

# **Report on Implementation of NREGA**

**in Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh**

**In May and June 2006**

submitted by

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi

15 September 2006

A-11, Second Floor, Niti Bagh, New Delhi – 110 049  
Telefax: +91-11-4174 1285 / 6 / 7    Email: cbadelhi@vsnl.net

## Table of Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	3
Maps	4
<b>Chapters</b>	
Chapter 1: Introduction	6
Chapter 2: Socio-economic background of survey areas	8
Chapter 3: Implementation of NREGA in survey areas of selected states	38
Chapter 4: Conclusion and recommendations	67
<b>Appendices:</b>	
Appendix A: Survey Team	74
Appendix B: Household Questionnaire	75
Appendix C: Worksite and Related Questionnaires	83
Appendix D: Muster Roll Verification Sheets	107

## Acknowledgements

This study is the result of the combined efforts of a very large number of people. In addition to the survey team which comprised 70 students and 7 supervisors and co-ordinators, there was active participation in the process by local organisations working in the area.

We are extremely grateful to these organisations, and to those who facilitated the survey and assisted the survey team in numerous ways during the exercise. In particular, we would like to thank the following: In Jharkhand: Jawahar, Lalit, Indramani, Devlal, (Vikas Sahyog Kendra, Manatu), Avdesh (Vikas Sahyog Kendra, Latehar), Byomkesh (Action Aid India), Balram. In Madhya Pradesh: Madhuri Krishnaswamy (Jagrut Adivasi Dalit Sangathan, Barwani), Krishna, Bhuru (Adivasi Dalit Morcha). In Chhattisgarh: Gangabhai, Sameer (Chhattisgarh Kisan Majdoor Andolan, Jashpur), Amarnath Pandey (CPI, Surguja). In Andhra Pradesh: Prof. Shanta Sinha and the MV Foundation.

The teams also received a lot of assistance from government at central and state levels. The District Collectors in each of the survey districts provided local assistance to the teams and also responded to queries and comments. In Latehar, DC Shri K. K. Soan,..... In Delhi, Ms. Amita Sharma, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, was extremely helpful and supportive throughout. Professor Abhijit Sen and Shri B. N. Yugandhar of the Planning Commission also provided support in various ways. Shri Rajesh Sharma, PS to Member, Planning Commission, helped in many different ways in dealing with particular problems.

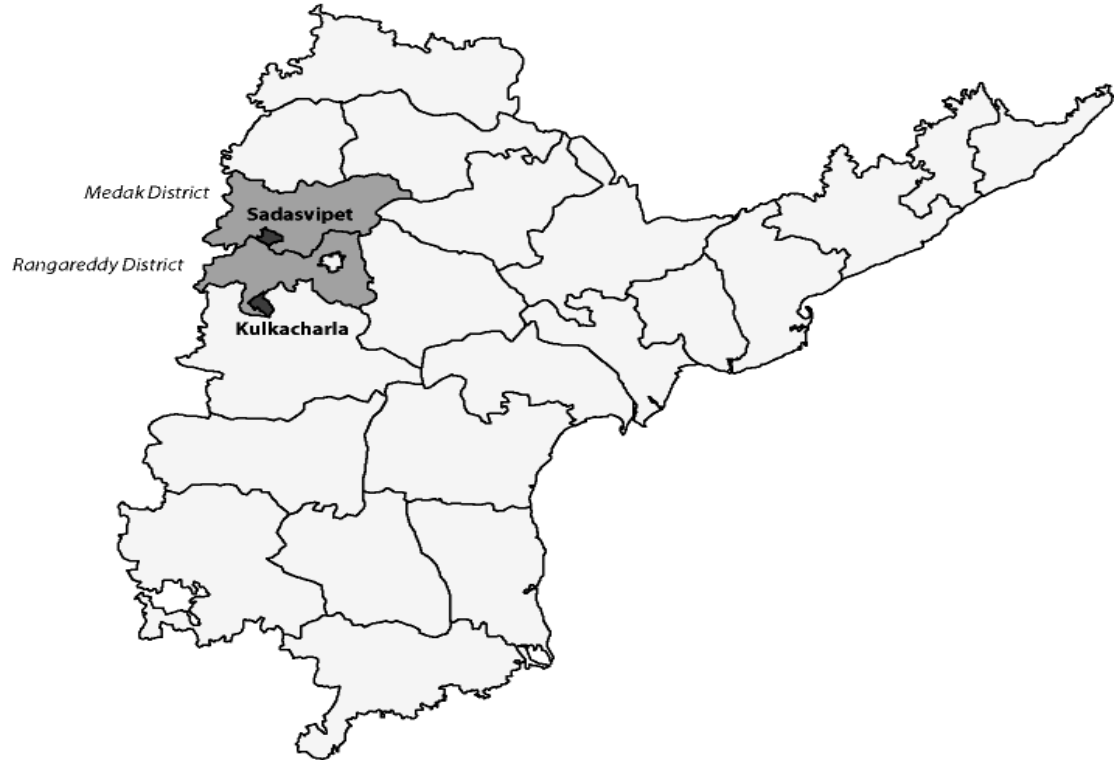
The CBGA provided congenial and accommodating arrangements to meet the requirements of this particular study. We are especially grateful to Amitabh Behar and to Yamini Mishra, Co-ordinator CBGA, for their continuing support and assistance. The Centre de Sciences Humaines was kind enough to grant leave to Himanshu to allow him to work on this project, and also provided space and computer time for one of the students to work there for data cleaning and processing. Bertrand Lefebvre Scientific Secretary at CSH helped in making the maps. Bhupal Singh Bisht of the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, provided organisational assistance at various times. Dr. Vikas Rawal of JNU also assisted in working out the questionnaires and survey design.

This study was sponsored for the Ministry of Rural Development by UNDP New Delhi. We are grateful to Ms. Neera Burra of UNDP for her encouragement.

Kaustav, Himanshu, Deepak, Omkarnath  
Jayati, Jean, Kamal, Praveen

## Maps of the Surveyed Blocks and Districts

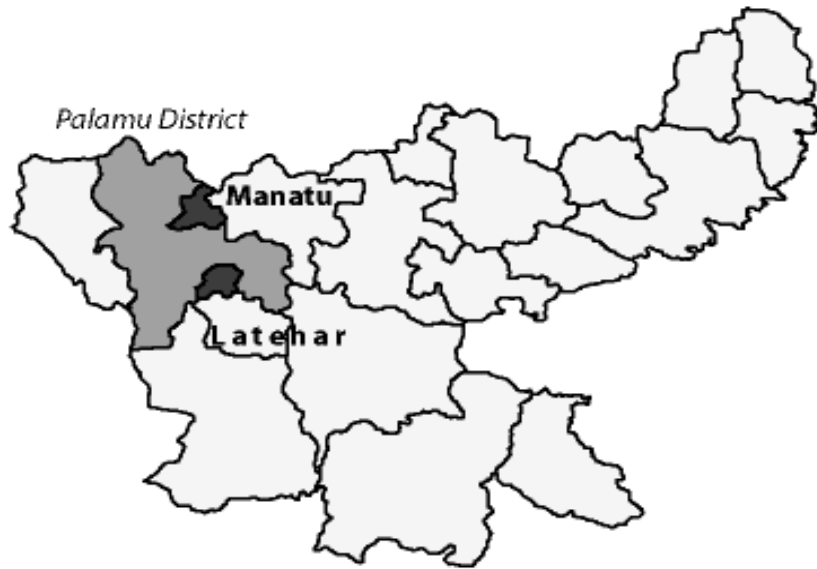
### ANDHRA PRADESH



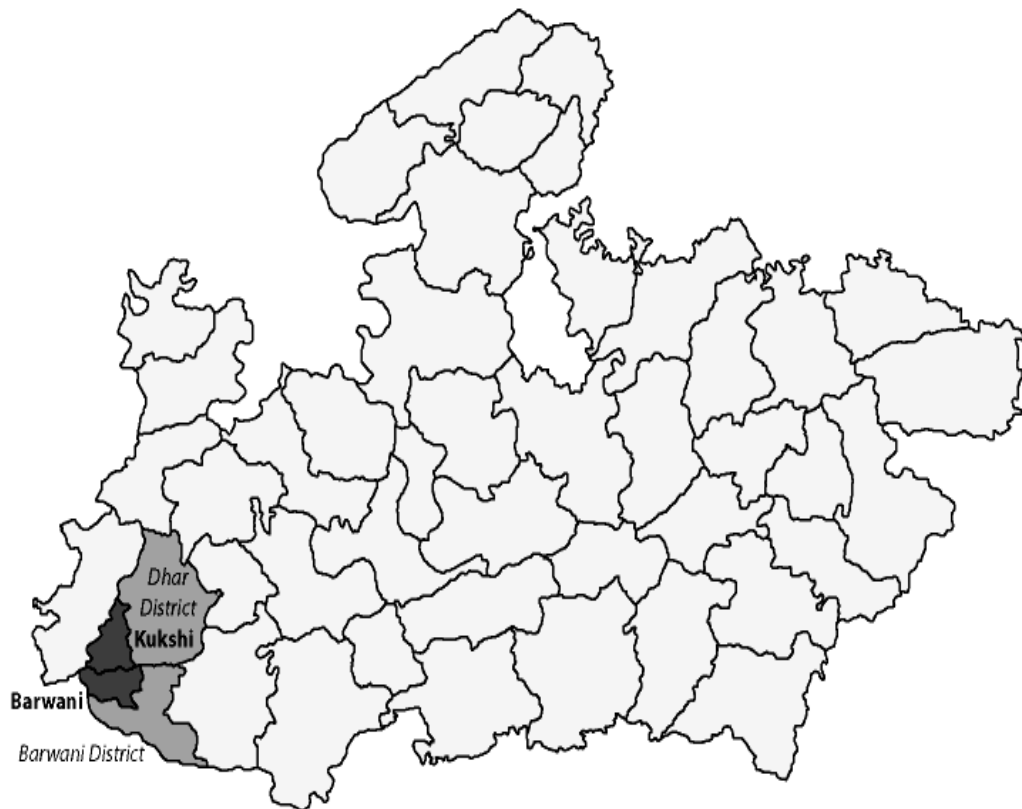
### CHHATTISGARH



# JHARKHAND



# MADHYA PRADESH



## Chapter 1: Introduction

This report is an initial attempt to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (hereafter NREGA) in its initial phase of implementation in 4 states – Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. The study was conducted under the auspices of the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi. It is based on field surveys over the months of May and June 2006, by 70 students from Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and Hyderabad Central University. The survey was co-ordinated by Kaustav (Research Scholar, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), supervised by Dr. Himanshu (Fellow, Centre des Sciences Humaines, New Delhi), Deepak L. Xavier (Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, New Delhi), and Dr. G. Omkarnath (Department of Economics, Central University, Hyderabad), under overall guidance of Professor Kamal Chenoy (School of International Studies), Professor Jean Dreze (Centre for Development Economics, Delhi University and GB Pant Institute of Social Sciences, Allahabad), Professor Jayati Ghosh and Dr. Praveen Jha (both from Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi). This report has been written by Himanshu and Kaustav, with some final inputs from Jayati Ghosh.

In each of the states, two districts were chosen, and within these districts a particular block was identified for more detailed investigation. The details of the areas selected are as follows:

State	District	Block
Andhra Pradesh	Ranga Reddy Medak	Kulkacharla Sadashivpet
Chhattisgarh	Jashpur Surguja	Bagicha Kusmi
Jharkhand	Latehar Palamau	Manika Manatu
Madhya Pradesh	Barwani Dhar	Pati Dahi

In each of the areas chosen, there was a team consisting of 10-12 field investigators accompanied by one supervisor. Each team carried out the following exercises:

- A survey of a minimum of 30 households in two villages, to assess the socio-economic characteristics, labour market details and awareness of NREGA. Villages in the chosen districts of Andhra Pradesh had more households than in

Jharkhand, MP and Chattisgarh because of the difficult terrain and different demographic structure in the latter areas; therefore, more households were surveyed in AP.

- Worksite surveys on at least 5 to 6 NREGA work sites, to capture the type of work, the nature of working conditions, the wages paid, and whether the NREGA guidelines were being followed.
- Muster roll verification exercise for ongoing worksites under NREGA.
- A survey of the problems faced by the local administration in implementing NREGA and verification of Muster Rolls. This involved structured interviews with officials of the District administration and Block administration, as well as elected panchayat level administration.

Each of the research team was motivated by the following objectives:

- To understand the specific socio-economic context in which the NREGA is operating.
- To check whether there is awareness about NREGA and its various aspects.
- To check conformity of the actual Schemes with the NREGA Guidelines.
- To assess the difficulties faced by various players, including those in charge of implementing the Act, and see how they can be addressed
- To communicate to the workers about their rights under NREGA.

The survey teams visited each area for a period of around 16-20 days. Towards the end of the survey period, the teams organized a *Jan Sunwai* (Public Hearing) in each block to present their main findings with regard to the implementation of the NREGA. The District Collector/Block Development Officer/Chief Executive Officer, Panchayat Sevaks and the workers were invited to these meetings.

This report presents the results of this study. Chapter 2 outlines the socio-economic context in which the NREGA is operating. This section is based on the detailed household questionnaire which collated household level data on land, credit, occupation, literacy, BMI, migration, housing, assets and livestock, women and work, employment in public works, wages. Chapter 3 provides the results of the survey of the actual implementation process, based on the worksite surveys, the muster roll verification exercises and the structured discussions with local administration and officials. Specific features of the implementation process which are currently inadequate or in need of revision are outlined. In the final chapter, along with concluding comments, some recommendations are made about how to resolve some of these problems and make the implementation of NREGA more effective.

## Chapter 2: Socio-economic conditions in the selected areas

### A. State-level indicators

The NREGA is being implemented in the first phase in 200 districts, which are already identified as being among the most backward districts in the country. The four states chosen for this survey also happen to be among the poorer states in the country, with per capita income below the national average, and three of them are particularly backward in terms of standard development indicators. In what follows, we provide the socio-economic context for the implementation of NREGA, both at aggregate level, and for the specific blocks and villages where the survey was undertaken. We first present some secondary information on the areas<sup>1</sup>, followed by results of the socio-economic survey of households conducted as part of this study.

Table 2.1: Per capita Net State Domestic Product in 2003-04

State	(in Rupees)
Andhra Pradesh	20757
Chhattisgarh	14863
Jharkhand	12509
Madhya Pradesh	14011

Source: Economic Survey of India 2005-06

In all of these states, the literacy rate in 2001 was well below 70 per cent, although there is evidence of substantial improvement over the previous decade. Jharkhand showed the worst levels of literacy among these states, with the situation being especially bad for females.

Table 2.2: Literacy rates

State	Literacy Rate 2001			Literacy Rate 1991
	Total	Male	Female	
Andhra Pradesh	61.11	70.85	51.17	44.09
Chhattisgarh	65.18	77.86	52.4	42.91
Jharkhand	54.13	67.94	39.38	41.39
Madhya Pradesh	64.11	76.8	50.28	44.67
India	65.38	75.96	54.28	51.63

Table 2.3: Infant mortality rates (per 1000 live births)

	Total	Rural	Urban
Andhra Pradesh	66	74	40
Chhattisgarh	77	88	58

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, the source for all of the secondary level tables is the Census of India, 2001.



Jharkhand	62	67	40
Madhya Pradesh	86	92	53
<b>All India</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>42</b>

Source: Statistical Abstract of India, 2003

As Table 2.3 indicates, the relative lack of development in three of the four states also appear in the infant mortality indicators, which are significantly higher especially for rural areas of Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh.

Table 2.4: Work participation rates in 2001

Andhra Pradesh	Persons	45.81
	Males	56.44
	Females	34.93
Chhattisgarh	Persons	46.54
	Males	52.97
	Females	40.04
Jharkhand	Persons	37.64
	Males	48.21
	Females	26.40
Madhya Pradesh	Persons	43.72
	Males	51.96
	Females	34.93
India	Persons	39.26
	Males	51.93
	Females	25.68

## B. Secondary information on selected districts in the four states

### Andhra Pradesh

Of the two selected districts of Andhra Pradesh, Medak is predominantly rural with 85.64 per cent of the total population living in the rural areas and Rangareddy is mostly urban with just 45.80 per cent rural population. In both Medak and Rangareddy, the average size of the rural households is above five, which is much higher than the state average of only 4.39. The rural literacy rates in Medak (40.18%) and Rangareddy (44.56%) are lower than the state average of 47.01 per cent. The sex ratio among the rural population in Rangareddy (962) is much lower than the state average of 983 women per thousand men. SCs and STs together constitute only one fourth of the total rural population in both the districts.

Table 2.5: Demographic data for rural Andhra Pradesh

Districts	% Rural Population	Average Size of Rural House holds	% SC	% ST	Rural Sex Ratio	Rural Literacy Rate		
						Persons	Male	Female
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	<b>72.7</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>8.4</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>37.6</b>
Medak	85.6	5.2	18.9	5.7	979	40.2	51.4	28.7
Rangareddy	45.8	5.0	20.6	7.3	962	44.6	54.8	33.9

Surprisingly, the workforce participation rate among the rural men in Medak (56.32%) and Rangareddy (55.78%) are lower than the state average of 58.30%. At the same time the workforce participation rate among the rural women in Medak (46.06%) is higher than the state average of 43.28%. In both the districts, the percentage of population dependent on agriculture is lesser than the state average of 75.04 per cent.

Table 2.6: Workforce characteristics in rural Andhra Pradesh

	Workforce Participation Rate			% Main Workers	% Agri Labour + Marginal Cultivators	% Agri Dependent Population
	Persons	Male	Female			
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>58.3</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>75.0</b>
Medak	51.2	56.3	46.1	81.6	42.1	73.8
Rangareddy	49.1	55.8	42.1	85.1	36.4	69.3

The sex ratios among the rural STs in Medak (951) and Rangareddy (955) are well below the state average of 974 women per thousand men. The rural female literacy rate in Madak (28.73 %) is far behind the state average of 37.58 per cent. In both, Medak (73.95 %) and Rangareddy (77.42 %) districts, the percentage of female main workers is higher than the other survey districts.

Table 2.7: Characteristics of women in rural Andhra Pradesh

	Literacy Rate	Sex Ratio	SC Sex Ratio	ST Sex Ratio	WPR	% Main Workers	% Cultivators	% Agri Labour	% Household Based Occupation	% Others
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>983</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>974</b>	<b>43.3</b>	<b>71.6</b>	<b>22.1</b>	<b>60.4</b>	<b>6.1</b>	<b>11.3</b>
Medak	28.7	979	990	951	46.1	73.9	26.9	52.4	6.3	14.3
Rangareddy	33.9	962	972	955	42.1	77.4	31.4	51.2	2.6	14.8

In terms of village amenities, Rangareddy appears to be the best situated among all the survey districts in the four states, with the two-third of households occupying permanent houses. Medak is closer to the state average on most indicators. Almost one fourth of the rural households in Medak and Rangareddy have to travel more than 500 meters to fetch water. Banking services are accessed by around one-third of the households in both districts.

Table 2.8: Household amenities in rural Andhra Pradesh

	Permanent Houses	Non-Serviceable Houses	Water Away from Home	Households without Electricity & Water	Households without Drinking Water, Electricity & Latrines	Rural Households availing Banking Services
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>30</b>
Medak	44	2.72	22	12	12	36
Rangareddy	66	1.48	23	12	11	33

## Chhattisgarh

In Chhattisgarh, the Schedule Castes and the Schedule Tribes together constitute almost half of the rural population. The majority of the rural population in both Surguja (57.4%) and Jashpur (64.5%) is tribal. Also, both districts are predominantly rural, with more than 93 per cent of the total population living in rural areas. In Jashpur, the literacy rate among the rural population is better than the state average of 49.7 per cent. The female literacy rate in Jashpur (42.9%) is low but it is still far ahead of the female literacy rate in Surguja (31.2%). The average size of rural household in Jashpur (4.98) is lower than the state average of 5.09. The sex ratio in Surguja (977) is far below the state average of 1004 women per thousand men.

Table 2.9: Demographic characteristics of rural Chhattisgarh

	% Rural Population	Average Size of Rural Households	% SC	% ST	Rural Sex Ratio	Rural Literacy Rate		
						Persons	Male	Female
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>37.6</b>	<b>1004</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>60.7</b>	<b>38.7</b>
Surguja	93.0	5.1	4.8	57.4	977	42.1	52.8	31.2
Jashpur	95.4	5.0	4.7	64.5	1003	52.3	61.8	42.9

Both Surguja and Jashpur have workforce participation rates among the men and women which are higher than the state average. At the same time, in both the districts, the percentage of main workers is well below the state average of 70.2 per cent. In both

districts, as much as ninety per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture, which underlines the significance of the NREGA in this region.

Table 2.10: Workforce characteristics of rural Chhattisgarh

	Workforce Participation Rate			% Main Workers	% Agri Labour + Marginal Cultivators	% Agri Dependent Population
	Persons	Male	Female			
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>	<b>50.3</b>	<b>54.1</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>86.9</b>
Surguja	51.5	56.3	46.6	60.3	50.8	90.1
Jashpur	54.7	58.1	51.3	65.2	44.6	89.7

In both the districts, sex ratio among the tribal population is much higher than the district average. In Jashpur, the workforce participation rate among the rural women is higher than rest of the state i.e. 46.6 per cent. In both the districts, the percentage of marginal women workers is far higher than the state average of 45.7 per cent.

Table 2.11: Characteristics of women in rural Chhattisgarh

	Literacy Rate	Sex Ratio	SC Sex Ratio	ST Sex Ratio	WPR	% Main Workers	% Cultivators	% Agricultural Labour	% Household Based Occupation	% Others
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>	<b>38.7</b>	<b>1004</b>	<b>1002</b>	<b>1017</b>	<b>46.5</b>	<b>54.27</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>46.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>5.2</b>
Surguja	31.2	977	982	987	46.6	33.15	45.7	48.7	1.7	3.8
Jashpur	42.9	1003	996	1016	51.3	42.63	60.8	32.8	2.4	3.9

From Table 2.12 it is evident that the vast majority of the households in rural Chhattisgarh, and particularly in the survey districts, do not live in permanent dwellings. Almost every fourth household in Surguja and Jashpur does not have drinking water, electricity or toilet facilities. This is far more than the state average, indicating the relative inadequacy of basic infrastructure in these districts even within this state. Hardly any households have access to banking facilities.

