. A good monsoon enhances the potential for a better rabi crop of maize and wheat, and in some areas *bajri*. Some enterprising farmers have started growing vegetables and flowers for cash along with horticulture on a small scale.
- The major occupation in the area is wage labour. The families have to resort to wage labour for subsistence over and above tilling the land. They migrate to the urban areas in Vadodara, Ahmedabad, Surat and now even up to Maharashtra to work as construction labour. They also provide the labour force for agriculture in the districts of Kheda and travel as far as Saurashtra and Kutch to work on farms. The inexpensive, hard working and naïve labour of Panchmahaals and Dahod is forced to work in trades they were never seen - in salt pans of Saurashtra, which is an indication of distressed livelihoods of the poorest labour families, unable to negotiate work and wages.
- Besides this, many youth go to lay electricity and telephone lines/ towers. Among the poorest families the entire families migrate while in most families all the young persons migrate for work for over 6 to 7 months of the year.
- Small land holdings, unending debt traps, perpetual health crisis etc push women and men to migrate out to work. They often get enticed by cash advances from the contractors. The contractors charge very high rates of interest.
- Non-payment of wages, undue deductions, harassment of labour, sexual exploitation of women and young girls, abduction and selling *adivasi* young girls in non-tribal areas for money are complaints often registered at the *Lok Adhikar Kendra* seeking support of the *Nyaya Samiti* of DMS.

9.2.2 Status of NREGA Implementation

ANANDI and the women's sangathans in the *adivasi* areas of Panchmahaals and Dahod districts of Gujarat were part of the Right to Food and Work campaign at the national level. ANANDI also partnered the process of Concurrent Monitoring of NREGA as one of the members of the *Anna Suraksha Adhikar Abhiyan*, Gujarat. The study was conducted by the Centre for Development Alternatives, Ahmedabad. The following observations, based on the findings during this study field and experiences of ANANDI activists, capture the state of NREGA implementation when ANANDI began work:

- Since February 2006 Gram Sabhas for registration of households for job cards (JC) were held, along with seminars and public meetings for dissemination of information about the Act. While these meetings were held in all the blocks, there was very little effort in making them people-friendly.
- All National Food For Work plans were treated as final plans of the Gram Sabha for shelf of projects in 10% villages of Devgadhi Baria, Ghoghamba and Shehara blocks of Dahod and Panchmahaals districts of Gujarat respectively. The works were related to water conservation and road connectivity.
- There were no standardized formats/ forms ready for the wage seekers to demand work.
- During July to September 2006 people were demanding work by writing applications, but there was no system of accepting and providing receipt for the same. The GPs were unclear about the process, and hence they felt that the Programme Officers would sanction works and only then would they be able to start work.
- October 2006 to January 2007 was the phase when most Gram Panchayats had elections followed by election of Sarpanch and the process of handing over of charge to newly elected Panchayat body.
- In the period between February to March 2007, it became apparent that the Govt of Gujarat was publicizing and promoting the state government's programme *Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojana* in tribal areas (the 6 districts of the first phase were tribal districts).
- The following tables highlights the performance of NREGA in Panchmahaals and Dahod districts as of 2006, showing the slow movement of the programme:

District	No of Talukas	No of Village Panchayats	No of Villages	No of Works Started	No of Works Completed	No of Works Stopped
Panchmahal	11	658	1201	657	395	127
Dahod	7	459	693	320	113	298
Total	18	1117	1894	977	508	425

District	Approved Grant (Rs. lakhs)	Expenditure incurred on (Rs. Lakh)					Total as % of Sanctioned	% expenditure on Unskilled labor
		Unskilled wage	Semi-skilled and skilled wage	Material	Contingency	Total		
Panchmahaals	2187	68	0	5	78	150	7	45
Dahod	2321	229	5	91	52	377	16	61
Total	4508	297	5	96	130	527	12	56

As can be seen from the above tables:

- less than one work could be started per village and even fewer were completed.
- In all, not more than 15% of the sanctioned amount could be utilized.
- In Panchmahaals, the expenditure on unskilled labour was less 50%.

9.2.3 Work Done and Impacts

Roji Roti Lok Jumbesh (RRLJ) – people’s campaign for right to food and work is an annual process of awareness and social audit initiated by ANANDI with the Gram Sabhas led by the local women’s sangathans. RRLJ is best described as a people’s campaign for collective action on ensuring right to work under the NREGA and right to food entitlements. In the beginning of the 2007 the 15-day Padyatra covered 80 villages. The objective of the campaign was to help communities understand the Act and their rights within it and to conduct social audits of fund utilization under NREGA.

The second round of RRLJ began in December 2007 and continued till February 2008. The campaign in this period focused on demonstrating how people can exercise their right to demand for work and ask for information regarding public funds/resources that are allocated for their development and that of their village. The campaign was divided in the following phases:

1. Awareness about the provisions of the act and demand for work
2. Demand information from the Gram Panchayat about the works done in the current financial year thus establish the transparency function
3. Demonstrate how people could demand work, get full wages with good quality work
4. Demand and ensure that the worksite facilities for workers are arranged for.

The RRLJ in January 2007 resulted in significant change in coverage and approach of the block as well as the district level officials. The following table shows the positive impacts of RRLJ in Devgadhi Baria block of Dahod where the campaign took place:

Description	Devgadh Baria		Dahod District	
	Dec 06	Mar 07	Dec 06	Mar 07
No. of Villages	86	86	698	698
No. of Gram Panchayats	71	71	459	459
No of HH issued Job cards	7858	10035	101244	108779
Demand for Work	2322	8666	25385	56822
HH Provided Work	2322	8666	25385	56822
HH Provided 100 days of wage work	1512	1786	2597	5054
Wage days generated (in lac)	2.039	3.297	17.385	23.74
Wage days – women (in lac)	1220	1630	9720	11958
Fund available (in lac)	341.88	420.96	2710.14	3253.42
Cum expenditure (in lac)	227.89	412.70	1562.44	2801.86
GP where Social Audit Completed	0	71	23	315
Worksite with Social Audit Completed	0	446	31	852
Vigilance Committees formed	0	71	150	410
	Oct 06	Feb 07	Oct 06	Feb 07
Completed works	124	261	461	863
On going work	149	92	550	371
Exp.on completed work (in lac)	100.13	188.39	467.82	935.62
Exp. on ongoing work (in lac)	62.7	67.85	520.64	980.55

In July 2007, ANANDI identified 6 GPs of Ghoghamba block of Panchmahaals for focused inputs to the community, supporting the workers demand and facilitate the process of planning in the GPs in order to initiate works that would strengthen and build natural resources for sustainable livelihood in villages for the migrating and most vulnerable communities.



Anandi organized village meetings to focus attention on NREGA and its entitlements. Here the team is involved in micro-planning with the village community

The following table highlights impacts of the RRLJ interventions in these panchayats:

Item	Jabuvaniya	Ruparel	Palli	Chathi	Khanpatla	Daudra
Application for Job card	35	63	37	29	66	41
Demand for work	41	65	76	14	75	19
Job cards issued during follow up	85	100	102	90	148	23
Ration card separation (essential as often the govt officials take ration card as a proof for issuing a job card)	61	41	30	7	18	0
RTI Applications for NREGA and other entitlements	2	5	8	2	4	4

9.2.4 Performance Review by State Government

Through various interactions and workshops at the district and state level the ASAA and ANANDI build pressure on the state government to review their performance. The state

government also felt the pressure from the central government to meet targets. GoG set parameters of performance for each district and set targets they had to comply with. A marking system was set as follows:

- Grading exercise is of 200 Marks for a District
- Each parameter /Review is of 10 Marks
- Districts crossing more than 4% in administrative expenditure lost 10 Marks and districts maintaining this 4% cap were given a 10 mark bonus.

Panchmahaals was ranked 6th in July 2008, as the district was unable to maintain the administrative expense cap of 4% and its performance was quite poor in most indicators:

	Parameters	Proposed target	Achievement in %	Marks
1	Total Job Cards issued-136469	Total Rural HHs-314881	43.33	4.3
2	Employment Provided-27520	Job Card issued-136469	20.16	2.0
3	Person-days shared by women-5.51 Lakh	Total Person-days- 12.47Lakh	44.18	4.4
4	Average days of employment to HHs – 46.18 Days	Average days of employment required to be provided -100 Days	46.18	4.6
5	Average wages paid to the workers- 54.47Rs	Average wage required to be paid -100 Rs	54.47	5.4
6	Administrative expenditure-42.08 Lakh	Total Expenditure- 938.68 Lakh	4.48	-10
7	Works completed in the Districts-1744	Total works undertaken - 3241	53.81	5.3
8	Works taken up of water conservation-1624	Total works undertaken 3241	50.10	5.0
9	Works taken up of SC/ST beneficiaries -351	Total works undertaken- 3241	10.82	1.0
10	Total expenditure on wages-697.17Lakh	Total expenditure- 938.68	74.27	7.4
11	Total expenditure on material-217.43 Lakh	Total expenditure-938.68	23.16	2.3
12	Total Muster rolls verified-6804	Total Muster rolls issued-7503	90.68	9.0
13	Total Social audit conducted-2487	Total social audit required to be conducted-3241	76.73	7.6
14	Works inspected-2699	Total works -3630	74.35	7.4
15	Bank Post Office Accounts Opened-13806	Total Registered HHs-136469	10.11	1.0
16	Complaints disposed-3	Total received -8	37.5	3.5
17	Total posts filled in the District-62	Total posts required to be filled-763	8.12	0.8
18	Employees trained -51	Employees required to be trained -62	82.25	8.2
19	PRIs trained- 6280	PRIs members required to be trained-6280	100	10
20	VMC members trained-4605	VMC members required to be trained-4605	100	10
21	Total Marks Out of 200			89.2

The internal audit process also remarked that there were many important issues, for which the GoG awaited responses such as, action taken report for the CAG draft report, setting up of help line at district level, action taken report on transparency and accountability, on social audit and muster roll verification etc.

9.2.5 State Level Advocacy Convention

This progress in GREGS in the state during 2008 was improving bit by bit as many districts of phase 2 and 3 were also showing a slow start. Although there was consistent demand from communities, the Gram Panchayats were still not forthcoming as they were finding it problematic to deal with the additional responsibility, to be transparent in functions given the GS-centric nature of the programme.

To highlight the issues with regard to NREGA implementation a state level consultation on NREGA was organized in February 2009. This provided a platform for ASAA to initiate a dialogue with the Department of Rural Development as well the Commissioner Development. The role of the Member CEGC and the state advisor appointed by the SC for the Right to Food Case was very critical in the consultation. A broad representation of workers, panchayat members, NGOs and trade unions participated in the convention to share their experiences on the current status of the implementation of Gujarat Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. This was followed by taking these recommendations to the state coordinator NREGA, GoG for appropriate action at the state and national level.

The report of the convention was also shared with the Principal Secretary and Commissioner Rural Development, GoG. She invited the ASAA representatives for further discussion as part of here series of dialogue with line departments and the civil society organizations.

Specific actions were taken by the Principal Secretary and CRD based on some of the recommendations emerging from the convention. Regarding the other issues, the pressure is proposed to be kept up. An outline of recommendations emerging from the convention and commitments made by the GoG are given below:

A state level convention was organized in February 2009 to highlight issues in Gujarat NREGA implementation. Seen in the photo is CEGC member, Dr. Mihir Shah addressing the gathering



Issue 1: Job Cards and Demand for Work

Recommendations

This has been a critical issue in Gujarat, although it is not resolved entirely in the state. The Job Card seekers face lesser humiliation in the districts covered in the third phase. ASAA had demanded a re-issue of the circular defining households.

While this remains incomplete, some of the job cards which were made wrongly have been set right as demanded by ASAA during the consultation. We have seen that single women still battle to seek a separate JC. There is a need for national level advocacy in defining households. The definition must make a specific mention of a household as;

1. Husband–wife with adult unmarried children above 18 years of age.
2. Single women-widow, separated, deserted, unmarried women (are independent households)
3. Households with physically challenged person/s (should have a separate JC)

ASAA also expected that each GP had enough copies of forms printed by DRDA for registration of households for job cards and demand for work.

GoG Response

The GPs have now been provided with and have the required stationery; however there is still resistance in giving out the printed forms for demand for work. The difficulty related to Talatis not receiving the demand for work and issuing a receipt for the same seemed very difficult. Both the State Coordinator and the Principal Secretary RD did not have any specific comment or commitment on this and other recommendations.

Issue 2: Trained staff for assistance to Panchayats for NREGA

Recommendations

It was recommended by ASAA and the group of experts that there is need for designated human resource for the programme

- Every Gram Panchayat should have *Rozgar Mitras* with designated responsibility of accepting demand for work, mobilizing other workers and supervision.
- The Rojgar Mitra should be trained to furnish details to be recorded in the job cards by Talati-cum-Mantri, maintain records, and assist the technical staff on work site.
- The E-Gram initiative of the state should be used as a platform for feeding data and accessing information on NREGS works at the Panchayat level.

GoG Response

In response to these recommendations the CRD said that each district is in the process of selecting and recruiting staff on contract basis at block as well as district level. The new recruits would be provided technical training. The NREGA Cell has been formed in the month of June 2009. The cell hosted a one day interface between multiple stakeholders for effective implementation of the NREGA. The dialogue was set rolling among the GP members, elected leaders from the block, members of political parties, academicians, civil society organizations, district level legal aid department and government officials from block, district, and state level. After this first interface, the cell has committed to sustain the dialogue among the group.

