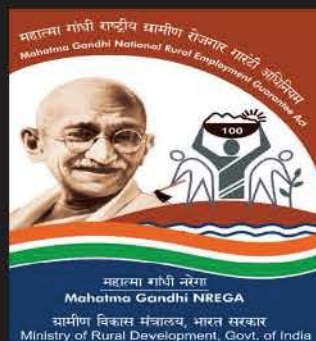




ANNUAL REPORT 2011-2012

IMPLEMENTATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME



सत्यमेव जयते

State Rural Employment Society
COMMUNITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Government of Meghalaya

Preface

The year 2011-12 was a significant one for the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Meghalaya. Some of the challenges confronting the State in the implementation of the Act were addressed during the year. The State Government specially focussed on providing the institutional support for better programme management during the year.

The establishment of the Meghalaya State Rural Employment Society (SRES), is one of the major accomplishments of 2011-12. The SRES was inaugurated by the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Meghalaya on 2nd August 2011 and it has been seen as one of the path-breaking initiatives of the State Government. The SRES has since been assisting the Government in the implementation of the MGNREGA since then.

The SRES has also been entrusted with the management of the State Employment Guarantee Fund (SEGF). Shortage of funds while the Districts await their Central Release or during peak demand season often affects the programme performance. To address this problem, the State Government has set up a State Corpus, as a Revolving Fund to cater to the emergent fund requirements of the Districts. During 2011-12, an amount of Rs. 17 crore was released from the State Corpus Fund by the State Government, rolled over several times during the year.

Further, to bring down the leakages as well as to improve the management of the programme, the SRES has recruited professional Programme Managers and Programme Officers through an open and transparent process. The impact of this institutionalization has led to a significant reduction in the number of complaints, due to the prompt field visits and inquiries made by the SRES officials followed by quick action.

During this year measures were also taken to encourage both the public and private sector banks to start the Business Correspondent model in the State. In addition to the State Bank of India, the State Government signed MoUs with Axis Bank, ICICI Bank and MCAB Ltd. This effort is likely to give results in about a year's time.

The installation of VSATs has been completed in 34 Blocks. This would provide the Blocks, especially the remote ones, in uploading the data in the MIS. Through this connectivity, the Blocks would be able to enter the requisite data online.

During the year 2011-12, 175.37 lakh persondays of employment were generated at a total expenditure of Rs. 32,143.81 lakh. The unskilled wage rate has increased from Rs. 100/- per day to Rs. 117/- per day. The State Government has also introduced a new scheme viz., Blacktopping of the rural roads to undertake blacktopping of 2 km MGNREGS roads per Block per year under the Black Topping of Rural Roads Scheme for Rs. 25 lakh per kilometer, which is a much needed convergence plan.

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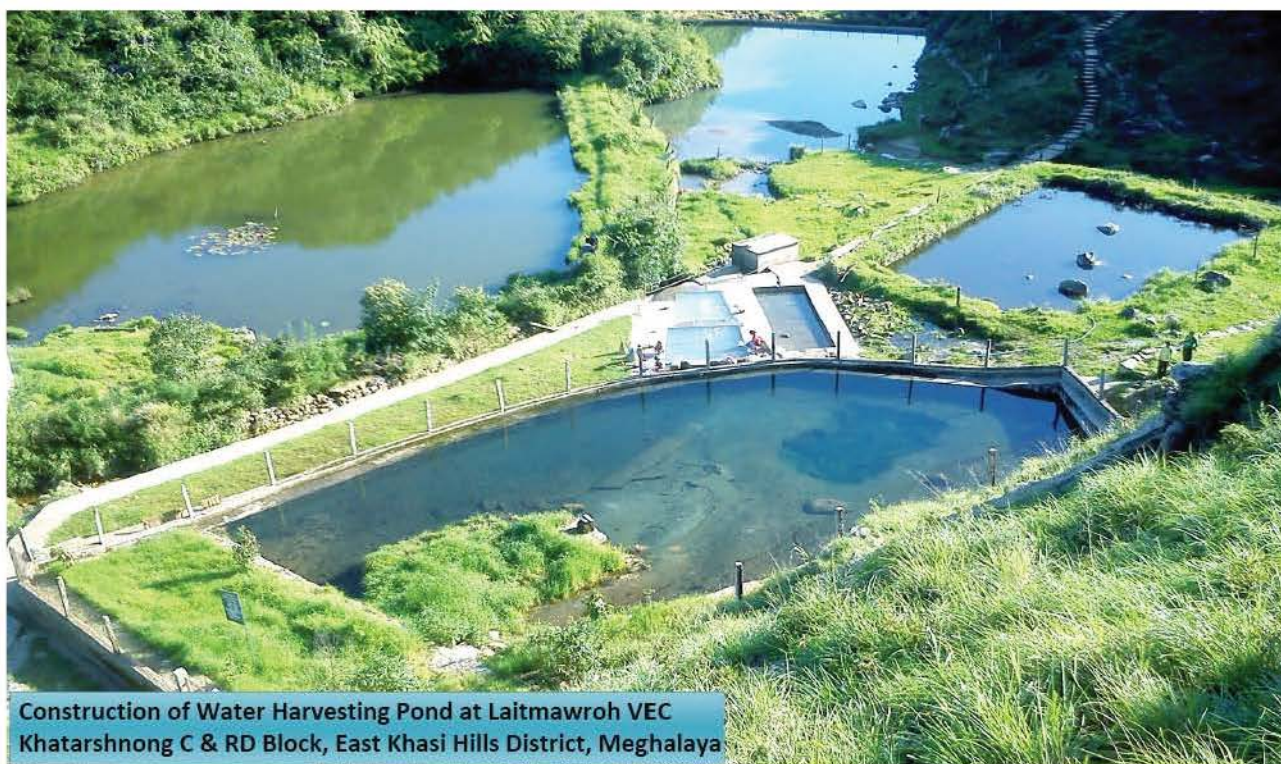
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1. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act : Implementation

(a) Implementation of MGNREGS during 2011-12

During the year 2011-12, the State has provided an average of 51.68 persondays per household to 339198 households that have demanded employment during the year 2011-12 against the National Average of 43 persondays per household. The following table summarizes the achievements of 2011-12:

District	HH with Job Cards	HH demanded Employment	HH Provided Employment	%ge of HH employed	Total Persondays Generated (in lakhs)
South Garo Hills	21397	13917	13876	100	4.40
West Garo Hills	96868	94256	94211	100	54.27
East Khasi Hills	80415	59962	59743	100	18.14
Jaintia Hills	57892	46140	46140	100	14.67
Ri Bhoi	47487	34087	34611	102	18.92
East Garo Hills	51503	49817	49742	100	44.96
West Khasi Hills	61673	41019	41019	100	20.01
TOTAL	417235	339198	339342	100	175.37



The unskilled wage rate under MGNREGA was revised to Rs. 117/- per day during the year. This was an added advantage to the workers. With the launching of the State Rural Employment Society, the State Government took a huge step forward in improving the administration of the MGNREGS. The Scheme was earlier managed by a small MGNREGA Cell in the Community & Rural Development Department.



(b) Financial Performance during 2011-12

District	Approved Budget for 2011-12 (In lakhs)	Total availability	Total expenditure (in lakhs)	%ge Expenditure on Wages	%ge Fund Utilization
South Garo Hills	1570.14	908.54	762.46	67.58	83.92
West Garo Hills	11359.34	10035.52	9896.74	63.22	98.62
East Khasi Hills	6360.88	4118.34	3526.26	60.15	85.62
Jaintia Hills	3354.79	3544.08	2872.00	58.61	81.04
Ri Bhoi	5882.23	3878.89	3752.03	59.00	96.73
East Garo Hills	7672.76	7663.80	7409.41	70.85	96.68
West Khasi Hills	3946.79	4284.79	3924.91	60.86	91.60
TOTAL	40146.94	34433.97	32143.81	63.55	93.35

(c) Total number of AECs and VECs formed

District	No. of VECs formed	No. of AECs formed
South Garo Hills	624	142
West Garo Hills	1500	450
East Khasi Hills	846	259
Jaintia Hills	475	179
Ri Bhoi	589	146
East Garo Hills	925	286
West Khasi Hills	1130	351
Total	6089	1813

The State Rural Employment Society (SRES), has been registered as a Society under the Registration of Societies Act, to provide financial flexibility and an impetus to the implementation of the MGNREGS. Its officials are professionals in Rural Development, Information Technology, Civil Engineering, Accounts and Statistics. The SRES also manages the State Employment Guarantee Fund as well as the State Corpus Fund, to act as a resource pool for the districts during acute fund shortage.



