

Evaluation of Impact of Individual Land Development Activity undertaken
under MGNREGA

Department of Commissionerate of Rural Development

Executive Summary

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was set into operation in Karnataka in the year 2006 and under Phase-I, Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur, Davanagere and Chitradurga districts were covered. The Act was extended to Belgaum, Bellary, Chickmagalur, Hassan, Shimoga and Kodagu districts under Phase-II, and in Phase-III, all the remaining districts of Karnataka were also included. The primary objective of the scheme is to enhance employment security of rural poor by providing a minimum of 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in each financial year to every household with adults volunteering to do unskilled manual work. The guidelines for individual land development works provide scope to take up works pertaining to irrigation facilities, land development facilities, horticulture, afforestation, and other land development activities in the lands of individual beneficiaries which help the farmers to develop their own lands, enhance its productivity and develop rural economy.

The Commissionerate of Rural Development and the Karnataka Evaluation Authority (KEA) intended to evaluate the working aspects of MGNREGA and study the impact of Land Development works taken up in individual beneficiaries land under the scheme during the financial years 2012-13 and 2013-14. Eight districts namely Tumkur, Shimoga, Chamarajanagar, Dakshina Kannada, Bidar, Koppal, Bijapur and Haveri were selected randomly as sample districts for the evaluation with indication to identify the sample taluks at the rate of one per district per year in such a way to cover all types of works and all types of

beneficiaries with 10% random sampling. The taluks so selected are i) Kunigal taluk of Tumkur district, ii) Sagar taluk of Shimoga district, iii) Chamarajanagar taluk of Chamarajanagar district, iv) Bantwal taluk of Dakshina Kannada district, v) Bhalki taluk of Bidar district, vi) Kushtagi taluk of Koppal district, vii) Indi taluk of Bijapur district, and viii) Haveri taluk of Haveri district. In all, 49 villages from 39 GPs of 8 taluks have been randomly selected for field verification. In the 8 sample taluks, during the year 2012-13 & 2013-14, there are a total of 3753 works which have been completed, 9071 works are ongoing and 1779 works have been shown as “works approved but not commenced” as per the MGNREGA website as on 1-11-2014.

After finalization of the taluks and selection of individual land development activities, field inspections were carried out. Each individual land development work was verified with respect to quantity / quality / stage / utility / impact and other parameters specified in the Terms of Reference. Group discussions with farmers of various villages, who gathered at Gram Panchayats were held and their perceptions, views and opinion / use about process of implementation of the land development and other activities, their quality / quantity and status etc., were held. Discussions with staff and Officers at Gram Panchayats were held. The teams also held discussions with the Chief Executive Officers (Chamarajnagar and Shimoga districts), Deputy Secretary-Development (Dakshina Kannada, Tumkur, Koppal, Bidar and Bijapur districts), Project Director of Zilla Panchayat in Haveri district, Planning Officers, and others of concerned Zilla Panchayats and sought their views. Similarly, in each taluk the opinion/ views of concerned Executive Officers / Assistant Director / staff of Taluk Panchayats etc., were collected.

Individual Land Development Activity (ILDA): ‘Individual Land Development Activity’ is an opportunity provided for the households from SC / ST / BPL families, beneficiaries of land reforms / IAY and of SF / MF to take up land development, irrigation facilities and plantations on their lands to mitigate drought, enhance land productivity and generate a steady income. As per the guidelines, works on lands of SC / ST households are to be taken up on priority, followed by works in the lands of small and marginal farmers. One of the conditions is that the individual land owner should be a MGNREGA job card holder and also should participate in the execution of the work. The work has to be approved by the Gram Sabha. No contractor or machinery is to be used in execution of the work. Also, the responsibility of maintenance of MGNREGA works on individual land rests with the beneficiary household.

The scope of the present evaluation is to study the impact of the land development activities undertaken in individual beneficiary lands during the years 2012-13 and 2013- 14. For this purpose, a beneficiary schedule was designed for field inspection purpose and was used for recording information on each activity. Different works carried out under individual land development activities in the sampled districts were verified in the field. As many as 1540 farmers (out of 12,824 farmers), accounting for 12% samples were interviewed. Of them, based on the extent of land, 44% were marginal Farmers, 51% small farmers and 5% were large land holders. Based on category, target groupwise, 23% were SC, 10% ST, 2% OBC, 7% minority and 58% general.