Issue 3: Creation of Sustainable Assets through Convergence

Recommendations

ASAA members suggested that the GP plans should be reinforced by converging with other development plans:

- In many panchayats very useful works such as key rural roads to increase connectivity, canal cleaning have been taken up. These works are likely to be sustainable only if technical sanction of every canal clearing work has stone pitching as apart of it within the allocated budgets for material in the scheme or through convergence with other schemes.
- In Panchmahaals the NREGA Tribal Development Department funds and TSP funds are effectively tied for asset building and sustainable livelihood promotion.
- ANANDI's experience of promoting organic fertilizer production in a group of 8-12 women is suggested as an activity. This activity is proposed as one of the permissible activities in NREGA and should be given to pregnant women, nursing mothers and old and physically challenged. This should also be built in the livelihood model in the on going Panchmahaals model of Van Bandhu Kalyan Mandal
- As suggested by the campaign during the consultation, the approved copy of all technical and administrative sanctions under the NREGA (including the works done by the line department) should be given based on the Gram Sabha resolution. These would be pasted on the Gram Panchayat office with a copy of the GS resolution for public information. Similarly a copy of the plan estimate would also be available on the notice board and at the worksite with the Rojgar Mitra.

GoG Response

No specific commitment

Issue 4: People with Special Needs

Recommendations

GoMP has enlisted works to be given on priority basis to wage seekers with special needs. In Gujarat also we need to develop a list of activities for pregnant women, nursing mothers, physically challenged and aged as wage seekers. Vermi-compost production, nursery raising, stone collection, shrub cutting, water and medicine facility at the worksite, child care worker at the work site are some of the activities the group has suggested often.

GoG Response

No specific commitment

Issue 5: Proactive Disclosure

Recommendations

While the RTI act is central to the NREGA, in past three years there has been gross violation and denial in providing information to the citizens. The group suggested elementary steps in proactive disclosure (ANANDI demonstrated this in one of its model GPs):

- Gram Panchayat office should have a display board to announce (the wage seekers with their job card no) the worksite and date of commencement of work
- All Gram Panchayats must have records such as the job card register, copy of the resolutions passed in Gram Sabha, copy of work estimate, copy of administrative and technical sanction, copy of SoRR, copy of master roll.

GoG Response

While there was no disagreement on this recommendation from either side, the campaign realized that the citizens would always have to take charge of monitoring and dispute resolution.

Issue 6: Social Audit

Recommendations

ASAA said that the Social Audit process can not be reduced to just reading out the names of works in the GS which is chaired by the Sarpanch and led by a host of block and district level officials. There is a need for announcing 2 mandatory Gram Sabhas in each GP.

GoG Response

No specific commitment

Issue 7: Wage Payments

Delayed payment is a cause of concern at all levels. It was linked to opening of accounts in bank or post office. Some of these payments which were pending for over four months and were reported by the representatives and the experts during the consultation were made in the same month i.e. is February up to April 2009. Often the short staffed banks/ post offices are unable to meet demand. The group demanded Panchayat level camps for account opening with assistance from voluntary organizations.

Recommendations

- All delayed payments must be settled by end of July 2009. There are complaints that they are delayed for over 1 month.
- Looking at the road construction sites in Panchmahaals and Dahod it is evident that the earth work is very laborious while payments are low. There is ambiguity about SoRR applied in road construction work. The SoRR revised in July 2008 is applicable on all worksite. Photocopy of the master roll would be made available to the GP for public display and scrutiny.
- Payments made for tree cutting, clearing of shrubs in pond etc are unclear. These must be stated as part of the SoR. The job cards are not filled up for the wage worker to understand no of days of work, work output and wage rate for the same.
- In the Sarvangi Vikas Karyakram of ANANDI we found that the workers were able to earn minimum Rs. 100 a day. We have followed the minimum wages for agriculture labour as they are revised. The technical team has to be motivated and trained to give work to the wage seekers as much they could do.

- As the payments are made by the programme officer through cheques. The wage seeker, the GP technically doesn't play any role in funds disbursement. The AP model of support cost for implements should be followed

GoG Response

To our demand of seeking clear notification stating what kinds of records are required for a wage seeker to open account in banks or post offices, respective heads were called at the state level workshop. Both the agencies have made their systems more user-friendly.

Issue 8: Worksite facilities

Recommendations

- There is a need to have all the worksite facilities of drinking water, shade, first aid box and creche, to avoid the kind of risks the children face here, since lots of small children can be observed on worksites. Provision for purchase of shade material/ tent and first aid boxes need to be made along with technical sanction issued by TP
- For every 40 workers or less there should be one Old Age/ Handicapped/ Pregnant Woman worker who can be assigned the work of giving water, child care or maintain attendance register of workers.

GoG Response

There was low commitment towards providing facilities but the demand for these will be kept up.

TEN

LOOKING AHEAD

In this chapter we bring together the key learnings emerging from Consortium partner engagements across the country. Our aim is to suggest a series of reforms in NREGA, with the hope that this forms the basis for a wider national debate.

10.1. Dedicated Implementation Structure for NREGA at Sub-block Level

10.1.1 The Current Situation

Throughout the report we have sought to emphasise that it is time now for us to carry NREGA to the next level, where it fulfils its mandate of generating sustainable livelihoods and converts itself from a palliative wage employment programme to one that ultimately results in self-employments for our rural people. This means the central emphasis has to be on productivity enhancing, high quality works under NREGA. The Gram Panchayat is the main implementing agency under the Act. But it lacks the human resources and technical skillsets to discharge what it is expected to do. The lack of a full-time dedicated support structure for NREGA has been observed by several analyses of the implementation of the Act on the ground¹. Additional charge to an already overloaded bureaucratic structure appears to be the norm. This lack of personnel has had a big role to play in delays in work execution, measurements and payments, in the poor quality of works as also in the absence of genuinely bottom-up participatory planning and social audit, which are the *differentia specifica* of NREGA

10.1.2 Deepening Decentralization in NREGA Implementation: Village Development Cluster (Gram Vikas Sankul)

It is obvious from the experience of the last three years that NREGA needs to be liberated from what may be termed the “additional-charge” syndrome. A dedicated professional cadre

¹ See for instance, the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, CAG (2008), Pramathesh Ambasta et.al (2008), Jean Dreze et.al. (2009)

meant exclusively and devoted full-time to NREGA implementation is required. But even before that we need a fundamental rethink about governance in rural India. Decentralization has to be deepened further beyond the current District -> Block -> Gram Panchayat (GP) model. This should be done by introducing one more layer between the Block and the GP. On an average there are about 90 villages per block in India. We may divide the block into 3 parts, each to be called the Village Development Cluster (Gram Vikas Sankul, GVS) comprising 30 villages each² or about 15 GPs. This middle tier GVS will be the cutting edge level of NREGA implementation between the Gram Panchayat and the Block Panchayat. Such a layer will facilitate appropriate deployment of requisite personnel, which will ensure³:

- proper planning
- time-bound sanctions and releases
- timely measurements and valuations of work
- powerful social mobilization and social audit.

10.1.3 Professional Support, Capacity Building and Administrative

Costs

It is further proposed that to make the structure of NREGA implementation effective, a fully dedicated staffing structure be deployed in the GVS, drawing talent from the open market through a rigorous selection process. These officers must be recruited on contract for a period not exceeding 3 years. Their performance will be strictly reviewed and their contracts liable to termination on one month's notice in case their performance is found to be less than satisfactory. The GVS team will be headed by a GVS Project Officer. These GVS POs will be answerable to the Block Panchayat

An Outline of the Professional Support Staff Required

The table below attempts to outline the staff requirements at the GVS level along with their proposed job description and the situation at present:

² This is akin to the "Mandal" of Andhra Pradesh introduced in the 1980s by the then Chief Minister of the state, N.T. Rama Rao. The Mandals of AP comprise 20-25 Gram Panchayats on an average.

³ To clarify, this layer is not another panchayat layer for which separate elections have to be held. The GVS is a part of the Block-level panchayat where it is located. However, it is the cutting edge level of implementation as far as NREGA is concerned. If this concept gains ground, the GVS could be the centre for implementation of all similar development schemes

Personnel Required	Work Description	As Required Now (though not always in place)	Our Recommendations
Programme Officer (PO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overall responsibility for co-ordination of NREGA works undertaken by Gram Panchayats and other Implementing Agencies • Leads team of social mobilizers and EGAs to take responsibility for social components of NREGA, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ raise awareness about provisions of NREGA ○ ensure registration of workers and issue of job cards ○ mobilisation for raising work demand ○ conducting baseline socio-economic surveys ○ PRAs, transect walks and rural appraisal exercises for planning ○ finalisation of action plan with village community ○ presentation and approval of action plan in gram sabha ○ formation of local vigilance committees ○ organising gram sabhas for continuous approval of work done ○ organisation of social audits and social audit forums ○ capacity building of EGAs, social mobilizers and PRI leadership ○ conflict resolution • monitoring each stage of implementation • redressing or taking responsibility for redressal of grievances • reporting to Block Panchayats and DPC 	<p>1 per block (invariably additional charge)</p> <p>CAG report (2008) finds that 19 states had not appointed these officers in 70% of the blocks they surveyed. The existing Block Development Officers (BDOs) had been given "additional charge" of NREGA.</p>	<p>1 per GVS (2-3 per block)</p> <p>Full-time, professional PO, carefully selected from the open market, on contract, fully answerable to the Block Panchayat.</p>
Civil Engineer (AE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Technical Head of GVS • Guide the process of technical planning, estimating, measuring and valuating works • Responsible of approval of plans and estimates at GVS level • Responsible for approval of measurements at GVS level • Building capacities of TAs, APOs and EGAs • visits to work sites to provide handholding support to TAs and EGAs • Assist in monitoring of the programme 	<p>In some states 1 AE is in-charge of more than 100 villages (invariably additional charge)</p>	<p>1 per GVS (2-3 per block) full time with experience of earthen works, carefully selected from the open market, on contract, Reports to PO</p>
Technical Assistants (JEs)	<p>Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical survey of possible work sites • preparation of technical drawings • preparation of cost estimates proper shelf of works <p>Execution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • layout at work site • supervision and monitoring of works • measurement of work done • preparation of musters • maintenance of site-specific records • preparation of work completion certificates 	<p>1 per 20 GPs</p> <p>Major lacuna in present set-up leading to enormous delays. According to the CAG report, TAs are not in place in 35% of the blocks they surveyed. Official NREGA Guidelines recommend 1 TA for 10 GPs; CAG</p>	<p>We agree with the CAG that one full-time TA is required for every 5 GPs or 3 per GVS full time (each in-charge of 15 villages) with experience of earthen works, carefully selected from the open market, on contract; Reports to Civil Engineer (AE)</p>

Personnel Required	Work Description	As Required Now (though not always in place)	Our Recommendations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obtain technical approval from AE • lead the grassroots technical team of barefoot engineerings 	recommends 1 TA for 5 GPs	
Barefoot Engineers	Work under the supervision of Technical Assistants and perform the following functions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assist in technical surveys and readings • assist in layout on work sites • prepare measurements for approval by TA • supervise work on site • maintain any technical records as may be required 	None	1 per village reporting to TA. Is a long-term investment for the concerned village and gram panchayat.
Social Mobilizers	Work directly under guidance of PO and discharge social mobilization functions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awareness generation among village communities about the act and its entitlements • organize meetings/ campaigns to raise level of work demand • ensure that work demand applications reach GPs and receipts are issued • assist in social aspects of micro-plan formulation • form and mobilize vigilance committees • carry out the fact-finding for social audits • assist in organizing of social audits and other similar events • ensure that grievances reach POs and other redressal mechanism • assist in conflict resolution 	None	1 per village
Employment Guarantee Assistant (EGA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists social mobilizers and barefoot engineers in all their tasks • ensure maintenance of records at GP level • ensure that job card and worker registration is maximized 	Official Guidelines suggest one EGA for every GP. According to the CAG report (2008), EGAs are not in place in over 50% of the GPs they surveyed.	1 per village
Data Entry Operator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • data entry at block level 	2 DEOs per block already in place	1 DEO per GVS (3 per block)

Given the experience of the past 2 years, it is imperative that a decentralized project office at the GVS level is put into place urgently. This may begin with the 2,000 most backward blocks⁴ of the country where NREGA is of the greatest importance. There is widespread evidence that within districts there are blocks that are much less developed than others and where demand for NREGA works is greater. Most tribal blocks would fall into this category. Extension of the Act to the entire country became a case of spreading our resources too thin and achieving sub-optimal outcomes across-the-board, rather than aiming for high quality works where they are needed the most.

⁴ The identification of these most backward blocks on various indices is a crucial exercise in itself. A recommendation of this report is that such an identification process be urgently carried out by the Planning Commission.

Costs of Professional Support

We present below an indicative calculation of the costs involved in these reforms in the 2,000 most backward blocks of the country. Our calculations assume that NREGA will be extended at Rs.100 per day to every adult individual (instead of household), as promised in the Congress Party manifesto of 2009.

As the calculations detailed below show, the annual cost of employment guarantee if it is extended to all rural adults wanting work in 2,000 blocks of the country will be approximately Rs. 60,000 crores. According to the 7th Rural Labour Enquiry Report (Labour Bureau, 2004), there were 13.71 crore rural households (RH) in the country in 1999-2000, of which 5.48 crore (40%) were rural labour households (RLH). Projecting the number of RLH to grow at an annual compound rate of 1.93% (the national rate of growth of population between 1991 and 2001), we get a figure of 6.64 crore RLH in 2009-10. Since there are 6495 blocks in India, there would be around 2.04 crore RLH in the 2,000 most backward blocks. If we assume that 2 adults in 90% of these RLH offer themselves for employment under NREGA, the number of people for whom the 100 day job guarantee would have to be extended in the 2,000 most backward blocks comes to nearly 3.60 crores.