Table 2.12: Household amenities in rural Chhattisgarh

	Permanent Houses	Non-Serviceable Houses	Water Away from Home	Households without Electricity & Water	Households without Drinking Water, Electricity & Latrines	Rural Households availing Banking Services
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>19</b>
Surguja	3	0.17	28	24	24	18
Jashpur	3	0.03	26	23	23	17

## Jharkhand

Jharkhand has a very high percentage of rural households, which is also reflected in terms of high percentage of rural population. Furthermore, the average size of rural household is far above the national average. Of the total rural population, the SCs (12.35 %) and STs (31.02 %) together between them constitute 43.38 per cent. Of the two selected districts, Latehar district was created as a separate district carved out of Palamu in April 2001. Therefore the 2001 Census data on Palamu provides evidence for both Palamu and Latehar. Palamu is predominantly rural with 95 per cent rural population. Both the literacy rate (33.84 %) and average size of rural family (5.92 %) are worse than the state averages.

Table 2.13: Demographic characteristics of rural Jharkhand

Name of State/Districts	% Rural Population	Average Size of Rural Households	% SC Rural	% ST Rural	% SC & ST Rural	Rural Sex Ratio	Rural Literacy Rate		
							Persons	Male	Female
<b>Jharkhand</b>	<b>77.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>31.0</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>49.1</b>	<b>24.0</b>
Palamu	94.	5.9	26.5	19.7	46.2	938	33.8	45.4	21.5

Palamu and Latehar have low workforce participation rates and has above-average population (82.41%) dependent on agriculture. The large dependency on agriculture and women's participation in agriculture and cultivation greatly emphasize the need for NREGA.

Table 2.14: Workforce characteristics of rural Jharkhand

	Workforce Participation Rate			% Main Workers	% Agri Labour + Marginal Cultivators	% Agri Dependent Population
	Persons	Male	Female			
<b>Jharkhand</b>	<b>40.9</b>	<b>49.6</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>59.6</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>77.8</b>
Palamu	38.6	47.6	29.1	55.1	56.3	82.4

The sex ratio (989) among the tribal population is higher than the state average of 962, and is favourable to women. At the same time, the overall sex ratio in Palamu (938) is far below the state average.

Table 2.15: Characteristics of women in rural Jharkhand

	Literacy Rate	Sex Ratio	SC Sex Ratio	ST Sex Ratio	WPR	% Main Workers	% Cultivators	% Agri Labour	% Household Based Occupation	% Others
<b>Jharkhand</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>962</b>	<b>958</b>	<b>989</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>41.4</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>7.9</b>
Palamu	21.5	938	939	969	29.1	30.1	33.8	55.5	3.3	7.3

Almost three fourth of the households in Palamu do not have electricity, water and toilet facilities. Once again, most households do not occupy permanent structures as dwellings. Only one fifth of the households in Palamu and Latehar avail of banking services.

Table 2.16: Household amenities in rural Jharkhand

	Permanent Houses	Non-Serviceable Houses	Water Away from Home	Households without Electricity & Water	Households without Drinking Water, Electricity & Latrines	Rural Households availing Banking Services
<b>Jharkhand</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1.21</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>21</b>
Palamu	11	0.39	25	25	24	19

## Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh has got one of the worst sex ratios among the rural population, among all of the states in India. At the same time, the sex ratios among the rural population in Dhar and Barwani districts are far above the state average of 927 women per thousand men. The average size of rural households in Barwani (6.49) is far higher the state average of 5.55. Both Dhar (61.84%) and Barwani (75.98%) have phenomenally dominant tribal population. The literacy rate in Barwani is almost half of the literacy rate of Madhya Pradesh, making it one of the most backward districts in terms of education.

Table 2.17: Demographic characteristics of rural Madhya Pradesh

	% Rural Population	Average Size of Rural Households	% SC Rural	% ST Rural	Rural Sex Ratio	Rural Literacy Rate		
						Persons	Male	Female
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>73.5</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>46.8</b>	<b>58.1</b>	<b>34.6</b>
Dhar	83.4	5.9	6.2	61.8	971	38.2	49.1	26.9
Barwani	85.4	6.5	5.5	75.9	977	27.2	34.4	19.9

Over 90 per cent of the rural population in Dhar and Barwani is dependent on agriculture. The workforce participation rates among the rural persons in both the districts are fairly better than the state average. Better workforce participation rate and high dependency on agriculture reinstate the demand for NREGA.

Table 2.18: Workforce characteristics of rural Madhya Pradesh

	Workforce Participation Rate			% Main Workers	% Total Agri Labour + Marginal Cultivators	% Agri Dependent Population
	Persons	Male	Female			
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>53.0</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>70.7</b>	<b>44.1</b>	<b>85.5</b>
Dhar	49.2	52.6	45.6	71.3	43.6	90.2
Barwani	50.9	53.5	48.3	72.6	42.4	91.1

The female literacy rate in Barwani (19.9%) is far below the state average of 34.6 per cent. The workforce participation rates among the rural women in Dhar (45.6%) and Barwani (48.3%) are higher than the state average of 40.7 per cent. In both Dhar (962) and Barwani (987), the sex ratio among the rural SC population is significantly higher than the very low state average of 905 women per thousand men.

Table 2.19: Characteristics of women in rural Madhya Pradesh

	Literacy Rate	Sex Ratio	SC Sex Ratio	ST Sex Ratio	WPR	% Main Workers	% Cultivators	% Agri Labour	% Household Based Occupation	% Others
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>927</b>	<b>905</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>46.9</b>	<b>43.2</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>5.7</b>
Dhar	26.9	971	962	984	45.6	54.1	56.4	39.3	0.9	3.3
Barwani	19.9	977	978	986	48.3	57.7	61.4	33.8	0.9	3.9

While the proportion of households who have got permanent houses is low, at 35 per cent in Dhar and 22 per cent in Barwani, it is much higher than in the other four survey districts discussed earlier. Other amenities also appear to be better provided: only

8 per cent of the rural households in Dhar and 12 per cent in Barwani do not have electricity, drinking water and latrine facilities. Thirty per cent of the rural households in Dhar avail of banking services, but this ratio is only 16 per cent in Barwani.

Table 2.20: Household amenities in rural Madhya Pradesh

	Permanent Houses	Non-Serviceable Houses	Water Away from Home	Households without Electricity & Water	Households without Drinking Water, Electricity & Latrines	Rural Households availing Banking Services
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0.98</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>21</b>
Dhar	35	0.68	28	8	8	30
Barwani	22	2.21	24	12	12	16

### C. Survey data on socio-economic characteristics

In order to situate the working of the NREGA in rural areas of the country, a socio-economic survey was conducted in two villages in each of the districts. The villages were selected on the basis of random sampling of all villages in a particular block. However, for the purpose of sampling, relatively large villages were left out (villages with more than 200 households, except Andhra Pradesh where all villages were included in the sample frame). Once sample villages were identified, 30 households were randomly selected for canvassing of household survey schedule.<sup>2</sup>

This section presents some broad indicators of the socio-economic conditions of the rural households in the selected NREGA districts. In what follows, the source of all tables is the field survey carried out as part of this study. The results presented here have been aggregated over districts and villages to bring out the differences in socio-economic characteristics across the selected states. For selected household characteristics, further disaggregation by caste groups is also presented. However, since the districts selected for the study were mainly tribal districts and backward districts, the level of socio-economic variables for each state need not represent the state average. Nonetheless, these socio-economic characteristics do give some indication of the context of extreme rural distress within which the NREGA has to be evaluated.

Since most of the surveyed districts (except in Andhra Pradesh) were predominantly tribal districts, the caste distribution of the selected households also had a larger percentage of households from the Scheduled Tribe community followed by Scheduled Castes. Together ST and SC households accounted for 75% of all the households surveyed. The caste distribution of sampled households is broadly similar to the caste distribution reported from Census 2001 for the corresponding blocks.

<sup>2</sup> In Surguja, the households were drawn from more than one village because of the particular difficulties associated with the field conditions there.



Table 2.21: Caste Distribution of Respondent Households (%)

	CHHATISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
ST	54.6	73.3	30.0	65.6	57.2
SC	14.6	5.0	38.8	23.3	17.8
OBC	10.7	18.3	28.8	11.1	15.6
Gen	20.0	3.3	2.5		9.5

Table 2.22: Caste Distribution in Rural Areas of Selected Blocks from Census 2001

	CHHATISGARH		MP		AP		JHARKHAND	
	Bagicha	Samari	Barwani	Kukshi	Kulkacharla	Sadashivpet	Manika	Manatu
ST	68.6	72	76.6	78.8	26.1	1.5	46.4	9.1
SC	4.3	5.2	5.1	4.1	13.7	22.5	22.3	29.2
Others	27.1	22.8	18.3	17.1	60.2	76	31.3	61.7

In order to get an idea of the extent of vulnerability of the people in the sampled villages, questions were asked regarding their land holding, possession of household assets, structure of dwelling unit, possession of ration card and finally, if they have availed Indira Awas Yojana grant.<sup>3</sup> Given the fact that the present scheme of identifying BPL households relies on these indicators, these are a good proxy for the level of deprivation of these households. However, in this study, we do not undertake any exercise of quantifying the extent of BPL households in the selected villages.

Access to land in a predominantly agrarian economy is an important indicator of the level of deprivation of the selected households. Table 2.23 below gives the distribution of sampled households by various land size-classes. Around half of all households reported land holding of less than 2.5 acres (approx. 1 hectare).

Table 2.23: Land holding by size of holding (in acres)  
(per cent of households)

	CHHATISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
Landless	12.1	23.5	18.7	12.5	15.9
0 to 1	17.1	9.6	25.3	35.2	19.9
1 to 2.5	26.1	20.9	18.7	31.8	24.7
2.5 to 5	27.6	28.7	26.7	12.5	24.9
5 to 10	8.5	11.3	6.7	4.5	8.2
10 and above	8.5	6.1	4.0	3.4	6.3

<sup>3</sup> It is important to reiterate that these indicators were selected to have an idea of extent of vulnerability of the sampled households, these in no way indicate anything regarding income and consumption of these households.

A look at the distribution of land ownership by caste also shows the vulnerability of the SC and ST populations compared to other castes. In particular, SC households appear worse off than even the ST households, which is consistent with other secondary data.

Table 2.24: Land holding by caste (in acres)  
(per cent of households)

	ST	SC	OBC	General
landless	16.2	20.0	8.1	12.9
0 to 1	17.0	30.6	21.6	16.1
1 to 2.5	25.8	22.4	27.0	22.6
2.5 to 5	24.0	18.8	29.7	32.3
5 to 10	9.6	5.9	6.8	9.7
10 and above	7.4	2.4	6.8	6.5

As would be expected from the secondary data, most of the respondent households were living in kuchha houses. Almost 90% of the surveyed households were living in kuchha households in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. In Andhra Pradesh, the situation was a little better with one fifth of respondents living in pucca houses. But here again, the relative deprivation of SC and ST households is clear. Most of the pucca houses owned in these districts were owned either by upper castes or OBC castes. Compared to only 3.4% of SC households reporting ownership of pucca houses, the general castes had 22.6 % of the households living in pucca houses.

Table 2.25: Type of dwelling by state  
(per cent of households)

	CHHATISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
pucca	7.8	9.2	22.5	2.2	9.5
kuchha	92.2	90.8	77.5	97.8	90.5

Table 2.26: Type of dwelling by caste  
(per cent of households)

	ST	SC	OBC	General
pucca	8.1	3.4	18.2	22.6
kuchha	91.9	95.5	81.8	77.4

Apart from land and dwelling unit, information was also collected about possession of certain items of consumption. The following table gives the percentage of households within each category owning one or more than one items. Over all, households from Andhra Pradesh appear better off than the other states. Within states, it is the “general category” of castes, in particular the well off castes, which report more possession of durables. This is particularly true for the costlier items of consumption. However, it is also worth noticing that the majority of the households do not possess even the bare necessities such as cots, mattresses, chairs, tables etc.

Table 2.27: Possession of durable goods

Percentage of households owning one or more than one item									
	By State				By Caste				
	CG	MP	AP	JK	ST	SC	OBC	Gen	Total
Mattress	59.5	28.3	45.0	54.4	51.9	34.1	35.1	80.6	48.7
Pressure Cooker	8.8	0.9	1.3	1.2	5.1	2.3	2.6	6.5	4.3
Chair	23.0	4.3	35.0	7.8	15.4	19.5	21.1	29.0	17.8
Cot/Bed	50.5	60.3	18.8	75.6	52.9	49.4	47.4	67.7	52.2
Table	12.7	1.7	13.8	2.2	7.5	9.2	6.6	19.4	8.4
Clock/Watch	35.6	7.8	50.0	30.0	27.9	37.2	30.3	36.7	30.3
Electric Fan	8.8	0.9	28.8	0.0	5.0	11.5	15.8	16.1	8.6
Bicycle	53.9	5.2	11.3	43.3	31.8	31.0	23.7	61.3	33.5
TV (B/W)	1.5	0.9	10.0	1.1	2.1	3.4	3.9	0.0	2.7
Scooter/Motorcycle	1.5	0.9	1.3	0.0	1.1	0.0	1.3	3.3	1.0
Water Pump	0.0	0.0	7.5	5.6	2.1	0.0	6.6	0.0	2.2
Bullock Cart	6.4	4.3	7.5	0.0	2.9	5.7	5.3	20.0	4.9
Sewing Machine	1.5	0.9	1.3	0.0	1.4	0.0	1.3	0.0	1.0
Telephone	0.5	0.0	3.8	0.0	0.4	0.0	2.6	3.3	0.8
Tape Recorder	1.0	0.9	5.1	0.0	0.7	1.2	4.0	3.3	1.4
Mobile	1.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	0.7	1.1	1.3	0.0	0.8
Tractor	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.8
Radio/Transistor	10.4	2.6	10.0	3.3	7.5	11.5	3.9	3.3	7.2
Almirah	2.0	4.3	2.5	0.0	3.2	0.0	2.6	0.0	2.2
Bullock	35.0	47.4	10.1	60.0	48.6	32.6	27.6	6.7	38.5
Buffalo	16.3	15.5	18.8	16.7	20.0	11.5	11.8	13.3	16.6
Cow	17.3	35.3	12.5	28.9	28.9	14.9	16.0	13.3	23.0
Cock/Hen/Duck	52.2	48.7	11.3	51.1	47.9	42.5	32.9	48.3	44.5
Goats	37.4	42.2	13.8	43.3	40.0	35.6	22.4	33.3	35.8

Note: CG--- Chhattisgarh, JK---Jharkhand

Another pointer towards the relative deprivation of these districts is the access to public services by the households in these districts. In this regard, the two indicators used in the survey were the possession of ration card by the various households and whether the household has availed the Indira Awas Yojana. Access to ration card is important for availing food rations from the PDS, but increasingly so for accessing the benefits out of various government schemes. Even in the case of NREGA, it was observed that distribution of job cards was linked to possession of BPL cards in many states including Andhra Pradesh.

The following tables give the distribution of households by possession of various types of ration cards in each category. Consistent with secondary evidence, Andhra Pradesh turns out to be better in this regard compared to other states. However, the real concern is with the states like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh where more than one third of the sampled households reported not having any card. This has also implications for

NREGA in these states where the distribution of job cards has been linked to possession of ration cards. **In fact, not possessing a ration card was the primary reason for many households being rejected for job card application in these states.** Further disaggregation also suggested gross anomalies in distribution of ration cards with most of the excluded groups belonging to those households which have either no land holding or live in kuchha houses.

Table 2.28: Possession of ration cards  
(per cent of households)

	By State				By Caste				Total
	CG	MP	AP	JK	ST	SC	OBC	Gen	
BPL	35.6	61.7	86.3	38.9	50.4	58.0	57.1	32.3	50.6
APL	16.1	9.6	3.8	1.1	12.2	9.1	3.9	9.7	9.8
Antyodaya	14.6	10.4	6.3	18.9	14.4	4.5	15.6	6.5	13.1
Annapurna	0.5							0.5	0.2
No card	33.2	18.3	3.8	41.1	23.0	28.4	23.4	51.1	26.3

Households were also asked whether they have received any money as part of Indira Awaas Yojana. In response, only 16% households reported having received any money. Needless to mention, even those who got it received only three fourth of the sanctioned money, the rest being cornered by various functionaries of government.

Table 2.29: Percentage of households who have received Indira Awas Yojana

CHHATISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
14.3	7.5	17.9	30.0	16.1
85.7	92.5	82.1	70.0	83.9

Interestingly, while the sanction under IAY is linked to possession of BPL cards, roughly one fifth of households who received IAY were households that either had no card or had only the APL card.

Table 2.30: Percentage distribution of households who received IAY by ration card type

BPL	APL	Antyodaya	Annapurna	no card	Total
52.6	5.1	28.2	0	14.1	100.0

The level of rural distress in the surveyed districts is also obvious from looking at the extent, source and purpose of credit taken by these households. Table 2.31 provides information on the percentage of households who have taken loans from various sources.

Table 2.31: Pattern of indebtedness

By States			By Caste		
	% Indebted households	Average Amount Outstanding (Rs)		% Indebted households	Average Amount Outstanding (Rs)
Chhatisgarh	26.8	13441	ST	42.4	13436
MP	37.5	5518	SC	52.3	23039
AP	85	34403	OBC	54.5	19370
Jharkhand	56.7	6035	General	32.2	22156
Total	44.2	17073	Total	44.2	17073

The extent of indebtedness in the case of Andhra Pradesh is consistent with secondary evidence from the Situation Assessment Survey of NSSO, which reports 82% of farmer households in Andhra Pradesh having taken some loan. On the other hand, Chhatisgarh and MP report relatively lower level of indebtedness. But across caste groups, the SC and OBC caste groups have relatively larger levels of indebtedness than the general caste households. Households in Andhra Pradesh also had the highest loan amount outstanding.

Tables 2.32 and 2.33 give the distribution of the credit by source and purpose.

Table 2.32: Percentage distribution of credit by various sources

	By State				By Caste				Total
	CG	MP	AP	JK	ST	SC	OBC	General	
Government	3.6	2.3		2.0	2.5			10.0	1.8
Cooperative/SHG	12.7	20.5	2.9	2.0	8.3	4.3	17.1		8.7
Bank	32.7	9.1	44.1	11.8	17.5	43.5	29.3	40.0	26.6
Institutional	49.1	31.8	47.1	15.7	28.3	47.8	46.3	50.0	37.2
Employer/landlord		2.3	1.5		0.8		2.4		0.9
Moneylender	20.0	45.5	36.8	49.0	40.0	32.6	36.6	30.0	37.2
Shopkeeper/trader	9.1	6.8	1.5	25.5	14.2	4.3	2.4	20.0	10.1
Relatives	20.0	4.5	13.2	2.0	10.8	15.2	7.3		10.6
Other	1.8	9.1		7.8	5.8		4.9		4.1

Table 2.33: Percentage distribution of credit by various purposes

	By State				By Caste				Total
	CG	MP	AP	JK	ST	SC	OBC	General	
Medical	9.1	7.3	13.6	30.0	16.5	15.2	14.6		15.1
Education	3.6		1.5	2.0	1.7	4.3			1.9
Consumption	3.6	14.6	13.6	34.0	20.0	10.9	12.2	11.1	16.0
Marriage/ceremony	21.8	14.6	19.7	20.0	20.9	15.2	17.1	33.3	19.3
Land/building	12.7	9.8	27.3	2.0	7.0	30.4	14.6	11.1	14.2
Other productive	34.5	43.9	16.7	10.0	25.2	21.7	26.8	33.3	25.0
Repayment	1.8				0.9				0.5
Others	12.7	9.8	7.6	2.0	7.8	2.2	14.6	11.1	8.0

A look at the sources and purpose of credit reveals some interesting patterns. Close to two thirds of the loans taken come from non-institutional sources with moneylenders accounting for same percentage as institutional sources. Institutional sources account for half in the case of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. These two states are also the states with high average debt and further segregation shows that the high value loans in these states are coming from the institutional sources. In states like Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh where the average loan is considerably lower, it is mainly the moneylenders who control the credit market. In both these states, almost half of the respondents reported taking loan from the money lender. It is also clear from the source of loan by caste that the general category of households and the SC households depend more on institutional sources for loans while the ST and OBC castes have relied on the moneylender for their credit needs. In fact, this is also true for the SC castes. The high dependence of SC castes on institutional sources is primarily due to the SC castes in Andhra Pradesh who also have accessed high value loans from Banks. In both Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, the absence of institutional sources has led to high dependence on moneylenders and shopkeepers in these states. In the case of Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, SHGs have also been found to be an important source of credit; however most of these loans are low value loans.

Most of the high value loans taken from the institutional sources are for land and building purchases. This is also seen in the purpose of loan with Andhra Pradesh showing 27% of the loan being taken for this purpose compared to Jharkhand where only 2% households who have taken loan have taken it for buying land. Further disaggregation by caste groups shows that it is primarily the SC castes who have taken loan to buy land. In case of Jharkhand, it is primarily consumption loan for day to day needs including food. The weak PDS system has also led to the vulnerable families depending on the shopkeepers and moneylenders for even basic food requirements. This also comes out clearly by looking at the purpose of credit by castes. Compared to the general caste households, a larger percentage of households from the SC and ST Communities take loan for consumption purposes. Jharkhand also shows a high percentage of households reporting loan for medical purposes. The second most important purpose of taking loan is marriage and ceremonies. This is in fact the largest category for the general or upper castes who continue to take loans to show off their status even if it means large loans. Very few households reported taking loan for educational purposes but of the few who did report doing so; it was mainly the ST and SC households. Nobody in Madhya Pradesh took loans for education and is also reflected in the low level of educational attendance in the state as reported in the next section. The desire to take loans for educational purposes by the SC and ST households shows the demand for education by these communities despite the lack of provisioning of such facilities in these districts by the state.

