

**Tour Report of Shri Satyendra Kumar Singh,
Director, Mahatma Gandhi NREGA
Ministry of Rural Development
Government of India**

To

Ajmer (Rajasthan)

Tour Report of Shri Satyendra Kumar Singh, Director, (MGNREGA) to Ajmer (Rajasthan)

Period of Visit	19.06.10 to 20.06.10
Village/Gram Panchayat/Block Visited:	Kadel, Kadel, Pisagan Jatia, Data, Srinagar
No of Pages in the Report:	10 (Ten)

Preliminary

- 1** The undersigned accompanied Secretary (RD) during his visit to Ajmer (Rajasthan) to oversee the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGS. During the visit work sites in the Villages Kadel and Jatia were randomly selected without prior information to the officials accompanying Secretary (RD).
- 2** The District Officials directed the Executive Engineer Shri Sharad Gemavat to accompany and extend all possible cooperation to the undersigned during the visit. The interaction with the representatives of Sarpanch, mates, officials and MGNREGA workers were of immense help knowing the finer aspects of implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA at the ground level..
- 3 A general profile of District Ajmer**

Total population: 21,81,670.out of it 13,06,994 is **rural population** and **BPL** is 2,91,041

Job Cards issued: 3,58,635 households

Employment Provided to Households

2008-09	2,66,836
2009-10	2,68,716
2010-11 (upto 31 st May)	2,22,332

Households completed 100 days of employment

2008-09	1,65,413
2009-10	1,50,245
2010-11 (upto 31 st May)	Nil

Expenditure under MGNREGS

2008-09	Rs. 336.22 crore
2009-10	Rs. 328.60 crore
2010-11 (upto 31 st May)	Rs. 0.79.70 crore

Number of ongoing works at the end of Month May:

2008-09	2,497 employing 2,08,391 job card holders.
2009-10	2,238 employing 2,15,905 job card holders.
2010-11	2,287 employing 2,14,537 job card holders.

Person days generated

2008-09	2.49 crore
2009-10	2.67 crore
2010-11 (upto 31 st May)	0.85 crore

4 Visit to Worksites

1. Construction site of Check Dam in the Village: Jatia, Gram Panchayat: Data, Block: Srinagar

The work had started on 18th May, 2010. The Sarpanch of the village is Smt. Indira Devi. Gram Rozgar Sahayak was Sh. Jagdish Gujjar.

There were two mates on the worksite. One of them, namely, Shri Biram Singh, Ex-Army Service Core personnel was interacted with. It was found that he was generally aware of the basic entitlements of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers and was aware of the way measurement can be made. On the worksite, a ready reckoner for measurement of work was also found which was quite informative. There were around 100 workers working at the site. 90% of them were women.

Worksite Management and Muster rolls: At work site, two mates were deployed who were maintaining muster rolls. On examination of muster roll viz-a-viz the workers working at the work site, it was found that the names figuring in the muster rolls were actually working at the site also. Another positive was that all the workers were having their job cards at the site and the job cards were hard bound and having hologram on the job card to protect against the issuance of duplicate job cards.

Choice of works: The selection of the worksite appeared to be proper but it was also reported that there have been very poor rainfall in that area which is 330 mm only. It is expected that an average rainfall of 540 mm will help in recharging of the nearby wells. It will help in rain fed agriculture.

Facility at Work Site: A small tent with drinking water facility was there. It was informed that proper tents are available but the Gram Rozgar Sahayak is not able to carry to worksite due to its weight and transportation of it will need vehicle.

Payment of Wages: A few workers, namely Kamla Bai, Bandi Devi and Shri Mira Gyan Singh were interacted with. They reported that there is delay in payment of wages for a month. They expressed that the payment should be made timely. Cross checking with the pass books of Bandi Devi (No. 61080076640) and Sh. Mira Gyan Singh (61044753641) revealed that there was delay in payment of wages but it also revealed that she was in receipt of

the wage corresponding to the number of days of employment provided to her.

On the issue of delayed payment, it was reported that for 275 Gram Panchayats only 20 Junior Technical Assistants are available and they visit worksite for measurement once in a 15 days which leads into delay of payment.

There was strong feeling that the number of days for employment should be increased from 100 to 200.

2. Construction of Earthen Dam in Gram Panchayat: Dilwara, Block: Srinagar

The Sarpanch of the village is Smt. Mangi Devi Gujjar.