CC Check Dam at Banglapluh, Mawshynrut C & RD Block
West Khasi Hills District, Meghalaya

(d) Constitution of State Corpus Fund under MGNREGS

The MGNREGA, being demand driven, needs adequate funding especially at times when the demand is at its peak. It is experienced that delays in release of Central fund due to administrative reasons, result in subsequent delays in payments and slower implementation of projects. The State Government has many times faced critical shortage of funds and the field officials face tough situations when the Job Card holders demand their wage payments. The SEGF is established to receive the Central Funds and is set up as mandated in the MGNREGA Financial Rules. The SEGF has already been notified and is now functional.

The State Corpus Fund is utilized when the Districts are facing fund shortage and while awaiting the release of next installment from the Centre. The State Corpus Fund would also cater to the fund shortage during peak seasonal demand for employment.

Section 21 of MGNREG Act mandates constitution of a State Fund to meet the emergent expenses of the districts for the implementation of the scheme. It has been decided by the State Government that the fund released through the State Corpus Fund would act as a revolving fund which would be refunded once the Government of India releases the Central Share. As per the recommendations of the Governing Body of SRES and approval of the State Employment Guarantee Council, an amount of Rs 15.00 Crore was sanctioned in the year 2011-12 by the Community and Rural Development Department. The amount of Rs. 15 crore was revolved among the needy Districts several times. With the rotation of the Fund, the total assistance to the Districts through during SEGF during 2011-12 was Rs. 17 crore.

2. Training Programmes: A Report



The State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Meghalaya is the Nodal Agency for providing capacity building support to the Blocks, implementing agencies and the Line departments. The SIRD has come up with a training manual which will help it in providing training to a large number of beneficiaries working under the MGNREGS.

Trainings Conducted	Name of the Programme	No. of Participants
SIRD, Nongsder	Training Programme under Lab-to-Land Initiative 2010-11/2011-12	880
SIRD, Nongsder	Training Programme of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNV) under Lab-to-Land Initiative	1398
Extension Training Centre (ETC), Nongsder	Capacity Building(Social Audit) under MGNREGA	742
SRES	Salient Features of MGNREGS, Transparency and Accountability, Record Maintenance and Sensitization cum workshop on RSBY.	232
Total		3252

The State Rural Employment Society has also organized training programmes particularly for VEC/AEC functionaries on priority basis with the objective to enhance the capacity of those functionaries for effective and better implementation of the Scheme. Six Training Programmes were conducted for the VEC/AEC functionaries of South Garo Hills and Jaintia Hills District respectively on a pilot basis. Two programmes on Sensitization cum Workshops on Extension of RSBY were also conducted for the District and Block Functionaries. Apart from these, two State Level Workshops were also conducted.



(a) Trainings conducted by the State Rural Employment Society during the Financial Year 2011-12

Sl. No.	Name of the Programme	Number of Programme(s)	Names of the District(s)	Number of Participant(s)
1	Training Programme on Module I (Salient features of MGNREGS)	2	Jaintia Hills	20
			South Garo Hills	68
2	Training Programme on Module II (Transparency and Accountability)	2	Jaintia Hills	24
			South Garo Hills	23
3	Training Programme on Module III (Record Maintenance)	2	Jaintia Hills	17
			South Garo Hills	10
4	Sensitization cum workshop on RSBY for Khasi Hills Districts	1	East Khasi Hills, West Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills and Ri Bhoi	29
5	Sensitization cum workshop on RSBY for Garo Hills Districts	1	East Garo Hills, West Garo Hills and South Garo Hills	41
Total		8		332



(b) Workshop on Reforms in the Implementation of the MGNREGA

The first initiative of the State Rural Employment Society, Meghalaya was the convening of a State level workshop on 4th November 2011. The workshop discussed at length the issues and problems faced in the implementation of the MGNREGA in the State.

The Workshop was attended by Minister incharge Community and Rural Development, Shri Saleng A Sangma, Shri WMS Pariat IAS, Chief Secretary of Govt of Meghalaya & Chairman SRES, Shri F Kharlyngdoh IAS, Director Community and Rural Development, Smt IR Sangma MCS, Additional Mission Director and Shri A.Mawlong MCS, Director, State Institute of Rural Development.

The session began with a welcome speech by the Commissioner & Secretary Community and Rural Development. He highlighted the agenda for the workshop. He mentioned that due to lack of awareness about the norms and guidelines of the scheme some officials have made errors in the implementation of the programme. He cited an instance where AECs were communicated by the Block Officials that employment is guaranteed only for 70 days under the Act, based on the labour budget estimates made earlier in the year. This has led to the violation of the Act in certain blocks of the State. Organising training programmes at the VECs & AECs, Blocks, District and State levels is also required in a regular manner. He said that a comprehensive calendar will be prepared by the SRES for targeting them in the next few months till March 2012. The Commissioner of C&RD appreciated the performance of the East Garo Hills District particularly of the Samanda block, for achieving 100 days employment and urged upon other districts to strive towards achieving similar results.

The Additional Mission Director, SRES gave a presentation on the MGNREGA performance of all the districts till September 2011. She highlighted that the block level MIS data entry was very slow, particularly in the districts of South Garo Hills and West Garo Hills. She stressed upon the importance of proper maintenance and accuracy of MIS since, the Central government relied only on the MIS data for sanctioning of funds to the districts. She also highlighted the decrease in Household Employment Demand due to delays in payment of the wages to the VECs and to the job card holders thereof.



The Chief Secretary & Chairman, SRES highlighted the challenges that call for bringing about reforms in the implementation of the MGNREGA. The first step for the smooth functioning of any scheme is the generation of awareness among the people and one reason why programme fail to deliver as per the provisions and expectations. As the state has no Panchayati Raj Institutions, it has to rely on the VECs and AECs. In order to implement the MGNREGA more effectively, the State Rural Employment Society was set up, to act as a nodal agency for the implementation of MGNREGA. He also mentioned that through MGNREGA, the prevailing unemployment that exists in rural Meghalaya would be addressed as it has the provision to provide livelihoods and wages. He emphasized on the importance of MIS as it acts as a crucial component of the MGNREGA, depicting the performance level data and also used by the Ministry for allocation of funds and increasing linkages with banks for better financial inclusion.

The Minister in his speech applauded the hard work of the VECs and AECs especially Samanta C& RD blocks of East Garo Hills for achieving 100% generation of households employment. MGNREGA has got the potential to uplift the socio-economic condition of the people and with the wages increasing from Rs 70/- to Rs 117/-, there is a better scope to enhance the living conditions of the rural people. For this, better awareness of the MGNREGA should be there at different levels. He also requested the DCs to create awareness first before implementing any of the schemes and the Block level has to be the point where it could disseminate. The Minister stressed on the importance of proper maintenance of MIS and transparency of fund flows and information.

Recommendations of the Workshop:

- Materials bought should be photographed and Gram sevaks should inspect the work done.
- Problems arising at the village level should be dealt and resolved at the Block level.
- Workshop on Social Audit and convergence to be organized by December 2011.
- All MRs needs to be photocopied once it is bought back to the Block Office and entered it into the MIS.
- Actions pertaining to internet connectivity will be assigned to IT department of SRES.
- Encourage fisheries development in the State through MGNREGS.
- SRES fund, training and Social Audit will be handled by SRES.



State Level Workshop on Social Audit in MGNREGA

(c) State Level Workshop on Social Audit

Social Audit is a tool to maintain transparency and accountability in the implementation of the MGNREGS. However, it is experienced that, Social audits have been conducted without the true participation of the primary stakeholders and the success rate of checking misappropriation and redressing grievances has therefore, been minimal.

A State Level Workshop was conducted on 16th December 2011 to review the State's Audit performance, discuss the establishment of Social Audit Unit and Rules pertaining to it and for recommending a suitable methodology to formulate a mechanism for effective conduct of Social Audit in the State.

The decisions and recommendations of the workshop are as follows:

- All Districts are to constitute a District Level Convergence Committee.
- SIRD shall prepare an elaborate set of instructions with regard to the conduct of Social Audit which shall then be distributed and adopted uniformly.
- Launch of mass media campaign on social audit in the form of information campaign, news release and newspaper advertisement.