The study on employment generation indicates that:

1. Beneficiaries and their family members were provided work for an average of 14 days in all the types of individual land development activities covered under the study. Accordingly, cumulative employment generated is

estimated at 1,43,560 person days which includes beneficiary family employment to the extent of 49,756 person days (i.e., about 35%).

2. The family employment generation against total person days is more in case of Kushtagi taluk (Koppal district - 52%) followed by Kunigal taluk (Tumkur district = 44%), Bhalki taluk (Bidar district = 43%), Sagar taluk (Shimoga district = 40%), Bantwal taluk (Dakshina Kannada district = 39%), Chamaraja Nagar taluk (Chamarajnagar district = 38%), Haveri taluk (Haveri district = 29%) and Indi taluk (Bijapur district = 24%).

It was observed that majority of the beneficiary farmers were following improved cropping systems. About 60% of farmers were following mixed cropping system followed by mono-cropping (24%) and the remaining farmers were following agri-hortisilvi- pasture systems. It is also evident that farmers who are following improved cropping systems such as banana, sugar cane, groundnut, maize, arecanut with vegetables were getting more income than other cereal crops.

Based on Individual land development works executed and considering their present status, length, section, crop condition, growth, height, survival percentage, crop yields, physical topography of land, cropping system adoption etc., are graded as good, satisfactory and poor as the case may be (details provided in Table - 21). These works were taken up as per the requirement of the individual beneficiaries; the necessity and utility are justifiable socially. On physical verification of these works and taking into consideration the views of the individual beneficiary it was seen that majority of the beneficiaries found the work to be useful and meeting their needs. Regarding the quality of work executed, there are different views by beneficiaries in the districts, and are as follows:

1. In Tumkur district, about 61% of beneficiaries expressed it as good, 30% as satisfactory and 9% declared it as unsatisfactory. Similar was the evaluation of the field investigators of the Consulting Organisation with 4-5% variation.

2. In Shimoga district, beneficiaries expressed that, the works carried out were good in case of 52% of works surveyed, satisfactory in 48% of the cases and no work was poor. However, some of them expressed that, the number of seedlings be given based on the extent of land holdings / requirement and not limited to 40-60 uniformly as is being done now. They also are of the opinion that, better quality seedlings need to be supplied and that too on time.
3. In Chamarajanagar district, it is observed that the works carried out are technically sound both in design and location and the quality of execution was deemed good according to about 8% of the beneficiaries, satisfactory by 89% and poor in case of 3% of the beneficiaries.
4. In Dakshina Kannada district majority of the individual beneficiaries have expressed that the works met with their needs and were highly useful in nature. With regard to quality of work, 81% of beneficiaries rated the work as good, 18% as satisfactory, and only 1% expressed their dissatisfaction.
5. In Bidar district the works executed are considered to be good to average in quality & implementation and the beneficiaries have also express their satisfaction. With regard to quality of work, 60% of beneficiaries rated the work as good followed by 40% as satisfactory and none indicated their dissatisfaction. However, a few beneficiaries have expressed the need to increase the depth of wells depending on site conditions
6. In Koppal district, about 24% of the beneficiaries expressed the quality of work to be good, 68% as satisfactory and the remaining 8% expressed their dissatisfaction.
7. In Bijapur district, it was observed that 100% of beneficiaries found the works to be useful and serving their needs. Looking at the quality aspects, it

is found that the works carried out were deemed as good by 19%, satisfactory by 80% and unsatisfactory by 1% of the respondents.

8. In Haveri district, about 8.06% of the beneficiaries rated the work as good and 91.57% as satisfactory. A negligible 0.37% of the beneficiaries have expressed that the work quality is poor.

Interactions with beneficiaries and Gram Panchayat Staff, it is observed that the payment of wages for the work executed was made timely. However, in case of those works which have been physically completed, payments were yet to be made for want of funds. It was understood that payment has been stopped wherever the employment generated exceeded 25,000 man-days in a financial year and in such cases, payment was blocked.

As per data available and through interactions with Executive Officers and Panchayat Development Officers, 1779 works were found to be approved but not started. On perusal of the data, it was observed that, works approved in the action plans during years 2008 to 2011-12 are also included in this 1779. This means, even though the farmers had decided to take up the works long back, they have not commenced till the date of field visit made by the evaluation team. It has come to the notice that these farmers are presently not interested in taking up works due to some other domestic priorities and need of work was not felt by the farmer beneficiary of ILDA, but rather thrust by the people's representatives on them. Because of which, they were not able to submit Form-6 to the PDO's / GP's. The concerned PDO's expressed that they are going to place this subject in the ensuing Gram Sabha/ Gram Panchayat meetings and final decision would be taken on whether to continue them in the list or otherwise. Out of 1779 works approved but not started, more than 10% of concerned farmers were covered during FGD discussions .