There were two mates on the worksite, namely, Shri Ashok Prajapati who has studied till B.A (Final) and Ms. Pinki who studied up to VIIIth standard. It was found that Shri Prajapati was generally aware of the basic entitlements of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers and was also aware of the way measurement can be made. Ms. Pinki required some training on these counts. On the worksite, a ready reckoner for measurement of work was also found which was quite informative. There were around 75 workers working at the site in the form of gang of 4/5 persons. Most of them were women.

Worksite Management and Muster rolls: At work site, two mates were deployed who were maintaining muster rolls. On examination of muster roll viz-a-viz the workers working at the work site, it was found that the names figuring in the muster rolls were actually working at the site also. The job cards were having hologram on the first page of the card to protect against the issuance of duplicate job cards.

Choice of works: The selection of the worksite appeared to be proper and likely to recharge nearby dug wells but it was also reported that there have been very poor rainfall in that area which is 330 mm only. It is expected that an average rainfall of 540 mm will help in recharging of the nearby dug wells.

Facility at Work Site: A small tent with drinking water facility was there. It was informed that proper tents are available but the Gram Rozgar Sahayak is not able to carry to worksite due to its weight and transportation of it will need vehicle.

Payment of Wages: A few workers, namely Smt. Sita Phula, who is working since the last four weeks but has not received her wages was interacted with. Her account is with cooperative bank where the number of staff is limited. She expressed that timely payment of wages will help her immensely.

On the issue of delayed payment, it was reported that due to fewer number of technical assistants, the measurement is done once in a 15 days which had led into delay of payment. The State Government is in process to put more technical assistants in place and also contemplating concept of Daksh Mate.

There also was strong feeling that the number of days for employment should be increased from 100 to 200.

3. Construction of Charagah Ndi Khudai, Aaw and Waste wier Nirman, Rewat Gram Panchayat: Kedal, Block: Pisangan

The Sarpanch of the village is Smt. Sanpat Kanvar who is B.Com pass.

The work has already been completed. It started on 1st April, 2008 and was finished by 15th July, 2008. The sanctioned amount was Rs. 10.64 lakh out of which Rs. 10.42 lakh was spent. It consists of Rs. 4.03 lakh on material component and Rs. 6.38 lakh on wage component. 6,585 persondays were generated.

This structure will address the problem of arid climate and topography with a catchment area of 152 hectre and has capacity of 1.06 million cubic feet. It will benefit in recharging of 104 dug well approx. which are situated downstream of the structure. In case of average rain fall, it will cater to the irrigation requirement of approx. 9200 hectre of agricultural land. Due to in conducive climate for agriculture, live-stock rearing is also major source of income. This structure is likely to facilitate availability of water to 1000 cattle those graze in the surroundings pasture area.

4. Renovation & Repair of Khurda and Aaw near Narsingh Ndi Aaw (No. PG/GP/0-11/13055)

Village Kedal, Gram Panchayat: Kedal, Block: Pisangan

The Sarpanch of the village is Smt. Sanpat Kanvar who is B. Com pass. Gram Rozgar Sahayak is Shri Rehman.

There were 109 workers working at the site in the form of gang of 4/5 persons. Most of them were women. One mate was supervising of a group of 50 workers on the work site. The mates as well as workers were aware of the basic entitlements to them and their rights under the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. Though there is a practice that the person belonging to Rajput community do not indulge in earthen work. But during the interaction on this worksite it was found that sufficient number of female as well as male belong to the particular community were working on the site. The Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has started impacting the social myths prevalent in the society. It speaks volumes above the acceptance and desirability of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS in the rural areas.

Worksite Management and Muster rolls: At work site, two mates were deployed who were maintaining muster rolls. On examination of muster roll viz-a-viz the workers working at the work site, it was found that the names figuring in the muster rolls were actually working at the site also. The job cards were having hologram on the first page of the card to protect against the issuance of duplicate job cards. A cross verification of Ms. Manju Kanvar having job card No. RJ-272100617002503700/27 and account No. 9300135 was tracked to Muster Roll and payment through the accounts. Also the application for employment was matched and it was found that her demand for employment and the details in the muster rolls and payment details matched.

Choice of Works/Worksite: The selection of the work/worksite appeared to be proper and likely to result into water conservation by diverting the flow of the downstream of rain water to the pond situated in the village which will in-turn augment the water availability to the villagers and will also help in recharging of nearby water sources.

Payment of Wages: The workers reported delay in payments. The wages are generally paid after 15 days from 1st day of employment.

There also was strong feeling that the number of days for employment should be increased from 100 to 200.