3. Grievance Redress



Conduct of Social Audit at Seinduli VEC
Mawshynrut C & RD Block, West Khasi Hills, Meghalaya

(a) Grievance Redress

Transparency and accountability are essential for the implementation of the MGNREGS. The State Rural Employment Society, Shillong with its team of quality monitors has been keeping a keen eye in providing transparency and accountability through Grievance Redress mechanism to the beneficiaries of the MGNREGA. In the year 2011-12, the society has been able to dispose of eleven (11) major complaints regarding the implementation of the scheme. Some of the complaints are as follows:

Sl. No.	Nature of complaint	District/Block	Findings	Action Taken
1.	Allegations against Block technical officials reported in the newspaper, "Haduh 5-10 hajar hap siew ki shnong sha ki Ophisar Block ban pynshna plan MNREGS". Maweit AEC	Nongstoin Block, West Khasi Hills (28 th & 29 th Sept. 2011)	It was alleged that amount of Rs. 500/- to 1000/- was collected from each VEC and this amount was said to be given to the Block Officers for approval of estimates. The same was not proved as per the inquiry.	Show Cause notice issued by the BDO to Technical Officers but the allegation was denied. The report of BDO, based on the meeting held with VEC functionaries reveal involvement of Technical staff of Line Departments in the allegation. A letter had been sent to the PWD to conduct an inquiry.

Sl. No.	Nature of complaint	District/Block	Findings	Action Taken
2.	Based on the newspaper report, " No wages for Umsning Job card holders ", Mawblang AEC	Umsning Block, Ri Bhoi (3 rd & 10 th Oct.2011)	It was observed that there was no proper maintenance of Muster Rolls submitted by VECs at the Block Office and there was pending payment of Rs. 5,62,000/- against those Muster Rolls of January- March 2011.	The BDO had been advised to make immediate payments to the VECs and to maintain documents properly. Payment had been made on the 24 th January 2012 and 1 st February 2012.
3.	Based on the news report " fake cash memo unearthed " in Mawryngkneng VEC	Mawryngkneng Block, East Khasi Hills (27 th Oct. 2011)	The allegations made were true as the site verification shows mismatch between cash memo and actual material used for road construction. The use of JCB machine was also proved in one road constructed under MGNREGS.	A show cause notice had been issued to the VEC Functionaries.
4.	A news report about the irregularities in payment of wages to MGNREGA workers and communication from the Block Office that they are entitled only to 70 days of employment in a year ". Mawlynnong and Nohwet AECs	Pynursla Block, East Khasi Hills (3 rd Nov. 2011)	It was observed that Job Card holders were informed that the entitlement of guaranteed employment is 70 days, apparently because the labour budget for the district was initially approved by the Ministry was 70 days. The other allegation was that, different amount of wages was paid to male and female workers. This was found not true during the inquiry.	An explanation had been called from the BDO but found unsatisfactory. All the BDOs were issued instruction so as to prevent such situations in future.
5.	Complaint received on misappropriation of MGNREGA funds from the 63 job card holders. Allegation against VEC Secretary/ Chairman for deduction of wages from Job Card Holders and Non payment of wages in Rongjeng reserve.	Dambo RongjengBlock, East Garo Hills (24 th Nov. 2011)	It was observed that there was a misunderstanding among the JobCard Holders and VEC functionaries because of the contribution collected towards construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra at Nengringgittim to meet the material cost. The resolution was taken that each AEC will contribute wages of 500 days	The matter was resolved at the time of inquiry.
6.	Newspaper report, " Corruption galore in NREGS execution ": Mawryngkneng VEC	Mawryngkneng Block, East Khasi Hills (25 th & 26 th Nov. 2011)	The inquiry revealed that there is 10% deduction of money from each work taken up. Besides, there is manipulation of MRs and there is also only one Social Audit conducted (in 2009).	Vide letter no. DRDA/MGNREGS/120 (11-12)/91 dt 9 th January 2012, an FIR had been filed against the VEC Secretary and Chairman by the DPC and case has been registered Vide PS. Case no. 03(01) 2012 u/s 406/420/188 IPC at Madanriting Police Station.

Sl. No.	Nature of complaint	District/Block	Findings	Action Taken
7.	The complaint lodged by NGOs (FKJGP and KSU Mawryngkneng unit) regarding non-existent of two works i.e. Construction of roads from Mawiong to Lymkynthong and Dew saw to Ksehbita	Mawryngkneng Block, East Khasi Hills (5 th & 6 th Jan. 2012)	The inquiry reveals that the construction of the two roads as mentioned by the complainants does not exist. There was no proper estimates, field inspections, measurement of works and verification of materials purchased.	The DPC had been directed to seek explanation from the Junior engineer and the Gram Sevak. Based on the reply to the show cause and recommendations from the DPC, both the Gram Sevak and Junior Engineer have been put under suspension.
8.	Complaint against the Secretary of VEC, Pushkunipara, Selsela Block regarding misuse of fund, not maintaining transparency and no public hearing held.	Selsela Block, West Garo Hills	It was found out that all the allegations made against the Secretary were false.	Allegation found to be false. There was no need for any action to be taken.
9.	The complaint received from the Job card holders of different VEC under Selsela Block regarding arbitrary action and corruption practices of BDO Selsela C&RD Block (by removing and appointing of VEC Chairman and Secretary at Gomaijora, Nimaikata, Bholarbita East, Bagalkatha Muslim, Goladigli, Pathorkatha and Charbatapara)	Selsela Block, West Garo Hills (7 th , 9 th & 12 th March 2012)	The inquiry report says that the BDO carried the entire exercise on valid grounds.	Suggestions were given out to the district and the comment from the DC received stating that there is no lapse from the BDO side therefore the question of arbitrary action by BDO, Selsela does not arise.
10.	Complaint on misappropriation of MGNREGS fund by Secretary Shri. Aminul Shaikh under Betasing	West Garo Hills	Inquiry was conducted by the SDO© and SRES. Findings are that the allegations are false.	No further action was required.
11.	Based on complaints regarding issues in NREGS implementation in Jongksha VEC	Mawkynew Block, East Khasi Hills (15 th , 25 th March 2012)	Some beneficiaries are yet to receive their payments for work done in 2008. The Job Cards had been used for the benefit of other people without the knowledge of the owner, as the Cards are with the VEC functionaries. There is no supervision by Block Field Functionaries on payment of wages to the workers, Data were also not properly checked at the Block office, and there were discrepancies in muster rolls.	The BDO had been instructed to make immediate payments to beneficiaries. The BDO have been instructed to direct the ex Chairman and ex Secretary to refund the appropriated money of Rs. 24,780/-



(b) Appointment of Ombudsmen

The Ombudsman has the power to receive the complaints from the MGNREGA workers and others on specified matters, consider complaints and facilitate their disposal in accordance with the law, can issued direction for conducting spot verification, lodge FIRs against the erring parties, initiate proceedings suo moto, direct Redressal, disciplinary and punitive actions and sent his reports to the Chief Secretary, and the Secretary of the Community and Rural Development Department.

The office of the Ombudsman is vested with the following powers in order to redress grievances under MGNREGA:

- Receive complaints from NREGA workers and facilitate their disposal in accordance with law
- Require the NREGA Authority complained against to provide any information or Issue direction for conducting spot investigation
- Lodge FIRs against the erring parties
- Initiate proceedings suo motu in the event of any circumstance arising jurisdiction that may cause any grievance
- Engage experts for facilitating the disposal of the complaint
- Direct redressal, disciplinary and punitive actions
- Report his findings to the Chief Secretary of the State and the Secretary, State
- Nodal Department for appropriate legal action against erring persons

Ri Bhoi District has appointed Shri. T R Mallai as the Ombudsman for the District in the year 2011-12. The other Six (6) districts have been asked to recommend a fresh panel of names to the Ombudsman Selection Committee which will review the names in the coming years.

4. Enhancing Transparency



Signing of MoU with Banks

Poor bank coverage in rural areas is a problem within the State leading to an inability of the State Government to make payments of wages through bank/ post office accounts to the wage earners under MGNREGA. Beneficiaries have difficulties in opening accounts in Bank/ Post Office as they have to travel long distances to banks to collect their payment and have to spend their own money for the travelling cost at times even losing a day's wage in the event. Hence, the State Government has tied up with Banks so that the unbanked areas or villages that are at a distance of more than 5kms from the nearest Bank Branch can have the bare minimum Banking facilities.