ILDA under MGNREGA and its impacts:

Socio-economic impacts - The time that has elapsed from the commencement of implementation of the MGNREGA scheme is too short a period to expect any significant measurable change in the socio-economic conditions of the beneficiaries. This is because most of the programmes are land based and relate to conservation and productivity enhancement. These take a prolonged gestation period before benefits begin to be visible and accrue to the beneficiaries. For example, an agro-forestry or horticultural plantation could take close to 5 years to establish, grow and begin showing economic returns. The same applies to the soil and water conservation works that are taken up in the lands of the beneficiaries such as construction of bunds, land leveling and drainage line treatment through nala-bunds or check dams, as they too take a few years to begin giving economic benefits. However, it was seen that the field bunding and land levelling activities has resulted in a feeling of better moisture regime. The opinion of 39% beneficiaries shows that the Individual Land Development Activities (ILDA) are good, in case of 58%, the works are satisfactory and 3% were not satisfied with the works.

Convergence with other Departments – There was no evidence found during evaluation to suggest any conscious effort done to bring about convergence in the implementation of land based activities, except that in the case of horticulture plantation, where the pitting and planting was taken up under MGNREGA and seedlings and planting material were supplied by the Department of Horticulture as seen in case of some plots in Bantwal and Kunigal taluks, and the construction of cattle sheds has been linked with the construction of toilets involving the Gram Panchayats in Saigaon Gram Panchayat of Bhalki taluk.

Technical assistance and sanctions - The technical sanction for various individual land development activities were given by the concerned line

Departments. In case of cattle sheds constructed and wells excavated, technical sanctions were obtained from the PRED (Panchayat Raj Engineering Department.), while in case of land development works such as field bunding, land levelling, nala bunding, farm ponds, check dams, nala revetment, recharge pits etc., technical sanctions were obtained from Watershed Development Department. Horticultural/ forestry activities were taken up after obtaining sanction from the respective Departments. Due procedure has been followed in implementation of the programme.

Gram Panchayat approval and eligibility criteria for sanction and execution –

All the ILD activities implemented under this scheme have been approved by the concerned Gram Sabhas conducted by the Gram Panchayats. It is seen that the eligibility criteria was followed in affording benefits to the SC & ST, women, small and marginal farmers; economically weaker sections as per scheme guidelines. However, it is noticed that a few big farmers are also covered under the scheme.

Time Schedule - Physical completion of works are reported to have been accomplished within the stipulated time in majority of the cases. Sometimes due to paucity or delayed release of funds the payment has been delayed. Hence, such works have been shown as spill over or ongoing (Refer Table - 24).

Increase in the area under irrigation & change in cropping pattern - In case of successful excavation of open wells in Bantwal, Bhalki, Sagar taluks, there has been a marginal increase in area under irrigation, as per beneficiary opinion. This has in many cases resulted in shift in cropping pattern such as sowing of better economic yielding crops/ high value crops. In such cases the cropping intensity has increased by 100% (Refer Table - 25).

Appropriateness in execution - The lands, sites selected for execution of individual land development activities are found technically suitable. The

execution of works is also satisfactory in most cases. However, in case of construction of field bunds, the existing bunds have not been accounted for. So also, no provision had been made to construct waste weirs on the new bunds to drain out the excess water during high intensity rainfall. Sometimes the specification of maintaining horizontal distance between bunds based on slope percentage and the rainfall pattern of the area has been ignored. For construction of farm ponds, a minimum catchment area has been defined, which has been ignored in few cases. A glaring technical gap observed in the field was planting method of forest seedlings. The seedlings planted on top of field bunds are very less effective in establishment and growth compared to planting on base of bund.

Impact on the village or community of farmers as a whole - There is rise in the understanding among rural community about availability of work in their own or neighbouring farms. They have also realized the large number of type of works that are available under this scheme and how such works can influence their life.