Estimated Costs of Extending Employment Guarantee Across 1,000 Blocks

		Unit	Amount
1	Total no. of Rural Households in 1999-2000	Crores	13.71
2	Total no. of projected Rural Households in 2009-10 @1.93% per annum rate of growth of population	Crores	17
3	Rural Labour Households [RLH] @40% of Rural Households (0.40 x [2])	Crores	6.64
4	No. of blocks in India	No	6495
5	No. of RLH in 2,000 most backward blocks	Crores	2.04
6	Persons offering themselves for NREGA work @2 adults in 90% of RLH in 2,000 most backward blocks (0.90 x [5] x 2)	Crores	3.6
7	Total job cards (=6)	Crores	3.6
8	Person days of employment if 100 days guarantee in one year (100 x [7])	Crores	360
9	Wage bill @Rs.100 per person per day ([8] x 100)	Rs. Cr	36000
10	Material Cost assuming 60:40 wage to non-wage cost ([9] x 4/6)	Rs. Cr	24000
11	Total Cost of guarantee (Rs.Cr) for 2000 most backward blocks ([9] + [10])	Rs. Cr	60000

The next table summarises the cost of professional deployment in the 6000 GVSs in the 2000 most backward blocks of India.

Professional Support Costs at Gram Vikas Sankul

			Salary per month	Salary Bill Per Annum (Rs. Crore)
1	Average no. of GVS per Block	3		
2	Average no. of villages per GVS	30		
3	No. of GVS for 2000 blocks ([1] x 2000)	6000		
4	Project Officers	6000	25000	180
5	Civil Engineers (=4)	6000	20000	144
6	Technical Assistants (=4] x 3)	18000	15000	324
7	Social Mobilizers (1 per village)	180000	3000	648
8	Barefoot Engineers (1 per village)	180000	2500	540
9	Employment Guarantee Assistants (1 per village)	180000	1500	324
10	Data Entry Operator (1 per GVS)	6000	5000	36
	Total			2196

The above cost of professional support works out to a mere 3.66% of total cost of extending the guarantee in the 2,000 most backward blocks.

Costs of Administrative Support

These professionals will also require administrative support in the form of office rent, travel expenses, computers and connectivity. These costs are presented below. Connectivity costs are essentially costs of PDAs (Portable Digital Appliances)⁵ and network equipment to be used for online, concurrent updation of the MIS. The costs of these PDAs is a one-time cost.

Estimated Administrative Costs for NREGA at GVS Level

Administrative Costs	No.	Rate per month	Amount per annum (Rs.Cr.)
PO Office Rent	6000	2500	18
PO Office expenses	6000	5000	36
Travel expenses for PO	6000	4000	28.8
Travel expenses for AE	6000	3000	21.6
Travel expenses for Technical Assistants	18000	2500	54
Computers and Connectivity (6 PDAs per GVS @Rs.20,000 per PDA and other costs)			72
Total Administrative Costs			230.4

The administrative cost is only 0.38% of the total cost of the guarantee in the 2,000 most backward blocks.

⁵ See section on Information Technology below

Capacity Building Costs

There is a need to continuously upgrade the capacities of the massive support structure of human resources needed for NREGA. An inadequate emphasis on capacity building has been a characteristic failure of rural development programmes in India (GoI, 2006). Indeed, we need to first recognise that this order of magnitude of trained people are just not available in rural India. This means that a major new initiative is required to build capacities of rural people in NREGA related work. Government should seriously consider recognising a one-year diploma course on NREGA, conducted by the whole range of government and non-government training institutions spread across the country. This is the kind of preparatory work that was required even before NREGA was launched. But it is still not too late to initiate such a programme, in which institutions like CAPART can play a special role.

In the table below, we have estimated the cost of training the personnel required in the 2000 most backward blocks. It comes to less than 1% of the total cost of NREGA works. Even though we believe that capacity building must be a continuing process, there is no doubt that these costs would also come down as a fully trained cadre emerges over time.

Estimated Costs of Capacity Building

Personnel to be Trained	Persons	Days of Training	Person-days of Training	Cost/ person-day	Total Cost (Rs.Cr.)
Project Officer at GVS Level	6000	5	30000	400	1.2
Civil Engineer	6000	5	30000	325	0.98
Technical Assistants	18000	10	180000	300	5.4
Social Mobilizers	180000	10	1800000	300	54
Barefoot Engineers	180000	15	2700000	300	81
Employment Guarantee Assistants	180000	15	2700000	300	81
PRI members (3 per GP)	270000	5	1350000	300	40.5
Total	885000		8825000		264.08

10.1.4 Professional Recruitment of Professionals

In order to attract the best professionals for NREGA implementation, the recruitment of professionals also has to be done in a professional manner. This will need innovative criteria for selection of the right person for the right job and transparent and appropriate human resource policies which build in performance assessment and incentives for good performance.

Such recruitments could be outsourced to credible agencies, backed by administrative and political support. Such innovations in the contexts of specific projects have been tried by the state governments of Bihar, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu with very good impacts⁶. The involvement of Srijan and SIDS⁷ in the recruitment process for the Jeevika project of the Government of Bihar is an illustration of such outsourcing. The project is being executed by

⁶ The inputs of Arya and Shubham (2009) to this discussion are gratefully acknowledged

⁷ Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action (Srijan) is an NGO working on water and agriculture related issues in several states of India. Srijan Infratech and Development Services (SIDS) is Srijan's consultancy arm

an autonomous agency, the Bihar Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (BRLP) which also outsourced the recruitment process. We present some of the details to provide an illustration of the kind of recruitment process we require under NREGA.

Jeevika Project in Bihar

The selection process was geared towards minimizing biases. Instead of relying on interviews for selection, the candidates were tested on various parameters, including attitude. The first key task is to create a profile of the desired candidate with respect to her knowledge, skills and attitude with respect to the job profile. Once clearly defined, these attributes help in deciding the right person through the following techniques:

- *Use of Multiple, and formal, Tests of Selection:* This allows for a more wholesome understanding of the person to be selected. In order to be able to understand and rate candidates, three kinds of tests can be used:
 - *Psychometric Tests:* These are tests designed to indicate how psychologically comfortable an individual is with the kind of work expected to be taken up in the project. There are various types of psychometric tests which are used depending on what we want to assess in an individual.
 - *Sociometric Tests:* These tests are used to indicate an individual's ability and attitude towards working in peer groups or in a team.
 - *Evaluation Interview:* If handled well, this gives an overall view of what makes an individual tick. It also helps determine whether the candidate would 'fit' with the role as well as with the organization or not. The interview, like other tools in this methodology, is used not so much as a tool of selection, but as a tool of rejection.
- *Having a formal mechanism of Selection.* A Selection panel should be formally constituted to oversee the process. Clear, unambiguous and transparent criteria for selection or rejection of candidates should be placed.
- *Having panelists who have been formally trained in the use of Selection techniques:* Persons sitting as members of the selection panel should be oriented towards the selection process and techniques of observation/ evaluation for the various tests. It should not be assumed that anybody with general work experience can be a good observer/interviewer.
- In order to further test the suitability to rural development, the process also included village immersion for fresh graduates who had applied for the field coordinator positions.

Each of the tests (whether it was case analysis for senior positions, group discussions or village immersion or interviews) has a weight assigned and the final selection is arrived at after a total of all scores. Hence weights for interview were never more than 20-25% in the overall selection process. The interview panel too consisted of experts who had experience of working in similar Projects (rather than only department officials or academicians). The success of the initial process led the Government of Bihar to approve a similar process of selection across all levels of Jeevika. Thus, almost 300 staff across all the three levels were recruited for the first phase of implementation.

An employee-friendly Human Resource Policy that included performance assessment and performance linked incentives was also designed. Apart from clear job descriptions, these policies have helped retain staff and keep their morale high. Annual action plans and capacity building initiatives also helped.

Immediate declaration of results, interaction with candidates after declaring a short list to answer immediate queries etc helped maintain complete transparency. Though SIDS ran the process, the BRLP management, including the CEO was fully involved in the process.

10.2. Information Technology for NREGA

10.2.1 Current Underutilisation of IT Potential in Governance

The classical reason given for why computers are useful or critical is that they automate several tasks which would otherwise have to be done manually. When we talk of such automation we normally mean that computers are able to perform certain repetitive computational tasks at phenomenal speed, and can also multitask. In networks, they allow several people to address the same task, though maybe different aspects of it⁸.

However, while such speed and efficiency reasons are obvious, the success of applications of computers really depends on how central they are to the workflow. If we look at all successful real-life situations where computers have made a difference, this is the one fact that comes out as striking. In a railway or airlines ticketing solution, from entering the reservation application, to allotting seats, to updating the railways database with the exact seat position for each train, to recording the amounts against the ticket, all aspects are handled by the computerized system.

While such tight integration of computer systems in commercial spaces has now become common-place, its successful replication in spheres of e-governance are sadly hard to come by. Such a lacuna, it would seem, is more to do with lack of sufficient imagination, creativity and commitment to craft innovative solutions and less to do with the nature of the subject matter of governance. For indeed, governance too has well defined inputs and deliverable outputs which can be articulated into smooth and seamless flows in a digital pipeline.

In typical applications of IT in governance situations, therefore, we find that hardware and software exists but is not used centrally to automate all tasks in the workflow. In such a situation the computerized system may be used but its non-use is *not a show-stopper*⁹. The system co-exists as an adjunct to the paper systems, which are actually the prime-movers in the workflow since it is on them that the holy cow of signatures, discretionary exercise of powers to make sanctions or to deny them is exercised. In such situations we typically find that:

- Computers are used as *post-facto* repositories of data. After the event, since it is a requirement to “computerize” information and there is normally an MIS division with staff and budget, data on sanctions, orders etc. is fed into the system. Such data are outdated from the point of view of monitoring and tracking and have limited use and certainly the speed benefits which should ensue from the use of computers never reach the end-user.

⁸ Contrast this to a manual railway reservation system where certain trains would only be handled by certain counters because it would be difficult to split the booking registers. Even if they were somehow split (say into two), it would be difficult, if not altogether impossible (and certainly inefficient in terms of the end-user) to coordinate seat bookings between two or more booking clerks. Computerization does away with such divisions and allows for concurrent access by several users to the same set of data (although for the sake of data integrity, certain parts of the data might be “locked” for concurrent write access if more than one user tries to modify the same parts)

⁹ In a manner of speaking that is. The show goes on at a low-level equilibrium, without the tightness, efficiency, speed and responsiveness expected of it

- Computers are used as certain check-points before a deliverable leaves the system. So, for example, if a project has to be sanctioned, it will be made compulsory that the sanction letter is issued through the MIS. At this point the MIS division steps in to ensure that the division which is issuing the sanction letter also updates all prior data in the computer system (which it had not done so far) relating to the project in question. This “prior data” pertains to information relating to earlier stages of the project before it came into the phase of sanctioning. One may well ask, why is it important to feed this data into the computer at this stage when the computer system and indeed, the entire division, continued to work without its computerization thus far¹⁰?

These real-life examples have been given to illustrate how computerized systems may become useless from the point of view of being at the cutting edge of implementation. Why this becomes a colossal tragedy is when we compare it with the *potentially huge* usefulness of a well-designed system.

10.2.2. How Can IT be Useful in the NREGA Context?

The NREGA Workflow

What follows is a broad outline of the broad stages involved in the NREGA workflow¹¹:

- Worker registration and issue of job cards
- Work demand applications
- Planning and estimation¹²
- Sanction of work
- Estimating material requirements
- Start of work
- Daily attendance and preparation of muster rolls
- Measurement and valuation at fixed intervals
- Preparation of pay order
- Payment to wage-seekers through bank accounts
- Accounts/book keeping

Objectives of IT Deployment and Different Stakeholders

If the speed and power of computer networks is to be harnessed to deliver governance at the doorstep of the poorest people in India, the objectives defined for the use of IT will need to be understood first. At the broadest level, while the use of IT in commercial spaces is governed by costs and revenue considerations, its use in governance cases need to be driven by two major objectives:

- IT deployments in governance must lead to greater transparency and availability of updated information to decision-makers and the public at large

¹⁰ This is a real life case of how sanctions and releases are made in CAPART, the MoRD's premier institution which makes grants to NGOs. By and large the IT infrastructure has adjusted to the serenity of the pace of work set by the institution rather than the other way around

¹¹ This does not attempt to capture all complexities involved in the work flow but is offered more by way of illustration. A more detailed discussion on the workflow (as analyzed for the APREGS) can be found in Tata Consultancy Services (2006)

¹² Although shown in a sequence, planning and estimation are not activities that need to wait for work demand. Nor should work demand be contingent upon work estimates prepared which seems to be the *de facto* situation today, because proper shelves of work rarely exist. So work demand on the MIS is always made equal to the work supplied by the simple method of normally entering work demand when a particular work has been estimated *and* sanctioned

- they must play a critical role in ensuring timely delivery of deliverables that any governance initiative is committed to delivering

From the points of view of different agents in the process of NREGA implementation, we can restate these objectives slightly differently:

- From the point of view of the *wage-seeker* in NREGA, IT must ensure that she gets the benefits which are due under the Act. This means the following:
 - if she demands work, this demand must be visible to someone who is entrusted with the responsibility of providing this work
 - work must be provided within the stipulated time if not earlier
 - wages for work done should be paid transparently, without any leakages and preferably at the doorstep, without any additional effort required on the part of the wage-seeker
 - if she is provided work, this too should be visible to someone so that it is ensure that she is paid wages in full and in time
 - if she demands work and there is no one to register this demand, or if the demand is registered but work is not opened on time or if work is performed and she is not paid on time, she must be compensated as provided under the Act
- From the point of view of implementers, IT must ensure:
 - that information of work demand reaches them and is not suppressed by vested interests
 - estimates and plans are drawn up in the shortest possible time to meet this demand
 - estimates of cost are not bloated, as is wont to happen in several government works so that various pockets are lined
 - the process of sanctions and releases is expedited
 - work is started with minimum delay
 - worker payments are made within a stipulated time interval of performance of work
 - wage payments reach workers and the scope for fraud and fudging is minimized if not altogether rooted out
- From the point of view of those who monitor the programme and are responsible for social audit, quick redressals and mid-course corrections, IT must enable:
 - availability of updated information which is as close to reality as possible
 - tracking of the implementation of the NREGA schemes as they go from stage to stage for it is clear that without updated information and the ability to quickly know where bottlenecks are creeping up, immediate and responsive corrective action cannot be taken.