During the year 2011-12, the State Government has signed an MOU with the Meghalaya Cooperative Apex Bank Ltd, AXIS Bank and ICICI Bank to provide Business Correspondent services in Ri Bhoi, Jaintia Hills, West Garo Hills, East Garo Hills, West Khasi Hills and some areas of East Khasi Hills. The Bank's Business Correspondents will cover each unbanked Block/ AEC/VEC in the State by way of appointing Customer Service Providers (CSPs) depending on the geographic/ demographic profile of the Block/ AEC/VEC.

The total number of individual Banks and Post Offices accounts opened till March 2011-12 is as follows:-

Sl. No.	Name Of The District	NO. of Bank Accounts Opened		No. of Post Office Accounts Opened		Total Accounts		
		Individual	Joint	Individual	Joint	Individual	Joint	Total
1	South Garo Hills	0	142	0	0	0	142	142
2	West Garo Hills	0	1500	0	0	0	1500	1500
3	East Khasi Hills	20937	3658	31618	3679	52555	7337	59892
4	Jaintia Hills	12115	88	19083	141	31198	229	31427
5	Ri Bhoi	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6	East Garo Hills	0	925	0	0	0	925	925
7	West Khasi Hills	19464	8636	18498	3486	37962	12122	50084
	TOTAL	52516	14949	69199	7306	121715	22255	143970

5. Information Communication and Technology in MGNREGA



With the discarding of Monthly Progress Reports submitted through the conventional method, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) has made it compulsory for all States to submit the employment, financial & physical reports through the Management of Information Systems (MIS).

In the MIS, the MoRD has utilized software, developed by the National informatics Centre (NIC), called as NREGASoft, for entering of data mandated as per the guidelines. The MIS ensures data authenticity, transparency, quick report generation and easy accessibility. With the reports being generated from the MIS data, the MoRD can gauge the actual progress in the implementation on a day to day basis rather than await reports submitted on a monthly basis.

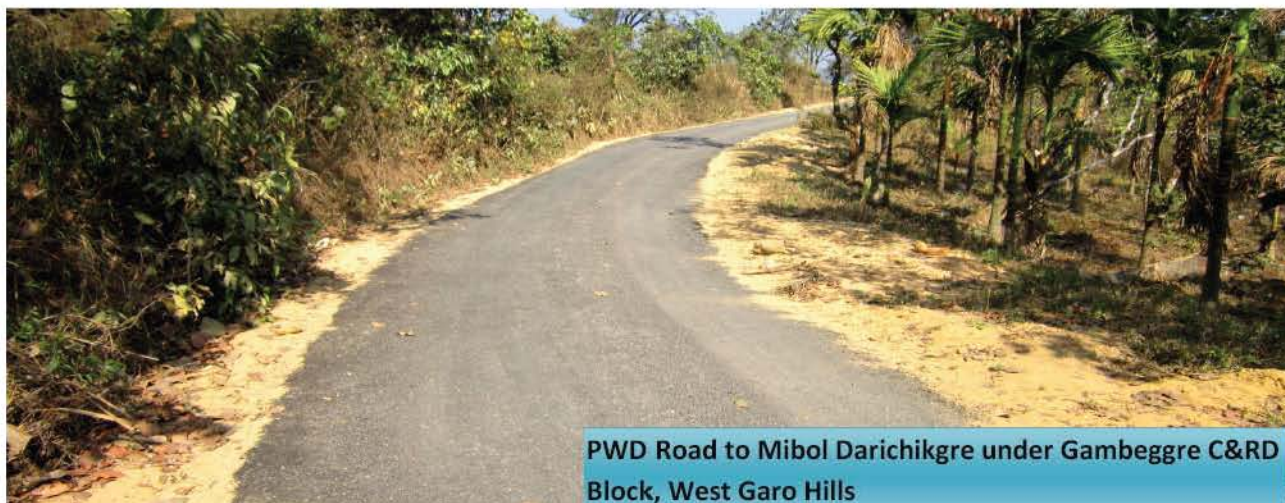
The software NREGASoft, is made available in both online and offline versions. For Blocks in Meghalaya, the offline version is being utilized as they do not have any internet connectivity. The Blocks have to regularly send the updates to the NIC Server from the nearest location having Internet connectivity. This creates a delay in data updates by about 10-15 days.

In 2010-11, the State Government had decided to purchase Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSATs) to provide Internet connectivity to the Rural Development Blocks. A VSAT, is a two-way satellite ground station with a dish antenna that is smaller than 3 meters. The majority of VSAT antennas ranges from 75cm to 1.2m and data transfer rates typically range from 56 kbps up to 4 Mbps. The purpose of the installation of VSAT is to ensure that the Blocks would be able to avail internet connectivity. With the presence of a reliable internet connection, the data entry can be started through the online mode.

The VSATs were purchased under the balance of administrative expenditure of 2009-10 and the procurement procedure was completed towards the end of 2010-11. The State Government engaged National Informatics Centre Services Inc. (NICSI), a branch of NIC, for carrying out the procurement and installation processes. An initial bandwidth of 128kbps is provided by the NIC free of cost.

During 2011-12, out of the 39 Blocks, the physical installation has been completed in 35 Blocks. In Blocks where the VSAT has been commissioned and initialized, the major drawback is the low bandwidth rendering the connection slow for data entry. The State Government has pursued this inadequacy with the MoRD and the bandwidth is likely to be enhanced to provide better Internet Connectivity to the Blocks.

6. Convergence in MGNREGA



Black topping of Rural Roads Scheme(BTRRS)

Convergence under MGNREGS is a process that brings together existing schemes and resources to create the undertaking projects more durable. Rural connectivity is an important factor in rural development and is one of the key components being recognized as the effective poverty reduction programme in India. Rural connectivity is important for Meghalaya because of the difficult hilly terrain. The MGNREGA roads are kutcha roads and transportation through these roads is tedious and is often unusable during peak monsoon season.

The Government of Meghalaya has taken the initiative to converge with the MGNREGA to construct durable roads in rural areas under the Scheme “Blacktopping of Rural Roads Scheme (BTRRS)”. The State Government has earmarked Rs.19.50/- Crore in the year 2011-12 for blacktopping 2 kilometre (km) of rural roads constructed under MGNREGS per block @ Rs.25.00/- Lakhs per Kilometre. The convergence programme under BTRRS will start working from the year 2012-13 will improve rural connectivity.



7. Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra Building



(a) Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has expanded the scope of works under schedule 1 para 1(g) to include construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra (BNRGSK) at the Gram Panchayat (GP) and Block level vide notification No J-11013/2/2009-NREGA dated 11.11.09 S.O.2877(E). This has been prompted by the demand from several states to strengthen the infrastructure at the Gram Panchayat and Programme Office level to enable an efficient implementation of MGNREGA and to provide space for greater and more transparent interactions with the citizens.

(b) Objective of the BNRGSK Buildings

The objectives of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra (BNRGSK) are as follows:

1. Provide space to facilitate the functioning of the MGNREGa office at the GP/Block Levels.
2. Function as a Knowledge Resource Center to facilitate
 - a) Citizens access to information on MGNREGA and other Rural Development Programmes
 - b) Provide space for facilitating dissemination of technologies and good practices for effecting convergence for durability and productivity enhancement of rural assents.
 - c) Operation of ICT facilities both to support GP and block office of Programme Officer (PO) as well as public excess to information and online transaction related to development process.
 - d) To facilitate timely payment of wages to MGNREGA workers through postal accounts, as the BPO may be accommodated within the building.
 - e) It can be used as a service center by the Block office for collection of Muster Rolls from the VECs and also for disbursement of wages slip along with verified Muster Rolls after MIS entry for payment of wages to the MGNREGA workers to minimize the transportation and miscellaneous cost of VEC functionaries.