Observations and Findings:

1. The Individual Land Development Activities are based on the perceived requirements of beneficiaries. These vary from district to district. In the districts of Tumkur, Shimoga, Chamarajanagar and Dakshina Kannada, the emphasis was found on pitting and planting of horticulture and forest species, construction of wells and land levelling. In the districts of Haveri and Bijapur the emphasis was mostly on field bunding, field bunding and land levelling activities. In Bidar, construction of cattle sheds and in Koppal district agro-forestry & horticulture activities were more common.
2. The performance of the scheme varies across the districts. Overall performance is rated as good by 39%, satisfactory by 58% and unsatisfactory by 3% beneficiaries. The response of beneficiaries indicates that, the ILDA has performed best in Dakshina Kannada district followed by

Bidar, Tumkur and Shimoga. Haveri, Chamarajanagar, Bijapur and Koppal, show satisfactory performance and in that order. However, these are the rankings amongst the sample districts only.

3. The cumulative employment generated in the sampled districts of ILDA is estimated at 1,43,560 person days which includes family employment to the extent of 49,756 person days (35%). The family employment generation against total person days is more in case of Koppal district (52%) followed by Tumkur district (44%), Bidar district (43%), Shimoga district (40%), Dakshina Kannada district (39%), Chamarajnagar district (38%), Haveri district (29%) and Bijapur district (24%).
4. It was observed that majority of the beneficiary farmers were following improved cropping systems. From the study, it is evident that about 60% of farmers were following mixed cropping system, followed by mono-cropping (24%), with the remaining farmers following agri-horti-silvi-pastures systems.
5. Almost as a rule, the preparation of plans and estimates was found to be not appropriate since details on existing topography / existing structures were not considered / accounted for – it appears to be not site specific, but, adoption of a standard model.
6. The cost per acre / hectare of field bunding varies among districts and is high compared to other schemes of the Watershed Development Department, which shows inadequate monitoring at all levels.
7. The quality of planting material supplied in case of horticulture and forestry is found not satisfactory by > 40% of beneficiaries.
8. Some of the forest seedlings found planted on the top of field bunds are under moisture stress. This speaks about the method of planting followed and inadequacy of effective field visits and monitoring by the line

Department Staff. Staking of planted seedlings with poles was missing in most of the cases.

9. ILDA such as field bunding and land levelling are found to be executed in lands where slope is between 0-2%, especially in Haveri and Indi taluks where the land levelling is not noticeable in many cases. Usually, in these areas, the cultivated black soils are deep to medium deep with uniform or gentle slope and therefore, do not require any levelling.
10. Under the scheme, cutting and filling of small quantity of soil is done in the GPs of Bijapur, Haveri and Chamarajnagar districts (for example 52.07 m³ of soil excavated in an area of 1.83 ha.). This much quantity stated to be used for levelling in the said area will not make any difference in the existing uniform slope or reduction in slope percentage. The recommended soil required for levelling are – for slope of 2, 3 and 4% are 1512 m³ , 2267 m³ and 3023 m³ per ha. respectively.
11. The beneficiaries of open wells in some cases (eg.: Saigaon panchayat of Bhalki taluk of Bidar district) have utilized the hard soil excavated for formation of field bunds wisely and this is serving the purpose of soil and moisture conservation.
12. The majority of ILDA executed in the sampled Gram Panchayats fall under the previously completed watershed development programs. Some new works of water harvesting structures also were executed either in individual lands or community lands / drainage line networks under MGNREGA, but the renovation of earlier water harvesting structures is found to be left out under the scheme.
13. Of the total sample beneficiaries (1540), about 11 (0.71%) were found to be holding more than 5 acres (other than SC/ST). *Prima facie*, it appears that these beneficiaries are ineligible for the benefits under the scheme.

However, sufficient corroborative evidence is needed in its support, which may be gathered / verified by detailed inspection.

