

**Tour Report of the visit to District Ramgarh (Jharkhand) of
Shri S.K. Singh, Director (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA) as Area Officer
from 20th to 23rd April, 2010**

The State of Jharkhand was visited to review the status of implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. In the district Ramgarh, on the basis of performance, villages Gola and Patratu block were selected for visit and intensive interaction with the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA beneficiaries was ensured. After it, a discussion was held with district level officers and BDOs of all the blocks within the district. Interacted with Executive Engineer in charge of PMGSY scheme in Ramgarh was undertaken to review the implementation of PMGSY and convergence issues of PMGSY with Mahatma Gandhi NREGS in the field.

A. INTRODUCTION

Jharkhand was created in the year 2000 from the erstwhile State of Bihar. As per census 2001, the population of Jharkhand is 2.18 crore out which 28% is STs population while 12% is the SCs population. It is a poor state with per capita income of Rs. 4,161 per annum. The density of population is 274 person per sq. km. The total number of districts are 24 which is under the coverage of NREGA:

Phase-I	20 districts
Phase-II	02 districts
Phase-III	02 districts

The total geographical area is 79.70 lakh hq. while cultivable land is 38 lakh hq. and only 8% of the total sown area is under irrigation with the productivity of the land is low.

Significant part of population is poor farmer practicing subsistence agriculture using traditional technology and family labour. Use of modern inputs

like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, machinery is not very frequently used especially in case of SCs/STs farmers.

B. During the visit, the main emphasis was put on:

- (1) The assessment of compliance on timely payment of wages to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
- (2) Selection of works in the shelf of works and completion of the same.
- (3) Initiative towards convergence with other schemes of Department of Rural Development.
- (4) Any innovative initiative taken up at the field level

C. RAMGARH DISTRICT

The district was carved out of erstwhile district of Hazaribagh on 12th September 2007. Ramgarh district has four Block's namely Ramgarh, Gola, Mandu and Patratu. The district headquarter is at Ramgarh town. The total area of Ramgarh district is 1360.08 Sq.Km, out of which 487.93 Sq.Km is forest area. It has a population of 8,39,482. Comprising of male: 4.43 lakh, female: 3.95 lakh including SCs: 93073, STs: 170387.

Status of Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREG Scheme

1. Employment provided to households:

In 2009-10, the total number of households provided employment is 68,888 as against 73,069 households registered under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The district average for the number of days of employment provided to a household comes to 22.41 days which is less than 49 days which is State average.

2. Total Job Cards issued in Ramgarh district were 73,069 out of which Share of SCs and STs are 14,160 and 23,493 respectively in the financial year 2009-10.

3. **Utilization of funds:** In 2009-10, Total availability of funds with the district was Rs. 38.64 crore out of which only Rs. 28.61 crore was utilized in the financial year 2009-10. It included an opening balance of Rs. 16.92 crore which is 44% of the total available fund.

4. **Works:** Total 1,583 works were undertaken in the financial year 2009-10 out of which 540 works were completed which is 34% of the total works. It is substantially less than the completion rate of works in the State i.e. 47%.

5. **Bank Accounts/Post Office accounts management:** There are 37 banks, one head post office, 16 sub-head post offices and 61 gramian post offices in Ramgarh district. There are 67,920 accounts with banks and post offices of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers for payment of wages. It is reported that Rs. 14.82_crore has been disbursed as unskilled wages through these accounts.

D. GOLA BLOCK

Status

As reported by the BDO, the number of households which have been issued with job cards is 17,654 which is less than the number of B.P.L families (as reported on the official website of district Ramgarh) i.e. 18145 and the households provided with employment was 10,055 which is 57% of the registered households and 54% of the total BPL families. The number of B.P.L. Card holders in Gola is 9090. The number of Indira Gandhi Old age Pensioner is 3921. Cultivable land in the block is 40197.57 Acre and only 5201.57 acre is irrigated land, thus giving lot of scope for work under water conservation/irrigation facility on individual lands. In fact, 50% of the work accounts for the works under Schedule I (4) of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. In current financial year, construction of ponds has been taken in big way in the block.