Block Level BNRGSK Building at Ranikor C&RD
Block, West Khasi Hills

(c) Functions of the BNRGSK Buildings

The major functional elements considered for the BNRGSK at Block Level are as follows:

- a) Meeting/Training & capacity building hall
- b) MIS room
- c) Office space with server room
- d) Office space for MGNREGA
- e) Work station for the employees
- f) Citizen centric interface room
- g) Reception & Lobby, etc

The major functional elements considered for the BNRGSK at Panchayat/AEC Level are as follows:

- a) Meeting/Training hall
- b) Office space for MGNREGA
- c) Citizen centric interface room



Block Level BNRGSK Building at Pynursla C&RD
Block, East Khasi Hills



(d) Construction of BNRGSK Building at Bakhlapara AEC, Jirang C&RD Block, Ri Bhoi Dsitrict

Bakhlapara AEC consists of 5 VECs viz. Bakhlapara, Hawla, Jimbrigaon, Lyngkhung and Patgaon. This building was constructed with the sole objective to be used as Office of the AEC where the jobcard holders from these VECs can seek job, get their wages and file complaints.

The building will also serve as the training -cum-information centre where the people can seek detail information regarding various Govt. Schemes being implemented particularly MGNREGS.

The project was sanctioned during the financial year 2011-12 with a total sanctioned amount of Rs.10,00,000/- and generate 2128 persondays.

With the successful completion of the construction of this building, the functionaries of these 5(five) VECs and the AEC as a whole can now look forward to work in better working conditions and atmosphere and serve the public in a better way. The people from these 5 villages can now have a common meeting place to discuss their problems and speak out their grievances instead of going to the residence of the AEC/VEC Chairman or Secretary.



8. Glimpses of Success



(a) Construction of Protection Wall (R/Wall for Erosion Control Work) Amlarem C&RD Block, Amlarem Jaintia Hills District

Nongtalang Mission is the village under Amlarem C & RD Block. It constitutes a village employment council of which 103 household has registered during the Financial Year 2011-2012. The main occupation of the people in the area is casual labour, Government servant, etc.

The Construction of the Protection Wall (R/Wall Erosion Control Work) was taken up on the basis of public demand with the aim to protect the village from soil erosion and landslides. This wall also provided them with a better drainage system and has generated additional employment to the people of the area.

The construction of the protection wall has been able to provide work to 103 job seekers and generate 8343 man days and provided each job seeker with a 100 days of employment. The total length of the wall is 535.00 meter.

This project has given a new image to the village and generated a very important and durable asset for the village.





Footpath Cum Water Harvesting Pond At Laitsohpliah , Khatarshnong Laitkroh C&RD Block, East Khasi Hills District

(b) Footpath Cum Water Harvesting Pond At Laitsohpliah , Khadarshnong Laitkroh C&RD Block, East Khasi Hills District

The Laitsohpliah VEC is a village under the Khadarshnong Laitkroh C&RD Block and is situated on the beautiful hills of East Khasi Hills District which is located on the way to Cherrapunji.

A water conservation dam on top of a hill of Laitsohpliah VEC was constructed in the year 2010-11. Getting to this dam is quite tedious as the way to the dam is slippery and uneven.

The VEC in the year 2011-12 took the work of Constructing Footpath which leads up to the Dam. This construction was able to generate 2100 persondays and the total cost was Rs. 4,02,982/-.

This footpath is attracting tourists, both local and domestic as the views from the top of the hills are magnificent reflecting the beauty of the of Meghalaya. The VEC has even constructed resting place on the top as well in the midway of the two hills joining the dam.

The infrastructure created under MGNREGA has uplifted the economy of the village as a whole. Fish will be reared in the Dam and a certain amount will be collected from visitors which will go towards the village fund and which will be utilized to develop other infrastructure in the village, besides helping the poor and needy in times of distress.



Footpath Cum Water Harvesting Pond At Laitsohpliah , Khatarshnong Laitkroh C&RD Block, East Khasi Hills District



Fishery cum Water Harvesting Pond At Ashabibra,
Samanda C&RD Block, East Garo Hills District

(c) Fishery cum Water Harvesting Pond At Ashabibra, Samanda C&RD Block, East Garo Hills District

Ashabibra village has a population of 235 males and 185 females. There are 76 households in the village. It is situated 27 kms. from the Block Headquarter on the other side of the Simsang River. Despite militancy the centrally sponsored programme like MGNREGS has been going on smoothly with the dedicated efforts of the local villagers. The village consists of farmers, fishermen and labourers.

The VEC took decision to take up pisciculture under MGNREGS during 2011-12. It has tremendously benefitted the local people in providing livelihood and able to generate decent income from the harvest. Through their endeavour the villagers realise the potential of developing their locality into important tourist destination and promote eco-tourism in the surrounding areas.

The VEC was able to converge with other Govt. departments like Tourism, Fishery, Soil & Water Conservation, Animal Husbandry & Veterinary to translate the felt needs of the people in their areas.



R.C.C. Culvert at Chimagre Songgital VEC
Samanda C& RD Block, East Garo Hills

(d) Construction of R.C.C. Culvert at Chimagre Songgital Samanda C&RD Block, East Garo Hills District

Chimagre Songgital is a small village under Nengkra Gram Sevak Circle of Samanda C& RD Block, East Garo Hills. It is located 39 km away from the block headquarter, 17 km away from Williamnagar town and 3 km away from Nengkra PWD Road.

The area consists of two villages viz., Chima Gradekgittim and Chima Dachitgittim. The total population of the village and the area is about 589 persons. The main occupation of the villagers is fishing and making of bamboo basket, which locality know as "kokcheng." The villagers make baskets and sell it at Nengkra bazaar, Nongalbira coal belt areas and Williamnagar. Others inhabitants earn their livelihood by working as wage labourers under MGNREGA. There are a few Govt. employees in the village.

The main obstacle to the villagers and students during rainy season was to cross the river. Prior to implementation of MGNREGA there was no motorable road and bridge to cross the river. Now with the completion of this project village is connected with fair weather road and villagers can carry their produce to the market easily and children can now go to school even in the rainy season.



Project inspection by Shri. V. K. Mantri, IAS DC and DPC
And Shri. M.K. Marak P.D, DRDA Williamnagar at Chimagre



Water Harvesting Structure With Irrigation Field Channel At Aski Napram
Dambo Rongjeng C & RD Block, East Garo Hills District, Meghalaya

(e) Construction of Water Harvesting Structure with Irrigation Field Channel at Aski Napram, Dambo Rongjeng C&RD Block, East Garo Hills District

Despite having more than 122 bighas of cultivable land, the villagers left land fallow due to non-availability of water. Efforts to cultivate paddy with seasonal rainfall was found to be unproductive and uncertain. The aspiration of farmers in Nongchram – I VEC have seen the light of day with the implementation of MGNREGS programme. VEC took up the project on 16/05/2011 and completed the work on 16/07/2011. Now, the farmers able to irrigate whole available cultivable land and increase the production of food grains this year.

The total amount sanctioned for the project was Rs. 3,96,705/- which includes the wages amounting to Rs. 2,38,095/- and materials to Rs. 1,58,610/-. Total mandays generated under the project is 2035. The length of the canal is 21.00m, its breadth is 8.00m and the area is 168m².



Water Harvesting Structure With Irrigation Field Channel At Aski Napram
Dambo Rongjeng C & RD Block, East Garo Hills District, Meghalaya



Construction of Earthen Canal at BetasingHajongpara VEC,
Betasing C&RD Block, West Garo Hills District

(f) Construction of Earthen Canal at BetasingHajongpara VEC, Betasing C&RD Block, West Garo Hills District

Rice is the staple food for the people of Garo Hills. However, people depend on monsoons for irrigating their fields. Scanty monsoon can add to the woes of the farmers. Experiences of the people of BetasingHajongpara VEC, prompted them to tackle their problem head on. They thought, “Instead of waiting for the monsoons which of late have become undependable, why not do something to provide water to the rice field by channeling the perennial water from the nearby brook?” Thus, the idea of building a canal was mooted. This idea became a reality through MGNREGS.

Micro and small irrigation development works under MGNREGS have resulted in increasing the production as the farmers can now adopt a double cropping pattern.

After completion of the canal the farmers have full access to water even during the dry months. Now the villagers need not depend on the monsoons for irrigating their fields. They can farm their land without any water shortage and it has already benefited the farmers and will do so in the years to come.



After Completion



Improvement of Road from Kusupara to Baksapara
Zikzak C&RD Block, West Garo Hills District

(g) Improvement of Road from Kusupara to Baksapara Zikzak C&RD Block, West Garo Hills District

This is the story of one of the villages of South West Garo Hills, which falls under Zikzak C & RD Block. This small village consists of a population of about 221, with 66 Job Cards. This village shares an International boundary with Bangladesh.