Suggestions / Recommendations:

1. There should be certain minimum conditions specified for land levelling works so that the works are measurable and useful.
2. Every year, a demand survey of planting material needs to be carried out so that the right species planting material in the required numbers/ quantity is available.
3. There needs to be in place a robust system of raising planting material in forestry and horticulture. They need to be supplied timely. For this, the transportation of seedlings to the village may be done about 15 days before the date of monsoon, lest the supply is delayed.
4. An asset beneficiary register need to be maintained and continually updated by the Gram Panchayats in order to ensure that no farmer is selected twice until all eligible farmers are covered under other Government schemes.
5. The present system of preparation of model or typical plans and estimates needs to be reviewed. The Gram Panchayats must insist on appropriate preparation of plans and estimates based on field conditions rather than typical model of uniform type of estimates by line Departments. The beneficiaries are to be motivated to adopt area specific and low cost technologies.
6. The construction of cattle sheds as one of the Animal Husbandry components is appreciated not only by beneficiaries but other stake holders. However, construction of urine drain and urine collection pit and usage of urine for bio-pesticide preparation should be made mandatory.
7. The works in MGNREGA are many and scattered. The Staff of line departments are not enough to provide technical inputs and supervision. For

them, MGNREGA work is priority only after their usual department works. Hence, need for a dedicated team of supervisors, engaging them on contract basis locally may be done.

A. Policy issues: Several water harvesting structures have been executed in the State for the past four decades under various State & Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and externally aided projects. Perhaps, the entire drainage network seems to be saturated and it is difficult to locate new sites for fresh works. However, a number of works were seen to have been executed in the field disregarding technical specifications and these in turn have resulted in wasteful expenditure. Hence, there is urgent need for attention on rejuvenation of the asset already created with minimum expenditure which would benefit nearby farmers as well as community as a whole, besides providing employment opportunities for good number of days. The structures are old and are in need of repairs. The rejuvenation suggested would increase the irrigation potential. The increased storage will also enhance the groundwater recharge but, at a lower cost.

The following may also be considered –

1. Department may instruct field level officials to check with other line departments, whether similar components are implemented in the elected villages, where scheme components are implemented. So that, there won't be duplication in works carried out by line departments in future.
2. Dissemination of information relating to success stories may be carried out for the benefit of farming community.
3. The beneficiaries of ILDA may be encouraged to visit the successful field experiments for adopting the same in their land based activities.

B. Suggested models of convergence:

1. Field bund planting with forest tree species along with tree guards,

2. Farm ponds shoulder bund planting with Drumstick (*Moringa oleifera*), Amla (*Embelica offeinalis*) seedlings or improved fodder grasses as per choice of beneficiaries.
3. Nala revetment and removal of drainage line congestion especially in case of Malnad region.
4. Fishery development in the water bodies of farm ponds where water availability is for more than six months.
5. Cattle sheds integrated with vermin compost units by duly utilizing the cattle dung and urine.
6. Land levelling by duly utilizing de-silted fertile soil from water harvesting structures.
7. Use of irrigation canal hard soil/ murrum soil/ soils obtained from digging of wells/ road cutting for construction of field bunds or strengthening waste – weirs.
8. Sowing of rainfed vegetable seeds on the surface of field bunds.

Observations & Findings

The study team during the field visit made note of certain aspects and the important ones are given below:

1. Farm bunds/ field bunding, Land levelling, Farm ponds, Nala bunding, Check dams, Recharge pits, Nala revetment, Open wells, Pitting and planting of horticulture fruit species suitable to that agro-climatic region, Afforestation through agro-forestry, Cattle sheds, Compost pits etc., are the different types of ILDA undertaken in the 8 districts taken up for this study. Individual land Development activities under the scheme are based on the perceived requirements of beneficiaries. This varies from district to district. In the districts of Tumkur, Shimoga, Chamarajanagar and Dakshina Kannada, the emphasis is found on pitting and planting of horticulture and forest species, construction of wells and land levelling. In the districts of Haveri and Bijapur the emphasis was mostly on field bunding, field bunding and land levelling activities as per local demand. In Bidar, construction of cattle sheds and in Koppal district agro-forestry and horticulture activities were more common.
2. The performance of the scheme varies across the districts. Overall performance is rated as good by 35%, satisfactory by 63% and unsatisfactory by 2% beneficiaries. The response of the beneficiaries indicate that the ILDA has performed best in Dakshina Kannada district followed by Bidar, Tumkur, and Shimoga (all have >50% good rating). Haveri, Chamarajanagar, Bijapur, and Koppal, show predominance of satisfactory performance and in that order. However, these are the rankings amongst sampled districts only.
3. The cumulative employment generated is estimated at 1,43,560 person days which includes family employment to the extent of 49,756 person days

(35%). The family employment generation against total man days is more in case of Koppal district (52%) followed by Tumkur district (44%), Bidar district (43%), Shimoga district (40%), Dakshina Kannada district (39%), Chamarajnagar district (38%), Haveri district (29%) and Bijapur district (24%).