The above indicates that for IT to be able to deliver there must be a system in place:

- which is tightly integrated end to end
- which in turns requires that the IT system is central to the workflow, in that the workflow cannot happen outside its purview¹³, so that data are as real time as possible
- which in turn also requires that the system constantly innovates to bring more and more such areas under its purview which are traditionally thought of as belonging to the domain of notesheets, files and red tape

It needs to be remembered here of course, that what we are outlining above is the necessary

¹³ An MoRD publication (see MoRD[undated]) describes the major lacuna in the NREGASoft software designed specially for NREGA as follows: "but since all entries have to be done manually after the event has taken place, it is an online transaction based system but not real time system. It does not allow the illiterate person to directly access the system"

condition for IT to make a difference at the cutting edge. This is by no means a sufficient condition, in that such a system will not automagically ensure that everything works well. Only sustained public vigilance can finally lead us there.

Lacunae in Current IT Setup

Let us now examine the NREGA workflow and see how the situation on the ground looks for NREGA. What is attempted below is a stage-wise analysis of what is happening now and how IT can be made to deliver.

	Stage	Current Status/ Problems that can occur	Stakeholders impacted	How Can IT Effectively be Used to Change the Situation
1	Worker registration and issue of Job Cards	Registration of bogus workers (dead men/ ghosts)	Monitors: Information on wage-seekers is wrong, with possibilities of misappropriation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Unique ID project through fresh surveys and tight screening can rule out such cases - The UID can function as a single window for all entitlements due from the government
2	Work demand applications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Registered demand for work can invite penalties for implementors under the Act if works are not opened within the stipulated time. So attempts are made to suppress or under-state work demand. - A way to reconcile the work generated with work demanded is to show in the MIS all work generated as having been demanded¹⁴ 	<p>Wage Seekers: Their demand for work cannot find expression and thus, their right is denied.</p> <p>Monitors: Since the system depends on paper at the local level, no one else other than local functionaries need know about the fact that applications are not being allowed to surface</p> <p>Implementors: Cannot properly reconcile work creation with work demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UIDs when issued can be combined with biometrics, RFID and wireless networks to register work applications online. This makes actual work demand visible on the network for those monitoring the programme so that corrections can be put in place.- Even if non-IT correctives to work demand suppression exist¹⁵, IT solutions can act as yet another channel for flow of crucial monitoring information
3	Planning and Estimation	Only in a few states like Andhra are computer-generated estimates and drawings actually used. In most states, this stage of work is not computerized, even though the MIS reportedly has the capability	Implementors: In the absence of sufficient personnel, a lot of time is lost preparing work estimates and shelf of works. Thus, they are never ready in time, or the tendency is to simply copy estimates and plansPlans may be prepared which are non-priority, or with bloated estimates, or not according to standard acceptable norms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Estimation must be computerized as in Andhra. This will help put in place a proper shelf of works and plan, absence of which is a serious shortcoming in NREGA and also help in speeding up plan formulation. - Because planning and estimation is done through a software as in APREGS, dependence on “technical” personnel for this stage is

¹⁴ Dreze et.al. (2009) also point out that the MIS is entirely based on official data, and there is an issue with the credibility of the data, with a covering up of such information that may be seen to be violative of the act. Thus, the NREGA MIS routinely shows that the employment demanded is equal to that provided, whereas actually, the wage-seekers may be routinely dissuaded from applying for work.

¹⁵ Such as submission of applications directly to Project Officers who are independently recruited from the open market

	Stage	Current Status/ Problems that can occur	Stakeholders impacted	How Can IT Effectively be Used to Change the Situation
			Monitoring: Properly monitoring and tracking works available for sanction becomes impossible, affixing responsibility for non-preparation of plans becomes impossible etc. ¹⁶	reduced. - By standardizing norms for estimation, chances of overbloated estimates is reduced- by making work estimates available on a network and visible, tracking of workflow becomes faster and simpler, so proper monitoring is aided; computerized shelf of works makes possible quick comparisons and matching of demand for work with possible sources of supply so that appropriate action can be taken
4	Sanction of plan	Two types of sanctions are required: technical and administrative. Neither is computerized so there is a reliance on paper sanctions	Wage seekers: Work will not open on site until sanction is accorded. So the entitlement of timely wage employment is denied, which is a violation of their right Implementors: Implementors are kept on hold because unless they receive sanctions, they cannot implement Monitors: Invisibility of proposal pending for sanction effectively reduces chances of tracking delays between work planning and sanction, affixing responsibility and ensuring time-bound programme implementation.	- possible to have systems of computerized sanctions. Priveleged and differential access to the same data, depending on the role of the user should make it possible to accord such sanctions online. In fact the paper sanction should be a <i>report</i> emanating from online transactions, rather than the other way around - For additional safeguards digitally signed sanction letters/emails using private-public key type encryption methods may be used - This will speed up this part of the work and also make the system more tracking-friendly
5	Material requirements estimation	- Automated in Andhra - Manual elsewhere, takes time, and is not available for peer review	Implementors: - Lack of automation may slow down procurement - also may slow down payments to suppliers, accounts reconciliation etc. Monitors: - may not be enough safeguards against choice of suppliers made by implementors - Difficult to track reasons for delays in material	- Online database of suppliers (as in the case of the APREGS) limits scope for discretion and misuse in choice of suppliers. Better than <i>post-facto</i> action and deterrents - material supply and accounts thereof can be seamlessly integrated and speeded up - Data on network makes tracking better

¹⁶ While it is possible to get all information without using IT, such information flows are prone to huge delays as everyone knows and lead to question, why have an IT solution at all?

	Stage	Current Status/ Problems that can occur	Stakeholders impacted	How Can IT Effectively be Used to Change the Situation
			procurement if order placement itself is not online	
6	Start of work	Currently no way of knowing when work <i>should</i> have started, since it is entered in MIS when it is started	Monitors:- Lack of online informaton on stages prior to start of work does not make for good monitoring and tracking	- Tracking can be improved by making IT central to the workflow
7	Daily attendance and muster rolls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Taken manually - huge scope for fudging by contractors and others in the implementation interface¹⁷ - most muster roll data entered into MIS after a certain number of days of work have been completed (this is the case even in AP) 	<p>Wage seekers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do not know if information against their job card is entered correctly, are victims of corruption <p>Implementors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - can fudge, connive etc. to make money - seniors need not come to know if juniors are indulging in such malpractices <p>Monitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no means of verifying whether the muster roll details fed into the MIS are true or are fudged, so corruption cannot be tackled effectively - there is lack of updated information on labour employed 	Use of UID, GPS enabled handhelds along with biometrics <i>and</i> “NREGA correspondent model” wherein the correspondent or field worker is equipped with handheld devices which take the attendance “digitally” can enable direct <i>real time</i> updation of attendance and muster rolls. In such a system muster rolls are <i>reports</i> generated out of the online system rather than data entry forms feeding data into the system. A pilot of this concept has been proposed by the MoRD for Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Kerala, UP and Bihar ¹⁸
8	Measurement and Valuation	<p>This is an activity which will have to be done on site. However, it is delayed and is sometimes subject to enormous delays for various reasons, because of which work completion, further installments and wage payments are all delayed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is also need for verification of work done, which at present can only be done through periodic surveys/inspection of selected sights 	<p>Wage seekers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Delays in measurements can often cause serious delays in wage disbursements in clear violation of the law - It can also put at risk further work prospects <p>Monitors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of onsite verification can lead to corruption which can become very hard to establish <i>post facto</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If all previous stages are sufficiently “IT-ized”, then chances of tracking delays at this stage are maximized - use of technologies such as those outlined in the row above can make possible real-time verification of sites

¹⁷ The killing of Jharkhand activist Lalit Mehta, at the hands of the contractor mafia because his work on NREGA “revealed high levels of corruption involving people in high places”, is a grim reminder that such a situation is very much a likelihood

¹⁸ See MoRD op.cit., (undated) for a description of the concept

	Stage	Current Status/ Problems that can occur	Stakeholders impacted	How Can IT Effectively be Used to Change the Situation
9	Preparation of Pay Order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in Andhra computerized wage lists, pay orders are sent to GP, Post Office or Bank - elsewhere this stage appears largely outside the purview of the MIS as it happens which is updated later 	<p>Wage seekers:No check on pay order generation and handing over can mean delays in wages</p> <p>Monitors: No real time basis for knowing whether the pay order has been prepared or not, so if delays occur they appear only after the event</p>	Take a cue from Andhra and integrate this process it into the main MIS
10	Wage Payments to wage seekers through bank/ post offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bank/Post office based labour payments mandatory since 2008 to ensure transparency and separation of executing agency from paying agency: Not enough bank branches to deal with the number of wage-seeker accounts that need to be created; Large number of small accounts are not seen as profitable by banks; At payment time, there are a large number of wage-seekers who come for cash withdrawal who have to be catered to by a small staff; Panchayats too do not have the human resources to help wage-seekers with all the paper formalities that banks require to be completed; wage-seekers are often not aware of bank procedures and do not know how to use their accounts; bank branches are located at a distance from workers homes, so it is difficult for them to make frequent trips¹⁹; collusion mechanisms to beat the system and actually practise corruption have surfaced at different places 	<p>Wage seekers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - benefitted to the extent that bank/PO transfers check corruption - however, delays in wage payments take place frequently - traveling to banks, negotiating with them for withdrawals etc may discourage wage seekers - the poor can enter into arrangements with some people in the village for a “consideration” to help them get cash withdrawals done <p>Monitors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - no means of verification (except after the event type of social audits etc.) whether the payment has actually reached the wage -seeker or has been syphoned off - MIS does not reflect wage payment delays²⁰ 	The bank correspondent model along with UID-based smartcards, biometrics and handheld devices can ensure that payments reach the beneficiary at the doorstep

¹⁹ For wage-seekers under NREGA, frequent cash withdrawals are necessitated because this cash is used to facilitate day to day consumption

²⁰ Dreze et.al (2009) points out “Yet, delays in wage payments remain very common, and timely payment is yet to be accepted as an essential right of all workers. The casual treatment of this right is evident from the fact that in most states the Monitoring and Information System (MIS) does not include any tracking of the timeliness of wage payments: if payments are delayed, there is no trace of it in the MIS. Similarly, there is no compensation in the event of delays in wage payments. Tracking and compensation of delays in wage payments are essential to ensure that this entitlement is realized.”

10.2.3 Taking a Cue from Andhra Pradesh

The problems cited above could have been avoided if the IT systems were sufficiently geared up. For instance, while delays in estimation and planning are due partly to a shortage of staff, computerization of estimation can compensate for the lack of people. Where delays occur despite computerization (say in valuation or wage payments) a good IT deployment can make monitors aware that such delays are taking place.

It is worthwhile to look at the APREGS software, developed by the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) which comes as close as possible under the current situation to being a good IT deployment. The software was developed at the special request of the GoAP after an in-depth analysis of the NREGA workflow and an understanding of its shortcomings²¹ viz, inflated schemes with exaggerated quantities of work, “depressed person day productivity and / or inflated person day estimates”; bogus registration of workers including minors, dead men and ghost workers; fraudulent requisition of funds arising out of false measurement, inflated progress of works; fraudulent wage payments etc.

Based on this understanding, TCS laid down the following 3 guiding principles for fresh systems and procedures:

- Minimizing administrative costs
- Expediting payments and measurement cycle
- Minimizing leakages.

The system is designed to intervene in the areas of enrolment of wage-seekers, management of shelf of Works, monitoring, management of wages, material, and funds, and social audit.

All stages of NREGA work, from registration of workers to issue of job cards, preparation of estimates for works, muster rolls and transfer of payments to workers can be very effectively computerised, leading to reduction in time taken and administrative costs. Modules in the software related to estimation and planning make it possible for technical survey readings for a standard basket of activities²², taken by a Technical Assistant or EGA, to be fed into the system and a work estimate generated on this basis. Works to be executed at any village can be identified by the gram sabha and data entered into input sheets. The identified work will have necessary measurements along with the leads. With the help of input sheets, work estimates are generated in the computer system and sent to the Gram Panchayat for scrutiny and prioritization. Depending on its nature and type, every work has a given set of tasks. All the above details for a particular work are estimated task-wise and the total estimated work and material requirements for that work are computed. The estimate is given a unique ID, which is used to track the work, prepare muster rolls from the MIS system and also prepare orders for payments. The system also has modules for material management, maintaining a list of authorised suppliers, and integration of accounts. The MIS has already ensured that most or all stages of NREGA implementation cannot bypass it. Thus, work estimates, pay orders, muster rolls etc. must be generated from the system for work to continue.

The major contribution of this MIS is that it opens up NREGA for public scrutiny, thus engendering greater transparency and better public audit. Take for instance, the payment of wages. By contrast with the rest of the country, labour payments in Andhra Pradesh are

²¹ See Tata Consultancy Services (2006)

²² The software allows for customisation in terms of adding activities or modifying estimation procedures

increasingly being made within a week of completion of the previous week's work. By the last (sixth) day in a week's work, the measurement sheets and muster rolls of the entire week are closed and reach the mandal (sub-block) computer centre. The next day, the muster data are fed into the computer. On day eight, the pay order is generated by the computer and the cheques are prepared. By day ten, these cheques are deposited into the post office accounts of workers. The next day cash is conveyed to the post office so that on days 12 and 13, workers are able to access their wages from their accounts. All payments to labour are made only through these accounts; there are no payments in cash.