The rate of interest on these loans varied a great deal ranging from 5% per annum to 42% per annum. The high interest rate charged was mainly by the shopkeepers and moneylenders who charged interest monthly and in case of non-payment also compounded it monthly. The system was also tightly controlled by the moneylenders with the illiterate villagers not owning any piece of paper showing the amount of either principal borrowed or the rate of interest charged. Nor did they have any idea of how

much they have actually paid. It was common complaint that despite having paid the interest and principal, the moneylender continued to show them in large amounts of debt and sometimes even taking away their cattle and land.

### Literacy, educational attendance and health status

The distressing situation of these districts is also reflected in the education and health related indicators of these states. The following table presents the literacy status of household members by age group and sex.

Table 2.34: Literacy by age group and sex

	5 to 15			15 to 60			60 and above		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
<b>Chhatisgarh</b>									
literate	89.6	88.4	89.0	61.3	33.0	47.1	25.0	5.9	15.2
illiterate	10.4	11.6	11.0	38.7	67.0	52.9	75.0	94.1	84.8
<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>									
literate	42.6	33.3	37.9	15.6	5.7	10.7	5.6	5.6	5.6
illiterate	57.4	66.7	62.1	84.4	94.3	89.3	94.4	94.4	94.4
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>									
literate	87.0	85.5	86.2	45.0	19.3	31.7	11.1	0	4.8
illiterate	13.0	14.5	13.8	55.0	80.7	68.3	88.9	100.0	95.2
<b>Jharkhand</b>									
literate	78.4	68.1	73.4	42.6	13.7	28.5	10.0		6.3
illiterate	21.6	31.9	26.6	57.4	86.3	71.5	90.0	100.0	93.8
<b>Total</b>									
literate	73.0	67.6	70.2	45.9	21.7	33.8	13.2	3.8	8.5
illiterate	26.8	32.4	29.6	54.1	78.3	66.2	86.8	96.2	91.5

These literacy measures are very close to the figures reported for the individual blocks from the Census 2001. However, compared to 2001 all other states seem to have done better except for Madhya Pradesh where literacy levels are still close to what they were in 2001. On the other hand, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh show improved literacy for the younger age group population, and the gender gap in these two states also seems to be coming down.

Table 2.35: Literacy rates

State	Block/Mandal	Literacy Rate from Census			Literacy Rate from Survey		
		Rural Male	Rural Female	Rural Total	Rural Male	Rural Female	Rural Total
Chhattisgarh	Bagicha	66.4	41.4	53.9	71.4	54.9	63.0
	Samari	70.4	45.8	58.3	68.4	47.2	57.7
Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	33.3	19.2	26.4	13.8	9.2	11.5
	Kukshi	47.6	25.7	36.7	37.1	22.9	29.9
Andhra Pradesh	Kulkacharla	48.4	24	36.4	54.9	34.8	44.7
	Sadashivpet	64.4	36.8	50.8	63.6	45.5	53.5
Jharkhand	Manatu	49.9	21.8	36.4	53.7	35.7	45.4
	Manika	47.9	18.4	33.5	53.3	29.4	41.4

The low level of literacy in Madhya Pradesh also gets reflected in low educational attendance for children in the age group of 5-15 years.

Table 2.36: Children in the 5-15 age group currently attending school

	Male	Female	Total
Chhattisgarh	90.4	77.0	83.5
Madhya Pradesh	35.6	24.8	30.1
Andhra Pradesh	81.2	75.4	78.3
Jharkhand	83.8	72.5	78.3
Total	71.8	60.8	66.3

The NREGA guarantees 100 days of employment to every rural household in the selected districts in unskilled manual work. Since most of the work will be required and done in the lean seasons of peak summer, it by itself excludes a significant proportion of the rural poor who are either disabled or are malnourished and therefore not capable to undertake such arduous work. Moreover, most of the work payments under this act have been under the task rate system which not only is highly biased against the normal workers, but at times is also impossible given the soil conditions in these tribal areas. Precisely because of this, it is important to have information on the health status of the individual family members, especially young and the adults. To measure this, height and weight were collected for all individuals in the selected districts.<sup>4</sup> These height and weight measures were then used to calculate BMI (Body Mass Index) for each of the household members. These BMIs are presented for Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand by age group and sex. The BMIs have been presented in five categories, less than 15, 15 to 18.5, 18.5 to 20, 20 to 25 and 25 and above. In the standard nutrition literature, BMI between 18.5 and 25 is considered normal while less than 15 are considered severely malnourished. BMI between 18.5 and 20 is nutritionally normal but is considered to be borderline.

<sup>4</sup> Unfortunately, this part of the exercise was not done in the case of Madhya Pradesh.



Table 2.37: Percentage distribution by level of BMI for sampled persons  
by age group and sex

Age group	0 to 5			5 to 15			15 to 60			60 and above		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
<b>Chhattisgarh</b>												
Less than 15	50.0	66.7	60.9	40.9	53.8	47.9	1.6	3.8	2.9			
15 to 18.5	25.0	20.0	21.7	31.8	30.8	31.3	29.5	20.5	24.5		40.0	25.0
18.5 to 20				13.6	7.7	10.4	18.0	26.9	23.0	66.7	20.0	37.5
20 to 25	25.0		8.7	9.1	7.7	8.3	49.2	44.9	46.8	33.3	20.0	25.0
25 and above		13.3	8.7	4.5		2.1	1.6	3.8	2.9		20.0	12.5
<b>Andhra Pradesh</b>												
Less than 15	54.5	37.5	47.4	52.9	45.5	48.7	1.8	1.3	1.5	20.0		7.7
15 to 18.5	27.3	37.5	31.6	47.1	45.5	46.2	21.4	32.0	27.5	20.0	62.5	46.2
18.5 to 20	9.1	12.5	10.5				28.6	14.7	20.6	20.0		7.7
20 to 25		12.5	5.3		9.1	5.1	42.9	42.7	42.7	40.0	25.0	30.8
25 and above	9.1		5.3				5.4	9.3	7.6		12.5	7.7
<b>Jharkhand</b>												
Less than 15	47.5	44.8	46.4	74.5	62.2	68.5	3.7	2.1	2.9		25.0	8.3
15 to 18.5	30.0	20.7	26.1	17.0	28.9	22.8	46.9	43.6	45.1	75.0		50.0
18.5 to 20	10.0	6.9	8.7	2.1	4.4	3.3	30.9	29.8	30.3	25.0	50.0	33.3
20 to 25	7.5	10.3	8.7	6.4	4.4	5.4	18.5	23.4	21.1		25.0	8.3
25 and above	5.0	17.2	10.1					1.1	0.6			
<b>Total</b>												
Less than 15	49.2	50.0	49.5	61.6	55.9	58.7	2.5	2.4	2.5	6.3	5.9	6.1
15 to 18.5	28.8	23.1	26.1	26.7	33.3	30.2	34.3	32.8	33.5	43.8	41.2	42.4
18.5 to 20	8.5	5.8	7.2	4.7	4.3	4.5	26.3	24.3	25.2	31.3	17.6	24.2
20 to 25	8.5	7.7	8.1	5.8	6.5	6.1	34.8	36.0	35.5	18.8	23.5	21.2
25 and above	5.1	13.5	9.0	1.2		0.6	2.0	4.5	3.4		11.8	6.1

Note: BMI less than 15: severe malnourishment, 15-18.5 malnourished, 18.5 to 20: normal but underweight, 20 to 25: normal, more than 25: overweight.

For MP, height and weight were not collected.

What comes out shockingly from the distribution of household members by nutrition status is the extent of malnourishment among the children. For both the age groups below age 15, a large percentage of children are either malnourished or severely malnourished. Some recent secondary data on BMI in Chhattisgarh are available from the preliminary results of the NFHS-3, while for the other states, some indication about the extent of malnourishment can be had from the NFHS-2. However, from NFHS-2, this information is only available for women above age 15. The BMI levels from NFHS-2 for Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh are reported below. These BMIs are for state aggregates that also include urban areas and for all districts. Despite this, it is shocking that around two fifth of females above age 15 were malnourished. Looking at the comparable figure for the 15-60 age groups from the table, there has been some improvement in Andhra Pradesh, but Jharkhand has seen a worsening of the situation compared to erstwhile Bihar.

Table 2.38: NFHS Data on BMI

BMI	Less than 18.5	18.5 to 25	25 and above
Bihar	39.3	57.0	3.7
Andhra Pradesh	38.2	55.7	6.1
Madhya Pradesh	37.4	50.6	12.0
Chhattisgarh	41	52	7

Source: NFHS-2 for states other than Chhattisgarh, NFHS-3 for Chhattisgarh.

In standard literature on anthropometric studies, child malnourishment is analysed on the basis of underweight (weight for age), stunted (height for age) and wasted (weight for height) categories based on the international reference norm taking into account the age, height and weight, in this table the standard BMI calculations only are presented. These may not be very accurate indicators of malnourishment for children below age 5, but can be used as an indicator of the larger picture regarding malnourishment of children. To put this in context, according to NFHS-2, 47% of children in India (rural and Urban together) were underweight and 18% were severely underweight. A further 26% were mildly underweight, so that in total underweight afflicted three fourth of Indian children under age three. If these are any indication, then probably things have not improved much since then.<sup>5</sup>

## Occupational Distribution and Activity Pattern

To assess the employment and activity status of household members, information on usual status of employment was collected in the demographic schedule of the survey. However, to obtain information on their current activity pattern during the week preceding the survey date, a separate schedule was also canvassed. The table below

<sup>5</sup> However, it should be noted that NFHS data on Chhattisgarh suggests a decline in the percentage of “severely malnourished” children under 3 years from 61 per cent to 52 per cent, although this is still very high.

presents the occupational distribution of the surveyed household members by usual status.

Table 2.39: Occupational distribution of household members

	Chhattisgarh			Madhya Pradesh			Andhra Pradesh			Jharkhand		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
Regular	2.5	1.1	1.8	1.0	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.8	2.1		1.1
SEA	26.3	14.9	20.7	33.6	20.7	27.0	19.3	16.1	17.7	25.4	11.0	13.9
Casual(Agri)	11.2	5.5	8.4	11.7	6.6	9.1	18.5	26.6	22.6	4.6	0.4	2.6
Casual(Other)	10.9	3.0	7.0	12.4	12.5	12.4	12.0	5.2	8.6	7.8	0.8	4.5
SENA	2.5	0.9	1.7	2.7	0.3	1.5	3.1	4.9	4.0	5.3	1.2	3.3
Student	23.6	23.6	23.6	10.4	7.5	9.0	28.6	23.2	25.9	29.0	22.7	26.0
Old/infant	12.1	9.4	10.8	11.7	13.3	12.5	11.6	14.2	12.9	19.8	22.3	21.0
Disabled	0.2	0.2	0.2		0.3	0.2	0.4	0.7	0.6		0.4	0.2
HH-Work	1.7	34.3	17.6	2.3	22.3	12.4	0.8	4.9	2.9	1.1	36.1	22.4
No work	8.0	6.9	7.5	13.8	15.9	14.9	0.8	3.0	1.9	4.2	3.9	4.1
Other	1.0	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	4.2	0.4	2.3	1.1	1.2	1.1

Note: SEA—Self-employed in agriculture, SENAAA—Self-employed in Non-agriculture, HH-Work---Domestic work. Other also includes can't say

To maintain comparability with secondary data of such nature, the definitions and concepts adopted were similar to the NSS employment and unemployment surveys. Accordingly, self-employed in agriculture here apart from crop cultivation also includes livestock care and forestry. Moreover, the “no work” category also includes those who have been unemployed for a long time. The results are mostly in agreement with the existing secondary data of such nature with minor variations. As expected, a large majority of workers were working in agriculture as self-employed. In the case of Andhra Pradesh, the largest group among workers was that of agricultural labourers. Consistent with secondary data, percentage of women reporting themselves as agricultural labourers were considerably higher than the other three states. Around 20-25% of surveyed persons were attending educational institutions except Madhya Pradesh where the percentage was less than 10%. For women, a significant section also reported being engaged in household work, the highest being Jharkhand. On the other hand, Andhra Pradesh had less than 5% women reporting themselves as household domestic workers. Madhya Pradesh had a high percentage of persons classified as not working. This incidentally also included a significant share of those in the age-group 5-15.

For a comparative picture, occupational distribution from the Census 2001 for the selected blocks is also presented below. Compared to census estimates, there appears to be some under-estimation of women workers by our survey. However for other states, the survey results are more or less in tandem with other secondary sources such as the census estimates presented here.

Table 2.40: Occupational Distribution of selected Blocks from Census 2001

Block/Mandal	Rural	cultivator	Agricultural labour	Non-Agricultural worker	Other worker	WPR	Out of Labour Force
Bagicha	Total	39.1	14.5	1.7	4.3	59.6	40.4
	Female	35.9	17.7	1.4	2.3	57.2	42.8
	Male	42.3	11.4	1.9	6.4	62	38
Samari	Total	33.2	15.3	1.3	3.8	53.6	46.4
	Female	26.9	20.2	1.1	2.1	50.3	49.7
	Male	39.4	10.5	1.6	5.4	56.8	43.2
Barwani	Total	31.5	13.3	0.4	3.3	48.5	51.5
	Female	28.7	14.5	0.4	1.8	45.3	54.7
	Male	34.2	12.1	0.4	4.8	51.6	48.4
Kukshi	Total	35.4	13.0	0.5	3.4	52.4	47.6
	Female	33.2	15.5	0.5	1.6	50.8	49.2
	Male	37.5	10.6	0.6	5.2	54	46
Kulkacharla	Total	23.1	20.3	2.0	6.9	52.3	47.7
	Female	17.3	27.4	2.3	3.9	51	49
	Male	28.8	13.5	1.7	9.7	53.7	46.3
Sadashivpet	Total	13.3	26.6	1.0	8.1	49	51
	Female	7.7	30.9	0.8	2.2	41.5	58.5
	Male	18.7	22.4	1.2	14.0	56.3	43.7
Manatu	Total	14.6	20.9	1.5	3.4	40.4	59.6
	Female	9.7	18.2	1.4	1.5	30.9	69.1
	Male	19.3	23.5	1.5	5.1	49.4	50.6
Manika	Total	20.0	17.6	1.0	4.6	43.2	56.8
	Female	15.8	16.9	0.8	2.9	36.4	63.6
	Male	24.1	18.2	1.1	6.2	49.6	50.4

The second set of detailed questions was on actual activity status of the surveyed household members regarding their activity status in the week preceding the survey. This block of the questionnaire was restricted to population above age 5, that is, excluding infants. Information on the daily activity status was obtained from the respondents. Provision was made to take into account work done for half days only and in those cases information on activity done in the other half was also collected. The distribution of person days by different activities for males and females separately is presented in the table below. Since the NREGA is meant for able bodied adults (above age 18) in rural areas, the activity status presented here is for the adult age-group. However, the age-group for which we have presented figures here corresponds to 15-60 age groups.

Table 2.41: Percentage distribution of household members by daily activity status

	Chhattisgarh			Madhya Pradesh			Andhra Pradesh			Jharkhand			Total		
	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total	male	female	total
SEA	21.6	6.3	14.2	42.1	28.1	35.3	13.8	10.0	11.9	26.5	16.4	21.6	26.1	14.2	20.3
SENA	11.4	4.7	8.2	2.2	0.7	1.5	7.3	3.9	5.6	11.1	9.7	10.4	8.1	4.3	6.3
Regular	2.0	0.9	1.5	1.8	0.6	1.2	2.3	2.2	2.2	7.7	2.0	4.9	2.9	1.3	2.1
Casual(Agri)	4.4	3.5	3.9	8.1	7.0	7.6	43.7	48.6	46.3	7.3	1.1	4.3	13.8	14.1	14.0
Casual(Public)	6.0	2.1	4.1	24.9	20.7	22.9	0.0	0.7	0.4	7.6	0.3	4.0	10.0	6.2	8.1
Casual (Other)	11.8	2.2	7.2	4.8	0.0	2.5	15.3	8.6	11.9	10.4	0.0	5.3	10.4	2.8	6.7
Unemployed	9.3	3.2	6.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.5	0.0	1.8	4.1	1.2	2.6
Student	1.7	0.0	0.9	1.8	0.0	0.9	6.9	3.6	5.2	2.5	1.5	2.0	2.9	1.0	2.0
HH-Work	12.1	58.9	34.7	12.3	38.8	25.0	1.1	5.3	3.3	3.3	63.0	32.4	8.5	42.5	25.2
HHUSE-work	0.4	5.7	3.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	0.8	2.2	1.5	9.1	4.7	7.0	1.8	3.4	2.6
No work	16.4	10.7	13.7	1.9	2.1	2.0	3.8	9.8	6.9	8.2	0.6	4.5	8.7	6.7	7.8
Other	2.8	1.7	2.3	0.3	1.6	0.9	5.0	5.0	5.0	2.9	0.6	1.7	2.6	2.2	2.4

Note: SEA—Self-employed in agriculture, SENAAA—Self-employed in Non-agriculture, HH-Work--- Domestic work, HHUSE-work---productive work for household use. Other also includes can't say

Some of the differences are due to the fact that the survey was conducted at different point of time in different states. This partially explains the high work-participation rate in Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh the survey was conducted in mid-June and end-June when rains had started and the agricultural season was picking up. This also partially explains the low participation in public works in Andhra Pradesh which otherwise is doing well on NREGA. But even with these, the low level of public casual work reported in Andhra Pradesh is unusually low. The other factor in the case of Andhra Pradesh is the traditionally high participation rate for females. Even in Madhya Pradesh the rains had started by the end of the survey and some agricultural work had been started. But in some areas, there was also NREGA work which was going on mainly in the areas where Dalit Adivasi Sangathan was active. For Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, self-employed in agriculture includes grazing, tendu leave collection and other forest product collection.

The other thing that should be kept in mind is that it is generally very difficult to capture open unemployment in rural areas, especially with illiterate respondents. In the survey, other than using the standard definition of unemployed based on NSS and Census, there was a separate category introduced which was 'not doing anything'. And it does appear that most respondents have reported not working even though they would be unemployed in the census or NSS sense, that is, 'did not work but was seeking or available for work'. For example, in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh the standard definition of unemployment returned negligible response. On the other hand, for females, most of them even though would have been available for work, chose to declare them as domestic workers. But it would be safe to take the sum of 'did not work but was available for work' and 'not working' as the unemployment rate.

The high participation in public works is mainly on account of the high share in Madhya Pradesh. Most of it is attributable to participation in NREGA (previous FFW programmes). But what does come as shocking is the low level of people reporting employed in public works in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand where survey was conducted in the peak summer season with little agricultural work available. This factor also was responsible for high percentage of persons in Chhattisgarh reporting as not working. In Jharkhand, the ‘discouraged worker’ hypothesis seems to be operating and hence some of the men and women who otherwise would have been participating in public works if such employment were available, chose to report themselves as household workers. This was particularly true for females where almost 63% of them reported themselves as household workers. Even in the case of Chhattisgarh where almost no public works were undertaken, 58% of female workers reported themselves as household workers. By contrast, the percentage in Madhya Pradesh where some NREGA work was happening was 38% and in Andhra Pradesh where the agricultural season had started, it was around 5%. The peak agricultural season in Andhra Pradesh is also responsible for the high percentage of workers being reported as agricultural labourers. Almost 45% of surveyed population in Andhra Pradesh was employed as agricultural labour.

The ‘other’ category is mostly persons who had gone out to meet relatives or to the block office or to attend marriages (May was marriage season in most states) or could not recall properly the activity undertaken by them in previous week.

### Understanding women’s work

A separate block was canvassed as part of the household schedule to understand women’s work. This block was asked only to report women above age 15. A significant percentage of women reported spending most of their time on domestic work. This percentage was lowest in Andhra Pradesh and highest in Jharkhand. However, most of them also reported that they were engaged in other productive activities. At the same time, they were also eager to accept productive work if it was made available to them.

Table 2.42: Women’s work

Percentage of women responding in affirmative to these questions:	CG	MP	AP	JK	Total
Were you required to spend most of your time on domestic duties almost throughout the last 365 days?	57.4	43.1	12.8	88.0	49.9
Along with your domestic duties are you also engaged in any other productive activities?	77.7	89.6	83.0	85.0	82.0
In spite of your pre-occupation in domestic duties, are you willing to accept work if work is made available to you?	78.7	88.9	87.5	89.5	84.1

Further probing on the nature of work undertaken by them other than domestic work was done and the responses are reported below in Table 2.43. These responses are only for those women who reported being engaged in other productive work along with

usual domestic work. Some of these women were engaged in more than one of these activities, however only the primary productive activity is used for the table.

Table 2.43: Percentage distribution of women in other productive work

	CG	MP	AP	JK	Total
Maintenance of kitchen gardens, orchards etc	9.7	3.9	15.2	4.3	9.0
Work in household poultry, dairy, etc	8.9	29.4	8.8	13.8	13.4
Free collection of fish, small game, wild fruits, vegetables, etc. for household consumption	5.1	10.8	1.6	9.6	6.1
Free collection of fire-wood, cow-dung, cattle feed etc. for household consumption	40.5	22.5	24.0	48.9	34.9
Husking of paddy for household consumption	7.6	2.0	4.8		4.7
Grinding of food-grains for household consumption	2.5	2.0	1.6	1.1	2.0
Making baskets and mats for household use	11.4		3.2	2.1	5.9
Preparation of cow-dung cake for use as fuel in the household	1.3	1.0	11.2	11.7	5.2
Sewing, tailoring, weaving etc. for household use	1.7		3.2		1.4
Tutoring of own children or others' children free of charge		2.0	3.2		1.1
Bringing water from outside the household premises	5.1	14.7	18.4	7.4	10.2
Other	6.3	11.8	4.8	1.1	6.1

As the table shows, women were doing all sorts of productive activities which involved moving out of the household boundary despite being engaged in household work within the household boundary. A large percentage of women were engaged in free collection of fire-wood, cow-dung, cattle feed etc for household consumption. In Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, the percentage of women bringing water from outside household premises was also very high. It also appears very clearly that women do move out of the household boundary and are willing to move out if work is made available to them as was reported by them in the previous table. On a more direct question on their limitations and expectations from work outside home boundary, large majority of them were even willing to go outside the village boundary to work.