4. It was observed that majority of the beneficiary farmers were following improved cropping systems. However, few farmers are still following mono-cropping system. From the study, it is evident that about 60% of farmers were following mixed cropping system, followed by mono-cropping (24%) with the remaining farmers are following agri-horti-silvi-pastures systems.
5. Almost as a rule, the preparation of plans and estimates was found to be not appropriate since details on existing topography / existing structures were not considered / accounted for – it appears to be not site specific, but, adoption of a standard model.
6. The cost per acre / hectare of field bunding varies among districts and is high compared to other schemes of the Watershed Development Department, which shows inadequate monitoring at all levels.
7. During interactions with beneficiaries and farmers groups, most of them expressed that the quality of planting material in case of horticulture and forestry is not satisfactory by more than 40%. The visiting team members also observed the seedlings planted in the fields are sleek or of inferior quality. Such cases were documented during the field verification.
8. In the gram panchayats of Kushtagi taluk of Koppal district, the forest seedlings were found planted on the top of field bunds and are under moisture stress. This speaks about the method of planting followed and

inadequacy of effective field visits and monitoring by the line Department Staff.

9. There is provision of staking the planted seedlings with poles once they are established as per sanctioned plans & estimates. During field visits, it was observed that the staking with poles was missing in majority of the cases. Wherever seen, the staking is not adequate/ effective and such seedlings are liable for destruction since they cannot sustain the speeding winds.
10. As part of ILDA, large scale field bunding combined with land levelling have been executed. These are found constructed in lands where existing bunds of different sections are noticed (e.g. Haveri and Indi taluks). Also, these works are found executed in lands where slope is between 0-2%. The field bunding is seen in the fields where as the area where it is levelled or soil spreading done is not visible on the ground. Usually the cultivated black soils are deep / medium deep with uniform / gentle slope and without undulations and therefore, do not require any levelling. It is advisable that land levelling is not required in areas with < 2% slope wherein, field bunding will by itself take care of water conservation.
11. Under the scheme, cutting and filling of small quantity of soil is done in the GPs of Bijapur, Haveri and Chamarajnagar districts (for example 52.07 m³ of soil excavated in an area of 1.83 ha.). This much quantity stated to be used for levelling in the said area will not make any difference in the existing uniform slope or reduction in slope percentage. It could hardly cover 3% of land area with 10 cm thickness. The recommended soil required for levelling are – for slope of 2, 3 and 4% are 1512 m³ , 2267 m³ and 3023 m³ per ha respectively.

12. The beneficiaries of open wells in some cases (eg.: Saigaon panchayat of Bhalki taluk of Bidar district) have utilized the hard soil excavated for formation of field bunds wisely and this is serving the purpose of soil and moisture conservation.
13. The majority of ILDA executed in the sampled Gram Panchayats fall under the previously completed watershed development programs. Some new works of water harvesting structures also were executed either in individual lands or community lands / drainage line networks under MGNREGA, but the renovation of earlier water harvesting structures like check dams, farm ponds, nala bunds etc., is found to be left out under the scheme. Also, the need for renovation of such drainage line Water Harvesting Structures seems to be not properly assessed. During farmers group discussions the subject was raised and they feel it most essential because many of the structures are silted up and are in dilapidated conditions needing immediate attention.
14. During interaction with Gram Panchayat staff about approved works but not started yet, many of them could not give information about their number and reasons for not starting the work. Later, it was found that the major reason was non submission of Form-6 by concerned applicant because of factors such as personal considerations, non availability of the proposed labour force and lack of real desire for the activity.
15. The Gram Panchayats do not have ready answers/ data on subject of total works sanctioned, completed & balance works, number of villages covered & the percentage of land holders covered or those not yet availed/

benefitted. However, it was stated that still 30-35% deserves the benefits under the scheme.

16. MGNREGA provide scope / allows NGO's to act as an implementing agency even though major share of funds have to be implemented through Gram Panchayats. However, the services of NGO's are not seen in any process of implementation like motivation, publicity etc.