From the very beginning of the implementation of MGNREGS the villagers have been actively working for the development of their village. The implementation of the project of "Construction of road from Badorkura to Bildoba via Baksapara with 2 nos. of Culverts" at a length of 1.8 Km for an amount of Rs. 4,09,500/- (Rupees four lakh nine thousand five hundred only) has become the life line for the villagers as they can easily transport their commodities like arecanut and other farm produce to the nearby market and also bring many of their needs to the doorstep.

The people now are very happy that heavy and light transport vehicles are now reaching their homes. The problems they had faced earlier to transport their produce outside the village and bring in essential commodities from outside to the village is now a thing of the past, due to the successful implementation of scheme on rural connectivity funded under MGNREGS.



Improvement of Road from Kusupara to Baksapara
Zikzak C&RD Block, West Garo Hills District



Implementation Of Footpath At Nongthymme VEC
Khliehriat C&RD Block, Jaintia Hills District

(h) Implementation Of Footpath At Nongthymme VEC Khliehriat C&RD Block, Jaintia Hills District

Nongthymme VEC is one of the oldest Villages in Jaintia Hills, District, Meghalaya but still backward in several fields. The VEC comprises of 81 household and the main livelihood of the people is agriculture and handicrafts. The VEC started the implementation of the Scheme in the year 2007 – 2008. Since the year of implementation of the Scheme, the VEC has taken up various projects.

During the financial year 2011 – 2012 the VEC included footpath as one of the important projects in their Village Annual Action Plan. Based on the Annual Action Plan the VEC constructed a footpath about 205 Rm in length. Through different Projects taken up by the VEC, it can be seen that most of the Projects were Rural Connectivity. Now, the village has easy connectivity from one part of the Village to the other part through this footpath.

With the implementation of MGNREGA Scheme in the Village, the VEC were able to get employment in their own respective Village instead of going outside of their Village in search of job. Construction of this footpath has benefitted 62 house hold with 868 Mandays. This Scheme has provided employment especially for the women and also it created durable assets.



Implementation Of Footpath At Nongthymme VEC
Khliehriat C&RD Block, Jaintia Hills District

9. Statistical Reports and Monthly Progress Reports

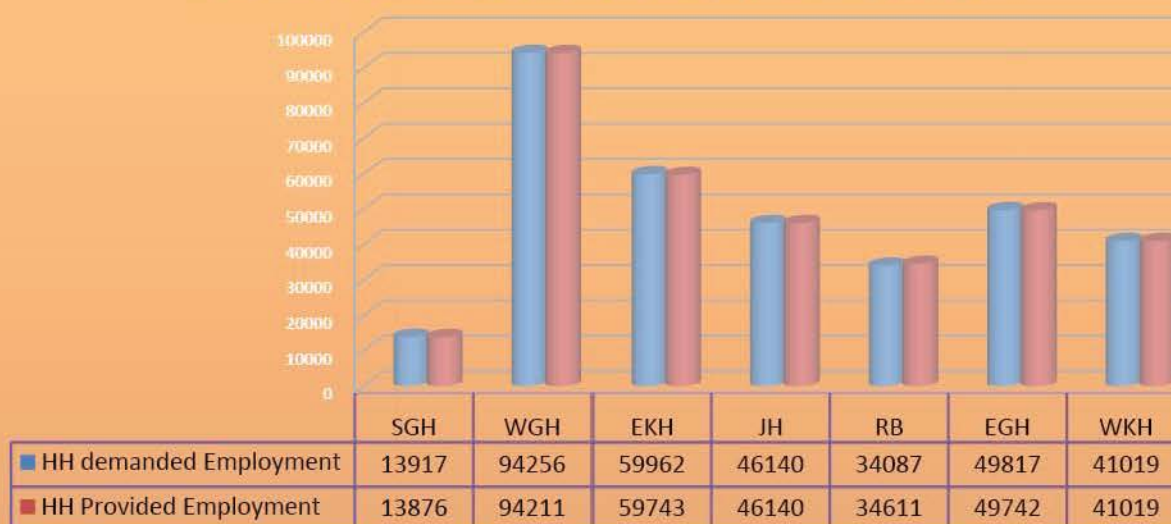
(a) Approved Labour Budget Of 2011-12

Total Projected expenditure for Meghalaya for 2011-12				
District	Projected Persondays to be achieved	Projected Expenditure		
		Labour	Material	Total
South Garo Hills	37.00	1000	569.75	1570
West Garo Hills	60.13	6883	4476.23	11359
East Khasi Hills	38.31	4094	2267.05	6361
Jaintia Hills	34.44	2012	1341.60	3354
Ri Bhoi	80.78	3529	2352.90	5882
East Garo Hills	85.64	5050	2623.04	7673
West Khasi Hills	31.02	2368	1578.72	3947
STATE	51.33	24937	15209.29	40146

(b) Employment Generation in 2011-12

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION							
District	HH with Job Cards	HH demanded Employment	HH Provided Employment	%ge of HH employed	Total Persondays Generated (in lakhs)	Persondays provided to each family	%ge of Women participants
South Garo Hills	21397	13917	13876	100	4.40	31.74	50.00
West Garo Hills	96868	94256	94211	100	54.27	57.60	34.65
East Khasi Hills	80415	59962	59743	100	18.14	30.36	58.37
Jaintia Hills	57892	46140	46140	100	14.67	31.80	39.64
Ri Bhoi	47487	34087	34611	102	18.92	54.66	39.65
East Garo Hills	51503	49817	49742	100	44.96	90.40	43.57
West Khasi Hills	61673	41019	41019	100	20.01	48.77	45.28
TOTAL	417235	339198	339342	100	175.37	51.68	41.94

Households demanded & Provided employment for 2011-12



(c) Financial Performance in 2011-12

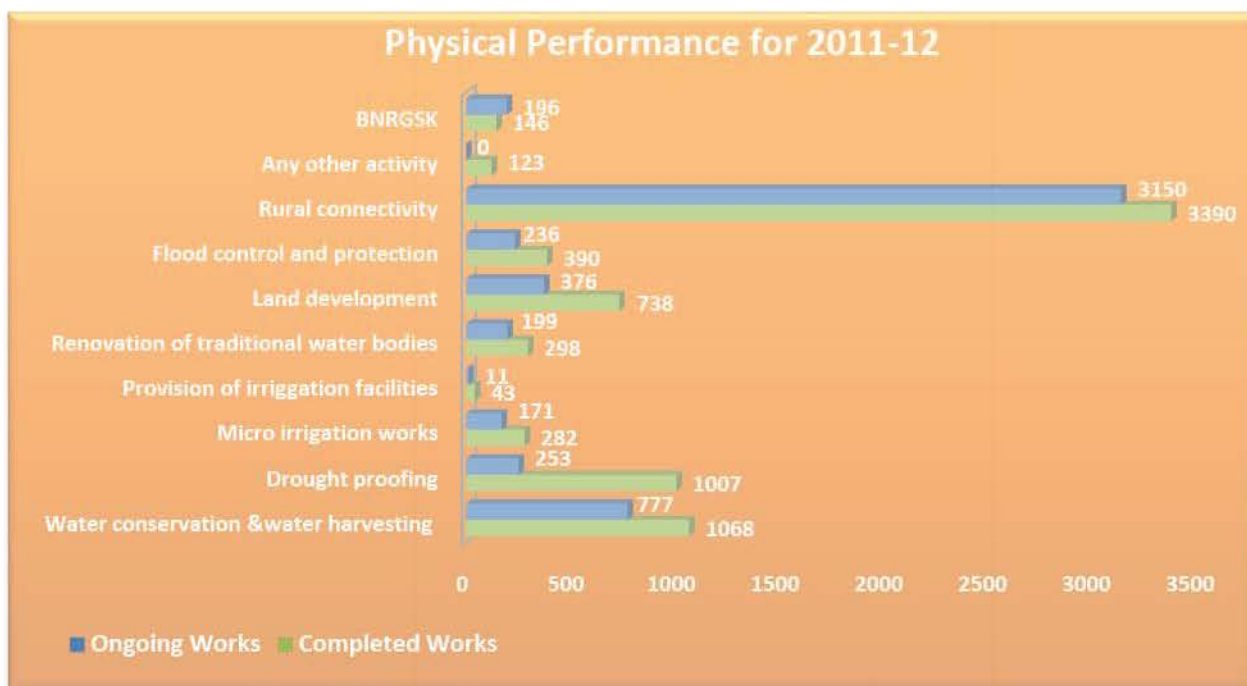
FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE				
District	Approved Budget for 2011-2012 (In lakhs)	Total availability	Total expenditure (in lakhs)	%ge Expenditure on Wages
South Garo Hills	1570.14	908.54	762.46	67.58
West Garo Hills	11359.34	10035.52	9896.74	63.22
East Khasi Hills	6360.88	4118.34	3526.26	60.15
Jaintia Hills	3354.79	3544.08	2872.00	58.61
Ri Bhoi	5882.23	3878.89	3752.03	59.00
East Garo Hills	7672.76	7663.80	7409.41	70.85
West Khasi Hills	3946.79	4284.79	3924.91	60.86
TOTAL	40146.94	34433.97	32143.81	63.55