Table 2.44: Women's willingness to travel for work  
(% distribution of responses)

How much distance are you willing to travel to get work?	CG	MP	AP	JK	Total
Within Household	3.0	1.1	26.2		7.8
Within Village	43.9	33.7	30.0	38.1	38.0
Upto 1 Km	14.3	3.4	20.8	8.3	13.2
Upto 5 Km	29.1	27.0	3.1	40.5	24.3
More than 5 Km	9.7	34.8	20.0	13.1	16.9

Except for Andhra Pradesh where one-fourth of women wanted work within household boundary, all other states had more than 95% of women willing to move out of

household boundary for work. In Madhya Pradesh, where the level of deprivation was worse than others, 35% women were willing to go beyond 5 Km distance, the distance stipulated by the NREGA for providing work. These responses are clear indicators of the demand for work, provided work is made available to them.

Finally, women were also asked to spell out their expectation of wages under public works or other productive work if it was made available to them. And the responses varied a great deal depending on the kind of work they would like to have. While in most states except Andhra Pradesh, the minimum wages demanded by women were close to what they were getting in actual practice in their villages, and sometimes lower, the maximum was mostly the minimum wages prevailing in the state or Rs 100 for skilled work such as tailoring etc. Even these wage rates were lower than the minimum provided in the minimum wages act for skilled workers. But on an average, the wage rates expected by these women were lower than the minimum wage prescribed in each of these states except Andhra Pradesh. In Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, these average wages were less than or equal to the minimum floor prescribed by the central government of Rs. 60 But the fact that women were willing to work for as little as Rs. 10-12 a day itself is a great pointer towards the level of distress prevailing in rural areas of the surveyed districts.

Table 2.45: Expected wage rates of women workers

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean
CHHATISGARH	12	150	57.0
MP	12	100	74.6
AP	50	120	87.3
JHARKHAND	10	100	60.8
Total	10	150	67.7

### Participation in Public Works

Even before NREGA was put in force, there have been a plethora of employment generation activities undertaken by the state as well as central government in rural areas. The most notable precursor of NREGA was the Food For Work programme which was implemented in 150 of the 200 districts where NREGA is currently in operation. In the household questionnaire, the attempt was made to understand the nature and extent of public works participation in the selected districts.

Table 2.46: Percentage of adult population ever participating in public works in the last one year

CHHATISGARH	47.4
MP	29.3
AP	14.5
JHARKHAND	37.9
Total	34.5



The extent of participation in public works varied a great deal across states from 47% in Chhattisgarh to 14.5% in Andhra Pradesh. Except Andhra Pradesh, close to one third of adult population participated in public works within the last one year, although the days of participation varied from 4 days to two months. In Andhra Pradesh, the low participation rate is also probably due to the fact that one of the surveyed districts, Medak was not a food for work district. Excluding Medak, even in Andhra Pradesh, public works participation is more than 20%.

Of the total persons who participated in public works, most of them worked in some form of road construction work. The other major type of public works was minor irrigation which accounted for almost one fourth of all public works.

Table 2.47: Distribution of Public works by type of work

	Road laying (kuchha)	Road laying (pucca)	minor irrigation	well digging and deepening	construction	others
CHHATISGARH	50.5	14.1	14.6	4.7	14.1	2.1
MP	72.0	2.0	24.0			2.0
AP	37.5	31.3	29.2		2.1	
JHARKHAND	42.3		55.8		1.9	
Total	52.0	9.9	27.9	2.0	6.8	1.4

But most of these works could provide employment for less than a month. Table 2.48 below gives the distribution of workers by number of days worked in public works. Except for Andhra Pradesh where 21% of the workers reported working on public works programme for more than a month, in most of the states the number of days worked was less than a month. Almost one-third of workers had worked for less than a week. Further probing also revealed that in most cases, the work undertaken under public works was of such nature that work could happen for only one month or so.

Table 2.48: Percentage distribution of workers by number of days worked in public works

	1 to 7 days	7 to 30 days	30 days and above
CHHATISGARH	28.8	62.5	8.7
MP	39.2	60.8	0.0
AP	33.3	45.8	20.8
JHARKHAND	32.7	66.3	1.0
Total	32.6	61.2	6.2

The workers were also asked to name the public works programme on which they worked. Interestingly, a large majority of them could not name the programme despite having worked on the programme. But what appears surprising from the distribution given below is that not a single person reported working on NREGA despite claims that Andhra Pradesh is doing well in implementation of the programme. This incidentally

matches with the activity and occupational distribution obtained earlier where extent of public works participation was almost negligible. It could either be due to the fact that most of the NREGA works were extension of FFW programmes and hence were reported under FFW or the workers simply did not know.

Table 2.49: Name of the programme on which you worked

	FFW	NREGA	OTHER	Don't know
CHHATISGARH	4.6	8.9	25.4	61.1
MP	13.3	18.1	12.4	56.2
AP	27.1	0.0	0.0	72.9
JHARKHAND	57.0	0.9	1.9	40.2
Total	18.7	8.3	15.9	57.0

Workers were also asked to report in which months they participated in public works. The information from this response would also be an indication of some kind of demand management for NREGA. While in Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand, the works were mostly in the winter lean agricultural season, in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh it was the lean summer months of agricultural season when most public works took place. In all states, there was virtually no public works in the months of July to November which is the peak agricultural season throughout the country. Since the number of days a household can work under NREGA is fixed at 100, it suggests that state governments can anticipate the requirement of public works in lean and peak seasons and accordingly prepare plans for it.

Table 2.50: Percentage distribution of public workers by month of work

	CHHATTISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
January	7.9		32.5	22.3	12.5
February	9.6		2.5	33.0	12.8
March	20.3	11.1	22.5	8.5	15.9
April	35.6	22.2		2.1	21.1
May	14.1	54.2		3.2	17.5
June	2.3	11.1			3.1
July	1.7			2.1	1.3
August			2.5		0.3
September			5.0		0.5
October	2.3			4.3	2.1
November	1.7			6.4	2.3
December	4.6	1.4	35.0	18.1	10.5

Along with the number of days worked, respondents were also asked about wage payments. In many cases, the respondents were not able to recall the exact amount of wage paid to them, or whether it was in cash or kind. However, what they did know for sure was how many days they have actually worked and for how many days they have been paid. Based on this information, the responses were tabulated in three categories, those who have not been paid any wages, those who have received part wages (received wages for less number of days than actually worked) and those who received wages for

all the days worked. In almost all states, only two-third workers said that they have received wages for all the days worked. It needs to be mentioned at the outset that getting full day wages does not automatically mean getting wages at stipulated minimum wages for all days. It just means that the worker has got wages for all the days worked with no information on the wage rate.

Table 2.51: Wage payment for public works

	Part wages paid	Full wages paid	No wages paid
CHHATISGARH	24.1	61.7	14.2
MP	22.1	76.0	1.9
AP	9.4	65.6	25.0
JHARKHAND	29.8	66.3	4.0
Total	23.8	66.1	10.1

Except Andhra Pradesh, around one fourth reported being paid part wages, which is wages for less number of days than actual days worked. But almost 10% also reported that they have not received any wage at all. This was highest in Andhra Pradesh where almost one fourth of public workers had not received any wage.

The reason for not accepting those for whom wages for all days have been paid as their total entitlement is due to the fact that most of these workers did not know what their entitlement is. So even if they claim that they received full day's wages, it was unclear regarding their actual entitlement which varied across states and across programmes. However, to gauge the extent of awareness about knowledge of their entitlements, a simple question was asked about their knowledge of minimum wages in that area. Less than one-third reported any awareness of minimum wages in the programme. The extent of ignorance was highest in Madhya Pradesh where literacy as well as school attendance is the lowest.

Table 2.52: Are you aware of minimum wages in the programme?

	Yes	No
CHHATISGARH	35.4	64.6
MP	20.9	79.1
AP	27.9	72.1
JHARKHAND	31.7	68.3
Total	31.2	68.8

## Migration

Given the extent of poverty and stress in these districts, these also are witness to substantial migration, especially to neighbouring areas. Table 2.53 below gives the percentage of adult population which has migrated in the last one year. Overall, one fifth of the rural population in these districts has migrated to various destinations in the last one year. The extent of migration in Madhya Pradesh is highest among all states.

Table 2.53: Percentage of population migrated in last one year

CHHATISGARH	11.0
MP	38.8
AP	24.7
JHARKHAND	21.6
Total	22.2

Table 2.56: Distribution of migrants by destination

	Inside block but outside village	Outside block/mandal	Outside district but within state	Outside state
CHHATISGARH	44.6	23.1	3.1	29.2
MP	6.2	31.8	48.8	13.2
AP			19.7	80.3
JHARKHAND	10.0	6.0	4.0	80.0
Total	13.1	18.4	25.6	42.8

Except for Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand, most of the migration is short distance migration within the state. In the case of Jharkhand, the popular destinations for migration are Bihar, Varanasi, Kolkata and Delhi. For Andhra Pradesh, most of the out of state migrants are migrating to Karnataka districts which surround the district. Andhra Pradesh also appears to have no migrants within the district. However, this kind of short distance migration to neighbouring town is very prominent in Chhattisgarh. Most of these migrations are for more than a month. Almost one third of them also report migrating for more than three months. Since most of the migrants in Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand are out of state migrants, these are mostly for longer duration and more than three months, since it is difficult to travel back home frequently. For Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh where within-state and within-district migration is also common, short term migration for less than 15 days is also popular.

Table 2.56: Duration of migration

	1 to 15 days	16 to 30 days	30 to 90 days	90 days and above
CHHATISGARH	19.0	17.2	34.5	29.3
MP	11.2	22.4	36.0	30.4
AP	0.0	3.1	0.0	96.9
JHARKHAND	2.9	23.5	23.5	50.0
Total	9.3	17.1	26.0	47.7

The migrant workers are found to be engaged in all sorts of work but the common work types are agricultural work, construction and other casual labour. Agricultural work is the primary reason for migration in Madhya Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh it is primarily construction work. Since Jharkhand is a mining and industrial state, a significant section

of migrants in Jharkhand also migrates for factory work in neighbouring areas as well as neighbouring states.

Table 2.57: Type of work done by the migrants

	Agricultural	construction	factory work	domestic work	public work	other casual labour	other
CHHATTISGARH	7.1	32.1	3.6	8.9	3.6	19.6	25.0
MP	77.0	8.9	3.7		2.2	5.9	2.2
AP	11.9	66.1		1.7		15.3	5.1
JHARKHAND	23.3	2.3	23.3		11.6	32.6	7.0
Total	42.7	23.9	5.8	2.0	3.4	14.3	7.8

Almost 40% of those who migrate did not receive any help. But some others are lucky to have some contacts such as friends and family to help them out. This was the case mainly in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh where migration is mostly within state and the migrants know the area and language. But for Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand, where out of state migration is very high, the migrants are either helped by Jobber (Contractor/Thekedar) in the case of Jharkhand or family members in the case of Andhra Pradesh.

Table 2.58: Help received in migration

	Jobber (contractor and/or Thekedar)	family member at the place of migration	friends at the place of migration	no help received in migration
CHHATTISGARH	31.0	7.1	16.7	45.2
MP	21.2	12.7	11.9	54.2
AP		85.3		14.7
JHARKHAND	39.4	12.1	21.2	27.3
Total	19.5	30.7	10.7	39.2

## **Chapter 3: Implementation of NREGA in the Survey Areas**

### **Introduction**

The primary objective of the monitoring and evaluation exercise was to look in detail the process of implementation of NREGA at the ground level. To undertake this, the methodology adopted was to look into the whole set of issues related to implementation of NREGA from three different perspectives. Firstly, to put the necessity for such a path breaking legislation in a context, a household survey was undertaken in selected villages of the districts. This provided a perspective on the existing socio-economic situation where the act was being implemented. The results of this were reported in Chapter 2. The second and crucial perspective was the perspective of the workers, which was sought to be captured in a worksite survey that involved asking questions to the direct participants at the actual worksite, in addition to supplementing the workers' viewpoint with direct observation of the norms and guidelines by the survey team themselves. The third perspective was to understand the role and perception of the various actors involved in implementing this piece of legislation. This was done through a set of structured questionnaires fielded to various government level officials, panchayat officials as well as gram sabha representatives, the ultimate level of implementing officials.

Needless to mention, a legislation of this nature is bound to have repercussions at different levels, right from altering the socio-economic conditions of the affected districts, more particularly for the disadvantaged and the poor, to altering the social dynamics which are currently very heavily weighted against the disadvantaged and the poor in these backward districts. To a certain extent, the extent and nature of impact of NREGA on overall economic and social conditions is influenced to a large extent by the overall political economy and nature of change in the social and political structures of power in these districts. While the household survey was a good pointer to the existing structure and level of socio-economic situation in the affected districts, the other two exercises, namely the worksite survey and the structured questionnaires for the implementing officials, gave some qualitative inputs to the processes which matter a great deal for NREGA to be effectively implemented. Moreover, the nature of concerns also varied a great deal depending upon the perspective with which one looks at the whole issue. While this exercise was greatly useful in having a snapshot of actual situation in rural areas of the affected districts, there was also an attempt to make this a more participatory process by spreading awareness about the NREGA, workers rights under this Act and the Guidelines on the MoRD, and therefore contributing to some extent towards positive change. Therefore an important part of this exercise was the involvement of the surveying teams in spreading awareness about the various issues related to effective implementation of NREGA, training of implementing officials at various levels and finally kick-starting the process of social audit and Jan-sunwai in the selected districts.

This final element of the survey and monitoring process, which has been painstakingly laid out in the NREGA guidelines, was not only an eye-opener for effective

implementation of public schemes in these largely illiterate and poor areas, but was also a learning exercise for the survey and monitoring team. In what follows in this chapter, the issues related to implementation of NREGA, therefore, are largely based on the survey and personal observations collected by visiting the worksites as well as based on the qualitative questionnaires canvassed with various implementing officials. The report also includes the observations and information gathered by the survey team by actually participating in the gram sabha, block level meetings and finally the jan-sunwai.

To contextualise the observations from the various sources and methods, the presentation in this chapter does not emphasise the individual specificities of any particular district or block. Rather, an attempt has been made to put together the various specific stories in the larger context of the socio-political dynamics of implementation of NREGA and to draw lessons based on that at the central level. Nonetheless, wherever required, state specific or district specific issues will be highlighted.

Since the NREGA draws its strength from being a legislation which guarantees 100 days of employment to every household in the concerned districts, by design it is different from any employment generation scheme that has been previously implemented. It requires a different approach towards employment generation schemes and towards overall involvement of the State in providing the right to employment to its masses (even though it is still far from being a full right). The real challenge as well as the strength of the Act comes from it being given the legitimacy as well as authority from the Indian Parliament, which puts the onus of its implementation in the hand of the recipient as well as that of the implementing authorities. The recipients have a greater role, at least by design, not only in demanding the employment but also in deciding on how the Act will be implemented. Such a situation is unique in terms of posing challenges of implementation where the existing system has one of being a dole to be handed to the recipients at the mercy of the 'babus' of the state. It also drastically alters the power equations which the agents of the state and the powerful groups within the local society have become used to enjoying. Precisely because of these, despite the well-intentioned nature of the Act, it poses necessarily new challenges and enables new ways of exploitation as well as new ways of fighting such exploitation.

However, before going into details of the implementation issues, it is important to mention that the survey was conducted only after three months of the Act being implemented. Clearly, therefore, many of the problems discussed below can be interpreted as "teething problems" of the initial phases of implementation. Further, the survey was conducted for the most part in some of the poorest and most backward parts of the country, where many public services have been inadequately provided in the past. All this may not be a valid excuse for inefficiency in implementation, since the Act was legislated in August 2005 and all state governments were asked to be prepared for it. Moreover, there was an effective campaign leading to the implementation of the Act which does take away a substantial share of the benefit of doubt that would have normally accrued to the implementing agencies. Nevertheless, the relatively short time period and the particularly backward contexts in which this survey was conducted it does mean that there should be some recognition of the need for a longer process of acclimatisation to the specific requirements of this Act.

Nonetheless, despite several bottlenecks, NREGA seems to have sparked off a silent revolution in many ways in rural India. Nothing can be a more visible symbol of this than thousands of illiterate and poor villagers staying for hours, holding their job-cards in hand, at the venue of Jan-sunwai at each of the districts where survey teams went. But more importantly, there is a sense of jubilation mixed with scepticism about the Act which intends to bring about the process of employment generation within the reach of the poor and unemployed, in which they have a say at every step of it. Even scepticism is mixed with hope for the future - and this essentially is a reflection of the firm belief that the poor continue to have in Indian democracy and the Indian State. At the least, the Act has given them the strength to fight the system, both political and social, even though in some districts, it still remains largely on paper.

### Awareness

Needless to say, effective implementation of any such guarantee is contingent upon the awareness of the fact that such a guarantee exists. That is, the entitlements of a right can only be claimed if one knows what the entitlements are. According to the guidelines as well as information provided by the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD), Government of India, spreading awareness was an important part of the implementation of NREGA. However, the ground realities suggested that this has so far remained insufficient except in the case of Andhra Pradesh. Compared to 97.5% of surveyed households reporting awareness of NREGA in AP, only 30% of households in Jharkhand were aware of NREGA.

Table 3.1: Are you aware of NREGA  
(per cent of responses by state)

	CHHATISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
Yes	69.3	45.0	97.5	28.9	60.6

Table 3.2: Are you aware of NREGA  
(per cent of responses by caste)

	ST	SC	OBC	General
Yes	50.5	65.9	83.1	80.6

At the same time, it was also clear that the awareness was mainly among the OBC castes and general castes. More than 80% of OBC and general castes were aware of NREGA compared to 50% in the case of ST and 66% in the case of SC households. But even this awareness about NREGA appeared to be rudimentary with very little information about the details of the NREGA. On a pointed question about awareness of various aspects of NREGA, the following responses were obtained.



Table 3.3: Awareness of various provisions of NREGA  
(Per cent of households reporting awareness)

	100 days per household	Minimum wages to be paid	Provision of crèche, shade, water etc	Work to be provided within 5 Km	Universal act with guarantee	Role of gram sabha
CHHATISGARH	53.7	35.1	9.3	13.7	2.0	3.9
MP	44.2	35.0	18.3	5.8	0.8	2.5
AP	93.8	68.8	48.8	8.8	3.8	2.5
JHARKHAND	10.0	8.9	1.1	2.2	1.1	1.1
Total	49.9	35.8	16.4	8.9	1.8	2.8

Table 3.3 shows that, even in Andhra Pradesh where there was almost universal awareness about NREGA, it was mainly related to 100 days of work and minimum wages. The awareness about minimum wages however, needs to be qualified. In most cases, the awareness about minimum wages was limited to the fact that they will be paid ‘sarkari’ rate. But on further probing, they were unaware of what this means in terms of task rate or daily rate. When it came to provisions such as universal applicability and guarantee and the role of gram sabha, awareness about the features of the Act was much less. The status of awareness in other states was far worse, particularly in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand.

Since the act depends a great deal on public participation, right from deciding on what projects to be undertaken to actually demanding work and finally undertaking social audit, lack of awareness about NREGA and its various provisions is the first stumbling block to any effective implementation of the act. Further probing on sources of information suggested that it was primarily the efforts of non-governmental organisations including political parties that were responsible even for this level of awareness. While in Chhattisgarh, the CPI and its affiliated mass organisations have undertaken some awareness campaigns, in Madhya Pradesh, the Jagrat Adivasi Dalit Sangathan has taken steps to make people aware of their entitlements. In Andhra Pradesh, it has been a mixed effort with audio-visual campaign by central and state governments also helping the cause. Discussion with implementing officials suggested that some activity has been undertaken in this regard, but these were not only found inadequate but also lack any clear thinking on their part.

First of all, there was a visible ignorance and misunderstanding on part of those who were responsible for disseminating information. This was partly blamed on lack of the local language version of the NREGA Guidelines (very few gram sevaks could understand the English guidelines), lack of time for training of trainers, mismatch between state and central guidelines and insufficient resources to spread awareness. In addition to these administrative bottlenecks, there was lack of initiative on part of the administrative machinery to undertake any exercise of this nature. The methods adopted included distributing pamphlets. These were sometimes in English and even where the local language was used, it was too technical. However, in these districts, where literacy is a rare attribute, distributing pamphlets and wall writings did not make much sense. On

the other hand, no significant steps were taken to educate the population through other means.

Even the awareness campaigns were restricted to mentioning the basics of the programme with cut-outs of political leaders. None of the wall writings or pamphlets had any information on where to get the job card, what is the actual entitlement or how to ask for employment. On pointed discussion with district officials, it was informed that steps for audio-visual announcements have been taken in the concerned districts, but this was not corroborated by the ground sources. Some villagers said that even when some of them did get to know about the Act, they were discouraged by the implementing officials, who sometimes supplied false information to cover up for their own inefficiencies. For example, in many cases, villagers were told that the 100 days of employment that they were supposed to get were not under their discretion but was dependent on the availability of schemes. In almost all cases, provisions regarding unemployment allowances were kept out of the information network. In almost all cases, there was no information provided about any grievance redressal mechanism.

Interestingly, it was also observed that even the panchayat sevaks were unaware of many of the provisions of NREGA despite the district officials' claim that they have been trained. This was particularly true for Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh. The situation was somewhat better in Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, while most officials were broadly aware of the provisions, the field assistants were largely unaware. Officials in Jharkhand also claimed that Gram sabhas have been held to educate the population about NREGA. The survey team did check the gram sabha records of the dates mentioned by the officials and did not find any record of gram sabha being held around those dates. This was later confirmed by the villagers also. Similar claims were made by Andhra Pradesh officials which again turned out to be untrue in some cases. Officials in Andhra Pradesh also claimed that SHGs were entrusted with the task of spreading information on NREGA. This was however, found to be true in some cases, but again the information was effectively restricted to members within the group.

However, during the period of the field survey, the teams were also witness to some efforts at information dissemination being made by district authorities, including training of panchayat sevaks. For example, the survey team was invited to at least three training programmes in Latehar district within a span of a fortnight. The district administration was also helpful in arranging training programmes at short notice, on request of the survey team. Similar efforts were also noticed in other states.

