

Introduction

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was passed by parliament in year Sep. 2005. The Act came into force on Feb 2-2006 and is implemented in 200 of the poorest districts of the country in the initial phase and shall cover the entire country in next five years.

The act can be said as the first step towards realizing the right to work. Right to work is enshrined in our constitution as one of the directive Principles. The set says that "The state shall direct its policy towards securing that the citizens, men and women equally have the right to an adequate means of livelihood." The Act is implemented in 200 of the poorest districts in the initial phase and shall cover the entire country in next five years.

Twenty of Jharkhand's 22 districts are in the list of 200 districts where the NREGA came into force on 2-Feb 2006. Under NREGA, every state government is bound to launch a Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme within six months of the act coming into force. In Jharkhand the following 20 districts have been selected for implementation of the act.

Ranchi	Pakur	Garwha
Lohardaga	Sahebganj	Giridih
Gumla	Dumka	Simdega
Palamu	West Singhbhum	Saraikela
Koderma	Dhanbad	Godda
Latehar	Bokaro	Hazaribag
Jamtara	Chatra	

Planning Phase

From the launch of NREGA in the state, a series of consultations were held with different stakeholders to have an insight and understanding about the act. A one day orientation meeting was held on 20 Feb 2006 at Manthan Yuva Sansthan Ranchi. The meeting was presided over by Dr. A.K.Basu, Chairman, NAB, PACS Programme, eminent economist and State Advisor of Supreme Court Dr. Ramesh Sharan and Social activist and State Advisor of Supreme Court Mr. Balram. The brainstorming meeting was participated by lead CSO's, PST members, academia. Each and every clause of NREGA act was discussed and debated at great length. Thereafter a memorandum was presented to secretary, Department of Rural Development, Mr. Chintu Nayak. Based on the suggestions in the memorandum the state government raised the minimum wages from Rs. 60 per

day to Rs.73 per day. After much follow-up the public relations department, released full page advertisement of NREGA in all the Newspapers published from the state. In Consultation with partners it was decided that State PLW organised in March will focus on NREGA.

NREGA was the main agenda point in state peer learning workshop held on March 1st and 2nd 2006 at Hotel capitol hill, Ranchi. Dr. Y.B. Prasad, advisor on NREGA, SIRD discussed in detail about the provisions of the Act. Dr. Ramesh Sharan shared the suggestions and recommendations of the Brainstorming meeting held on 20th Feb 2006. Thereafter a strategy regarding implementation of NREGS was formulated through group work. Mr. Kiran Sharma, Director , PACS Programme emphasised that how NREGA essentially addresses the very urgent and immediate need and serious issues of hunger, lack of livelihoods, food security leading to endemic poverty.

Regularly during PST meeting also NREGA was one of main agenda points. A format was developed regarding learning of the status of NREGA in selected villages. The NREGS strategy was shared with Dr. K.C. Malhotra, Ms. Kiran Sharma in Project evaluation meeting on 9-10th May 2006 held at hotel Arya, Ranchi for their inputs.

In SBCA Review meeting May 19-20th 2006 consensus emerged of celebration of NREGS week from 3rd to 9th July 2006 all across PACS states and tentative strategy and guidelines were formulated

The final strategy NREGS week celebration was shared in PST meeting on 26 May 2006. It was decided that NREGS week be celebrated cluster wise under leadership of lead CSO's in 5 clusters. Core Teams were formed for each cluster and responsibilities were assigned to team members. It was unanimously decided that 5 regional workshops will be organised under cluster leadership of the following partners :

- Chetna Vikas in Deoghar –21-july
- MMK in Ranchi – 12-july
- SMS in Singhbhum 12-july
- NBJK in Hazaribagh 8-july
- SGVK in Palamu 16-july

Thereafter follow-up meetings were held with core team members in each cluster with respective partners.

The final roll out strategy for NREGS week celebration was decided in PST meeting on 22nd & 23rd June 2006. It was decided that objective of NREGS week would be:

- Creation of awareness on NREGA among villages.
- Sensitise the line staff to catalyse the implementation of the schemes and establish a process of dialogue with government and civil society organisations.
- Share the problems and hurdles in NREGS implementation with State Government.

It was decided that the following activities may be carried out at different levels as part of NREGS week celebration.

Village Level: It was suggested that during the NREGS week all PACS partners would stop regular project activities and focus only on awareness generation about NREGA. Each partner to cover at least 5 villages and work extensively on creating awareness on following suggestive aspects ; the CSO's may broaden scope of their activities based on local needs.

- Salient Features of the act
- 100 days of entitlement for a household
- Job Card
- Wage Rate
- Application for Job
- On e third jobs for women
- Facilities at work place
- Creation of jobs for disabled payments made for making job cards or any other
- Discrepancy documentation of testimonials.

The activities could be based on specific needs of the community like village meetings, Padyatra, Nukkad Natak, Rally, Meetings, Film Show, wall writing etc.

Commissionaire Level: Organising interface with government media and other stakeholders at commissioner level with testimonials and survey research findings.

Planning meeting for communication skill up-gradation regarding NREGS celebration. A planning meeting was organised on 1st July 2006 to finalise the

strategy and activity plan for celebration of NREGS week. After discussion it was decided that the week be celebrated in 3 phases..