The Mahatma Gandhi NREGA work sites for creation of ponds of different dimensions were visited in the Gram Panchayat Huppu, Upar Barga, Sadam, Chandi and Nawadih and the payment details as per Muster Roll payment advice by Block Development Officer to concerned post office and measurement books were examined to understand the time taken in payment of wages to workers.

Status in individual Gram Panchayat

(a) Chandi

Construction of pond on the land of Shri Bisheshwar Bedia in the village Jovia which has been allotted work No. 7/2009-10. The work started on 10th February, 2010 and corresponding muster rolls from 56007 to 56015 for the period 10th February to 22nd February, 2010 was utilized for registering the details of workers, the attendance of workers and payment details.

The advice for payment of Rs. 53,508/- was prepared on 24th February, 2010 and the same was received by the Branch Post Master on 25th February, 2010.

Another advice for payment of Rs. 48,756/- was made on 18th March, 2010 which was received by the Branch Post Master on 22nd March, 2010.

In both the cases, the payments were received by the workers within a span of a week on different days from the Post Office. The measurement book was not properly filled. There was discrepancy in filling up the Muster Roll as it shows the first measurement date as 23rd March/23rd February, 2010 and second measurement date as 15th March, 2010 by the Junior Engineer concerned.

It is further observed that the 1st set of muster roll was finalized on 15th February, 2010 while the payment was made around 3rd March, 2010. Though it is a marked improvement from earlier cycle of payment to the Mahatma Gandhi

NREGA workers, still it is to be brought down to the outer limit of 14 days of payment schedule.

The Muster Rolls show that there is duplicate muster roll for the 56011. One set is having 5 persons and another set is having 10 persons. Both signed by Shri Ramji Vedia and rest of the officials concerned in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.

(b) Nawadih

Construction of pond on the land of Shri Sham Sunder Munda in the village Sargadi which has been allotted work No. 2/2009-10. The work started on 13th January, 2010 and corresponding muster rolls from 53716 to 53718 for the period of 13th January to 18th January, 2010, 53719 to 53720 for the period of 20th January to 25th January, 2010, 53780 to 53782 for the period 12th February to 17th February, 2010 and 53783 to 53785 for the period of 19th February to 24th February, 2010 were utilized for registering the details of workers, the attendance of workers and payment details.

The advice for payment of Rs. 17,820/- was prepared on 25th January, 2010 and the same was received by the Branch Post Master on 28th January, 2010.

Another advice for payment of Rs. 29,798/- was made on 24th February, 2010 which was received by the Branch Post Master on 3rd March, 2010.

In both the cases, the payments were received by the workers within a span of two weeks from receipt of the advice for payment on different days from the Post Office.

The measurement book was not filled properly. The first measurement was done on 2nd April, 2010 for a corresponding wage payment of Rs. 63,249/- which is more than the wage due from the muster rolls available on record.

(c) Sadam

Construction of pond in front of Birhor Colony in the village of Masridhi which has been allotted work No. 3/2009-10. The work started on 31st January, 2010 and corresponding muster rolls No.15401, 15403, 15405 & 15407 (issued in the month of June, 2008) for the period 31st January to 5th February, 2010, muster rolls No. 15402, 15404, 15406, 15408, 15409 to 15412 (issued in the month of June, 2008) for the period of 7th February to 12th February, 2010 and muster rolls No.15413 to 15415 (issued in the month of June, 2008) for the period of 14th February to 19th February, 2010 was utilized for registering the details of workers, the attendance of workers and payment details. It appears that the work was approved in the year 2008-09 and was taken up in the year 2009-10.

The advice for payment of Rs. 12,177/- was prepared on 23rd February, 2010 and the same was received by the Branch Post Master on 24th February, 2010.