### **Job Cards**

The lack of public awareness about NREGA also suited the official machinery which used this to their advantage when it came to distribution of job cards. In most cases, job cards distribution was de-linked to applying for job cards. At the same time, lack of awareness also meant that only those who knew about it applied for the job cards which were mainly the literate and the elite of the villages.

Tables 3.4 and 3.5 below give the percentage of rural population which applied for job cards by state and caste. The most illiterate state of Madhya Pradesh also had the lowest percentage of job card applicants. On the other hand, despite low awareness, Jharkhand had almost same percentage of job card applicants as Andhra Pradesh. It was later discovered that in most cases in Jharkhand, job card applications were filled up by the panchayat sevaks without the concerned families knowing that they have applied for NREGA. In Madhya Pradesh, villagers were asked not to apply since job cards were being distributed to every family at the initiative of the state government. The survey did not come across any case where villagers were allowed to apply orally or on blank sheets, something which is allowed by the guidelines. This is a crucial provision considering the high percentage of rural population in these districts which is illiterate. But compared to OBC and general castes, lower proportions of population within ST and SC households had applied for job cards.

Table 3.4: Have you applied for Job Card?  
(percentage of responses by state)

	CHHATTISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
Yes	52.7	35.0	76.3	72.2	55.8

Table 3.5: Have you applied for Job Card?  
(percentage of responses by caste)

	ST	SC	OBC	General
Yes	49.8	54.5	72.7	64.5

Those who applied also reported having paid some money for the application form. This ranged from Rs 2 to Rs 10. In most cases it was claimed as the cost of photocopying but in some places it was also sold as the cost of the form. In Latehar, forms were being sold right opposite the block office. This was also the case in other districts. In some cases, charges for forms were collected by the panchayat sevak, who justified it on the ground of not being supplied enough application forms by the district administration. But in all cases where application forms were filled up, no receipt was provided. But among those who did apply for job cards, not everybody got their cards in the stipulated time frame according to the guidelines. In most cases, job cards were distributed one or two months after the date of application. In Jharkhand, job cards were distributed after the survey team had started its work. However the date mentioned on these job cards was that of February. The percentage of households who had actually received the cards is given in Tables 3.6 and 3.7 below.

Table 3.6: Have you received a job card?  
(per cent of responses by state)

	CHHATTISGARH	MP	AP	JHARKHAND	Total
Yes	39.5	90.0	70.0	33.3	55.6

Table 3.7: Have you received a job card?  
(per cent of responses by caste)

	ST	SC	OBC	General
Yes	60.8	45.5	59.7	35.5

The highest percentage who had received job cards turned out to be Madhya Pradesh, which incidentally had lowest percentage in terms of applicants. This was mainly due to the system of distributing job cards without application. For example, in Dhar district, there was no system of applying for job cards but it was being distributed by the block officials on their own. This was also partially true for Andhra Pradesh where the requirement of applying for job card was waived. In Andhra Pradesh, job cards were not considered important even by the mandal officials who were keen to open the post-office bank accounts. In Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, it was partially distributed by panchayat sevaks and partially in response to individual applications.

Even though it violates the Guidelines, the idea of distributing job cards on their own without the need of filling up of an application form is a good initiative, in a largely illiterate setting with most of the rural population unable to fill up these technical details. However, this is also fraught with several problems and is often a tool in the hands of the official machinery to discriminate. In any case, the Act as well as the Guidelines do allow for verbal applications which also do away with the need to fill up any application. But the real problems with any such initiative which bypasses the actual beneficiaries as participants are the lack of accountability in this regard and the more complicated problem of relying on some external mechanism to ensure complete coverage. In this survey, problems were found to occur on both counts.

One important issue is that this method of distributing job cards is either based on some other measure of the number of households or on some implicit norms on the composition of actual households. For example, in almost all states, the existence of the household in the BPL census list is considered a sine-qua-non for distribution of job cards. In other words, if the households name does not appear on the list of the BPL census for some reason, that household is denied job card.<sup>6</sup> This, in fact, was a common complaint for not having a job card, a fact strongly supported by the block officials. This relates to the difficulties of establishing residence, which in most cases has been based on the BPL Census conducted by the state government, for want of better alternatives.

The second problem which again was commonly encountered was that in the BPL census list the household appears as a joint family in 2002, but has got divided into nuclear families either due to marriage or due to partition. In such cases, they were not seen as eligible for two job cards, which should be the case according to Guidelines. Moreover, as was shown in Tables 2.28, roughly one third of the rural population in the survey areas did not have any ration card at all. In such circumstances, the over-reliance on the BPL census may not be the best way to ensure that every eligible household gets a

---

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the household is not required to be listed as BPL, rather, it simply has to be listed in the BPL Census which was supposed to cover all rural households, although the reality was somewhat different.

job card. Even disregarding the entire range of controversies regarding the BPL census, it quite clearly is an inadequate indicator of residence, for linking to distribution of job cards.

As a consequence, requiring either the possession of a BPL card or having the household listed in the BPL Census list has turned out to be a tool for excluding the marginalised from availing of job cards. This, in one stroke, has broken the universal character of the NREGA. This was further complicated by the fact that after the clearance by Supreme Court on the BPL list, many states were still in the process of processing the BPL list. Moreover, since the list is not available to the rural population (it was not shown to the survey teams also), there does not exist any mechanism of redressal for those whose names do not figure on the BPL list. In Jharkhand, for example, they have been asked to wait until the BPL list is modified. Therefore, it is necessary for state governments to develop other means of establishing local residence and therefore work entitlement of households under NREGA.

But quite apart from the problems emanating from using BPL list as the verifying criterion, there were some areas of lack of clarity regarding the Guidelines and the Act. The first important issue is that of definition of a household. While the act is silent on this issue, the Guidelines have specifically mentioned that the unit for issuing the job card will be a nuclear family. The definition of the household is of crucial importance since the entitlement is for each household and it matters a lot which way the household is defined. This issue, in fact, has been an issue with the higher level district officials also - that is, how to define a nuclear household. While in some states such as Andhra Pradesh, it was being locally dealt with depending on the Mandal Revenue Officer's interpretation, in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, it was not clear even to the district project officer. This was particularly a problem for single member household, migrant households, female headed households, separated households (where the female of the household even though legally married, opts to stay out) and households with elderly population. There was also some confusion regarding married women who were staying at their natal home. For most of these categories, job cards were denied.

Another reason for denial of job cards was the confusion spread by the 'unskilled worker' definition. In many cases, barbers, cobblers, carpenters and other traditional castes were denied job cards in the name of it being available only to unskilled manual labourers. Even when the survey team tried to explain that irrespective of caste status, if any member of the household is willing to do manual work, he/she can have the job card and apply for work, this was contested by local officials. For example, the BDO in Jharkhand argued that these are skilled workers and do not require job cards under NREGA.

But even in those cases where job cards were distributed, it came with a cost. In most cases and in almost all states and districts surveyed, instances of minor corruption in the form of charging some money were encountered. While it certainly was not the case for every household, the percentage of households who reported having paid some money to get the job card was significantly large. This ranged anywhere from Rs.10 to Rs.100.

In Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh it was sometimes taken as the cost of the application form and card, and sometimes as a simple bribe. On the other hand, there was money that was being charged from the applicants as the charge for the photograph. Again the amount ranged from Rs 30 to 100 including transportation cost despite, it being the responsibility of the state governments to provide photos free of cost. The survey team did not come up with any instance of photos being provided free of cost by the state governments, although in the Jan sunwai almost every district official claimed that the money will be refunded. In Andhra Pradesh, none of the job cards had photographs on them since the job card came out in printed form from the mandal office.

Moreover, there were considerable delays in the distribution of job cards. Except in Madhya Pradesh where most of them had got job cards, in other states, it took anywhere between one month to three months to get the job cards. In Jharkhand, job cards were being distributed after the survey team had started its work. It was also admitted by the block and district officials that had it not been the visit of the survey team, it would have been further delayed. In Chhattisgarh, a “quota” system was being followed. That is, each gram panchayat had been given a fixed number of job cards to distribute, and these were first distributed among the upper castes and the influential people of the village and then the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The official explanation was that the job cards were being printed and have not yet been issued to the district administration. In Jharkhand, after some initial distribution, there was some change required in the job cards which were being printed, and hence there was a delay. The quota system was also in operation in Palamu district where in one of the villages, members of the Muslim community were asked to wait for the second lot of job cards while the caste Hindus were given cards in the same village. But invariably, the ST households were the last ones to get job cards. In Madhya Pradesh, there were also some political overtones to job card distribution, with those households close to the Pradhan getting first but those who were in opposition getting it last or being denied.

In Jharkhand, the responsibility of distributing the job cards was assigned to the panchayat sevaks. However, the panchayat sevaks expressed their inability to deliver the job cards timely due to overload of work. Although there should be one panchayat sevak for each panchayat, in many cases, these panchayat sevaks were looking after 2 or 3 gram panchayats. In some cases, they would send a message to the villages to come and collect the job cards from the mandal office which was 20-25 kilometres from the village. This would not only turn out to be costly for the villagers, it also meant taking one day off from their work. In Latehar, the survey team found job cards lying at the panchayat sevak's house.

In most cases in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, the job cards were incomplete. This included absence of the block officials' signature, BPL number, card number, photographs and so on. In Andhra Pradesh, job cards were printed from the mandal office and had more or less all details required but in some cases were lacking the signatures. But in all states, the job cards were faulty in design. First of all, there was no wage column in any of the job cards, which rendered it useless for checking the wage payment to individual workers. Secondly, there was no column for writing the task performed by

the worker. The job cards also did not have the basic guidelines at the back of the job card. This is something which the Guidelines specifically provide for. Finally, the job cards did not have any space for recording details for unemployment allowance, as if the state governments had never visualised paying any unemployment allowance.

But even when the job cards were distributed, they appeared to be of no use to most of them. Most of the villagers did not know what to do with the job card and why they have been given the job card. It was like any other card. In Andhra Pradesh, the story was similar despite the large percentage of people who were aware about NREGA. For them what mattered most was the post-office bank account and job cards were more or less a redundant paper. Moreover, it was also observed in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand that the cards after distribution were taken by the supervisors either in the name of keeping them in safe custody or for completing the job cards. This was similar to the system which the team had observed in the case of ration cards, where most of the families had their ration cards kept at the dealer's house.

### **Application for work**

In almost all areas that were surveyed, the process of applying for work was bypassed. In other words, the essential nature of the Act being driven by demand was nowhere to be seen, and the old approach of the Food for Work type public employment schemes continued to operate. In Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, very few worksites were in operation despite it being the lean season for agriculture and huge demand for work. Wherever worksites were open, the employment at the worksite had no relation to application for work. The old system of contractors and implementing officials asking labourers to join work was still in practice. As a result, in many cases in Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh where work was occurring, workers were found working without having a job card.

In most cases, especially in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, people were led to believe that applying for work was not a precondition to getting work under NREGA and that work will be provided to them as and when work opens. But in some cases, such as in Madhya Pradesh, when the villagers did apply, they were not given any receipt. The official excuse for not providing any receipt was the unwillingness on the part of the administration to entertain any future claims of unemployment allowance. Where receipts were provided, they were generally not dated.

In fact, in all four states, we did not encounter a single instance of workers being paid unemployment allowance. On the other hand, in Barwani district of Madhya Pradesh, workers had to resort to hunger strike to demand unemployment allowance which did result in assurance of being looked in to. In fact, in all four states, the district officials claimed that there were strict instructions from higher-ups to not to entertain any claim of unemployment allowance. And the most convenient way of doing so was not entertaining any application for work. In Jharkhand, at the time of survey, there were no forms available to villagers on which to apply. When informed by the survey team about applying for work and their entitlement of getting it within 15 days, they agreed to apply

on blank sheets, but these were later refused by block officials and panchayat sevaks. This was also raised in Jan-sunwai, where in front of the survey team there were efforts by the block administration to discourage people from applying for work. In general, in all of the survey states, block officials had no record of the people who applied for work.

While lack of awareness about the need to apply is a major reason for people not applying, it has also been encouraged by the bureaucracy and the panchayat officials. In all cases, there has been inadequate preparation for this situation, and this lack of preparation is evident at many different levels. For example, there are no record books to maintain records of people who have applied. Panchayat sevaks have also been told to inform the villagers that they do not have to apply and like the previous schemes, they will be informed about worksite openings as and when money comes. This has also led to some form of discrimination regarding selection of workers for work. In many cases, especially where contractors remain active in the process (although informally so), the selection of workers was left in the hands of the contractors. There were consequently several complaints of villagers not getting work despite being willing to work and anxious to earn some wages.

Secondly, there was also confusion regarding the appropriate authority to receive the applications. In Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, some of the panchayat officials were unaware that they have to receive the applications for work. This also stemmed from the lack of awareness about their role in the entire process. The most common excuse was that they themselves do not know if they can initiate a new work under NREGA and hence it is meaningless for them to receive applications. In some cases villagers were sent to the block office, which in turn sent them back to panchayat officials. The situation was especially complicated in Jharkhand, where panchayat elections have not been held for more than 20 years now. The existing panchayat elected office-bearers were unsure of their status in the entire scheme of things and hence were unwilling to accept any applications for work. On the other hand, the district administration maintained that the existing office bearers were eligible to receive applications and forward them to block office.

### **Selection of works**

According to the Act and the Guidelines, the gram sabha is the nodal authority for deciding on the kind of work that is to be done as well as the place of the work. This, of course, has to be within the list of works suggested by the Guidelines unless state governments add something else under Clause 9. Unfortunately, the process of selection of worksites in almost all cases bypassed this cardinal principle of people's participation as envisaged in the Act. In most cases, almost all cases in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, gram sabhas were not consulted in deciding the worksites. In those cases where they were consulted, it was post factor with the decision of the block officials being ratified by the gram sabha. In Jharkhand, the survey team was handed over a list of dates when the gram sabhas were held and also the shelf of works. Unfortunately, the same information was not corroborated by the villagers. In most cases, the gram



sabhas were fictitious. In cases where they were actually held, it was clear from the minutes of the gram sabha that no discussion had taken place on NREGA. In some cases, district officials also reported to the survey team that the gram sabhas were held in the presence of panchayat sevaks. This was however, denied by villagers and also the panchayat sevaks. When the panchayat sevaks were confronted with these dates, they confessed to not being present there. For 11 panchayats in Manika block in Latehar district, there are only seven panchayat sevaks, and the panchayat sevak openly admitted to his inability to visit all panchayats.

In Jharkhand, it was also brought to notice of the survey team that the worksites were chosen without keeping in mind the need of the villagers. While in Palamu district, the DM had unilaterally ordered construction of more than 5000 ponds, in Latehar, block officials were instructed that only road construction will be given preference under NREGA. There was also clear evidence of a nexus between block officials and the elites in the villages in getting the work sanctioned in respective villages. The village landlords often managed to get particular works sanctioned which would favour them the most. For example, against the original proposal of a grade 1 path passing through the harijan tola, the grade 1 path was diverted to pass through the main landlord of the village. There was also a visible nexus of the contractors and PWD officials who were responsible for the kind of work sanctioned. In Lanka village in Manika block, it was openly pointed out by the villagers that the grade 1 path was diverted to pass through a different route at the instance of the PWD junior engineer.

In Jharkhand, the process of bypassing the gram sabha has also assumed legitimacy in the official language due to the absence of Panchayat elections in the state for very long time. This has given a very convenient excuse for the officials to appoint two people as president and secretaries on an ad hoc basis. They are called abhikarta and sachiv. The survey team encountered several cases where the abhikarta and sachiv are actually the erstwhile contractors who have been given new names. These are influential people and have got elected due to their nexus with block officials. While officially they are elected representatives, it was found that these elections were stage managed and most of the villagers did not know how and why they have been elected. The abhikarta is responsible for most of the decisions of the NREGA at village level and is also the executioner of the project. In all cases, we found that abhikarta has nominated his family members and relatives as members of the 'labhuk samiti' (beneficiaries committee).

In Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, where the panchayats are functional, there were both positive and negative reports of them being participants in selection of works. In Chhattisgarh, since no new worksites were opened under NREGA, the question of selection did not arise. The previous FFW sites were designated as NREGA worksites, on which they had little say. But in Madhya Pradesh, there was confirmation of the fact that gram sabhas did take place, although the selection of works was not so transparent. But this was only in some villages. In many villages in Badwani, there were reports of gram sabhas not being held. The official excuse was that they are following the Perspective Plan developed for the National Food for Work Programme. In Sawariapani village of the district, despite local requests for water works, a road has been sanctioned. At the same

time, block and district officials have refused to revisit the Perspective Plan in light of the NREGA, as suggested by the Guidelines.

However, the really peculiar situation was encountered in Andhra Pradesh, where for all practical purposes Panchayat Office bearers were replaced by the VO (Village Organisations, a body created under Velugu Project of the World Bank). VOs were considered the implementing agencies for most works in NREGA. The process of getting approval of the gram panchayat was replaced by getting approval from VO. This in fact was also admitted by the mandal officials who cited corruption in panchayats as the excuse to move to the VO system. While in some villages, the involvement of VOs was considered beneficial, there was resentment in some villages about the over-importance of a nominated body like VO in place of elected Panchayat Officials. These VOs were generally comprised of the SHG members of the village and this was found convenient by the mandal officials in dealing with wage payments and monitoring. However, since these VOs were unable to convene gram sabhas, most often the process of obtaining the sanction of the gram sabha meant generating consensus among SHG members. But this had also led to complaints of faulty selection of projects in villages and often sites suiting the SHG group or influential people of the village. It was also observed that local landlords managed to get projects sanctioned near their agricultural fields and homes by providing some land as part of the project. The gram sabha therefore had very little say on the selection of the worksite. This innovative way of bribing to get projects of their choice was not resented and disputed by VOs also. However, it was difficult to corroborate the actual mechanism of selection of projects through independent sources. But some of the SHG members did confess to receiving directions from the mandal for favouring certain types of projects. The role of panchayat secretaries was also not very clear in the entire process.

It should be noted that the entire process of local people's participation – through panchayats and gram sabhas – in deciding on local investment and public works is likely to take some time to be absorbed, since it is an entirely new concept in all of these states. Unlike some other states, the processes of decentralised planning, local control over some government institutions and devolution of some fiscal powers have scarcely occurred before in these four states. Nor were gram sabhas at all a common practice in these states before this. Therefore, it will not be automatic for these crucially empowering features of the NREGA to be adopted in these states, since they effectively go against the way that state intervention has occurred in these areas in almost all ways. In such a context, if the implementation of the NREGA is able to make even a small beginning in ensuring that some of the conditions for local participation provided in the Guidelines are met, it will be a major step forward and is likely to create conditions for greater public participation in other government programmes as well.

Another issue with respect to selection of works relates to the fact that the NREGA works are not yet integrated into a comprehensive plan for the local area or district, nor is there provision for enough technical assistance at the local level to enable more works to be planned and considered seriously. While the first is a matter of mobilisation and organisation, the second indicates the paucity of the financial and

technical resources necessary for ground-level implementation. This is an issue which should be seriously considered by central and state governments, and the need to set aside additional resources for administrative and technical assistance at the ground level must be recognised.

### **Worksite surveys**

An important part of the survey exercise was visiting the actual worksites and conducting worksite surveys including verification of muster rolls at the worksite. Before reaching the respective districts, a preliminary team had been sent well in advance to apply under the Right to Information (RTI) for the list of worksites. Unfortunately, in no cases did we get the list of worksites under RTI. However, in all cases the survey team did manage to get the list of worksites in the block from the block office after some persuasion and persistence. The number of worksites reported on official records in all the blocks was very high. For example, in Latehar, the survey team was given a list of 192 worksites where apparently work was under progress. However, the worksites also included the existing Food for Work sites which had been converted to NREGA sites, which is also allowed by the guidelines for the initial period. This was a common occurrence in Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. There was one worksite which was opened up in Latehar, when one of the MoRD officials from Delhi visited the district, but even that was closed when the survey team was there. In Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh however, there were some worksites which were opened up exclusively under NREGA.

Out of the list of worksites provided to the survey team, worksites were randomly selected for survey. The worksites were selected carefully to cover all panchayats of the concerned block. Adequate care was taken to cover all the worksites selected for the survey. In case of absence of worksite at any place in a panchayat, it was replaced by another worksite from the same panchayat.

The worksite survey was conducted unannounced. Once the survey team reached the worksite, they collected all workers of the worksite and asked for the muster roll from the 'mate'. Depending on the availability of the muster roll, a roll call was taken based on the muster roll or on a simple noting down of the workers' names according to the register or notebook available with the mate. The survey team also inspected the details regarding the worksite, sometimes armed with information collected from the block office. The following sections are largely based on the worksite surveys, complemented by follow-up discussions with villagers near the worksite. In case the worksite was not operational at the time of survey, an attempt was made to visit the worksite at some other time.

### **Workers**

The list provided by the block office had the number of workers working in the worksite. However, firstly most of the worksites did not have any work going on when the survey team visited the worksites. Secondly, in several instances, even on those sites where the work was going on, the number of workers was far less than what was stated in

the list given by the block office. For example, in Latehar district, out of 36 sites visited by the survey team, no workers were found on 28 of the worksites. The official explanation was that work had been suspended in most of the 'no-worker' sites temporarily due to non-release of funds or festivals. This was refuted by local workers for almost all worksites and it was reported to the survey team that no work had taken place at these worksites for the last three months. This was also confirmed by visible inspection of the worksite by the survey team, which did not find any evidence of work having taken place in recent past. Similar was the case in Manatu, where most sites had no worker. The situation in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh was also similar with Chhattisgarh as bad as Jharkhand.

This kind of anomaly was visibly less in Andhra Pradesh and there was good correspondence between the list provided by the mandal office and the actual situation at the worksite. This was probably a result of the software system maintained for APEGA. As a result of the software, there is far greater correspondence between the details provided by the software and actual situation. It was also evident that the software was regularly updated. However, even in the case of Andhra Pradesh, the number of workers officially reported was inflated. This was later clarified to be the total number of workers registered at the worksite, which did not necessarily mean the number of workers present on any given day.