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE				
District	%ge Expenditure on Material	%ge Administrative expenditure	%ge Fund Utilization	Average wage per person per day
South Garo Hills	29.08	3.34	83.92	117.00
West Garo Hills	32.02	4.76	98.62	115.29
East Khasi Hills	35.01	4.84	85.62	116.93
Jaintia Hills	39.66	1.72	81.04	114.73
Ri Bhoi	35.87	5.13	96.73	117.00
East Garo Hills	25.34	3.82	96.68	116.74
West Khasi Hills	34.52	4.62	91.60	119.40
TOTAL	32.18	4.27	93.35	116.48



(d) Physical Performance in 2011-12

Physical Performance		
Work Activities	Completed Works	Ongoing Works
Water conservation & water harvesting	1068	777
Drought proofing	1007	253
Micro irrigation works	282	171
Provision of irrigation facilities	43	11
Renovation of traditional water bodies	298	199
Land development	738	376
Flood control and protection	390	236
Rural connectivity	3390	3150
Any other activity	123	0
BNRGSK	146	196
Grand total	7485	5369



(e) Statistical Performance

NREGA STATISTICS			
Particulars	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12
No. of HH with Job Cards	372523	398226	417235
Employment provided to HH	300482	346129	339342
Person days			
Total	148.82	199.81	175.374
SCs	1.11	0.75	1.41894
STs	139.70	188.84	165.414
Women	70.08	87.76	73.55857
Others	8.01	10.21	8.54141
Total Funds (in lakhs)	22879.07	33293.06	34433.97
Expenditure (in lakhs)	18352.27	31985.62	32143.81
Total Works taken up	3173	14002	12854
Works Completed	6337	7726	7485
Hoeseholds completed 100 days	14633	19576	26935

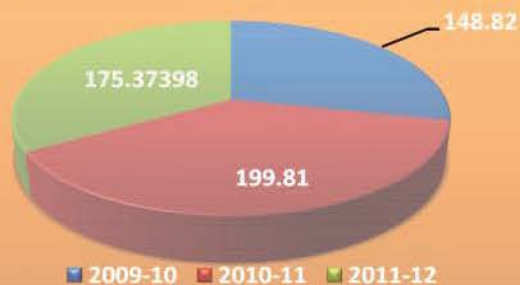
No. of HH with Job Cards



Total Funds (in lakhs)



Total Persondays Generated



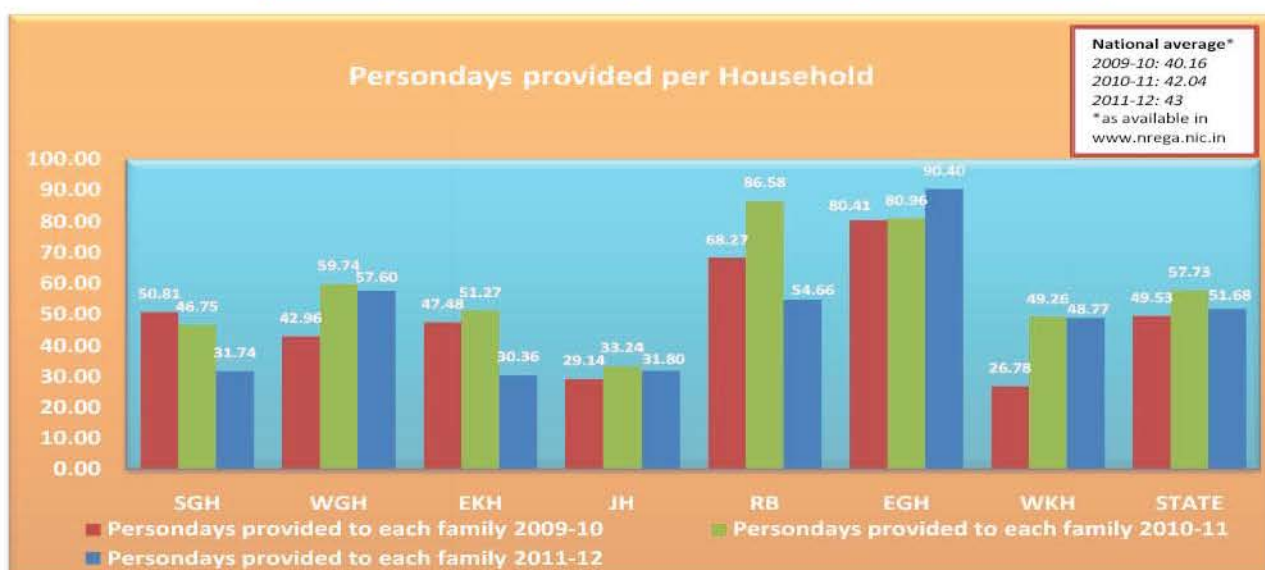
Total Expenditure (in lakhs)



Registered Households under MGNREGA			
District	HH with Job Cards 2009-10	HH with Job Cards 2010-11	HH with Job Cards 2011-12
SGH	20528	21040	21397
WGH	97149	96918	96868
EKH	70626	77546	80415
JH	51609	55503	57892
RB	38484	41397	47487
EGH	46388	48941	51503
WKH	47739	56881	61673



Persondays Provided to Each Household			
District	Persondays provided to each family 2009-10	Persondays provided to each family 2010-11	Persondays provided to each family 2011-12
SGH	50.81	46.75	31.74
WGH	42.96	59.74	57.60
EKH	47.48	51.27	30.36
JH	29.14	33.24	31.80
RB	68.27	86.58	54.66
EGH	80.41	80.96	90.40
WKH	26.78	49.26	48.77



10. Newspaper Clippings

MGNREGS is world's biggest econ stimuli: CM

CHRONICLE NEWS SERVICE
SHILLONG, AUGUST 2

Inaugurating the office of the State Rural Employment Society (SRES) at Dhankheti on Tuesday, Meghalaya Chief Minister Dr. Mukul Sangma said that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has been one of the world's biggest economic stimuli at a time when other countries were trying to figure out economic stimulus formula for countering economic slowdown.

Dr. Sangma said that the MGNREGS – which is a flagship programme of the central government – has brought huge investment and provided 100 days employment to the four lakh job card holders under this scheme. He expressed happiness over the government's ability to stop economic exploitation of

the farmers who had been engaged as daily wage labourers by the rich by paying them minimum daily wage but under the MGNREGS these labourers are getting uniform payment and are spared from economic exploitation.

However Dr. Sangma lamented that there are certain glitches that need to be ironed out during the implementation of the MGNREGS and he mentioned that paying the job card holders on time has been one of the major challenges before the government. He said, "If I tell the villagers that the MGNREGS is the best programme in the country, they will immediately disagree if they do not get payment on time."

Dr. Sangma informed that the newly-formed SRES will try to alleviate this problem and ensure timely payment to the job card holders of the MGNREGS. He was confident that this model

that the Meghalaya government had conceptualised for disbursement of the fund to the workers would be better as the fund are being rotated through the village councils of panchayats which are elected bodies and hence susceptible to politics.

The CM was confident that the model adopted by Meghalaya in implementation of the MGNREGS will be the best model in the country.

Meghalaya Community & Rural Development (C&RD) Minister Saleng Sangma said that initially the MGNREGS covered only three districts, but now it is being implemented in all the seven districts in the State. He hoped the SRES will provide the thrust that is needed to make the implementation of this scheme from "better to the best" by removing all the bottlenecks that are there at present.