Examination of Measurement Book reveals that the first measurement was made on 30th January, 2010 for a wage payment of Rs. 41,190/-. The details in measurement book do not correspond to the advice for payment made on 23rd February, 2010. The records provided at the Gola Block do not have any muster roll prior to 31st January, 2010. It is difficult to understand the gap between measurement book and wage arising out of muster roll which is Rs. 18,379/- for the period of 31st January, 2010 to 5th February, 2010. The record keeping is shockingly poor and the advice for payment of wages to post office issued on 9th April, 2010 does not have details of muster rolls and the relevant muster rolls were also not available readily.

(d) Happu

Construction of pond on the public land in the village Purana Sirka which has been allotted work No. 6/2009-10. The work started on 17th January, 2010 and corresponding muster rolls from 55201 to 55204 for the period 17th January

to 22nd January, 2010 for generation of 211 mandays, muster rolls 55205 to 55206 for the period from 24th January to 29th January, 2010, muster rolls 55218 to 55223 for the period of 10th February to 15th February, 2010, muster rolls 55224 to 55229 for the period of 17th February to 22nd February, muster rolls 26488 to 26493 for the period of 24th February to 29th February, 2010 and muster rolls 26494 to 26499 for the period of 30th February to 4th March, 2010 were utilized for registering the details of workers, the attendance of workers and payment details.

The advice for payment of Rs. 29,304/- was prepared on 30th January, 2010 as first measurement was done on 28th January, 2010 as per the measurement book and the same was received by the Branch Post Master on 8th February, 2010. It implies that the payment advice was made beyond the statutory limit of 14 days for payment of wages to the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers. The number of days taken by the Post Office to reimburse the wages was around a week.

Another advice for payment of Rs. 60,093/- was made on 24th February, 2010 which was received by the Branch Post Master on 6th March, 2010. This payment covers the period from 24th to 29th January, 2010; it implies that the payment advice was made almost after a month which is against the statutory provision for disbursement of wages within a fortnight after the date on such work was done.

In all subsequent payments, the time limit of fortnight was not adhered to.

In all these cases, the provisions of Para 30 of Schedule II is attracted which entitles the labourers to receive payment of compensation as per the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act, 1936.

In these cases, either the payment advice does not have the correct detail of muster roll or there is no reference to the number of muster roll.

E. PATRATU BLOCK

Status

The number of households which have been issued with job cards is 18,410 which is almost equal to the number of B.P.L families (as reported on the official website of district Ramgarh) i.e. 18117 and the households provided with employment was 6,046 which is 32% of the registered households. The number of B.P.L. Card holders in Patratu is 3,289. The number of Indira Gandhi Old age Pensioner is 2530. Cultivable land in the block is 11737 acre and only 1062 acre is irrigated land, thus giving lot of scope for work under water conservation/irrigation facility on individual lands. In fact, 50% of the work accounts for the works under Schedule I (4) of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. In current financial year, construction of ponds has been taken in big way in the block.

The Mahatma Gandhi NREGA work sites for creation of ponds of different dimensions were visited in the Gram Panchayat of Talatand and the payment details as per Muster Roll payment advice by Block Development Officer to concerned post office and measurement books were examined to understand the time taken in payment of wages to workers.

(a) Talatand

Construction of pond in front of house of Shri Badhan Gamu in the village Tirilbeda which has been allotted work No. 2/2009-10. The work started on 14th February, 2010 and corresponding muster roll no. 64505 for the period 14th February to 19th February, 2010, muster roll no. 64520 to 64521 for the period 22nd February to 27th February, 2010, muster roll nos. 64532, 64533 & 64546 for the period 17th March to 22nd March, 2010 were utilized for registering the details of workers, the attendance of workers and payment details.

The advice for payment of Rs. 6,237/- was prepared on 6th March, 2010 and the same was received by the Branch Post Master on 6th March, 2010.

Another advice for payment of Rs. 15,642/- was made on 6th March, 2010 which was received by the Branch Post Master on 20th March, 2010.

Another advice for payment of Rs. 21,087/- was made on 24th March, 2010 which was received by the Branch Post Master on 10th April, 2010.

In all the cases, the payments were received by the workers after one month as the advices were prepared late and accordingly the Post Office made late payments.