There were also gross contradictions regarding the number of days that the work had taken place at respective sites. The survey team could figure out from official sources the date of initiation of the project but there were no records maintained on a weekly/monthly basis for the number of days worked. In Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh, in some cases token work was started at the time of survey to mislead the survey team. However, the authentic source of number of workers and the number of days worked which should have been available through the muster roll was absent in all places. **In no place did the survey team manage to get the muster roll. In fact, official muster rolls were not being filled up at any of these places.** In most places, the attendance of workers was based on a sheet of paper or notebook maintained by the 'mate'. But even this sheet of paper or notebook was not available to the workers at the site and did not have signature of any of the workers. The survey team did manage to get hold of these informal registers at most sites and found huge irregularities in the names and numbers entered in those versus the actual workers. In Namudag village in Manika, the informal register was filled up with many fictitious names, which included the relatives of the 'mates' as well as pregnant women. In one of the instances, the pregnant woman was eight months pregnant and was not even present in the village since she had gone to deliver at her natal place. The abhikarta later confessed that the concerned woman was his brother's wife.

Fake names and replacement names were found almost everywhere including Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, the system of replacement was also widely prevalent where adolescents and children were found to be working in place of their father or mother. The other reason for mismatch of the names in Andhra Pradesh was the use of post office savings account. The usual mechanism and the explanation are as follows.

Andhra Pradesh NREGA has the provision of paying wages through post office accounts or bank accounts. However, unlike job cards which are for the household, these post office accounts are for individuals. Therefore, for example if the wife works at the worksite and the account is in the name of husband, the software sometimes refuses to make payments to the husband's account since his name is not there in the muster roll. To take care of this, even if the wife works, the name in the muster roll is that of the husband so that payment of wages can be made. While this sounds benevolent, it also leads to non-correspondence of names with actual workers present at the site. However, it made things difficult for the survey team to actually figure out if these were fake names or real names.

In most of the worksites, there were no job cards available with the workers. And there were no entries made in the job cards anywhere. This was also true for Andhra Pradesh, where the field assistants did not feel the need to fill up job cards when everything is computerised. For all practical purposes, the job cards were irrelevant. But despite the use of software, even in the case of Andhra Pradesh, the practice of taking attendance in loose sheets was common. Finally, at least in those worksites where workers were found to be present, there was a high proportion of women workers, around half or even more than half (as in the case of Jharkhand).

Since the muster rolls were not available, the information on number of days worked was based on workers' recall of the workers present at the worksite. This varied a great deal from one day at some of the worksites to 25 days at some of the worksite. The table below gives the average number of days worked per worker in each of the districts. The number of days worked in this case is the number of days worked at the worksite when the survey team was there and does not mean the total number of days that the site has been open since the beginning. In most cases, worksites were opened and then temporarily closed and hence even if the total number of days since the worksite opened were large in some cases, the number of days for present calculation takes into account the present spell of work. According to this calculation, those who worked in the previous spell (that is, when the worksite was defined as a FFW site rather than an NREGA site) have not been included.

Table 3.8: Average number of days worked per worker

	Average no of days worked		Average no of days worked
Latehar	2.5	Barwani	5
Palamu	2	Dhar	3
Sarguja	2	Rangareddy	10
Jashpur	3	Medak	12

But according to this rough calculation also, the number of days worked does not appear to be very large except for Andhra Pradesh. However, this may be because the survey was conducted in the months of May and June, when the process of implementation had barely begun in these states. The number of days worked was difficult to calculate in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand because there was no system of

taking attendance. In addition, in these two states, all the sites visited were those which had been converted from FFW sites to NREGA sites, which had therefore been open for some time. The attendance of workers was filled up by abhikartas and field assistants not at the worksite, but at home after the workers had left.

### **Availability of crèche, shade and water**

In none of the worksites did the team find any crèche under operation. This was despite the fact that many of the worksites had women working along with their children. While the older children were put to work, the younger ones were left in open under the sun to play. There was no shade available near any of the worksites. In Andhra Pradesh, the nearby tree was considered as the shade but the workers were not allowed to go and take rest there except during lunch breaks. While there were some worksites where water was available in earthen pots, it was brought by the workers themselves. The field assistant reported that he did not have the official sanction for buying an earthen pot although he was allowed to hire a person to fetch water for the workers. However in some cases, the field assistant had managed to get one earthen pot for water for the workers.

In other states, even this facility was not available. In some cases, the supervisors refused to entertain any demand like this and insisted on paying one-fourth the wages if they had to accede to such demands. In none of the worksites did the survey team find any notice board or any information regarding the details of the project. In Jharkhand, when this was brought to notice of the BDO, he justified not putting the notice up there for the fear that they will be washed off anyway in rain. When asked to put metal boards or wooden boards, he claimed that there is no money sanctioned under the project. It was later verified by the survey team that the project budget did not have any expenditure head for worksite facilities in any of the projects. The team also found machines being used in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh at some places. But no provisions were made for the tools and implements under the project. Mostly, the workers brought their own tools and implements.

### **Wages**

The worksite survey also sought details regarding wage payments from the workers present. This information was however incomplete in many cases since no wage payments had been made at many sites. Therefore, in those cases, the wage rates of the last time when wages were paid were recorded. But along with these, various other qualitative information regarding wages were also collected. This section summarises the experiences of the survey team regarding wage payments supplemented by the information collected through questionnaires.

In all the states surveyed, the wage payment system was based on the task rate system. However, there was no uniformity in the quantum of task that needs to be done and the amount of wage that is paid for it. This varied a great deal, from as low as Rs. 13 in a site in Dhar, to Rs. 50 in Chhattisgarh to around Rs. 90 in Andhra Pradesh. While the

system of task rate wage payment is permitted by the Act as well as the Guidelines, there are two important riders to it that have to be kept in mind while fixing these norms. The first is that the wages paid should not be less than the minimum wages prevalent in the state. The second is that under no circumstances should the wage rate under the task rate system lead to workers getting less than the daily wage rate for workers working for seven hours a day.

The Guidelines have also suggested that state governments undertake time-motion studies to revise the work norms in accordance with the provisions of the Act. Unfortunately, at the time of survey the wage rates had not been revised. (Subsequently, the norms have been revised in Andhra Pradesh.) As a result, in most cases the task rate system was too demanding even for an able bodied adult male to entitle him to minimum daily wages for seven hours of work. Considering that most of the districts covered by the survey team were areas with hard and rocky soil, the task rates were barely enough to provide them with one-third of the daily wage rate provided by the Act. It is clear that there is urgent need to revise the work norms in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh.

However, when the workers were asked by the team about wage rates received, the responses varied. In some cases, the workers admitted to getting paid less than even the stipulated task rate system. But in many cases, the wage rate reported was the same as that prescribed under the task rate system. The following table gives the workers' remuneration based on the task rate system.

Table 3.9: Wage rates received under task rate system

District	Task Wage received on NREGA Site	State Minimum Wage
Palamu	Rs 60	Rs 73
Latehar	Rs 63	
Barwani	Rs 50	Rs 61.37
Dhar	Rs 13	
Surguja	Rs 50	Rs 58.83
Jashpur	Rs. 50	
Rangareddy	Rs 95	Rs 88
Medak	Rs 88	

Even though there are some anomalies with respect to wage rates received under task rate system, this table might give the impression that the wage rates are not very far off from the minimum daily rate stipulated at Rs 60 by the central government and in the case of Andhra Pradesh almost 50% higher.

However, unfortunately this table hides more than what it represents. On further probing, the teams realised that the system of wage payment is not only complicated but is also heavily biased against the workers with workers actually receiving no more than 50% of the stipulated wages. In Jharkhand, for example, a certain percentage (5-10%) is taken out of daily wages as “commission to Naxalites” by the abhikarta or contractor.

However, underpayment of wages is possible also because of various loopholes available under the task rate system. These are elaborated below.

### **Modes of underpayment of wages at NREGA sites**

The current system of task rate wage payment by its very nature leads to underpayment of wages to the workers. And this happens at every stage of the work. Firstly, task rates in all states were so harsh that despite working for ten hours a day, an able bodied adult worker was not able to complete a task which is meant to be done in one day. In this regard, as mentioned above, there is an urgent need to intervene and state governments should be asked to undertake time and motion studies to revise these rates.

Secondly, in all states the task rates are uniform irrespective of the season of work that is summer and winter and also quality of soil. So work done in the searing heat under fierce sunlight is paid at the same rate as work done in cooler conditions. In Jharkhand, there is no district schedule of rates and the state schedule of rates does not distinguish sufficiently clearly between different qualities of soils. But even in those cases where it is specified, the abhikarta (supervisor) decides what kind of soil rate is applicable there. In most of the worksites in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand that the team visited, the soil was rocky terrain but the rate paid to them was that for soft soil.

However, the real reason why workers are underpaid is due to the system of measurement, which does not take into account either the number of days worked or number of persons worked. It is essentially this lacuna in the system which is mostly used by the contractors and abhikartas to steal workers' wages. For example, in most cases the work specified under the task rate is done in couples, husband-wife, son-father, son-mother or a group of labourers from the same village. However, even if two persons work and complete the work, the task system payment means that they get paid for one task. It was commonly observed that this kind of system was working. In almost all states, this was also a reason for large number of child labourers. Often children would help their mothers to accomplish a task, with the result that their wages and participation in work would not be recorded. The contractors would also encourage this system and did not find anything wrong with children working. While in some cases, names of these children were recorded in the informal register maintained with the 'mates', in many cases it was assumed that they were helping their parents. So even though there are four of the family workings, they end up getting wage for one task. But in turn, this also means that the effective 'daily' wage rate per person is only  $\text{Rs } 88/4 = \text{Rs } 22$  per person, in the case of Andhra Pradesh. In other states, it is even lower.

While going through the wage payments, the teams encountered many instances of the 'invisible workers'. Moreover, even though some of the task rates require two to three days work, they are shown as working for only one day to maintain the registers. There were many instances of these 'invisible days' in all states. Based on these, the effective wage rates calculated per person per day in each of these states is given in the table below. This calculation is based on the worksite survey as well as the household survey.





Table 3.10: Actual wages received under the task rate system under NREGA

District	Wage received on NREGA site per day per person	State Minimum Wage
Palamu	Rs 18	Rs 73
Latehar	Rs 17	
Barwani	Rs 23	Rs 61.37
Dhar	Rs 13	
Surguja	Rs 14	Rs 58.83
Jashpur	Rs. 17	
Rangareddy	Rs 45	Rs 88
Medak	Rs 44	

This system was particularly disadvantageous to the women and the elderly, who were not able to complete these arduous tasks on their own. At times, the women also were ignorant of their entitlement. In one instance in Latehar, the woman of the household had helped her husband in the NREGA worksite but did not expect separate wages for herself since she was helping her husband in his work. As noted above, this was a primary reason for many families to employ children at worksites, a system which was encouraged by the contractors. In Andhra Pradesh, Medak district, a woman labourer casually reported that both her sons aged 14 and 12 were helping her in her task since schools were closed and they were anyway sitting at home. This system also meant that those who could not work in such a “team”, such as single women or female household heads without partners, were not able to avail of the work provided.

Another way of cheating workers of their wages was the method of ‘invisible work’. Even though in the schedule of rates, there are various rates specified for various types of work, the contractors would club these and make wage payment for only one type of work. For example, digging up soil and lifting it to a certain distance (lift and lead) are two separate tasks. But often these would be clubbed together and the workers would be told that their task was cutting soil and dumping it at some site. In normal circumstances, the worker should have been paid for cutting soil as well as carrying it for whatever distance s/he did. But in many cases it was not specified to the workers and they ended up doing two tasks but getting paid for one. In Jharkhand, the workers were unaware that they are supposed to be paid for ‘lift and lead’ also.

Apart from these difficulties, there were complaints of gross irregularities in measurement of work done by them. Measurement was hardly done in front of workers and despite the specifications in the Act, it was not done periodically. The reason mentioned in all cases was the shortage of adequate junior engineers to undertake measurements, which is certainly a genuine problem. But as a result, since measurement of most of these tasks was too technical for the illiterate villagers to understand, they were often cheated of their legitimate work.

The state or district schedule of rates, procured by the teams, was not available at most worksites and the workers were not aware of the existence of any schedule of rates. When this was showed to them, most of them showed ignorance about it. Some of the

technical terms used in these schedules of rates were too difficult for the abhikarta himself in most cases.

In response to the question on discrimination on the basis of gender, the responses were mixed. One reason for this was the workers' ignorance of the wage payment system. Officially, there were no gender discriminations to report. But on further probing, instances of underpayment of wages for females compared to males were reported from every state although these were least in Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh. This gender discrimination in wages mainly took two forms. Firstly, women were assigned tasks which were supposedly less demanding, which in other words also meant that they were given tasks which resulted in lower wage entitlements to the women. For example, women were discouraged from cutting hard soil and instead preferred for carrying soil. Secondly, women were also found to take assistance of their children more often than men and hence the 'invisible worker' symptom was more common for women. But on the whole, there appeared to be less instances of gender discrimination in many cases particularly in Jharkhand and Andhra Pradesh. This was a welcome change for many women who have got used to being paid less than what their male counter parts get in other work.

However, what surprised the survey team was the response of supervisors who justified these methods of underpayment of wages once it was made clear to them. The usual excuse was that the tribal were inefficient and often came to work in drunken state and hence were not able to complete the task that is assigned to them. Similar allegations were levelled against the women who were blamed for working slowly and gossiping. Therefore supervisors justified underpaying workers on the ground that the workers are getting what they deserve. In some cases, the supervisors justified the method of equating the work of 2-3 children with one adult's work. In those cases where workers protested against under measurement of their work or underpayment of their work, they were harassed and humiliated. This was used in many worksites to intimidate the other workers.

### **Delay in Wage payments**

At most worksites, wages had not been paid till the survey team was there. The information on wages was more from the wages received by the workers, the last time wages were paid. In many cases in Jharkhand, wage payments were delayed by more than six months, for the work on the FFW scheme. In some cases it was more than a year. This was partly blamed on the district authorities for non-release of payments. But we also encountered instances where wages were not paid despite this not being a constraint. In one case, the wages had been released by the bank and were lying in the contractor's bank account, such that the contractor managed to earn a handsome interest amount. All these while, he had convinced the workers that wages have not been released by the district. Worse, he used the same money to lend to the workers at 3% per month interest rate. In some cases, there were conflicting reports from the district and block officials regarding release of wage payments.

Another major reason for delay in wage payments was the delay in getting the work measured by the junior engineers. The junior engineers would often take months to visit the actual worksites. Sometimes, they would delegate these tasks to panchayat sevak, panchayat office bearers or contractors. The shortage of engineers, especially at the junior level, had a number of other adverse effects as well, in planning works, assessing the quantum of work performed and so on. It is therefore an acute problem in NREGA implementation which must be addressed at central and state government levels.

In Andhra Pradesh also, there were instances of delay in wage payments. Sometimes, these were for more than a month. Apart from non-release of funds from higher authorities, in some cases wage payments were also delayed due to administrative reasons related to bank or post office accounts. All workers have to open their bank/post office accounts on their own, and banks sometimes charge an initial deposit of Rs 50 to Rs 100. In case there is even one worker who has not opened his/her bank account, the wage payment is delayed for all workers. Officials in Andhra Pradesh assured the survey team that steps are being taken to ensure that all workers have bank/post office accounts in due course, which will take care of these problems.

### **Muster rolls**

The worksite survey also included verification of muster rolls, both completed as well as current. While the survey teams were asked to verify muster rolls at each current worksite, they were also instructed to verify one completed muster roll. However, getting hold of the muster roll, completed or current itself turned out to be a treasure hunt without a map. In no case did the survey team manage to get the muster roll at current worksites. The muster roll verification was finally done using the kaccha muster roll only for most worksites. In some places in Andhra Pradesh, the muster roll could be traced, not at the worksite but at the field assistant's residence.

In Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh muster rolls were not issued on time. They were not available with the implementing authorities during the period the survey team was there. In Jharkhand, they were being handed over to abhikartas when the survey time was present in those districts. Initially, all the 'mates' misled the survey team that the muster rolls have been sent to the block office for submission. On checking at the block office the survey team was told that the muster rolls have just been released to the contractors.

But wherever muster rolls could be traced, they had wage payment by daily basis while the work was being done using task rate system. It was told to us and later verified by the survey team that this practice was due to absence of any column for work measurement on the muster rolls. Therefore, even the block officials encouraged contractors and abhikartas to use the daily basis format. This of course led to several instances of corruption which included fake names as well as under-reporting of the number of days worked. Surprisingly, since the muster roles were official documents, the abhikartas had written the official daily wage rates in the column for wage payments even though the workers were not paid on the basis of daily rates. Moreover, the abhikartas or

sachivs had managed to get thumb impressions of the workers on these muster rolls. In many cases in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand, the workers denied having put any thumb impression on the muster roll. Most of them had not even seen any such document in their life. We found out that the thumb impressions were mostly fake since there is no way to check which one belonged to whom. So the contractors have used different fingers to put thumb impression for different people. Sometimes, it was visibly clear that it was a female thumb impression but was marked against a male worker's name.

On the other hand, there was no column in the muster roll for recording the wage in Andhra Pradesh. This was mainly due to the system of wage payment where wages are paid through post office accounts. However, this has led to another complication, which is that there is sometimes no correspondence between the number of days worked according to the muster roll (which is mainly an attendance register) and the payment received in the post office account which is based on task rate system. The survey team also found that the system of payment is task rate according to the software being used and hence did not rely on the muster roll for payment. To keep account of tasks performed by the workers, the field assistants maintained an informal register which was then sent to mandal headquarters for making wage payments. Secondly, since the entire procedure of making wage payments was through post offices, it also lacked all transparency measures which are in built in the Guidelines and the Act. While each individual knows the wage payment received for the work done by them, they are not aware of the actual number of workers who have been paid and for how many days. That is, there is no way they can cross-check if any fake entry has been paid some money or not, or if some persons have been paid more money than what they actually worked. When this was raised by the survey team, the mandal officers promised to put the list of workers and wage payments on the panchayat notice board. However, this system was not in place at least till the end of the survey.

In the official muster roll in Andhra Pradesh, there were far more male workers than what was observed at the worksite where women were almost equal in number. Later it was found that the reason for this was that women were clubbed together with their husbands since there is only one bank account. Sometimes it was the other way around. But the real reason for this was that the women were not given independent tasks because they worked less. Therefore, the tasks were assigned to families rather than individuals, which took care of any loss of work due to female involvement. This was one way in which the women's work was underpaid. However, this system was very difficult to detect and the survey team could not establish too many cases like these. But as a result of this system, the average wage received by per person days is sometimes equivalent to average wage received per household which in turn turned out to be more than the minimum wages in almost all cases, sometimes double the minimum wages. For example, the survey team did witness one or two instances when the wage paid turned out to be more than Rs.150 per day.

Jan-sunwais were conducted in Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh, and the issue of fake names came out clearly in almost all cases. In most cases, the

abhikartas or the implementing authorities had put the name of their relatives or other influential people in muster rolls and wage payments were made to these people.

The survey team also tried to do at least one completed muster roll verification. After days of chase and persistence, the teams did manage to get the muster rolls, but in all cases they were found to be fake and doctored for the survey team. Instead of going into the details of each of the completed muster roll exercises, the case of Latehar district is presented below. The situation in most other cases was similar.

The survey team had asked for the completed muster roll from the BDO for any worksite where muster rolls had been completed upon reaching the district. The BDO had also been asked to be prepared to give the muster rolls even before the team reached through RTI. However, it took the survey team four days to convince the BDO to hand over the completed muster roll. The BDO promised to do so on the coming Monday. However, for a different reason the survey team went to the BDO office on Sunday and found the BDO office open with all staffs present there. This raised the suspicions of the survey team and when they went inside they found the BDO office staff filling up the muster rolls which was supposed to be handed over on Monday. On confronting the BDO about reasons for this, he gave the explanation that the block officials were teaching the abhikarta to fill up the muster roll. The survey team did not find any abhikarta there but the block officials managed to get hold of one abhikarta from outside the office. This incident happened in the presence of the District Project officer who had come to the BDO office for some other work. However, when the team was finally handed over one completed muster roll, it turned out to be fake and doctored.

That particular muster roll pertained to the construction of a kachha road in village Auratand. However, when a team went to Auratand to verify this muster roll, it emerged that the BDO had already been there a day before and personally filled this muster roll from the kaccha muster roll (the attendance register) in the presence of the panchayat sevak and abhikarta. Interestingly, some members of the nigrani samiti (vigilance committee) were also present. The survey team also found out from the villagers that in Auratand, the work had been completed at the end of March, and that wages had been paid sometime in April. Further inspection of the Auratand muster roll pointed to several inconsistencies. According to this muster roll, labourers had received part payment of wages in kind at the rate of 7 kg of rice per day. However, labourers denied having received any grain. Instead, they had received equivalent payments in cash, with rice being valued at the BPL price. Further, according to the BDO a permit had been issued for lifting this grain from the FCI godown and the grain had been lifted. This suggests that the grain was sold in the open market and money made out of it, since the BPL prices are much lower than the market prices.

Moreover, while the muster roll had only 53 names, the kachha attendance register had 126 names on it. The BDO himself admitted that the muster rolls submitted by him were doctored and he ran out of time to complete the muster rolls. During the surprise visit to the BDO office the survey team also chanced upon a bunch of job cards which were being filled up. These job cards were not only incomplete, they were not

signed by any authority - but the numbers of these job cards were found on the muster rolls which were being filled up at the BDO office. When the villagers were asked about the job cards, they reported that the BDO had asked for these job cards for correction. However, these job cards were being used to fudge the muster rolls. Finally, the muster roll that was given was that of the week between 18-24 March 2006, but the serial number on the muster roll belonged to the series which was issued in May 2006 to the BDO office. All these were brought to the notice of the Latehar DC who promptly decided to make a field visit and assess the situation himself.