Since the computer system is tightly integrated end-to-end, any work registered in the system is alive, status-visible and amenable to tracking. Delays at any stage can thus be immediately identified and corrected. The system keeps track of the work from the day the work-ID is generated and starts flagging delays in the payment cycle as soon as they occur. Because the network secures all levels from the ground up to the State headquarters and data are transparently and immediately available on the website, a delay at any stage is instantly noticed by the monitoring system. The free availability of this information on the website also facilitates public scrutiny, thus engendering greater transparency and better social audit.

10.2.4 Mobile Phones, Biometrics, Banking Correspondents and Bank Payments

Labour payments in NREGA through banks or post office accounts²³ have been made compulsory since 2008. While this is a move to ensure transparency so that handling of cash for payments is ruled out, lack of sufficient preparation for this move has led to several problems²⁴:

- There are not enough bank branches to deal with the number of wage-seeker accounts that need to be created.
- The accounts, if created, have a lot of paper work associated with them and banks are understaffed to take on this load, or otherwise do not see it as a profitable enough proposition.
- At payment time, there are a large number of wage-seekers who come for cash withdrawal to cater to by a very small staff.
- Panchayats too do not have the human resources to help wage-seekers with all the paper formalities that banks require to be completed
- wage-seekers are often not aware of bank procedures and do not know how to use their accounts
- bank branches are located at a large distance from where the workers live, so it is difficult for the to make frequent trips. For wage-seekers under NREGA, frequent cash withdrawals are necessitated because this cash is used to facilitate day to day consumption
- most shockingly, there are different types of collusion mechanisms to beat the system and actually practise corruption! A “good samaritan” in the village can volunteer to make withdrawals on behalf of several villagers. He can collect their passbooks, get withdrawal

²³ In this section, the term “bank” is used to mean banks and post offices

²⁴ See Vanaik et.al (2008), Dreze and Khera (2008) for discussions of the problems arising in the transition to the bank payment systems

slips signed, fill in one amount and give the wage-seeker another, or ask for a cut for his services. Even more serious cases are cited where for instance, contractors get bank accounts opened in the name of the wage-seekers without their knowledge. He then, along with the panchayat sewak fabricates muster rolls. Whatever money is transferred to the bank accounts of the labourers is eaten up by the two *and* unscrupulous elements in the bank²⁵

Despite its various problems, everyone (including the villagers themselves²⁶) are agreed that payment through bank transfers is a good thing and must stay. Its basic premises of separating those in-charge of work execution from those in-charge of payments and doing away with the handling of cash is fundamentally sound. Under the circumstances, it is desirable to think of ways in which the problems in the system are taken care of. Here Information Technology has a big role to play. The potential of the use of IT to create transparent and empowering systems is best seen in the use of the banking correspondent model. Essentially, the system is simple – the beneficiary may be given a smartcard which is powered by Radio Frequency Identification Technology (RFID). Optionally a secure mobile coupled with biometric authentication may serve the same purpose. Instead of banks opening more and more branches to cater to the rural areas, they hire the services of a business development correspondent. This correspondent is equipped with a cellphone or a handheld device whose memory is buttressed by flash cards which also has records of beneficiary accounts. Beneficiaries swipe their cards (smart cards or otherwise) against the phone and use their thumbprint for biometric identification. The transaction is updated instantaneously (or optionally the data may be synchronized with back-end servers periodically) and the cash is delivered to the doorstep from the cash chest in the possession of the correspondent. A printer may give out details of the transaction as a paper record.

The model has been piloted and tested with success²⁷. The GoAP plans to use this technology to deliver not only NREGA payments but crop loans, supplies through the PDS, SHG linkages and 14 more services²⁸. The then Chairperson of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, Dr. C. Rangarajan has endorsed the banking correspondent model and said that it must be used to make banking more inclusive:

“Technology has to enable the branch to go to the customer instead of the other way around”²⁹

Pushed by the RBI towards greater and greater inclusive banking, banks such as the State Bank of Hyderabad, Union Bank of India, UTI Bank and Andhra Bank have also embraced the biometric-business correspondent model, in partnership with organizations like A Little World and The Zero Mass Foundation³⁰. While the approach holds out genuine promise in terms of engendering transparency, extreme care has to be exercised that the business correspondent does not morph into a moneylender over time.

There are problems with biometrics, as field trials have shown. Several times, the thumb impression is not clear because it has been blurred or calloused due to a hard day’s work³¹. However, what such a technology has the potential to enable is transparency and a direct

²⁵ Dreze and Khera (2008)

²⁶ Field reports from consortium partners in different parts of the country indicate this

²⁷ See Amarnath K. Menon (2008), Leslie D'Monte (2008), Kris Dev (2006), NISG (2006) for some descriptions of the pilots and their success.

²⁸ K. Raju, Principal Secretary, RD, GoAP quoted in Amarnath K. Menon (2008)

²⁹ See Hindu Business Line (2007)

³⁰ Outlook (2007)

³¹ NISG (2006) discusses some of these issues

outreach to the end user. So, its scope needs to be expanded, both in terms of innovative ideas and expansion in scale.

Here, along with thumbprints, photo identification can be used if the central server stores a photograph of the account holder. The mobile phone can be fitted with a small webcam which can be used for face recognition, which is compared against the photo on the central server. This further reduces the possibilities of fraud.

10.2.5 NREGA Correspondents

With the success of the above pilots in the banking sector, it is time to think of extending the use of such technologies to the core areas of NREGA implementation.

Here, the recent Unique Identification³² project of the GoI can have a crucial role to play in both engendering transparency and inclusion and ensuring that crucial data are concurrently available for monitoring. The Identity card can function as a single window for the entitlements of the poor not only under NREGA but all government schemes such as the proposed Food Security Act, health care, education and so on. The business of manual updation of job cards and the consequent bad practices of some people keeping workers cards will become redundant.

A system can be visualized whereby handhelds are issued to field assistants under NREGA, and muster rolls are directly updated online to the state-level servers by biometric identification of the workers who are present on site. Such an immediate updation will go a long way in aiding concurrent monitoring. In fact, the paper muster roll can be a print out of the online muster. Fitted with GPRS facilities, the system should further aid in verification of the work being done on the site at which is reportedly being done (MoRD (undated) op.cit.). It seems that this has also already been piloted in different states by the MoRD. The results of this pilot should be made public and appropriate policies framed on the feedback

To take another example, the question of work demand applications. It is possible to imagine a situation where the local sarpanch is unwilling to accept the work demand application of a wage-seeker. If NREGA correspondents, or a computer is available even within the perimeter of the GVS or the Block, the application can be made online. For those monitoring the system, this is enough information to ask for explanations from the GP or others involved in the implementation, as to why the work application has not been made to the GP and why work has not been opened up.

Placed within a network, such technologies can ensure what they are meant to do: that information is made available when it is needed so that transparency and effective delivery of government welfare measures reach the poor's doorstep.

10.2.6 Statutory Warning

Concluding this section on the uses of IT will be incomplete without the "statutory" warning that IT is not a magic bullet in itself. In the beginning of the section we cited examples of where IT deployments have been successful. These are typically workflows where either

³² The Unique Identification Authority of India has been set up under the chairpersonship of Nandan Nilekani, erstwhile CEO of Infosys. This demand-driven process will both benefit NREGA and will, in turn, receive its greatest demand from NREGA workers.

time is at a premium or profits are involved. The question is whether the same commitment can be shown towards delivering to the rural poor. This has not yet been very discernible. It is hoped, however, that with pressure from below, and in a framework of other reforms around NREGA, IT will be utilized to its fullest potential.

10.3. A National Authority for NREGA

As the detailed discussion of the problems that face NREGA implementation in Chapter 1 has shown, the revolutionary potential of the Act is far from being realized on the ground. Indeed, with 37 days of employment generated on an average across the country in 2008-09 and only about 14% of wage seeking households in 2008-09 going the full 100 days of work, delays in wage payments, and vested interests violating transparency provisions and misappropriating funds, it is clear that the implementation of the Act has a long way to go. The previous two sections have discussed at length the kind of human and IT deployments that are needed in order that NREGA delivers not only in physical terms but in the more crucial areas of transparency and governance reform. Given the huge mandate of the Act, it seems clear that there is also a lacuna at the “top”, in terms of guiding and anchoring the programme at the national level.

The NREGA has assigned several responsibilities of steering and guiding the programme to the central government. Indeed, much credit for whatever achievements have been registered under NREGA must go to the NREGA cell at the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, which has undertaken the uphill task of getting NREGA off the ground across the country in very difficult conditions. But it has also been correctly observed that:

“Indeed, it is interesting to compare the facilities and structures that are available for NREGA at the centre with those of say, the Election Commission, the Census of India, or Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan – other national programmes with a much *smaller* budget and mandate. The NREGA cell at the Ministry of Rural Development is a dwarf in comparison, with most of the responsibilities handled by one beleaguered Joint Secretary (with a little help from UNDP consultants)”

The NREGA also assigns the following powers to the Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC)³³

- “(a) establish a central evaluation and monitoring system;
- (b) advise the Central Government on all matters concerning the implementation of this Act;
- (c) review the monitoring and redressal mechanism from time to time and recommend improvements required;
- (d) promote the widest possible dissemination of information about the Schemes made under this Act;
- (e) monitoring the implementation of this Act;
- (f) preparation of annual reports to be laid before Parliament by the Central Government on the implementation of this Act;

³³ Section 11 of the NREGA

(g) any other duty or function as may be assigned to it by the Central Government.

(2) The Central Employment Guarantee Council shall have the power to undertake evaluation of the various Schemes made under this Act and for that purpose collect or cause to be collected statistics pertaining to the rural economy and the implementation of the Schemes.”

However, despite its very comprehensive mandate, it would appear that the CEGC has yet to realize its full potential. We strongly believe that the largest employment programme in human history requires a separate Authority to anchor it and to ensure that the legal entitlements are complied with. We propose the setting up of a National Authority for NREGA (NAN) as an autonomous body within the Ministry of Rural Development for discharging three of the most important functions to make NREGA effective:

- Deploying IT and human resources to make NREGA implementation more effective
- Social Audit, Monitoring and Evaluation of NREGA implementation
- Grievance Redressal

Setting up of such an authority will help to separate the functions of executing the programme from those of monitoring, evaluation and grievance redressal, since as a matter of principle, the agency executing the programme should not be the one also assessing its own work. The authority is required also so that appropriate focus can be given to deployment of IT and human resource development, without which NREGA will not realize its potential.

In order to ensure maximum autonomy, the Chairperson of NAN should be an individual of established integrity and eminence chosen from public life. However, until such time as the road map for such autonomy along with its legal-constitutional implications is worked out, the Minister for Rural Development, GoI may be the Chairperson of NAN.

We propose that NAN has the following structure:

- NAN is an autonomous body, registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860
- The Central Employment Guarantee Council is the Governing Body of NAN
- The Minister for Rural Development, GoI, will be the Chairperson of NAN.
- NAN should also have a General Body comprising representatives from State Employment Guarantee Councils, state governments, elected representatives, domain experts, representatives of workers organisations, civil society organizations etc
- NAN has an executive arm, which discharges on a day-to-day basis what the CEGC is mandated with and reports periodically to the CEGC about its activities
- The executive arm is headed by a Director General (DG), who shall be an officer not below the rank of Secretary to the Government of India, and who should be selected from the open market after a careful search and screen process³⁴. The process should identify potential candidates from within the government or outside. The DG of NAN will also be ex-officio member-secretary of the CEGC. She is the executive through whom the will of the CEGC is expressed in action. The DG will report to the Chairperson, NAN and the CEGC.
- The executive arm of the authority has the following departments:

³⁴ The DG, DDGs and professionals can be appointed after the recommendations of a search committee consisting of the Cabinet Secretary as the chairperson, and two eminent professionals connected with NREGA implementation. Serving government officers can also apply for these posts.

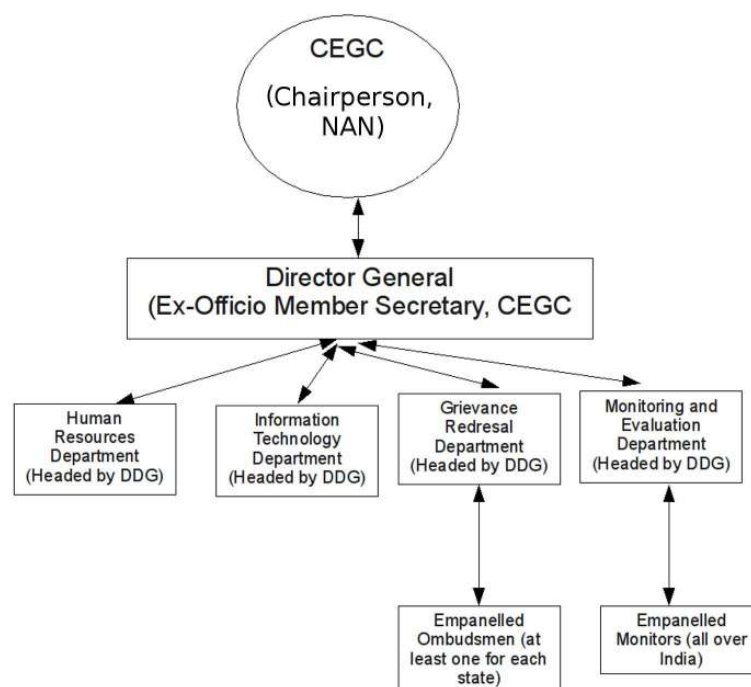
- *Monitoring, Evaluation and Social Audit*: Headed by a Deputy Director General (DDG, whose recruitment is from the open market and who will report to the DG), responsible for concurrent monitoring of work under NREGA, mounting evaluations through a carefully selected panel of experts and consultants from across the country, ensuring that social audits are undertaken and monitoring the action taken on the findings of such social audits;
- *Grievance Redressal*: Headed by another DDG whose recruitment is from the open market, and who will report to the DG, the department will be a window for immediate response to any complaint made by wage-seekers, lay citizens, representatives of wage-seekers, organizations working with wage-seekers or any other agency or institution wishing to bring to the notice of the NAN and the CEGC any violation of the Act or its operational guidelines in any part of the country. The department will appoint Ombudsmen throughout the country who will work as the eyes, arms and legs of the NAN³⁵.
 - ♦ Ombudsmen will:
 - be at least one for each state of the country, and can be more than one in a state depending on criteria such as population, geographical area and so on
 - be citizens of proven eminence, integrity and track record of service to the nation
 - be fully empowered by the authority of NAN and the CEGC to discharge their duties
 - receive complaints and then take up the matter with the district administration and the SEGC. If needed, the Ombudsman may go to the site from where complaints have originated, or appoint a team to go there, or organize that a multilateral committee made up of representatives of the government, ombudsman concerned and the complainant, be set up to find out the true facts *within a stipulated time frame*. The committee would submit a report with clear recommendations of action needed to be taken specifying the time period within which the action needs to be taken. The Ombudsman would report to the NAN about the action taken or not taken
- *Information Technology Department*: Also headed by a DDG, who will report to the DG, this department's role will be to:
 - ♦ assess ICT needs, in terms of both hardware and software, for providing a proper ICT backbone for NREGA implementation and come up with a blueprint for effective ICT deployment for NREGA which caters to information needs vis a vis transparency, monitoring and grievance redressals
 - ♦ deploy the best possible expertise available in the country to advise it on ICT deployments
 - ♦ ensure that the ICT blueprint is deployed once it has been ratified by the CEGC
 - ♦ ensure ICT deployment across the country, conforming to the best standards anywhere in the world
 - ♦ ensure that states are complying with the ICT requirements of data returns and updation
 - ♦ ensure that latest developments in ICT which are potentially beneficial for use in