Meghalaya Chief Secretary

WMS Pariat said that after the MGNREGS that has passed four years in its implementation in the State, its impact in Meghalaya can be gauged by the fact that it has provided jobs to about four lakh workers. He however said that there are areas that can be improved, especially with regards to the flow of fund from the central government. He said, "Flow of fund to the different districts has been cumbersome and the SRES will iron-out this problem."

C&RD Commissioner & Secretary KN Kumar, under whose leadership the SRES was formed, said that the new body will make the implementation of the MGNREGS more effective and efficient. He said the present fund allocation for the MGNREGS was Rs. 300 crore but he said the target set by the C&RD department is Rs. 500 crore which will go directly to the economically weaker section of the society.

MGNREGS to aid riot-hit

From Our Correspondent

TURA: The large scale destruction of homes and villages by mobs of attackers in the East Garo Hills region during two weeks of ethnic tension has literally pushed several thousand displaced villagers towards starvation in the months to come as the innocent victims have little or no means of making ends meet.

Given the appalling condition of the displaced people the district administration of East Garo Hills has mooted the idea

of bringing out several rural work projects under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

The administration is coming out with a proposal to create several projects in the areas where the ethnic violence flared and which would provide ample employment to the needy villagers.

"We have started a process of planning several employment generation works in the rural areas to discourage the displaced people from migrating elsewhere. People who have been deprived of their

livelihood due to the violence need not go far to look for employment because we will ensure works are utilized at the village level itself," informed East Garo Hills Deputy Commissioner Pravin Bakshi.

Under the central rural employment scheme (MGNREGS) the displaced villagers will be provided employment for a hundred days with wages of Rs 100+ per day per person.

Some efforts are also being made to provide homes for the displaced through the Indira Awas Yojana wherein cash and

material component amounting to a sum of Rs. 48,500 for each house is provided under the central scheme.

The negative aspect of the IAY project is that relief compensation, although meager, has already been announced by the Meghalaya government to provide Rs 10,000 and three bundles of CGI tin sheets for the rebuilding process of the displaced people. IAY projects, as per central norms, cannot be provided to families who have been given other state compensation packages.

Agency solution to wage delay

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Shillong, March 28: The Meghalaya government today decided to constitute a State Rural Agency to ensure smooth transfer of funds for payment of wages to job-card holders under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. It also approved the constitution of the Meghalaya Integrated Basin Development & Livelihood Programme.

In response to increasing complaints on the late arrival of funds from the Centre for disbursement of wages, chief minister Mukul Sangma said the State Rural Agency, which would have a corpus fund, would ensure timely payment of wages to job-card holders.

Sangma was briefing reporters after a cabinet meeting here this evening.

In December last year, several job-card holders in East Khasi Hills had a "blue Christmas" as there was a delay in the disbursement of wages because of late arrival of funds.

From now, if there is any delay in arrival of funds from the Centre, the state government would release the money to the deputy commissioners/block development officers through the corpus fund to clear the wages.

"Apart from addressing the wage issue, the agency would also look into the anomalies in the implementation of the NREGS," Sangma said. The agency would also scrutinise the funds allotted for the scheme, he added.

The government also sought to empower the rural poor through the institution of the Meghalaya Integrated Basin Development and Livelihood Programme.

"Under this programme, there would be a convergence of schemes such as agricul-



Mukul Sangma: Proactive

ture, fisheries, horticulture, tourism and others where the rural poor living near the river basins will be assisted," Sangma said.

For this programme, Sangma said, the government has earmarked Rs 15 crore. He added that through the programme, the government would try to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change.

To initiate the programme, a Basin Development Council, under the chairmanship of the chief minister and a Basin Development Authority, under the chief secretary, were also established.

Further, in line with the programme, the government also approved the setting up of a Meghalaya Institute of Entrepreneurship at a cost of Rs 5 crore.

"Through the institute, we would want to develop entrepreneurs in the state through training and capacity building," Sangma said.

He also announced the government's decision to establish the Meghalaya Institute of Governance to enhance accountability and transparency.

Another Rs 5 crore has been set aside for this institute, Sangma added.

"The institute will provide training not only to government departments, but also autonomous bodies, NGOs and the private sector in the field of financial management, human resource development, accountability and transparency," Sangma said.

The cabinet also approved the setting up of the Meghalaya Water Resources Development Agency to link all government departments related to water resources.

This agency would also formulate a state water policy, besides addressing climate change issues.

The cabinet approved the amendments brought into the guidelines for the implementation of the Special Rural Works Programme, a scheme implemented by the legislators. Henceforth, vehicles given by legislators for community purpose would bear government registration numbers in the name of the beneficiaries, Sangma said.

"If anyone is found misusing the vehicles such as ambulances, the deputy commissioners have been empowered to take back the vehicles from the beneficiaries," he said.

While this amendment would not be implemented with retrospective effect, Sangma said the government would look into cases where there are allegations that such vehicles have been misused.

The cabinet also approved the rules for the implementation of the Meghalaya Cement Cess Act, 2010 where the government is expected to generate around Rs 12 crore annually from cement factories. Under the act, Rs 20 would be charged for every metric tonne of cement produced.

11. SRES launched for administering MGNREGS



SRES launched for administering MGNREGS

To enable better implementation and monitoring of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Department of Community and Rural Development (C&RD) has set up a dedicated implementation structure in the State.

Located at the former United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) the SRES (State Rural Employment Society) will focus on the implementation of the national flagship programme – MGNREGS.

Speaking at the inaugural function, Minister for C&RD, Saleng Sangma said the absence of Management Information Systems (MIS), delay in data entry etc resulted in delayed reports and this in turn leads to delay in fund flows from the Government of India. "This dedicated unit will focus on better delivery of MGNREGS and bring in greater professionalism," he said.

Chief Minister Dr Mukul Sangma, who was the chief guest at the function, expressed his happiness that a "decision taken a few weeks back was moving ahead at great speed, not seen in the past." Dr Sangma lauded the officers and staff of C&RD Department for their "dynamism and desire to serve."

About the MGNREGS, Dr Sangma said it is the largest economic stimulus in the world. "While the world witnessed economic meltdown India was marching ahead with the idea of empowering the poor. The MGNREGS has liberated people from the clutches of rich farmers who were exploiting their labour," Dr Sangma asserted, adding that earlier the agricultural labourers were subject to wages according to the whims and fancies of affluent farmers. The Chief Minister said now the rural masses have the option to turn to MGNREGS for better wages.



The Chief Minister, however, rued the fact that job card holders were not getting their wages on time. “How can poor people be made to wait for months to get their just wages? We have to ensure that their wages are directly transferred to individual accounts on a daily basis,” Dr Sangma said, adding that such needless delays have a negative impact on the willingness of people to participate in Government programmes. “We have to have better monitoring and evaluation strategies and use smart ideas and technologies to give an impetus to the programme,” said the Chief Minister, adding that this would require stability of leadership at various levels of governance.

Dr Sangma said there are 4 lakh registered job card holders in Meghalaya. Taking the family size of five, there are about 20 lakh people who are served by the MGNREGS which is roughly two-thirds of Meghalaya or the entire rural populace. While the funds for the MGNREGS stood at Rs. 300 crore at present, the amount will scale up further to better administration of the programme.

Pointing out that Meghalaya has adopted the best system in so far as the setting up Village Employment Councils (VECs) and Area Employment Councils (AEC) are concerned as these institutions are free from partisan politics, the Chief Minister said, “In states with Panchayati Raj system, the mode of selection/appointment of VECs and AECs is highly political,” adding that the few hiccups that have surfaced in some areas can be tackled once the SRES begins functioning in right earnest.

Meanwhile, pointing at the importance of the SRES, the Chief Minister said this will become the convergence point for several departments which have key roles in rural development. The SRES will also provide continued capacity building for key officials and delivery agents of the MGNREGS.

Earlier, Chief Secretary, Government of Meghalaya, WMS Pariat & Chairman, SRES said one of the major constraints faced by the Department in implementing the scheme are the cumbersome procedures that resulted in delay in funds flow. “We hope to overcome this through the setting up of the SRES. There are huge numbers of people in rural areas both in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors who will be better benefited by this dedicated structure”, Mr Pariat underlined.

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