Some of the gross irregularities in the muster rolls in Palamu and Barwani were brought out in the Jan-sunwai. However, in Dhar district of Madhya Pradesh, completed muster rolls were obtained at the end of the survey and hence could not be verified. But even these looked doctored with over-writing in many places. In Chhattisgarh, the completed muster rolls had signatures in English for illiterate workers. When the muster rolls were shown to the workers, most of them denied having put any thumb impression on muster rolls. There were some cases also where the number of days and the actual dates of work were denied by the workers.

## **Other issues related to implementation of NREGA**

### **Monitoring and Vigilance committees**

In all states, there were no vigilance committees formed. The survey team was led to believe that the beneficiaries committee (labhuk samiti) is also the nigrani committee. In that sense, there were some committees in all the states. However, these committee members were themselves found unaware of their role. In most cases, they consisted of the relatives and friends of the supervisors or panchayat officials.

### **Post office wage payment and use of software**

This was an issue specific to Andhra Pradesh. In Andhra Pradesh, the record keeping for NREGA has been outsourced to TCS which manages software specifically designed for monitoring NREGA. While the software is good and has all the details required under NREGA, it does not eliminate the possibility of human errors since the computers themselves are operated by mandal officials. Moreover, the computers are stationed at the mandal headquarters and are dependent on information supplied by the field assistants for updating. While the software is designed to take care of any eventuality, the survey team did find that at times, it does create problems. These mainly relate to the post office bank accounts.

For wage payments, all the job card holders have been asked to open a bank account with the post office or cooperative banks. While many have done so, some have not done so since it requires an initial deposit of Rs.50-100 which is to be paid by the household. However, the software does not accept any worker's wage payment if he/she does not have a bank account. In that sense the accounts are mandatory for a household to get work under NREGA, although officially mandal officials claimed that they have not

denied anybody work due to this reason. Secondly, the bank accounts are individual and one per household; this leads to complications where the worker has to be the same as the one in whose name the account is. Thirdly, some women complained that since their wage payments is also paid in the household account which is operated by the husband, they hardly get to access their wage earnings. They also complained that even though they are the ones who work, their husbands blow away the money on drinking since they controls the accounts. The mandal and district officials informed us that they were therefore considering opening up of bank accounts for each individual.

Moreover, the state government also informed the survey team that they were paying some amount as commission to the post offices for making wage payments. The exact amount of it is not clear but postmen complained of increasing work burden on account of this additional task. There were also some confusion on whether the postman would come and give them the money or they will have to make rounds of the post offices which are sometimes as far as 15-20 kilometres from the village. This appears to be against the spirit of the Act which attempts to give work within five kilometres, since it would then require workers to travel up to 15-20 kilometres to collect wage payments. Secondly, with the exception of some villages, the villagers were also not given any receipts. The reason was the process where the receipts are generated at the mandal offices and sent directly to the banks. The field assistant is supposed to collect the receipts and give it to the workers, but this is hardly ever done.

In some villages, the villagers also preferred being paid in cash at the worksite itself. They did not feel comfortable dealing with so many papers and cards. On the other hand, women in some places felt that they can control their earnings better. However, it was also observed that in some places accounts were opened in the name of women members of the household which is a welcome step. In some villages, the workers preferred post office accounts since it meant some forced saving and protected the money from being blown away by their husbands. In nutshell, the system was still unfolding and there were mixed reactions to it. But overall the system of post office payment did ensure timely wage payment provided it was cleared at the mandal office by the software. However, it was not able to put a plug to the ways of under-measurement of work by the field assistant.

### **Staff and their response**

In all states and districts, the staff complained of being overworked due to NREGA. Most of their time was spent on dealing with NREGA and they had little time to do any other work. This also meant that all other work in the district and block suffered. This was also the complaint of the district officials who wanted a separate line of department to take care of this. There were also complaints that while the Act is very clear on the role of every other actor, it is silent on many points related to role of block and district officials. They wanted better clarity in that part of the district guidelines on who is supposed to do what and the chain of command that they have to follow in case of any unforeseen problems. The block officials also felt that there should have been better and proper training before undertaking this programme. In all districts, the training that



they had received was a mere reading out of the various provisions. As a result, they were unable to train the lower staff at the block. The survey team on request of the BDO did a two day training programme for block officials and panchayat sevaks in Jharkhand. Moreover, there was visible lack of coordination with line departments on this issue.

The district level officials also complained of lack of money for administrative purposes. All of them felt that the present 2% as administrative cost to the states is grossly inadequate. The district officials also wanted proper training and support for social audit at the village, block and district level. The system of jan-sunwai is not present in most of the states that the survey team visited. This requires training for officials as well as workers to do this on a regular basis. However, the block officials at many places also complained that this was taking too much of their time. In Madhya Pradesh, it took a great deal of effort on the part of the survey team to make them agree to participate in a social audit exercise. District officials also wanted more trained staff for measurement of work and accounting. At the very least, they wanted the existing officials at the block level to be trained in some basics of taking measurement of work at the worksites.

Except in Andhra Pradesh where in many places field assistants have been appointed, they were not appointed in any other state. The panchayat sevaks were too overburdened to take care of so many responsibilities.

### **Corruption in project cost**

The survey team also encountered several cases of blatant corruption in some of the projects. While the issue of fudging of muster rolls and underpayment of wages has already been discussed, another method of corruption was inflated project costs. The corruption in these cases was mainly on account of high material costs shown in the project budget. For example, for laying of grade 1 road, there was an expenditure head for soil and transportation which was not required. In Manika block, the survey team found that the supervisor has shown expenditure of Rs.25,000 for watering of the road, but the villagers refuted that this had been done. The supervisor then explained that since it had rained two days back, the road was automatically watered and there was no need of watering again. But he had managed to withdraw the amount showing expenditure on that count.

### **NREGA as an agent of change**

It is apparent that many of these problems are inevitable in a completely new programme that requires a basic change in approach on the part of both the state and the citizens who are affected by it. Other problems stem from the basic political economy of parts of rural India, and the entrenched power structures that are challenged or see in the NREGA new possibilities for surplus extraction. However, despite the shortcomings on various counts in terms of implementation, it is clear that the NREGA is already and will become an even more potent instrument of social and economic change.

The survey team found great enthusiasm among the rural population regarding NREGA. While this was amply evident in mass participation in the Jan sunwais conducted at various places, there was visible eagerness to know about it and ensure proper implementation of it. However, this was considered a huge task given the existing power structure and the nexus among officials and elected representatives at the village level. Nonetheless, there were small attempts to organise by the time the survey team left the respective districts. The survey teams have continued to maintain contacts in the respective blocks and districts. The events after the return of survey team have been encouraging as well as discouraging. In many cases, for example, Manatu and Barwani the workers who were vocal during Jan-sunwai have been threatened, evicted and beaten. In some cases, they have been harassed and threatened.

But in some other cases, there have been positive outcomes also and these have led to increased determination and strength among the workers to make sure that the Act is implemented properly. In Latehar, villagers have come together and fought for their rights and managed to get a worksite opened in one of the villages where the household survey took place. In Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, many local non-governmental organisations have taken inspiration and have conducted social audits on their own and have put pressure on block officials for greater transparency. There have been demands from these districts to have more exercises of this nature as well as capacity building of the local youth and women groups which can monitor the issues related to NREGA on their own.

Even though the lower bureaucracy seemed confused, ignorant, indifferent and sometimes resistant to the wider implications of the movement started by NREGA, there were some rays of hope with some elements of bureaucracy throwing their weight behind making NREGA a success. While this was definitely the case at the state government level, as in Andhra Pradesh, there were also prompt responses and active guidance by many districts collectors to ensure its success. For example, the DC of Latehar was not only prompt in responding to any irregularity in implementation of NREGA, he also took some positive steps to ensure its effective implementation. One of the important steps in this regard was involving more women in implementation of NREGA by directing the block officials to encourage women self-help groups in project implementation.

## **Chapter 4: Conclusions and recommendations**

The results of this survey clearly indicate that the NREGA is a major new intervention that has the potential to transform rural economic and social relations at many levels. However, this potential is still incipient and requires to be substantially supported in many different ways, since the very orientation of NREGA and the presentation of involvement in public works as a right is a very new concept in rural India and one that will take time to permeate, especially at the local levels.

In Chapter 2, the overall socio-economic conditions within which the NREGA is operating in the selected states, districts, and villages was outlined. It was evident from the socio-economic survey that these particular areas are among the most backward in India, where the inadequacy of basic infrastructure and aggregate lack of development has combined with recent increases in food and employment insecurity to create conditions of rural distress that may be unprecedented. Evidence of rural distress was found in the poor quality of housing and the lack of basic material possessions; in the high levels of indebtedness relative to income, especially to moneylenders and traders; in the very poor nutritional indicators which suggested alarmingly high levels of malnutrition especially among the young; in the very low and below-subsistence wages that were common in the survey areas; in the absence of locally available productive work resulting in the increased need to migrate for work and the actual increases in short-term migration for any kind of unskilled work. All these highlighted the pressing and urgent need for NREGA in the survey areas, as well as the massive demand for work under NREGA in these areas.

In Chapter 3, the results of the field survey of the implementation of NREGA in the selected survey areas were presented. A large number of issues were raised, and many problems that had emerged in the course of the field survey were outlined. These problems are listed briefly below, along with some recommendations for dealing with them. However, it should be noted that the uneven record of implementation thus far as well as the presence of a large number of implementation issues are only to be expected given that this is such a new programme, and one that envisages a complete change in the manner of interaction of the state, the local power elites, and the local working classes. The NREGA is completely different in conception from earlier government employment schemes since it treats employment as a right and the programme is intended to be demand-driven. Furthermore, the Act and Guidelines anticipate very substantial participation of the local people in the planning and monitoring of the specific schemes, to a degree which has not been at all common certainly in the four states that are considered here. Therefore, there are bound to be difficulties in making local officials and others responsive to this very different approach, and of course it will necessarily challenge the prevailing power structures, in some cases quite substantially. Therefore attempts to oppose or subvert the correct and full implementation of the scheme in rural areas must be expected, even as they must also be firmly dealt with.

The huge potential of the NREGA was evident particularly in the enthusiastic response of local people, in particular the landless and marginal farmers, in the survey

areas. This is a major strength of the current situation, which must be harnessed in future attempts to make the actual implementation of the NREGA more closely in accordance with the Guidelines in these states. However, what is clear is that along with more local level change, the central and state governments need to provide much more in the form of financial and technical resources for effective implementation. Such resources are required to ensure wider and more complete dissemination about the Act and all its features; to provide more assistance in the selection of works; to ensure prompt and correct payment of wages; to assist in the administrative work involved, including accounting; and to allow for genuine public monitoring and social audit of the entire process.

Below, we present in summary form some of the more significant implementation issues along with recommendations on dealing with them:

### **General Recommendations**

1. The financial allocations for administrative expenses should be raised from 2% as is currently provided, to at least 6%, and more in areas which are especially difficult and where such expenses are likely to be greater for effective implementation.
2. In the light of the recent experience of the past few months, and the feedback from the various surveys and experiences in different states, the MoRD should revise the Guidelines and prepare an updated version.
3. Currently the provisions for redressal in the Act and Guidelines are very weak and need to be strengthened. There is a related issue of how to hold the "implementing agencies" accountable (e. g . for worksite facilities) when the implementing agency is the Gram Panchayat. Some clarity is required on who is responsible, when the Gram Panchayat violates the guidelines, and how is he/she to be held accountable?

### **Awareness**

Problems:

1. In many areas, the Guidelines had not been received or were not available in Hindi or the local language.
2. The idea that NREGA was demand-driven has still not permeated among local officials in most areas.
3. Workers were mostly unaware about their specific rights and the processes that are required to avail of their rights.
4. The transparency guidelines in particular were not known and not seen to be compulsory.

5. Panchayat sevaks who have to create awareness were overworked and underpaid.

**Recommendations:**

1. There must be immediate arrangements for translation of the Guidelines and provision to all levels of implementing agency. Several copies of the guidelines should also be available at the gram panchayat level for public examination.
2. Worksites should be pro-actively opened and applications for work should be accepted on the spot, along with explaining the “normal” application procedure to workers.
3. There should be special training provided to local officials in charge of the scheme, especially about the Guidelines. In addition to circulars, special meetings should be held at district and state government level.
4. Much more dissemination about the Act and the scheme is required among the people generally.
5. More financial resources have to be set aside specifically for creating awareness.
6. Local networks, radio advertisements, cultural troupes, should all be used for official dissemination.
7. Local organisations and students should also be used, initially focusing on some areas intensively on a pilot basis.

**Job Cards:**

**Problems:**

1. Job cards were sometimes not available.
2. There were problems with the design of the job card in some states. For example, in some cases there is no space to record the wages paid. In all the states, the workers' entitlements have not been printed on the back cover as specified in the Guidelines.
3. Receipts were not provided when applications are submitted.
4. Joint families were registered as one household, because of problems with the definition of “household”.
5. Money was being charged for forms in some cases.

6. The lists used to define residence led to rejection of applications in some cases, especially the BPL Census list.
7. Female Headed Households were sometimes denied.
8. Cards were distributed according to “quota” and by caste/community/tribe.
9. Panchayat sevaks had to distribute cards to 2 or 3 panchayats each, which was difficult and time-consuming, and reduces access of people.

Recommendations:

1. Application forms should be made easily and applications on blank paper should also be accepted, as per the Guidelines available.
2. Dated and signed receipts should be provided with all applications.
3. All new job cards should have workers’ entitlements printed at the back, as per Guidelines (and even for old job cards, the possibility of stapling an “extra page” with the entitlements should be considered).
4. Clarity is required on the definition of residence as well as the nuclear family as the household unit. Circulars should be issued accordingly to all DCs/DMs.
5. The eligibility of women to be heads of household should be reiterated, not only in cases of widowhood etc., but all other situations, including in cases of male temporary migration.
6. Checks are required to ensure that no caste/community/tribal group members are denied.
7. District Administrations should ask for weekly progress reports, by village or panchayat, on job card application and distribution.

## **Application for work**

### Problems:

1. Many workers were not aware that work has to be applied for after the job card is received.
2. Dated receipts were not being given to workers.
3. Often work was not provided on the basis of applications, but simply when the local authority decides to set up a work and therefore mobilises workers.
4. The need to apply for work in addition to receiving a job card must be made clear to all workers as part of the dissemination.

### Recommendation:

1. Periodic checks should be conducted to ensure that dated and signed receipts are provided.

## **Choice of works**

### Problems:

1. Local authorities and panchayats lack adequate technical support to identify appropriate works and estimate labour and other requirements.
2. Works were being identified in centralised fashion without participation by gram sabhas. Top-down approach of earlier schemes is being repeated.
3. In some cases, even when local people had made their wishes clear, the preferred work was not chosen.
4. Too much focus on roads and big ponds instead of creating productive assets which meet local needs.
5. More technical staff – engineers etc. – should be made available at the local level. This can involve mobilising retired people and others willing to work in particular areas. More resources have to be set aside for this.

### Recommendations:

1. More resources should be provided to hire junior engineers not only to assess work, but also to assist the gram panchayats in planning appropriate works according to local specifications.

2. There is need to involve local groups (at the state/district level) for wider consultations regarding the type of works and estimates.

## **Worksites**

### Problems:

1. In most worksites there was no crèche or provision for first aid.
2. Drinking water was also not being provided and there was no effort to ensure shade in the vicinity for resting.
3. Machines were being used on some sites.
4. Local contractors were present at some sites, in MP in the guise of “mates”.

### Recommendations:

1. It is important to remember that the “implementing agencies” are responsible for provision of worksite facilities and should be held accountable for it. Therefore new methods are required to be worked out so that the Labour Enforcement Officer can ensure that all facilities are provided and non-provision is penalised.
2. More clarity is required on who can be a mate. In fact the mate should be chosen from among the workers, so as to avoid the indirect control of contractors and provide supervisors who are sensitive to the requirements and problems of workers themselves. .
3. In areas where contractors have been traditionally important and continue to dominate (e.g. MP), particular effort should be made to ensure that they are not involved at the work sites in any way.

## **Wages**

### Problems:

1. In many cases workers did not receive the minimum wage even for a full day’s work. The major exception is Andhra Pradesh.
2. Very significant underpayment was observed in some areas.
3. The work norms (District Schedule of Rates) were unrealistic and need to be revised downwards. Once again AP is the exception.



4. Because of payment based on groups, there were some cases of false muster rolls (MP) leading to more workers being listed and therefore reduction of per worker wage.
5. Measurement of work was not made in front of the workers.
6. Engineers did not visit the sites regularly and frequently as they were currently too few in number.
7. Payments were often not made on time. There were cases of delay in payments even after money was received at the panchayat level.
8. The problem of “invisible workers” means that actual wages per person are lower, and women and children get involved without recognition or separate pay.
9. Women sometimes received lower wages for similar work.

Recommendations:

1. The District Schedule of Rates needs to be revised in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and MP (it has already been revised in AP).
2. Where workers are receiving very low wages, they should be paid a daily rate for work instead of piece rate, until the rates are revised.
3. More engineers are required to visit the work site regularly and calculate the basis of payment in front of the workers.
4. Payments must be made regularly and periodic checks are required to ensure this.

**Muster rolls**

Problems:

1. Except in AP, muster rolls were not displayed and were not available for public inspection even at the offices.
2. In some areas (e.g. MP) muster rolls were treated as secret and not to be divulged, with no local official awareness of the NREGA guidelines.

Recommendations:

1. Local authorities should be reminded by circular that muster rolls must be displayed prominently at all worksites, and there should be periodic check and strict penalties for non-compliance.

2. Where workers were mostly illiterate, muster rolls must be read out at the end of the day's work.
3. Failure to comply with these norms should be dealt with strictly and made examples of.

### **Social audit**

#### Problems

1. In some areas, (observed in MP, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand) the local administration or other authorities (mainly at the Block level) obstruct people's right to information and open expression.
2. Officers were often not willing to be present at Jan Sunwais (public hearings) and respond positively to feedback.

#### Recommendation

1. Jan Sunwais should be given some priority by MoRD and state-level administration, with clear guidelines to local officials regarding presence and conduct during Jan Sunwais.

## Appendix A

### The survey team

#### Co-ordination and Supervision:

Kaustav, Himanshu, Deepak Xavier, G. Omkarnath  
Jayati Ghosh, Jean Drèze, Kamal Mitra Chenoy, Praveen Jha

#### Field investigators:

(Students from Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, University of Hyderabad, Andhra University, SV University and Nagarjuna University)

Devika Lal,	Jyotsna Taparia,	Nitya Aasaavari,
Parul Bajaj,	Anindita Adhikari,	Arpita Sinha,
Gayatri Sahgal,	Kasturi Chatterjee,	Manika Bhargava,
Richa Bagla,	Saumya Chaturvedi,	Sharmin Khodaji,
Sunayana,	Suneira Rana,	Vanita Falcao,
Yamini Tandon,	Aakash Joshi,	Akshay Verma,
Apurva Bamezai,	Devika Thapar,	Megnaa Mehtta,
Shatam Ray,	Tanmay Shukla,	Tavleen Bhatia,
Urvashi Jain,	Nayanjyoti Choudhury,	Praveen,
Anil Kumar,	Reetika Khera,	Navjyoti,
Tanushree Sood,	Nandini Nayak,	Sandeep Rai,
Asish Porwal,	Dinesh,	Aparna John,
Dheeraj Singh,	Ritu Singh,	Amit Gupta,
Awanish Dwivedi,	Rahul Verma,	Siddharth Tripathi,
Saurav Kumar,	Sushant Sudan,	Akshay Chand,
Aparajay,	Anand Prakash Ekka,	Gunajit Kalita,
Jitender Nayak,	Kunal Parikh,	Manika Bora,
Meera Vishvanathan,	Nayana Bose,	Neha Sahay,
Prakhar Dixit,	Pranav Satyam,	Priya Rampal,
Rahul Kumar,	Abhijit Sharma,	Neha,
Faizan,	Bela Bhatia,	D Siva Kumar,
V Subramanyam,	Y Venkatrao,	V Ramesh,
D Sundara Rao,	D Devaraju,	G Praveen

**Household Questionnaire for NREGA Survey (May-June 2006)**

**General Instructions:**

- Please Use Pencil and Eraser to fill up the questionnaire. Do not use Pen anywhere in the questionnaire.
- All the entries should be made in English and Arabic Numerals.

**BLOCK 0: Descriptive Identification of Sample Household**

<b>State</b>		<b>Name of Household Head</b>	
<b>District</b>		<b>Name of Informant</b>	
<b>Block/Mandal</b>		<b>1<sup>st</sup> Investigator Name</b>	
<b>Village</b>		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Investigator Name</b>	
<b>Household No.</b>		<b>Date of Survey</b>	

**BLOCK 1: Household Characteristics**

1. Religion (Code)	
2. Caste ( Code)	
3. Land owned as on date of Survey (Specify Unit)	
4. Type of Ration Card	
5. House Type (Code)	
6. Whether received any money from Indira Awaas Yojana (yes-1, No-2)	

**Item 1: Religion:** Hinduism-1, Islam-2, Christianity-3, Sikhism-4, Jainism-5, Buddhism-6, others-9.

**Item 2: Caste:** Scheduled Tribe-1, Scheduled caste-2, Other Backward Castes-3, General-4, If not sure –Specify

**Item 4: Ration Card:** BPL-1, APL-2, Antyodaya-3, Annapurna-4, No card-5

**Item 5: House Type:** Pucca-1, Kuchha-2

For Item 3, Please use the local unit of land and specify clearly the land area in the main unit and sub-units if any.

**Block 2: Credit**

Serial no.	Source	Purpose	Amount	Interest	Monthly/Annual

**Source:** Government-1, Cooperative Society/SHG-2, Bank-3, Employer/Landlord-4, professional moneylender-5, shopkeeper/trader-6, relatives/friends-7, others-8

**Purpose:** medical expenses -1, educational expenses -2, legal expenses -3, other consumption expenses -4; marriage and other ceremonial expenses -5, purchase of land/construction of building -6, productive purpose -7, repayment of debt -8, others -9.