³⁵ This is akin to the system of Commissioners and Advisers set up by the Supreme Court in the Right to Food case

NREGA implementation and monitoring are screened, piloted, developed further and disseminated

- ♦ NREGA implementation personnel are trained in use of ICT
- *Human Resources Department*: Also headed by a DDG, who will report to the DG, this department's primary responsibility will be
 - ♦ to work out standards for human resources recruited for NREGA implementation,
 - ♦ to work out a system of certification for human resources, which all implementation structures have to comply with,
 - ♦ to identify and set standards for identifying training institutions across the country who can discharge the responsibilities of capacity building for NREGA
 - ♦ to work out syllabi for training courses that NREGA personnel should go through,
 - ♦ to arrange for trainings for these personnel

The following diagram attempts to sum up the proposed structure of NAN:



10.4. The Forest Conundrum

It is well known that obtaining permission to work in land under the control of the forest department³⁶ is extremely difficult for any implementing agency, whether government or non-government, due to the provisions of the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 (FCA). The FCA is invoked even for work such as low-cost soil and moisture conservation measures which have proven themselves to be beneficial to the micro-level flora and fauna of the forest³⁷. This poses a bottleneck, particularly in NREGA interventions on the watershed development

³⁶ Even though such land may not have forest cover

³⁷ The benefits of such work are recognized by the forest department too. Take for example the letter of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Madhya Pradesh dated 28/4/2001, which states clearly that activities such as construction or deepening of small tanks, water harvesting structures, naala bunds, small stop dams etc. are extremely beneficial for forests and *do not* require clearance or no-objections under the Forest Conservation Act of 1980. However, despite this, a no-objection certificate may be extremely difficult, if not impossible to obtain

approach, where the ridge area of the watershed is typically located on land in the control of the forest department. And since India's *adivasis* are normally concentrated in villages close to the forest, it becomes difficult to carry out such NRM-focussed development activities in adivasi villages. A conflict is also often created with the very basic provisions of employment guarantee, since long delays in obtaining necessary permissions for working in forest areas translate themselves into inordinate gaps between work demand and work initiation, thus nullifying the very purpose of the employment guarantee.

10.4.1 The Forest Rights Act 2006

It is in this context that we wish to highlight the provisions of the Forest Rights Act of 2006³⁸ (FRA). The passage of the Forest Rights Act, in the midst of bitter opposition on the part of wildlife conservationists, seeks to inaugurate a new chapter in the history of India's forests and scheduled tribes. As the preamble to the FRA clearly says, the Act is a long overdue attempt to undo the historical injustices done to scheduled tribes and other traditional forest dwelling communities:

“WHEREAS the recognised rights of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers include the responsibilities and authority for sustainable use, conservation of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological balance and thereby strengthening the conservation regime of the forests while ensuring livelihood and food security of the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers;
AND WHEREAS the forest rights on ancestral lands and their habitat were not adequately recognised in the consolidation of State forests during the colonial period as well as in independent India resulting in historical injustice to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who are integral to the very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem;
AND WHEREAS it has become necessary to address the long standing insecurity of tenurial and access rights of forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers including those who were forced to relocate their dwelling due to State development interventions”³⁹

The Act brings into its ambit all manner of forest areas and defines community forest resource to mean

“customary forest land within the traditional or customary boundaries of the village or seasonal use of landscape in the case of pastoral communities, including reserved forests, protected forests and protected areas such as Sanctuaries and National Parks to which the community had traditional access”⁴⁰,

³⁸ The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act passed by the Indian Parliament in 2006 and notified in the Gazette of India Extraordinary in 2007

³⁹ The preamble to the Forest Rights Act 2006

⁴⁰ Forest Rights Act 2006, Section 2(a)

and recognizes the rights of forest dwellers to live in forests, to *nistaar*, to entitlements such as grazing and fish and other products of water bodies and even provides rights for conversions of all forest villages, old habitation, unsurveyed villages and other villages in forests into revenue villages⁴¹.

What is more are the enabling and empowering provisions of this Act in terms of work in the forest areas:

“Notwithstanding anything contained in the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980⁴², the Central Government shall provide for diversions of forest land for the following facilities managed by the Government which involve felling of trees not exceeding seventy-five trees per hectare, namely:-

- a) schools;
- b) dispensary or hospital;
- c) *anganwadis*;
- d) fair price shops;
- e) electric and telecommunication lines;
- f) tanks and other minor water bodies;
- g) drinking water supply and water pipelines;
- h) water or rain water harvesting structures;
- i) minor irrigation canals;
- j) non-conventional source of energy;
- k) skill upgradation or vocational training centres;
- l) roads; and
- m) community centres;

Provided that such diversion of forest land shall be allowed only if,

- (i) the forest land to be diverted for the purposes mentioned in this sub-section is less than one hectare in each case; and
- (ii) the clearance of such development projects shall be subject to the condition that the same is recommended by the Gram Sabha⁴³

When the Forest Rights Act has given such a clear and overwhelming mandate to the Gram Sabha to take decisions relating to work in the forest areas, it is disturbing that no move has been made to roll this out on the ground. Works such as rain water harvesting structures, irrigation canals, tanks and minor water bodies belong to the set of priority areas for NREGA work. They are also critical components of ridge area treatment measures in most watershed interventions, which in turn are crucial in ensuring that a certain level of livelihoods and food security is ensured for India's adivasis. Efforts of this kind which bring the adivasi community and other poor forest dwellers out of their absolute levels of poverty are important not only in economic terms, but also in laying the foundation for genuine governance reform for rural areas, as well as saving the forests themselves.

Work on NREGA in forest areas could hold the key to tackling thorny problems like

⁴¹ Forest Rights Act 2006, Chapter II, Section 3

⁴² Emphasis ours

⁴³ Forest Rights Act 2006, Chapter II, Section 3(2)

naxalism. The FRA provides a facilitating framework which helps overcome the difficulties apparently arising out of the FCA

10.5. Reform of the Schedule of Rates

The current system of measuring work done in rural employment programmes in India is on the basis of the Schedule of Rates (SoR). This schedule provides the government-approved rates at which work done by labour is valued. What SoRs do in effect is to set up equivalence between the physical quantum of work performed and the financial payments to be made for this work. The present SoRs are meant for a system that uses contractors and machines to carry out public works. These contractors, as a rule, do not pay statutory minimum wages to labour and get most of their work done through machines like the JCB.⁴⁴ Deploying the same SoRs under NREGA makes it impossible for workers to earn minimum wages. This is because existing SoRs make inadequate provisions for variations in geology and climate, discriminate against women, tend to underpay workers by lumping various activities together and do not revise rates in line with increments in statutory minimum wages (Vijay Shankar *et al*, 2006). The system of valuation using current SoRs makes it impossible for implementers like Gram Panchayats to correctly estimate the cost of works undertaken by them. The result is a combination of malpractices — more work shown on paper than actually undertaken by “fixing” muster rolls, poor quality of work done, work left incomplete as actual cost exceeds sanctioned amounts, violation of minimum wages laws, bogus workers shown as paid while machines actually do the work etc.

A charter of reforms for the Schedule of Rates must include:

- *Allow for variations in geological strata:* Geological strata vary in hardness and compaction. It is important to understand that the variations in geology cannot be straightjacketed to five of six categories. We need to allow for more intermediate rates for strata that do not strictly fit into these categories;
- *Allow for climatic variations:* For instance, high temperatures in summer slow down the pace of work. Here, we could add a premium to the existing rate for the work in these “hot months”, thus effectively downscaling the output norm per worker in these months.
- *The notion of an average worker implicit in the SoR does not allow for gender and age differences:* Studies have shown that sections of people such as the Primitive Tribe Groups (like the Sahariyas in MP and Rajasthan) have, for a variety of historical factors, inherited a weaker physical constitution. We must also remember that there are also large ‘malnutrition pockets’ in the country, where employment under NREGA is the only hope for the poor. In all such cases, payments should be made only on time-rates and no reference should be made to the Schedule of Rates. In this respect, recent orders of the GoMP⁴⁵ are radical, facilitating the participation of aged and differently abled persons at NREGA sites at minimum wages
- *Indexing of SoRs to Minimum Wages:* In many states, the revision of minimum wages takes place annually while the SoRs are revised once in three or more years. This means that

⁴⁴ The word “JCB” is now used colloquially as a genericised term for digger-excavator engineering vehicles, (now appearing in the Oxford English Dictionary), although the J. C. Bamford (Excavators) Ltd. company still treats JCB as its trademark.

⁴⁵ See section *Special Provisions for the Differently Aabled* in this chapter

work valued by SoRs fails to keep up with minimum wages. A standard indexing procedure needs to be followed by which rates must customarily be raised in line with the rise in statutory minimum wages.

- *Unbundling Composite Works:* SoRs also tend to underpay labour by lumping many activities within one rate. In particular, this tends to undervalue women's work who often do a lot of this kind of work. There is a need to unbundle these composite items into discrete activities, and fix separate rates for each within the SoRs. The most onerous sub-activity should be pegged at the minimum wage.⁴⁶
- *Hidden Costs into the Open:* As opposed to contractor based systems where no protection is offered to unskilled and semi-skilled workforce, the NREGA contains several provisions for insurance against accidents, disability and death while on duty, provision of medical aid, drinking water, care of children etc. Since the SoR have no provision to accommodate such payments, these are sometimes referred to as the "hidden costs" of labour (GoK, 2004). The NREGA should be able to finance such costs by including them as part of the SoRs.

In their orientation, the SoRs are fundamentally anti-labour. If the SoRs, in their current status, are used to value work done under NREGA, it would inevitably lead to violation of minimum wage laws, use of contractors and use of machines. Hence, the SoRs need to be modified to take care of these aspects.

Moreover, the entire process of arriving at these rates needs to be made much more transparent and participatory. The process of making and revising SoRs is entirely shrouded in mystery. It is heartening to note that the official NREGA Guidelines (GoI, 2005) prescribe that a watch shall be kept

"on the average wages earned under a task-based system. If necessary, the schedule of rates may be revised to ensure that the earnings are near the wage rate."

The Guidelines also provide that

"norms for measurement of work should be updated in advance of the implementation of the Employment Guarantee Scheme to a) ensure that all tasks/works are identified clearly and that nothing remains invisible and underpaid in piece-rate work; b) delineate tasks properly and carefully and to fix rates separately to the extent possible. Each such task should be specified and defined properly, and the clubbing/bundling of separable tasks should be avoided; c) devise productivity norms for all the tasks listed under piece-rate works for the different local conditions of soil, slope and geology types in such a way that normal work for seven hours results in earnings at least equal to the minimum wage."

The Guidelines also direct State Governments to

"undertake comprehensive work, time and motion studies. These studies will observe outturn and fix rates after detailed location-specific observations. This implies that productivity norms must follow possible outturn under different geo-morphological and climatic

⁴⁶ Moreover, these activities are sequentially arranged and delay in one might cause delays down the line. For instance, unless the first layer of soil is watered and compacted, the next layer cannot be placed on top of it. Unless puddle filling proceeds at the same pace, embankment construction will get delayed. The workers down-the-line will, therefore, be unable to meet productivity targets and hence not earn minimum wages. This calls for better organisation of work at the site

conditions, across and within Districts. This is of particular significance in areas with a high degree of location specificity and variability in the soil, slope and geological conditions and seasonal variation. Therefore, a matrix of rates for the same task needs to be drawn up that follows ecological rather than administrative boundaries. Based on these studies, separate Schedules of Rates should be prepared for each District, to be called ‘District Schedule of Rates’ (DSR). The DSR may also have further disaggregation within the District, e.g. separate Schedules of Rates for different geographical areas. These rates with standard designs should be proactively disclosed and widely publicized. In particular, the District Schedule of Rates should be posted at worksites in the vernacular, in a manner that is legible and comprehensible to labourers using the simple terminology of people’s estimates.”

Ideally, a Working Group should be set up in each district to carry out this exercise. This Group should include Gram and Zila Panchayat representatives, local NGOs, independent professionals and government officials and engineers. The role of this Group should not only be to prepare and revise District Schedule of Rates but also to arrange for the dissemination of these rates in Gram Sabha meetings across the district. It is only through such efforts that the black box of the SoRs can be opened up and a check be placed on what can be a major potential source of corruption in the NREGA.