Findings

1 **Public Awareness**

By & large people are aware of their rights and entitlements under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. In fact, there was a strong feeling that the entitlement of 100 days of employment should be increased to 200 days. In fact, in the district, in previous financial year almost 40% of job card holders completed 100 days of employment. The poor agricultural resource and other means of livelihood is the basic reason for such a high demand for employment in these areas. The Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is the lifeline for rural population at present.

2 **Gram Sabha**

The records of the worksite in Kadel is indicative that Gram Sabha has been held and the choice of works lies with the Gram Sabha only as the work sites visited revealed that it is useful to the community and village as such.

3 **Selection of Works**

The worksites visited revealed that the works undertaken have tremendous potential of water conservation but it may be pointed out that the rain fall in the past three years has been very scanty and less than the normal. In case the scenario continuous for coming two-three years, the utility of these assets will be heavily undermined due to kutchra nature of the dams.

4 **Distribution of Job Cards**

No case was reported of non-issuance of Job cards. In fact, job cards have been issued to individuals and nuclear families. The district has undertaken a drive to weed out fake job cards and around 50,000 job cards have reportedly been cancelled. An innovative step of fixing hologram on the job cards have been undertaken. It will definitely curb the making of fake job cards. This step is worth replicating by other states as well.

5 **Demand and Allocation of works**

The officials have put in place a system for demand for employment in each Gram Panchayat. There is a printed Form-6 for demand of employment. It covers details like name of the applicant, job card no., number of days of employment demanded, date of application and it is received by the Gram Rozgar Sahayak. There is a Form-8 which is a acknowledgment as well intimation to the job card holder intimating him the availability of employment at a particular worksite. Both the Forms are signed by Gram Rozgar Sahayak. It is good system as provided in the Operational Guidelines. The Form-6 also have additional information whether the particular person has completed 100 days of employment or not.

6 Unemployment Allowance

No case is reported where unemployment allowance has been paid.

7 Worksite Management and Muster rolls

It was found that all the worksites inspected were having mates who were by and large aware of basic entitlements of MGNREGA workers and process of measurement of works. An innovative practice of deploying ex-servicemen as mate is very good idea as one Shri Biram Singh, who was ex-serviceman found to be supervising and facilitating the works in a very organized manner. The job cards and muster rolls were found at the worksite. The muster rolls have numerous entries and carries over the legacy of capturing gang functioning from olden days. It raises doubts that a group of 5 or 4 which forms a gang most of the time do equal and comparable earth work. A less complicated form of muster roll may be thought of by the State because a person who is not aware of this type of muster roll will find it difficult to understand it. The muster roll also have a warning that false entries/overwriting and mutilation of muster roll is punishable under Section 420, 468 and 471 of IPC. Its good but whether the people dealing with muster roll is aware of these provisions of IPC is debatable. However, on the same muster roll it was found that there were deletion of entries. May be it is due to the fact that the muster rolls are supplied to the worksite with the pre-entries of workers in light of details in Form6 & 8.

8 Measurement of work

This is delayed because of shortage of hands. The Junior Engineer visit the site once in a 15 days which is the basic reason beyond the delay. Inadvertently, this schedule of measurement violates the provisions of Section 3(3) of the Act attracting provisions of Section 30. It was reported that the State is likely to deploy more Technical Assistants very soon and concept of Daksh Mate is also being mooted to overcome the delay in measurement of works.

9 Payment of Wages

Payment of wages follows the measurement of work. Since measurements are delayed because of shortage of engineers, delay exists in payments also.

10 Banks and Post Offices

Payment of wages through banks and post offices have been the most important remedy for mala fide payments.

While payments through banks and post offices has reduced corruption, it is notable that workers cannot endure the delay on payment due to delayed measurement of works and poor infrastructure with the post offices, cooperative banks etc. For them instant payment is the most preferred mode. The State Government is in touch with banks to overcome this bottleneck by use of Business Correspondent Model.

11 Disposal of complaints

No separate machinery for disposal of complaints exists. The institution of Ombudsman is still to be established. Though the district has taken a few exemplary actions by arresting the Sarpanch for misutilization and misappropriation of the funds under MGNREGS in Gram Panchayat Jabaja. 100% inspection of pucca works was done and corruption of tune of Rs. 1.0 crore was detected.

In Gram Panchayat Kashir, Shri Ram Singh Choudhary s/o Sarpanch Smt. Pussi Devi, who has allegedly made improper expenditure of Rs. 2.84 crore of MGNREGS, an FIR has been lodged under Section 394, 332, 353, 420, 467, 468 and 471 of IPC. Shri Ram Singh has been arrested. Such exemplary action will have a deterrent impact on persons who are likely to indulge in such malpractices.