**Block 3: Demographic Particulars**





work-6, Did not work but was seeking and/or available for work-7, attended educational institutions-8, domestic (household) work-9, sewing/weaving or other work for household use-10, not working-11, others-specify

**Remarks/Comments: (In case you can not figure out appropriate code for any activity, write others in status and specify clearly the activity along with person serial number)**

**Block 5: Follow-up questions for women above age 15**

1.	Person serial number						
2.	Were you required to spend most of your time on domestic duties almost throughout the last 365 days? (yes-1, no-2)						
3.	<i>if code 1 in item 3, reason thereof (no other member to carry out the domestic duties-1, cannot afford hired help-2, for social and/or religious constraints-3, others-9)</i>						
4	along with your domestic duties are you also engaged in any other productive activities: yes=1, No=2						
5	If yes, what are the activities (list main three codes).						
6	In spite of your pre-occupation in domestic duties, are you willing to accept work if work is made available to you? (yes-1, no-2)						
7	the nature of work acceptable ( <i>regular full time-1, regular part-time-2, occasional full time-3, occasional part-time-4</i> )						
8	type of work acceptable (code)						
9	Do you have any skill/experience to undertake that work? (yes-1, no-2)						
10	What assistance do you require to undertake that work? (code)						
11	How much distance are you willing to travel for work (code)						
12	If work is provided to you outside home boundary, how much wage do you expect (Daily wage)						

**Item 5: Other productive work:** maintenance of kitchen gardens, orchards etc-1, work in household poultry, dairy, etc-2, free collection of fish, small game, wild fruits, vegetables, etc. for household consumption-3, free collection of fire-wood, cowdung, cattle feed etc. for household consumption-4, husking of paddy for household consumption-5, grinding of foodgrains for household consumption-6, making baskets and mats for household use-7, preparation of cowdung cake for use as fuel in the household-8, sewing, tailoring, weaving etc. for household use-9, tutoring of own children or others' children free of charge-10, bringing water from outside the household premises-11, other-specify

**Item 8: type of work acceptable:** dairy -1, poultry -2, other animal husbandry -3, spinning and weaving -4, manufacturing wood and cane products -5, tailoring -6, leather goods manufacturing -7, Casual labour including public works-8, others -9.

**Item 10: whether assistance required:** no assistance -1; yes: initial finance on easy terms -2, working finance facilities -3, easy availability of raw materials -4, assured market -5, training -6, accommodation -7, others -9.







3. Have you applied for Job Card: Yes-1, No-2  
/\_\_\_\_/

4. If yes, when: (specify date)

5. If not, why?  
/\_\_\_\_/

Not aware of NREGA-1, Not yet required-2, no job card-3, not satisfied with work offered-4, wage rate too low-5, any other-specify

6. Have you received the job card: Yes-1, No-2  
/\_\_\_\_/

7. If yes, when? (Specify date)

8. Did you face any difficulty in getting the Job card? Specify:

9. Are you aware of the various provisions of the Act? (Multiple answers possible)  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

100 days per household-1, minimum wages-2, provision of crèche, shade, water etc.-3, work within 5 Km-4, universal act and scheme-5, role of gram sabha-6

10. What do you think about the entitlement of 100 days of work per household? (multiple answers possible)  
/\_\_\_\_\_/  
Should be increased-1, should be decreased-2, is enough-3, should vary according to household size-4, should be applicable to each member-5, No upper limit-6

11. Is the programme useful and well designed? Yes-1, No-2

12. Who do you think will benefit the most out of this programme?  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Everybody-1, only casual labourers-2, women-3, panchayat members/pradhan-4, government officials-5, political parties-6, Contractors-7, Nobody-8

13. Did any member of the household apply for work under NREGA? Yes-1, No-2  
/\_\_\_\_/

**For only those who have applied for work under NREGA, (note down the serial number of member who applied for work)**  
/\_\_\_\_/

14. When did you apply for work under NREGA? (Specify date)

15. Have you received work under NREGA? (Yes-1, No-2)

16. If not, Why? (Specify)

17. Have you received any unemployment allowance if work was not given within 15 days? (Yes-1, No-2)

18. If Received unemployment allowance, amount received and for how many days:

19. If worked, what was the wage received?

20. Where was/is the worksite and type of work done? (Specify the place and approx. distance from village)

21. When and where was the wage paid? (Date and place e.g, gram sabha, worksite, Panchayat office, block office, at home etc)

22. Suggestions and Comments, If any:

**Remarks/Comments (investigator):**

**Block 9: Assets & Livestock**

**How many of the following items does the household possess?**

Item	Number	Item	Number	Item	Number	Item	Number
Mattress		Refrigerator		Sewing Machine		Radio/Transistor	
Pressure Cooker		Television (B/W)		Telephone		Almirah	
Chair		Television (Colour)		Tape Recorder		Bullock	
Cot/Bed		Scooter/Motorcycle		Mobile		Buffalo	
Table		Car/Jeep		Tractor		Cow	
Clock/Watch		Water Pump		Phone		Cock/Hen/Duck	
Electric Fan		Bullock cart		Computer		Pigs	
Bicycle		Thresher		Fodder Machine		Goats	

**Use the last row to add any durable item, if not in the list**



## WORKSITE QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATE:

NAME OF INVESTIGATOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_

BLOCK: \_\_\_\_\_

PANCHAYAT: \_\_\_\_\_

VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part 1: Discussion with labourers**

NOTE: This section should be filled on the basis of informal discussion with a group of labourers at the worksite. **Make sure women are well represented.** If at all possible, avoid the presence of any contractor, mate, etc. (but do talk to such individuals separately, later on). Try to avoid anyone dominating the discussion. If there are important differences of views/responses between different labourers, note details as far as possible.

#### **1. General questions**

\* Are you aware of the act/scheme (*kanoon/yojana*) under which this work has been started?

[1=most of the labourers know; 2=some know, some don't; 3=only a few know; 4=no one knows; 5=no clear answer]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

\* Have you got a job card?

[1=most of the labourers know; 2=some know, some don't; 3=only a few know; 4=no one knows; 5=no clear answer]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

\* How have you been selected to work at this worksite? Please describe in detail.  
**(Inform the labourers about the process of applying for work under NREGA, if they are not aware but only after noting their responses.)**

\* How many days after you applied for work did it take to get work?

min (no.of days)

/\_\_\_\_\_/

max (no.of days)

/\_\_\_\_\_/

**(Inform the labourers about the 15 day limit and about unemployment benefit they are not aware.)**

\* How far is the worksite from your home/village?

min (in kms)

/\_\_\_\_\_/

max (in kms)

/\_\_\_\_\_/

**(Inform the labourers about the 5 km. radius and transport allowances if they are not aware.)**

\* Did anyone tell any of you that only persons with BPL/APL cards would get work?

[1=Yes; 2=No; 3=No clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please note details

\* Have machines ever been used on this worksite?

[1=yes; 2=no; 3=no clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please describe in detail. **(Inform the labourers about the no-machine use at NREGA worksites)**

\* Are any children (persons below the age of 14 years) employed at this worksite?  
[1=yes; 2=no, 3= no clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please give details

\* If you were not employed on this NREGA project, what would you do for a living?  
[Investigators: The answer is bound to vary between different persons, please try to note the main answers in long-hand.]

\*Do you have to Migrate because you don't get work here?  
[1=most of the labourers do; 2=some do, some don't; 3=only a few do; 4=no one does; 5=no clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

\* How far do you have to go from your home/village to get work? (**Most would tell you names of places, note down the names put the distance later afterwards**)

min (in kms) / \_\_\_\_\_ /

max (in kms) / \_\_\_\_\_ /

\* How would you rate the usefulness of this project, assuming it is successfully completed?  
[1=very useful; 2=somewhat useful; 3=useless; 4=destructive; 5=no clear answer]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

Please explain.

\* **What project according to you would be useful for the village?**  
Please note in detail.

## 2. Wage-related issues

\* What does a casual agricultural labourer normally earn for a day's work at this time of the year, in this area?

Rs/day

/\_\_\_\_\_/

\* Are you aware of the wage rate you are supposed to be paid for this work, according to the official norms of the scheme?

[1 = All aware; 2= Most aware; 3 = Some aware; 4 = None aware; 5 = No clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

**Investigator: Please note below what this wage rate is, according to those who are “aware” of the official norms.]**

\* On what basis are wages being paid at this worksite (e.g. daily wages, piece rates, task wage)? Please give full details.

\* Have any wage payments been made already at this worksite?

/\_\_\_\_\_/

[1=Yes; 2=No]

**[Investigators: If yes, please note details in the Table A.1. Panel A. According to Labourers in the Appendix.]**

\* Have you ever been paid wages that are lower than the official norm(s)?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = no clear answer; 4 = not applicable (wages are yet to be paid)]

/\_\_\_\_\_/



Please explain in detail.

**( Field investigators please try and ask the women the following question first, also make an effort to get women to answer. Please explain to the men they will be asked next so as to prevent men from speaking on behalf of women.)**

\* Have women and men ever been paid different wages at this worksite, for the same amount of work?  
[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = no clear answer; 4 = not applicable (wages are yet to be paid)]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

If yes, please explain in detail.

\* What is the mode of payment?

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

[1 = cash only; 2 = kind only; 3 = cash and kind; 4 = no clear answer]

\* If “cash and kind”, what is the share of grain in the total wage?

[Investigator: Please note the approximate proportion (e.g. 25%) below, after further discussion.]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ % /

\* What is your view about the share of grain in the payment of wages?

[1=too much grain;2=more or less right; 3=too little grain; 4=no clear answer]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

Please explain in detail.

\* What is your view about the desirability of grain in the payment of wages?  
Please explain in detail.

\* What is your view about the quality of grain in the payment of wages?  
Please explain in detail.

\* Do any of you have any complaints of cheating in the payment of wages at this worksite?  
[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = no clear answer; 4 = not applicable (wages are yet to be paid)]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

If yes, please provide details

\* Do any of you have any of the following complaints in relation to the payment of wages?  
[Investigator: Please tick the applicable options in the list below.]

don't understand how wages are calculated  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

delays in wage payments  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

fraud in work measurement  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

difficulties in collecting grain payments (e.g. tedious trips to ration shop)  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

unhappy with the frequency of payment of wages  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Other (please specify)  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

### 3. Other questions

\* Have you observed any kind of corruption in the implementation of this project (e.g. false names in the muster roll, under payment of wages, bribes to engineer for measurement, discrimination in the allocation of work, use of material for the project, billing for material etc)?

[1 = yes, 2 = no, 3 = no clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain in detail.

\* Have any labourers at this worksite been victim of any sort of harassment (e.g. verbal abuse, physical violence, sexual harassment, humiliation)?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3= no clear answer]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain

\* Do you have any other complaints of any sort?

\* Which of the following facilities are available at the worksite?

Drinking water [1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Crèche [1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

First aid [1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Shade for children [1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

\*

**Investigators: Before concluding, please fill Tables A. 1, A.2 and A.3 in the Appendix below:**

## Appendix:

### A.1. Wages paid (last time wages were paid)

		Panel A: According to labourers				Panel B: According to Muster rolls, if you get it			
		Panel 1: WOMEN		Panel 2: MEN		Panel 3: WOMEN		Panel 4: MEN	
		Per Day	Per Muster roll	Per Day	Per Muster roll	Per Day	Per Muster roll	Per Day	Per Muster roll
Total wage	Rs.								
Cash and Kind	Rs.								
	Kg.								

**Note:** Please fill only one of the two columns (“Per day” or “Per muster roll”, as applicable) in each of the four panels.

**If wages paid varied from person to person, and/or according to the amount of work performed, please note details in the space below, as accurately as possible.**

**A.2. Number of labourers employed**

	Total number of labourers employed at this worksite		Number actually present on the day of the survey	
	As per muster rolls (if available)	According to the labourers	As per muster rolls (if available)	As per direct observation
Men				
Women				
Children				
Total				

**A.3. Approximate number of labourers with different types of ration card**

APL  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

BPL  
/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

Antyodaya  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Annapoorna  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

No card  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Can't say  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

Total

/\_\_\_\_\_/

[Investigator: Please make sure that the “total” matches the last entry in Table A.1.]



**Questionnaire for local officials / gram sabha /panchayat /Block Office etc.**

QUESTIONNAIRE ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATE:

NAME OF INVESTIGATOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF RESPONDANT(S): \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_

BLOCK: \_\_\_\_\_

PANCHAYAT: \_\_\_\_\_

VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Part I Gram Sabha-related:**

[Reminder: Complete this section only if the project falls within the jurisdiction of a well-identified Panchayat.]

1. When was the last Gram Sabha convened in this panchayat? \_\_\_\_\_ months ago

2. Did any of the labourers participate in the Gram Sabha? /\_\_\_\_\_/

[1=yes, 2=no, 3=unable to tell]

If not, why not?

3. Did the Gram Sabha play any role in the selection of the project? /\_\_\_\_\_/

[1=yes, 2=no, 3=unable to tell]

If yes, please describe.

If no, why not?

4. Did the Gram Sabha play any role in verifying applications for the project? /\_\_\_\_\_/

[1=yes, 2=no, 3=unable to tell]

If yes, please describe.

If no, why not?

5. Did the Gram Sabha conduct any Social Audits?  
[1=yes, 2=no, 3=unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please describe.

If no, why not?

5. How was the Gram Sabha formed ?  
Note details.

6. Was a Nigrani committee formed? Is the Nigrani committee active/inactive?

7. Has any report been given by Nigrani committee to the Gram Sabha?

## **Part II Questionnaire for Nigrani Committee**

### **Nigrani Committee (NC)**

[Investigator: Please make sure to meet at least one (preferably two) member(s) of the NC before filling this section, and to discuss the work of the NC with independent observers also. If the NC has not been formed, just answer the first question and skip the rest.]



1. Has a Nigrani Committee been formed for NREGA worksites?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please give a brief description of the composition of the Committee.

2. Does the Committee include at least one woman?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

3. Does the Committee include at least 1 SC/ST member?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

4. How was the Committee formed? Please explain carefully.

5. Was the Gram Sabha involved in the formation of the Committee?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

6. Were you able to meet any member of the Committee?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If not, why not?

7. In your perception, is the Committee “active” or “inactive”?

[1 = active; 2 = inactive]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

Please explain.

8. Has the Committee done any of the following in relation to this NREGA project?

(a) holding a meeting [1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

(b) inspecting the worksite [1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

(c) inspecting the muster rolls [1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

(d) writing a report [1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

(e) issuing a certificate [1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

9. Did you find evidence of any other problems with the Nigrani Committee (e.g., corruption, infighting, nepotism, apathy, incompetence, ignorance, low motivation)?

[1=yes, 2=no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain.

10. What is your overall impression of the effectiveness of the Nigrani Committee as a watchdog for this worksite?

[1=very good; 2=good; 3=indifferent; 4=poor; 5=very poor; 6=unable to tell] /\_\_\_\_\_/

---



**Questionnaire for local officials / panchayat /Block Office etc.**

QUESTIONNAIRE ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATE:

NAME OF INVESTIGATOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF RESPONDANT(S): \_\_\_\_\_

POST OF RESPONDANT(S): \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_

BLOCK: \_\_\_\_\_

PANCHAYAT: \_\_\_\_\_

VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part I Gram Panchayat (GP)related:**

\* How many people have applied for work in this Gram Panchayat under REGS?

\* What kinds of problems does the panchayat face in registering households under REGS?

\* What kinds of problems does the panchayat face in issuing job cards under REGS?

\* What kinds of problems does the panchayat face in allocating work under REGS?

\* How does the panchayat maintain records of people who have applied for work under REGS?

\* What kinds of problems does the panchayat face in terms of funds reaching on time?

\* What kinds of problems does the panchayat face in making wage payments on time?

\* Does the panchayat have a separate bank account for REGS works?

\* Was the panchayat involved in drawing up the list of works under previous schemes and REGS?

\*Is there an employment guarantee assistant or 'Gram Rozgar Sevak' in your panchayat?

\*List of 'Panchayat works'

\*What steps is the GP taking to publicize the relevant information? What problems are being faced in this regard?

QUESTIONNAIRE ID: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DATE:

NAME OF INVESTIGATOR(S): \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF RESPONDANT(S): \_\_\_\_\_

POST OF RESPONDANT(S): \_\_\_\_\_

DISTRICT: \_\_\_\_\_

BLOCK: \_\_\_\_\_

PANCHAYAT: \_\_\_\_\_

VILLAGE: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part II Data from Block Office**

\*What is the process of selection and estimation of projects?

\*What problems are being faced in selection and estimation of projects?

\*What kind of support do you need for implementing NREGA?

\*Is there any provision of a Grievance Redressal Mechanism?

[Investigators: Please fill this table at the Block Office after completing your visits to the worksites.]

Name and location of the worksite (incl. village and Panchayat)			
Implementing agency (e.g. Gram Panchayat, Forest Department)			
Brief description of the work			
Starting date			
Budget	2005-6*	2006-7	Total

TOTAL ALLOCATION			
Wages			
Material			
TOTAL RELEASED (to implementing agency)			
Wages			
Material			
TOTAL UTILIZATION			
Wages			
Material			

\*2005-6: The worksites would be under National Food for Work Program (NFFWP) in 2005 which may have now become NREGA worksites.

### **Part to be filled by Field Investigators**

Fill this part of the questionnaire after you have conducted investigations by speaking to various officials and other persons concerned: the “mate”, the sarpanch, the gram sewak, members of the nigrani committee, and any other persons who may have the required information. Whenever possible, you should “cross-check” the information from different respondents.

This part of the questionnaire is addressed to you, the investigators. While conducting your investigations, please record the information you receive from different sources on a “spare” copy of the questionnaire. At the end of the day, you can fill in a “fair” copy of the questionnaire. **You will have to fill this section as a team after meeting the relevant local officials and the labourers. This should reflect your team’s view on the actual situation.**



Finally, do take a camera along if you can and take photographs that you think might be useful in establishing violations of the NREGA guidelines (e.g. the use of machines on the worksites).

## Part 2: Personal Observations of the Survey Team

[**Reminder:** This should be completed in two stages. First, rough notes should be taken on a “spare” copy of the questionnaire in the process of making the relevant enquiries, at the worksite and elsewhere. Second, a “fair copy” should be prepared using these notes as well as mutual consultation within the team.]

### 2.1. General questions

1. How many days have passed since this worksite opened?

starting date

/\_\_\_\_\_/

number of days

/\_\_\_\_\_/

2. Have job cards been issued to labourers at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

3a. Are the official muster rolls available at the worksite?

/\_\_\_\_\_/

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

3b. If yes, please note the muster roll number(s), if available:

\_\_\_\_\_

3c. If no, please describe the efforts you have made to obtain the MRs, and whether/where you found them.

[1 = available within the Panchayat; 2 = available locally but not within the Panchayat; 3 = available at government offices (explain); 4 = available elsewhere (explain); 5 = not available at all; 6=not applicable (MR available at worksite)]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

4. How have the labourers employed on this worksite been selected? Please describe in detail.

5. Has the possession of a BPL card been used as a selection criterion?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

6. Is this Panchayat located in a "Schedule 5" area (covered under "PESA")?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

7. What type of implementing agency is in charge of this worksite?

[1=Line departments; 2=Gram Panchayat; 3=Panchayat Samiti; 4=Zilla Parishad; 5=NGO; 6=Self-Help Group; 7=Private Contractor; 8=Other (specify); 9=Unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_  
/

## 2.2. Wage-related issues

1. What does a casual agricultural labourer normally earn for a day's work at this time of the year, in this area?

Rs/day

/\_\_\_\_\_/

2. What is the wage rate paid to NREGA labourers, according to the official norms of the programme?

Rs/day

/\_\_\_\_\_  
/

4. What is the wage rate that has been "promised" to labourers employed at this worksite?

Rs/day

/\_\_\_\_\_/

5. On what basis are wages being paid at this worksite (e.g. daily wages, piece rates, task wage)? Please give full details.

6. Have any wage payments been made already at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

7. What is the mode of payment?

[1 = cash only; 2 = kind only; 3 = cash and kind]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

8. Is the cash component at least 25% of the wage?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell; 4 = not applicable]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

9. Is the kind component at least 5 kg of grain per day?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = unable to tell; 4 = not applicable]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

10. Did you find any evidence of wages paid being lower than:

(1) the official norm?

[1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

(2) what had been promised to the labourers?

[1=yes; 2=no; 3=unable to tell]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain in detail.

11. Did you find any evidence of delay in payment of wages at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no; 3 = not applicable (too early)]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain.

12. Did you find any evidence, or hear any complaints, of cheating in the payment of wages at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

If yes, please explain.

13. Did you find any evidence of different wages being paid to men and women at this worksite, for the same amount of work?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

If yes, please explain in detail.

14. Did you find any evidence, or hear any complaints, of other irregularities relating to the payment of wages at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

If yes, please give details (e.g. lack of awareness of how wages are calculated, fraud in weighing of grain, tedious visits to ration shop, delays in wage payments etc.).

### **2.3. Other problems, complaints and irregularities**

1. Did you notice any evidence of environmental damage being caused at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /

If yes, please describe in detail.

2. Did you find any evidence, or hear any complaints, of corruption (or cheating) related to this NREGA project?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please describe in detail.

3. Did you find any evidence, or hear any complaints, of harassment of labourers on this worksite?  
[1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain.

#### **2.4. Conformity to guidelines**

1. Did you find any evidence of machines being used (or having been used in the past) on this worksite?  
[1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please explain in detail.

2. Did you find any evidence of a “contractor” being used to implement this project?  
[1 = yes; 2 = no]  
/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please give details.

3. Did you find any evidence of children (persons below the age of 14 years) being employed at this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please give details

4. Did you notice any other violation of the NREGA guidelines on this worksite?

[1 = yes; 2 = no]

/\_\_\_\_\_/

If yes, please give details.

## **2.5. Productive aspects**

1. Please give a brief description of the nature of the project (e.g. construction of checkdam, construction of approach road, excavation of pond).

2. Explain briefly how this project is expected to be “productive”, in the broad sense of contributing to the increase of production, the creation of assets, the preservation of the environment, the improvement of the quality of life, or related social objectives.

3. How would you rate the usefulness of this project, assuming it is successfully completed? [1=very useful; 2=somewhat useful; 3=useless; 4=destructive; 5 = unable to tell]

/ \_\_\_\_\_ /  
Please explain.

---