10.6 Mandating A Role for Civil Society

As the contents of this report have shown, civil society initiatives have gone a long way in making NREGA effective. Our consortium partners themselves in partnership with GPs have prepared detailed action plans worth several crores of rupees, across gram panchayats of the country. Real strides have been made towards greater inclusion of people left out of the entitlements of the Act because they had not been registered as workers or did not have job cards. Through door to door campaigns, CSOs have been able to increase the demand for work under NREGA.

Where mobilization by CSOs has taken place, the participation of village communities in NREGA has increased, their awareness of their entitlements too has expanded. CSOs have been able to checkmate bad practices from taking place through their role of vigilance and have been effective in ensuring that the writ of the law has prevailed.

In their areas of operation, CSOs have been able to convince district administrations and state governments about the way NREGA works can be better planned, or the way the state can provide for better worksite facilities and root out delays in wage payments. They have enabled a direct interface between wage-seekers and administration. CSOs have also worked hard to convince the political leadership in their areas to advocate reforms or changes in NREGA.

There is clearly both need and scope to step up the involvement of CSOs to bring it to a critical mass. Depending on the kind of expertise and experience available with them, CSOs can be involved to play at least 4 different types of roles:

10.6.1 Support to Gram Panchayats in Planning, Implementation and Social Audit

Several consortium partners have been engaged in supporting GPs in planning, implementation and social audit. There are at present two patterns which can be discerned in such cases:

- In the case of partners of the Jaisamand Consortium in Rajasthan, WASSAN and partners in Andhra, the Hyderabad Karnataka Consortium in Karnataka, Western Orissa NREGA Consortium in Orissa, consortium partners in Chhattisharh and Madhya Pradesh, such support has been pro-actively offered by the partners to GPs and accepted by the GPs through formal resolutions passed by the GP. The partners have worked closely with GPs to prepare detailed NRM-centred action plans, carry out training and exposure of panchayat functionaries, mobilization and awareness generation, proper registration of wage-seekers, creation of job cards and other aspects of NREGA implementation. However, it is important to note that there is an absence of a clear policy framework and administrative sanctions backing these partnerships, spelling out what the outlines and structure of such a partnership should be. Thus in cases of conflict, there is no fallback arrangement, which may lead to a disruption of the partnership to the detriment of the work on the ground.
- In the case of Foundation for Ecological Security in Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan and PRADAN in West Bengal and Orissa, the respective state governments have invited FES and PRADAN to work with GPs to help them in planning and implementation of NREGA works. The responsibility of work execution rests with GPs. However, FES and PRADAN support them in planning works, technical estimation, training of village-level functionaries, execution of the works, payments, reporting and interface with the district administration. Such partnerships benefit from the support received from the administration and its policy guidelines to streamline the process and enforces a commitment which is binding on both parties involved for a mutually agreed period of time so that work can proceed smoothly. Clearly, this approach has several advantages over the previous one and should be the preferred route for mainstreaming CSO support.

10.6.2 Direct Implementation

The GoMP has shown commendable vision in foreseeing very early the potential and desirability of convergence of NREGA with schemes for watershed development. A state-wise watershed development programme under NREGA was launched in March 2007 by the GoMP⁴⁷, to be overseen by the GoMP's Rajiv Gandhi Mission for Watershed Development. The scheme envisages treatment of identified watershed areas (which can include untreated portions of watersheds treated earlier) across different districts of the state.

Such watersheds are allotted to government line departments or credible NGOs, who are carefully screened and selected by the state government and designated as Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs), for carrying out treatment works. To be selected, applications

⁴⁷ See GoMP (2007)

in a prescribed format are solicited by the District Panchayat from credible NGOs of the district. These applications are then forwarded by the District Panchayat to the Mission Office at the state level. The NGOs are ranked on the basis of their experience and expertise and selected on the basis of this ranking as partner NGOs for the watershed programme. From among several such partner NGOs in a district, the more experienced ones are additionally given the role of “Lead NGO”, which involves, *inter alia*, coordination among partner NGOs in the district and helping the NGO-district administration interface.

The responsibility of implementation is vested with the selected NGO, in partnership with the GP. To operationalize this partnership, the watershed guidelines call for formation of Watershed Committees (WC) at the micro-watershed level. Members of the WC are elected by the Gram Sabha and the WC functions as a committee of the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha. The sarpanch of the GP is the *ex-officio* Chairperson of the WC. The WC has a President and a Secretary. The funds for watershed treatment works is disbursed by the district panchayat directly to a specially created works account of the WC. Signatories to this account are the GP Sarpanch, the President and Secretary of the WC and the Project Officer of the PIA. Planning on a watershed basis for all micro-watersheds, capacity building of village level functionaries, execution of works, filling in of muster rolls, making payments to workers through bank labour accounts, filing MIS returns at the block level, ensuring that transparency and vigilance provisions of the NREGA are complied with, is the responsibility of the PIA in close coordination with the WC. Consortium partners FES in Mandla, SPS in Dewas and Gram Sudhar Samiti in Sidhi are working as PIAs in this NREGS Watershed Programme.

To extend this concept across the country, certain hectares of land in each block must be reserved for treatment on a watershed/drought proofing basis. These areas should be handed over to capable CSOs after a careful screening process, to create models of excellence based on participatory planning and implementation. Where such CSOs have been assigned this responsibility there should be clear and unambiguous policy guidelines that 50% of the available job cards are reserved to be used by them in plan execution. This is necessary to create the requisite enabling framework so that unnecessary disputes arising between GPs and CSOs on the sharing of limited job cards do not arise.

10.6.3 Capacity Building, Mobilization and Monitoring

Some state governments have identified good NGOs who can take over the task of training, mobilization and monitoring of NREGA programmes. The Government of Uttar Pradesh (GoUP), has issued orders for a Special Plantation Drive in Bundelkhand and Vindhyaachal in year 2009-10, in which 55 million plants in eleven districts of the these regions are proposed to be planted. The project will be financed through the resources of NREGS and Forest Department. This project was launched in the districts of Bundelkhand region in the year 2008-09, where NGOs and other independent organizations were deployed for carrying out the concurrent monitoring, feedback and evaluation of the work being executed. One NGO was allotted between 1 and 2 blocks to monitor the work and was financed from the administrative expenses admissible under NREGS. The experience was that this not only helped in mid-course corrections, but the process also through up crucial information which

was not available with the departments. Besides, it also helped in imparting credibility to the implementation process as a kind of third party validation.

Under this project, Consortium Partner Arthik Anusandhan Kendra of Allahabad has been assigned the work of monitoring, training and mobilization of NREGS workers and other functionaries involved in the project in blocks of Mirzapur and Sonbhadra districts of the Vindhyachal region. The work of evaluation is planned to be assigned to the Banaras Hindu University. The GoUP is also identifying other reputed NGOs and institutions which are willing and capable of taking up this work.

10.6.4 Social Audit, Vigilance, and Advocacy

The success of the NREGA social audit process in Andhra Pradesh, wherein 4 million NREGA records have been publicly scrutinised and about Rs.1.25 crores of misappropriated funds recovered⁴⁸, bears eloquent testimony to synergies that can effectively be harnessed when government and civil society comes together to make common cause. Such a partnership has demanded that traditionally established mindsets of mutual suspicion and antagonism are shed on both sides.

The Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) led by Aruna Roy, one of the architects of NREGA, introduced the concept of social audit into development practice nearly two decades ago. But even in Rajasthan, where MKSS started its work, mainstreaming social audits has remained a distant dream. There has been violent resistance from the vested interests threatened with exposure and state support has been uncertain at best. By contrast, in Andhra Pradesh, an MKSS activist is working full-time within the government as Consultant and Specialist, NREGA social audit. Remarkably, this has not required the MKSS to dilute its position. Rather, in many ways, it has helped carry the process to a new high. The credit for this must, of course, go to the State government that has set up a separate unit exclusively for social audit, which enjoys great freedom of action.

The success of the social audit process has led the state government to frame new rules marking a historic step in the direction of institutionalising social audit⁴⁹. These rules promise full support to “any independent initiative of wage seekers to carry out additional social audits.”. Carrying the step further, the GoAP has earlier this year announced the setting up of an autonomous society, the Andhra Pradesh Society for Social Audit and Transparency to serve as an independent institution dedicated to social audit and empowerment of the poor.

Recently, a landmark MoU (see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.4) was signed between the Commissioner, Rural Development, GoAP and a network of Civil Society organizations, including all consortium partners in Andhra Pradesh, to ensure effective implementation of the Act in the selected mandals/villages. The MoU, initially for a period of one year, covers almost a third of the total mandals in the state and provides a common platform for both the government implementation agencies at various levels (mandal, district and State) and the civil society organisations to meet, share experiences, review NREGA operationalization regularly, participate in social audit and ensure effective implementation of the Act. This state-civil society partnership will also act as a grievance redressal forum.

⁴⁸ See Mihir Shah et.al (2008)

⁴⁹ See GoAP (2008)

10.6.5 A CAPART Scheme for NREGA

Given the importance of NREGA and the need for scaling up CSO participation, institutions like CAPART must play a bigger role in bringing on board credible and committed CSOs.. A fresh CAPART scheme for NREGA and CSO participation needs to be urgently put in place. Presented below is an outline of such a scheme, tentatively titled *NGO-PRI Partnership for Success of NREGA*:

Need for the Scheme

The passage of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (NREGA) has given rise to new enthusiasm among the poorest sections of Indian society. The NREGA promises the largest ever employment programme in human history. This unprecedented commitment of financial resources is matched only by the imaginative architecture of NREGA.

NREGA funds can be used to create basic water infrastructure in villages, which are also priority activities under the NREGA guidelines. Over time, an entire village development plan can be implemented. In less than five years, the infrastructure created will become the foundation for a range of income-generating livelihoods such as improved dryland agriculture and a range of nature-based livelihoods, including dairy development, smaller ruminant development, fisheries, agro-processing etc.

NREGA gives central place to Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) in NREGA implementation. This provides a unique opportunity to strengthen democratic decentralization at the grass-roots. Already from all over the country reports are pouring in of tremendous enthusiasm among PRIs about NREGA. Massive employment is being generated. At the same time, however, PRIs are also facing some genuine difficulties during planning and implementation of the NREGA programmes. This is understandable as NREGA involves a completely new system of implementation. PRIs are eagerly looking for external support in this regard.

Role of Non-Government Organisations

Many NGOs are doing excellent work at the grass-roots all over the country. This scheme is an attempt to facilitate NGOs to work closely with PRIs in NREGA implementation. This involves a massive programme of awareness generation and PRI empowerment. *NGOs can provide the critical support structure that Gram Panchayats (GPs) require to effectively implement NREGA.* This can ensure that not only will job cards get distributed and employment generated but this will all be part of carefully formulated village development plans and lead to construction of durable assets based on NRM activities that will give rise to long-term, sustainable livelihood security to the poor.

Gram Panchayats will remain the implementing agency. NGOs will be authorized and mandated to provide them technical and logistical support to Gram Panchayats for a range of activities including, social mobilization and awareness generation, training of NREGA workforce, members of village vigilance and monitoring committee, members of Gram Panchayat and Gram Rozgar Sewak on NREGA procedure and their roles, registration of workers, issue of job cards, raising demand for work, preparation of plans and shelf of works, execution of these plans and social audit of work done and maintaining high standards of

transparency and accountability.

The truly attractive feature of the scheme is the huge potential for leveraging that it contains. Our calculations show that a leverage of 1:30 of NREGA funds is possible on the basis of a small support given by CAPART to NGOs.

Goal, Objectives, Outputs and Activities

The overall *goal* of the project is to realise the full potential of NREGA and make its implementation effective through provision of the necessary support to gram panchayats for proper planning.

Objectives

The major objectives of the project are:

- Creating awareness in selected panchayats and villages about NREGA, its provisions and potential
- Forging partnerships with the gram panchayats to enable more effective implementation of NREGA
- Capacity building of Gram Panchayat members, NREGA workforce and village vigilance and monitoring committees on NREGA
- Creating greater demand for work and thus offtake and utilisation of NREGA funds
- Developing greater appreciation in the village communities regarding NRM work and the potential of giving such work priority in NREGA
- Building capacities of gram sabhas and panchayat functionaries in planning, implementation and management of NREGA works
- Developing micro-plans for each village in each of the panchayats in the project reflecting true NREGA priorities in natural resource management, soil and water conservation, which create the necessary water infrastructure to support sustainable development
- Providing support to Gram Panchayats for the implementation of these micro-plans
- Providing support to Gram Panchayats for effective social audit of work done under NREGA

Activities

The main activities to be carried out to achieve these objectives is:

- Training of NGO project staff so that they are able to work towards fulfilling the objectives of the project
- Village level mobilisation campaigns, meetings and door-to-door contact to spread awareness about NREGA and its provisions
- Meetings with PRI representatives and discussions about the details of collaboration, expression of commitment by local teams to help panchayats
- Obtaining formal Panchayat resolutions expressing keenness to work with local NGO and its team and affirming commitment to the partnership
- Discussions on increasing work demand at the village level through village meetings
- Exposure visits of panchayat functionaries and people from the villages to successful watershed/NRM projects where they understand the value of this type of work and are committed to integrating them

- Capacity building of panchayat functionaries on NREGA and its provisions
- Capacity building of panchayat functionaries on NRM and the types of interventions that are possible
- Capacity building of panchayat functionaries on NRM planning, estimation and costing
- Participatory planning exercises with village people, for identification of possible work which can be integrated into the NREGA plan
- Technical surveys of selected sites in each village
- Cost estimation, drawings and budgeting
- Preparation of draft detailed action plan and budget for NREGA works by Project Implementation Team and panchayat functionaries
- Presentation of proposed work plan at village meetings for finalisation
- Finalisation of action plan and budget after approval by gram sabha
- Implementation of action plan by Gram Panchayat with support of partner NGO
- Social audit of work done

Outputs

The outputs needed to achieve the project objectives and resulting from the above activities can be summarised as follows:

- There is greater awareness in village communities about NREGA and its potential
- Communities are empowered to access rights under NREGA and claim entitlements, inter alia apply for job card, apply for employment, ensure appropriate wage remuneration, participate in village level planning, avail of work site facilities, enforce employment allowance.
- A partnership is created between gram panchayats and local NGO teams
- There is an increased demand for work originating from the grassroots
- There is greater appreciation among panchayats and village communities about giving priority to NRM activities under NREGA
- Capacities of local panchayat functionaries, NREGA workforce and vigilance and monitoring committees are built
- A full-fledged micro-plan is developed for each village in each of the selected panchayats
- The micro-plan is implemented on the ground and water infrastructure is created, creating the foundation for sustainable development of project villages.
- Social audit is done for all activities implemented under the action plan. Thus greater transparency and accountability, is created and the community is empowered to inter alia, use the Right to Information Act, understand and scrutiny vital records like muster rolls, measurement books, job cards; do social audit and enforce grievance redressal.