F. Findings / Observations

- i. The record keeping at the Block level was found to be extremely poor and with a lot of efforts the records could be retrieved which were generally not complete.
- ii. The data entry in the MIS was found lacking and when compared with the data reported in MPR and MIS, it was found that both the data were always at variance. For example, the number of households provided in MIS was reported to be 7,351 while MPR reported 10,055.
- iii. The average employment generated was 17.4 days per family which is less than the average of the district as well as the State. It implies that either the demand is not captured fully or somehow there is less demand for MGNREGA works due to other opportunity for employment which is not likely to be there.
- iv. The data shows that there are 8,648 families which are registered under the MGNREGA but are not issued with the Job Cards.
- v. During the visit it was found that most of the job cards which were in use at the work sites were not having photographs of the members of the family.

- vi. Examination of muster rolls and its MIS entry revealed that there are many additional names figuring in the original muster roll while the same were missing in MIS entries.
- vii. There was a case where same number of muster roll was used twice with entries of different names.
- viii. There were cases where same name figures in the original muster roll as well as in the MIS entry but with different job card numbers.
- ix. There are instances where not a single entry matched between the original muster roll and the entries made in MIS.
- x. There are instances where the original muster roll belonging to same day has not been entered in MIS.
- xi. There are instances of use of muster roll issued in June, 2008 being utilized in February, 2010.

These are glaring discrepancies (a list is enclosed) in use of muster rolls and the details filled in the muster rolls. It needs to be properly investigated because the Block Gola, it was a rule rather than exception.

xii. It was found that the shelf of works have construction of ponds in abundance throughout the Ramgarh District. It is reported that the gram panchayats have approved it for irrigation purposes and to ensure that wage material ratio remains in the range of 60:40. However, it appears while selecting sites for construction of ponds the technical expertise and wisdom of the village community has not been taken into consideration as 50% of such sites are not likely to result in collection of water. The technical input, with regard to working out the run of available for storage with respect to catchments of pond and rainfall of the area, required topographical survey of storage area, hydrological and proper structural design were found missing. Photographs of few sites are attached.

xiii. Though the delay in payment of wages to Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has a tremendous improvement over previous financial years yet, there is scope to reduce it further. It was very encouraging to find that 100% payment of wages is being done through individual accounts of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA beneficiaries. It was informed that the state government kept a rolling fund with the post offices to ensure that payments are made to Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers within three working days of receipt of payment advice.

xiv. Though the deployment of Junior Engineer and Technical Assistants has been augmented. There is need to sensitize JE/ TA about statutory provisions of payment of wages in time. Lately, the district has started making payment of wages on the basis of muster roll and subsequent measurement of the work to regularize it. Though, it has reduced the delay in payment but in light of discrepancies pointed out in the muster rolls and its MIS entries, the JE and TA must take pro-active approach in measurement of outturn of work.

xv. It is reported that social audit has been conducted in all 143 gram panchayats and 90%v of the works have been inspected at block level the findings do not back these claims.

xvi. The Deputy Commissioner has taken initiative to introduce concept of integrated farming with emphasis on convergence of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA with the programmes of other ministries. Mandu block has been chosen to pilot such initiative.

xvii. At work site it was found that an overcoat of grey colour is provided to the mate and overcoat of maroon colour is provided to gram rozgar sahayak. In LWE affected areas there are chances of easy identification by the miscreants as well as it will put a substantial cost under the administrative head.

xviii. At the work site the basic medical kit was found along with drinking water facility.

G. Convergence with PMGSY

The issue of convergence of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA with PMGSY was discussed with Executive Engineer. During the discussion a few points emerged if they are taken care of the all weather roads taken up under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA can be utilized under PMGSY.

Regarding Site Selection

Under PMGSY a core network is prepared connecting 1000+ habitations and 500+ habitations with all weather roads. Those routes which have not been identified in core network could not be selected under PMGSY. Under MGNREGA route the route of the all weather road is selected by gram panchayat etc.