A. DEVIATIONS NOTICED

As per guidelines for Implementation of works on Individual land, the scheme MGNREGA provides an opportunity for the households from SC / ST / BPL families, beneficiaries of land reforms / IAY and of SF / MF to take up land development, irrigation facility and horticulture plantation on their land to mitigate drought, enhance agricultural productivity and generate steady income. The conditions for taking up MGNREGA works on Individual lands indicate that the works on the land of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe households will have to be taken on priority. Once the works on the lands of SC & ST are saturated in the Gram Panchayats, works on lands of small and marginal farmers may be considered. Also, guidelines provide that any farmer other than SC/ST can be taken up only after the works on the plots of SC/ST are saturated but in all the sampled cases, works had been taken up in lands of non SC/ST farmers without certifying or verifying whether SC/ST lands in the Gram panchayat has been fully covered or not. The guideline has thus been, but apparently without any ill intent, violated everywhere. As per the evaluation study, as many as 1540 beneficiaries were covered in the sample, of which, 23% belong to SC, 10% to ST, 2% to OBC, 7% to minorities and 58% belong to General category. Of

the total sampled beneficiaries (1540), about 0.71% of the beneficiaries were found to have land holdings of more than 5 acres. Prima facie, it appears that these beneficiaries are in-eligible for the benefits under this scheme. However, sufficient corroborating evidence is needed in its support, which may be gathered/ verified by detailed inspection.

Suggestions / Recommendations

The efforts of beneficiaries, Gram Panchayats and the implementing / executing Departments are equally important and warrant good co-ordination. Keeping these in view, the following suggestions are made.

- There should be certain minimum conditions specified for land levelling works so that the works are measurable and useful.
- Every year, a demand survey of planting material needs to be carried out so that the right species planting material in the required numbers/ quantity is available.
- There needs to be in place a robust system of raising planting material in forestry and horticulture. They need to be supplied timely. For this, the transportation of seedlings to the village may be done about 15 days before the date of monsoon, lest the supply is delayed.
- An asset beneficiary register need to be maintained and continually updated by the Gram Panchayats in order to ensure that no farmer is selected twice until all eligible farmers are covered under other Government schemes.
- The present system of preparation of model or typical plans and estimates needsto be reviewed. The Gram Panchayats must insist on appropriate preparation of plans and estimates based on field conditions rather than typical model of uniform type of estimates by line Departments. The beneficiaries are to be motivated to adopt area specific and low cost technologies.
- The construction of cattle sheds as one of the Animal Husbandry components is appreciated not only by beneficiaries but other stake

holders. However, construction of urine drain and urine collection pit and usage of urine for biopesticide preparation should be made mandatory.

- The works in MGNREGA are many and scattered. The Staff of line departments are not enough to provide technical inputs and supervision. For them, MGNREGA work is priority only after their usual department works. Hence, need for a dedicated team of supervisors, engaging them on contract basis locally may be done.
- **Policy issues:** Several water harvesting structures have been executed in the State for the past four decades under various State & Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) and externally aided projects. Perhaps, the entire drainage network seems to be saturated and it is difficult to locate new sites for fresh works. However, a number of works were seen to have been executed in the field disregarding technical specifications and these in turn have resulted in wasteful expenditure. Hence, there is urgent need for attention on rejuvenation of the asset already created with minimum expenditure which would benefit nearby farmers as well as community as a whole, besides providing employment opportunities for good number of days. The structures are old and are in need of repairs. The rejuvenation suggested would increase the irrigation potential. The increased storage will also enhance the groundwater recharge but, at a lower cost.

The following may also be considered –

4. Department may instruct field level officials to check with other line departments, whether similar components are implemented in the selected villages, where scheme components are implemented.

So that, there won't be duplication in works carried out by line departments in future.

5. Dissemination of information relating to success stories may be carried out for the benefit of farming community.

6. The beneficiaries of ILDA may be encouraged to visit the successful field experiments for adopting the same in their land based activities.

- **Suggested models of convergence:**

- Field bund planting with forest tree species along with tree guards and
- Farm ponds shoulder bund planting with Drumstick (*Moringa oleifera*), Amla (*Embelica offeinalis*) seedlings or improved fodder grasses as per choice of beneficiaries.
- Nala revetment and removal of drainage line congestion especially in case of Malnad region.
- Fishery development in the water bodies of Farm ponds where water availability is more than six months.
- Cattle sheds integrated with vermin compost units by duly utilizing the cattle dung and urine.
- Land levelling by duly utilizing de-silted fertile soil from Water Harvesting structures.
- Use of irrigation canal hard soil/ murrum soil/ soils obtained from digging of wells/ road cutting for construction of field bunds or strengthening waste - weirs.
- Sowing of rainfed vegetable seeds on the surface of field bunds.