Selection of NGOs

Selection of NGOs will be carried out through a very careful screening process. The NGOs selected should fall in the ongoing eligibility norms for CAPART assistance. These must be organisations with an established track-record of high quality work at the grassroots. They must also show that they enjoy the confidence of the GPs in their area. This may be reflected in a resolution of the GPs (which they intend to work with under this scheme) formally inviting the NGO to extend support to the GP in implementing NREGA works to

be submitted along with the project proposal of the NGO. The NGO has to submit a detailed project proposal. A Pre-Funding Appraisal (PFA) of the selected NGOs will be carried out as per the guidelines of CAPART for assessing the antecedents of the NGOs

Assignment of Target Area

The task at hand requires intense concentration on quality at every step from social mobilisation to awareness generation to technical planning, implementation and social audit. The NGO should choose a target group of panchayats with which it can attain the best possible results. It should also choose its scale of work depending on its core areas of competence, abilities and experience. One NGO partner may choose to work with a large number of panchayats on issues of awareness and mobilization while choosing to focus its technical support function to a smaller subset within this group.

NGO Project Team

Each NGO partner who is selected for the scheme will appoint a Project Implementation Team (PIT) comprising the following personnel:

- One Project Officer (MSW or equivalent degree in social sciences with experience in community work)
- One Technical Assistant (at least Diploma in Civil Engineering)
- Four Community Mobilisers

The above staff may be recruited afresh or nominated from existing NGO staff. Where possible, preference should be given to women in the formation of the above team. Depending on the work area of the NGO, it can designate a larger team to work on the project.

Capacity Building

Training of NGOs

For meeting the objectives of the project, two types of capacity building programmes may be held for different levels of NGO functionaries:

- *For social mobilisers:* a three day training programme on social aspects of NREGA implementation and Right to Information. A detailed Training Module as enclosed at Annexure 2 will be followed for imparting training to the participants.
- *For Project Officer and Technical Assistants:* A 20-day Basic Training Course on NRM and NREGA with special emphasis on technical planning, costing and estimation.

Immediately after the NGO is selected for the scheme, the Project Implementation Teams will be sent for training. The training will be conducted by the well-known national level institutions and reputed voluntary organisations with considerable expertise and experience, some of which have been listed in the latest *Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects* issued by the Government of India in 2008 (see section 10.2 on pages 44-45). CAPART will identify such organisations in each state and where possible, district, which are capable of imparting such training at the prescribed rates. At the time of sanction of the project, the sanction letter will inform the NGO about which institution they will be tied to for their training requirements.

Special financial provision will be made for these training programmes in the budget for each NGO as indicated in the model budget given in Annexure 3. Training fees to the training NGOs will be paid out of this budget.

Regarding training of GP functionaries, the NGO PITs will provide training to these functionaries after their own training is completed. Similarly, training of social mobilisers on technical aspects will be conducted by the trained Project Officer and Technical Assistants on the job.

Operationalisation and Monitoring of the Scheme

Given the national importance of NREGA, and the need to ensure high quality results in a short span of time, the scheme will be operationalised through a separate National Standing Committee (NSC) set up at CAPART Headquarters, which will oversee the functioning of the scheme. The NSC will have the responsibilities and powers bestowed on all NSCs for other project departments of CAPART. The NSC for this scheme will meet at least once every 2 months and monitor the progress of the scheme apart from taking decisions on new and ongoing projects.

The projects under the scheme will be monitored by a panel of monitors specially selected for the task by the NSC. Each project will be monitored thrice in its life cycle. The first will be the PFA before sanction. The second review will be a mid-term appraisal and the third appraisal will be the final appraisal of the project. Each appraisal will result in funds being released for the project.

10.7 Special Provisions for the Differently Abled

On the 25th of September 2008, the Madhya Pradesh State Employment Guarantee Council, Government of Madhya Pradesh, passed a landmark order for inclusion of old people and those suffering from various disabilities or challenges, mental or physical in NREGA. The order emanates from a felt need to “display greater sensitivity towards and make more efforts for provision of work to the disabled, weak and old under NREGA”. This order enables people falling into such categories to do light work on NREGA sites in accordance with their abilities and earn the daily minimum wage at par with other workers.

The order has identified different types of disabilities (such as those who suffer from weakness or debilitation of one or both hands or feet, or some combination of these weaknesses, those who suffer from spinal cord disorders and may be hunchbacked, those who are visually impaired or whose hearing is impaired and people who are mentally challenged) and also prepared comprehensive list of works that may be given to people in each of these categories. Such works include (see below) looking after drinking water arrangements, filling up of mud, sprinkling of water on construction sites, plantation, acting as baby-sitters and so on.

Work Classification According to the Capacity of Differently Abled Persons

Priority Works Under NREGA

1. Water Conservation and Harvesting
 - For drought-proofing, afforestation/ tree plantation.
 - Canals for irrigation (small and medium irrigation work).
2. To provide irrigation facilities on private land of SC/ST beneficiary families under Land Improvement and Indira Awas.
3. Repair of traditional water structures.
4. Desiltation of ponds.
5. Land development
6. Flood control/ security, drainage in water accumulation areas.
7. All-weather roads for village connectivity
8. Any other work as notified by central government on advice of state government.

Keeping the above in mind, possible classification of work according to the capacity of differently abled people under NREGA:	
1. Drinking water arrangements	2. Helping in looking after children
3. Plantation	4. Irrigation - canal digging
5. Earth backfilling	6. Dumping mud outside or in trolleys
7. Building construction - making concrete material	8. Shifting concrete and other building material from one place to the other
9. Carrying cement and bricks	10. Filling sand or pebbles in pans
11. Sprinkling water on newly built wall	12. Well deepening – filling baskets with excavated mud inside the well
13. Helping in pulling out the sludge from the well	14. Transferring the sludge to trolley
15. Digging out the sludge from the ponds	16. Putting the waste in iron containers
17. Transferring contents of filled up pans into trolley	18. Carrying stones
19. Setting stones in the right place	20. Land levelling
21. Farm bunding	22. Digging pits in water conservation land
23. Setting the mud from the pits in a different place	24. Road construction – sweeping the kuchcha roads with brooms
25. Sprinkling water, putting pebbles	

Work which could be done by orthopaedically handicapped people

1. Possible work for a person with one weak hand

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drinking water arrangements ▪ Plantation ▪ Filling pans with sand/pebbles ▪ Sweeping <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms ▪ Farm bunding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Assisting in looking after children ▪ Carrying cement and bricks ▪ Sprinkling water on newly built wall ▪ Pouring water, putting pebbles
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2. *Work done by a person with both hands weak*

- Assisting in looking after children (family members or children can also help – or they can also get employment. This way the handicapped person will feel more self confident)

3. *Work done by a person with one weak leg*

Work done with help	Work done independently
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drinking water arrangements ▪ Assisting in looking after children ▪ Plantation ▪ Sprinkling water on newly built walls ▪ Filling pans with sand or pebble ▪ Sweeping <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drinking water arrangements ▪ Assisting in looking after children ▪ Plantation ▪ Irrigation - digging canals ▪ Filling earth ▪ Digging out mud / putting in the trolley ▪ Construction – repairing concrete material ▪ Transferring concrete material from one place to other ▪ Carrying cement and bricks ▪ Filling metal containers with sand or pebble ▪ Sprinkling water on newly built walls ▪ Deepening wells – putting the sludge inside the well into baskets ▪ Helping in pulling out the sludge from wells ▪ Transferring the sludge to trolleys ▪ Digging out the sludge from ponds ▪ Filling up pans with waste ▪ Transferring filled up pans to trolleys ▪ Carrying stones ▪ Setting stones in the right place ▪ Land levelling ▪ Farm bunding ▪ Digging pits in land meant for water conservation work ▪ Transferring the mud from pits to another site ▪ Building roads ▪ Sweeping <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms ▪ Sprinkling water, putting pebbles

4. *Work done by a person with both legs weak*

- Assisting in looking after children
- Plantation
- Filling pans with sand or pebble
- Pulling out the sludge from wells (*the sludge from the wells is filled in huge containers and to pull it out at least 10 – 15 people are required. But if this sludge is filled in smaller containers, 3 – 4 handicapped people can do the same, even while they are sitting. The benefit is that the work will be faster, the labour required will be less as well as the handicapped people will be employed*)
- Sweeping *kuchcha* roads with brooms

5. *Work done by a person with one weak hand and one weak leg*

Work done with help	Work done independently
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizing drinking water ▪ Assisting in looking after children ▪ Planting trees ▪ Sprinkling water on newly built wall ▪ Filling pans with sand or pebble ▪ Sweeping kuchcha roads with brooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organizing drinking water ▪ Assisting in looking after children ▪ Planting trees ▪ Sprinkling water on newly built wall ▪ Sweeping kuchcha roads with brooms ▪ Sprinkling water, putting pebbles

6. *Work which could be done by hunch-backed persons*

- Drinking water arrangements
- Assisting in looking after children
- Plantation
- Sprinkling water on newly built wall on construction sites
- Sweeping *kuchcha* roads with brooms
- Sprinkling water, putting pebbles

Possible work for visually handicapped people

1. *Possible work for a person blind in one eye whose other eye is weak also*

1. Drinking water arrangements	2. Helping in looking after children
3. Plantation	4. Irrigation-digging canals
5. Filling earth	6. Dumping mud outside or in trolleys
7. Building construction- making concrete material	8. Shifting concrete and other materials from one place to the other
9. Carrying cement and bricks	10. Filling sand or pebbles in pans
11. Sprinkling water on newly built wall	12. Helping in pulling out the sludge from the well
13. Transferring the sludge to trolley	14. Digging out the sludge from the ponds
15. Putting the waste in pans	16. Transferring the filled up pans into trolley
17. Carrying stones	18. Setting stones in the right place
19. Land Levelling	20. Farm bunding
21. Digging pits in land for water conservation	22. Setting the excavated mud in a different place
23. Building roads – sweeping the <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms	24. Sprinkling water, putting pebbles

2. *Work done by completely blind people*

- Assisting in looking after children
- Plantation

- Filling pans with sand or pebble
- Drinking water arrangements
- other family members should also be employed on the site so that they realize that the handicapped person is not a burden but is instead a source of income for the family
- the handicapped person should be patiently trained. Proper training should be given on the way to do work as well as to measure the distance covered in terms of their footsteps

3. *Work done by a person with a weak vision*

1. Organizing drinking water	2. Helping in looking after children
3. Planting trees	4. Irrigation-digging canals
5. Filling soil	6. Dumping mud outside or in trolleys
7. Building construction- making concrete material	8. Shifting concrete and other materials from one place to the other
9. Carry cement and bricks	10. Filling sand or pebbles in metal pans
11. Sprinkling water on newly built wall	12. Helping in pulling out the sludge from the well
13. Transferring the sludge to trolley	14. Digging out the sludge from the ponds
15. Putting the waste in iron containers	16. Transferring the filled up metal container into the trolley
17. Carrying stones	18. Setting the stones in the right place
19. Land Levelling	20. Farm bunding
21. Digging pits in water conservation land	22. Setting the excavated mud in a different place
23. Building roads – sweeping the <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms	24. Sprinkling water, placing pebbles

Work which could be done by mentally challenged people

1. *Work that can be done by a people who are severely mentally challenged*

1. Drinking water arrangements	2. Helping in looking after children
3. Plantation	4. Irrigation-digging canals
5. Filling earth	6. Dumping mud outside or in trolleys
7. Shifting concrete and other material from one place to the other	8. Carry cement and bricks
9. Filling sand or pebbles in metal pans	10. Transferring the sludge to trolley
11. Digging out the sludge from the ponds	12. Putting the waste in pans
13. Transferring the filled up pans into the trolley	14. Carrying stones
15. Setting the stones in the right place	16. Land Levelling
17. Farm bunding	18. Digging pits in land for water conservation
19. Setting the excavated mud in a different place	20. Building roads – sweeping the <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms
21. Sprinkling water, putting pebbles	

Note: Such people should be instructed sequentially and slowly. They can produce good work once they have understood it well.

2. *Work that can be done by a person who is mildly mentally challenged*

1. Drinking water arrangements	2. Helping in looking after children
3. Plantation	4. Filling earth
5. Dumping mud outside or in trolleys	6. Filling sand or pebbles in metal pans
7. Transferring the sludge to trolley	8. Building roads – sweeping the <i>kuchcha</i> roads with brooms
9. Sprinkling water, putting pebbles	

Such people are good at assisting and supporting others. They can carry pans of sludge and dump it if they are assisted in lifting them.

Work which could be done by people under treatment for mental illness – such people can do all kinds of work. Only the amount of work done could be quantitatively less.

Work which could be done by hearing and speech impaired people – such people can do all kinds of work but it is required that they are instructed properly in sign language.

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