There have been complaints that JCBs are used for carrying out earthen work. The DPC has taken cognizance of such complaints and has issued a circular that in case of use of JCB found correct, the mate as well as the workers under MGNREGS will be listed and they will not be given employment in future. The machine will be seized and action will be taken against the owner of the machine.

12 Social Audit

Interaction with the representatives of NGOs revealed that they have strong reservation about efficiency and efficacy of present system of carrying out social audits. They pointed out the person like Sarpanch, who is executing the scheme and at the same time auditing the scheme with the help of the workers is contradictory in itself or an utopian concept. They also protested against the provisions in Para 13 (b) (as amended) which provides for the procedure for conducting social audits. Towards proactive disclosure of information, concept of Wall Writing was examined and found to be truly helpful as the relevant information become available to all in the village.

13 Record Maintenance

Generally the record maintenance was found to be satisfactory.

14. Reduction in Working Hours

It was found that the working hours have been reduced to 4 hours and accordingly the task rate has been reduced by 50% for a specific period. It meant that the workers get wages equivalent to the wage for working 8 hours though they work for 4 hours only. It is in violation of Paragraph 8 (i) and 8 (ii) of Schedule I. The muster rolls and the measurement details therein prove it beyond doubt. Any instruction issued by the State Government in contravention of the provisions of the Act is null and void ab initio. The State should be asked to explain and take corrective measures. The financial liability of the Centre under Section 22 (1) should be restricted to the wage corresponding to the works actually carried out by the workers. The arbitrary nature of revision of SoR, though it is within the

domain of the State, should not be approved of as it sets bad precedent and improper financial liability. At the time of finalizing this report, the issue has already been taken up with the State.

Action to be Taken

- (a) It is pointed out that the assets created for water conservation will not be useful in isolation as the rainfall is around 330 mm which is far less than the normal. It was suggested by Secretary (RD) that extensive plantation should be taken up through Gram Panchayats and Forest Department on barren hillocks and along with the road side. Specially fruit bearing plants like jack fruit, jamun, cashew nut as these are sturdy plants also seasam plant of commercial value can be plant of choice for plantation. As it will help in conserving the soil, retention of moisture and improvement in climatic condition making it conducive for rainfall
- (b) Plantation of Neem with use of local technology so that the Neem is planted in the shrub of a type of cactus as the soil at the root of cactus has moisture and soft conducive for the germination and growth of Neem plant. The surrounding cactus protects the sapling from being eaten away by the cattle (goat and sheep).
- (c) An exposure visit of the members of Panchayati Raj Institutions and officials of District should be arranged to the Tumkur District in Karnataka, Rale Gaon in Maharashtra and Shri Vivekanand Sewa Trust in Bhuj in Gujarat to understand their successful experiment in nano watershed approach which has resulted in increased agricultural productivity. The Bhuj example is very relevant as their watershed approach for scanty rainfall up to 80 mm has yielded great results.
- (d) The concept of hologram should be followed by other districts also as it will reduce the incidence of fake job cards.
- (e) During the discussion with the DPC, it was found that work on harit road which includes widening of existing roads/state highways and two side plantation of the road will have the funding of manual labour from MGNREGS fund. The proposal will be moved by PWD and approved by Zila Panchayat. As the work will be inter-Panchayats, the work will be broken up Gram Panchayat wise. The State should share the modalities of it with the Centre so that the legality vis-a-vis Mahatma Gandhi NREG Act of the same is examined.
- (f) The reduction in working hours and arbitrary adjustment of SoR is in violation of the Act. The State should take corrective measures immediately.

- (g) During the interaction with the NGOs, it was found that the Wall Writings with the details of employment provided to each job card holders in a village and details of use of material year wise is a great step towards proactive disclosure. It should be taken up in all the districts and the other States may be advised to do the same.
- (h) The village elders reported that there was abundant vegetation on the adjoining hillocks of villages as late as 35-40 years back. As of now these hillocks are barren and the quantum of annual rainfall has gradually depleted. There is need of special projects to be taken up for making these barren hillocks green. State Government prepare draft special projects and can share with the Ministry as early as possible.
- (i) A copy of findings forwarded to the BDO, Kisangarh by Sarpanch, Silora regarding fraudulent attendance of one of the MGNREGA workers handed over. An Action Taken Report may be sought from the district.