These routes under PMGSY are categorized into Through Routes & link Routes depending upon the length and number of commercial vehicles calculated. For designing pavement thickness traffic is projected for 6 years and this projected traffic volume taken for flexible pavement design. A detailed survey is conducted for evaluation of CBR strength of the soil in every KM of road length. For four days soaked samples of having lowest VBR is selected for road pavement thickness. Depending upon the lowest CBR value and projected traffic volume of six years a suitable pavement thickness is selected.

Preparation of DPR

Under PMGSY road works, a pavement thickness is calculated on two parameters viz. CBR value of borrow area soil and total traffic volume count. A detailed survey is conducted and after that a formation level is fixed keeping longitudinal gradients in the prescribed limits. Thus quantity of earthwork is calculated accordingly as per the need of local sites.

Whereas in NREGA works, height of 2 ft. to 2.5 ft is generally adopted for calculating the quantity of earthwork involved in pavement construction.

Award of Work

For PMGSY works tenders are invited where only Class IA category contractors only can participate in the tendering process. The work is awarded to the technically eligible bidder with lowest price.

Thus in PMGSY only those contractors are awarded the work who have sufficient machinery for earth cutting, road rollers, vibrating rollers for compaction of laid earthwork and allied works.

Under MGNREGA the work is carried by the local Labhuk Samiti (Beneficiary) whose president and secretary are elected by the local Gram Sabha only. Such elected persons do not possess their own rollers which very important for compacting different pavement layers such as earthwork, GSB layers and WBM Grade –I layer etc.

Execution of Road Work

The first item in road work is earthwork. Laying of earth and compacting it by road rollers in 23.5 cm thick layer under controlled optimum moisture content and achieving maximum dry density is done by vibratory rollers. Actually borrow soil contains some moisture when it is brought and laid on the road after that water is sprinkled on such earth to make moisture content at OMC level. At this moisture content compactive effort by vibratory roller is applied and maximum dry density is obtained. Such prepared compacted earth layer is now fit for receiving GSB layer and other layers too.

But in NREGA schemes earth work, which is to compacted by static road rollers under uncontrolled moisture content i.e. not at OMC. Thus required maximum dry density is not achieved and the compacted earth layers.

Geometric Standards

Geometric standards are strictly followed while executing the PMGSY works such as setting out of horizontal curves, super elevation, camber, vertical, valley and summit curves.

But in MGNREGA schemes no such provisions are made. It would be useful if we follow some standards layouts o geometric designs in NREGA schemes, so that it could be converted under PMGSY/ State Sponsored roads.

Carriage width prescribed under PMGSY scheme is 3.7 m and formation width 7.50 m, so wherever possible, under MGNREGA scheme above specification should be followed except in built-up areas where 7.50 m formation width might not be available.

Points which are required to be inducted under MGNREGA so that these schemes could be taken up under PMGSY

- i. Selection of schemes should be such selected so that they fall under sanctioned core network routes.
- ii. Moisture meter should be kept at each site and moisture should be controlled during compaction of earthwork. Incharge JE and AE should record moisture content and instruct the mate or site incharge about the required water quantity for 100 ft of road length by tanker. By doing so proper compaction and maximum dry density would be achieved.
- iii. Proper camber to drain off rain water from road surface and proper super elevation to counter centrifugal action should be provided in earthwork itself which is very important about camber and super elevation to be laid.
- iv. The case of stone aggregates, in Jharkhand State, good quantity of stone metals are available which have sufficient strength, hardness, impact value etc. but at site generally over sized materials are dumped and used. It is essential that gradation test should be conducted at site and concerned JE and AE should instruct the site incharge such as mate that SM Grade-I (90-45 mm) and SM Gr-II (53-45 mm) should be used and its records should be maintained.

- v. While preparing DPRs of MGNREGA schemes 3.75 m carriage way width 7.50 m formation width and earthwork of required quantity according to site need should be provided where land is available.
- vi. At Block level, at every 4 panchayats, at least one static road roller should be purchased and kept for rolling earthwork etc.

These measures MGNREGA roads can be easily upgraded to the level of PMGSY Roads.

H. Local innovation

At one of the work site it was found that the earth coming out on excavation was used for making of kuchha brick. It was reported that these are being sold locally and the benefit accruing out of it is shared among the workers.