Phase 1 Date 3rd to 5th July 2006

Interaction with PACS & Non-PACS Community Based Organisation (CBOs) for sensitisation.

Media Coverage

Dissemination of communication support material/ IEC Material

Phase 2 Date 6th to 8th July 2006

Mass awareness activities like Nukkad Natak, Rally, meeting, Seminar, Wall Writing, Padyatra etc.

Dissemination of IEC Material

Media Coverage

Phase 3 Date 9th to 10th July 2006

Presentation of experiences and submission of Memorandum to BDO / Govt. Officials with community representatives (like SHG members, CSOs functionaries and intellectuals) .

Media

Development of communication support material :

Communication is dynamic and evolving process. It can be termed as an ever continuing process going all the time. Regularly during PST meetings discussions were held on development of the kinds of communication. Support materials not only for NREGS week and for awareness generation throughout the year. Interactions were also held with PACS partners during Peer Learning workshop and planning meetings for NREGS week celebration – regarding development of IEC materials with inputs from SBCA review and planning meetings it was decided that both traditional and mass media tools be used for awareness generation on NREGA.

The communication support material for the NREGS week be developed centrally by state based communication agency, Manthan Yuva Sansthan so that uniformity of message could be maintained all across the states. CSO partners may also develop IEC material based on need assessment of their project interventions which could be used through out the year.

Following communication support materials were developed at state level;

Booklet- A booklet titled "Sau Din Rojgar Kanooni Adhikar" was developed on NREGA. It contains provisions of the act and how can rural population take advantage of it and apply for job card and work. The booklet was developed with objective of guiding the reader about the act in detail and subsequently as a support material for capacity building on NREGA.

Pamphlets : Pamphlets were developed with objective of mass distribution during the awareness week. It focussed on the high points of provisions under the act.

Poster : Poster was developed with objective of highlighting the provisions of the Act during PLW.

Poster for NREGS week : A centrally designed poster was printed in Flex keeping in mind the timing of the NREGS week which coincided with onset of Rainy season in the state. Any thing in paper could get washed away easily. The flex poster definitely can adapt to tough weather conditions and has longer life span also

Audio – Visual Support Material:

A short film about 20 min. duration was developed for NREGA with the objective to disseminate the message to the grassroot in a personalised manner. The film deals in detail about the provisions of the act and how to take benefit from it. It is in drama format.

Radio Programme on NREGA

A 10 episode PACS sponsored radio programme of 15 min. duration is on air time a week (Tuesday and Saturday) from 6.30 PM to 6.45 PM in 'Gramin Jagat' programme on Ranchi Primary Channel. Primary Channel has a listening and reach all over the state. The programme is called "Sau Din Rojgar Kanooni Adhikar". The programme was launched during the NREGS week on 4th July 2006 will continue till first of August 2006. The format of the programme is as following:

Episode I

- Signature Tune
- Comparing
- Song on NREGA
- Talk with Dr. Ramesh Sharan on NREGA
- Song on NREGA
- Closing
- Signature Tune

Song on NREGA :

10 songs in Hindi and 2 in Nagpuri focussing on different aspects of the act were also developed for Radio Programme. The same are also being used for awareness generation on NREGS at grassroots.

Script for Nukkad Natak on PACS

A 15 min. script for Nukkad Natak on NREGS was also developed. It focuses on different provisions of the act and is followed by a Question-Answer session for recall.

Wall Newspaper

Wall Newspaper was taken out by some of the CSO's in NREGS week.

Along with these communication support materials the CSO's also developed and made use of geographically relevant materials like wall writings, banners, folders, miking in local hats, bazaars and placards with slogans on NREGA.

NREGS week in Action :

Hundreds of different types of events were organised in all the 20 districts of Jharkhand by CSO partners during celebration of NREGS week. The activities differed from CSO to CSO but all had the common objective of creating awareness on NREGS among the rural community.

Awareness Camps:

During the week awareness camps were organised focussing on benefits provided under NREGS. These awareness camps focussed on the following :

- Process of registration under the scheme
- entitlement of 100 days of employment for each rural household every financial year
- Salient feature of the act
- How to make job card
- How to apply for work
- Wage rate
- Payment of unemployment allowance
- Facilities provided at work place / site
- 1/3 of jobs to be created for women
- Creation of job for disabled
- Creation of community assets
- Any other

Despite onset of agricultures seasons great interest was shown by people from the grassroot. Community members were encouraged to share their experiences regarding NREGS implementation. The camps were fully facilitated by project staff.

Orientations

Orientations were held for project staff with objective of capacity building about provisions of act. The orientation made the project staff confident and as a result they were able to talk about NREGA at field level with great ease. These orientations were participated both by male and female staff equally.

Some of the CSO's separately organised orientations for women SHG members. Thereafter these women went around villages in small groups to spread awareness about NREG act.

Village Meeting

Meeting were held at village level by all CSO's with objective of sensitising the people about NREGS. Some the CSO's also filled in forms on behalf of village people for job cards. Village meetings proved to be a very effective platform as the people were able to ask questions.

Panchayat Level Meetings:

During the week panchayat level meetings were organised in different panchayats. The purpose of these meetings was to have direct dialogue with the community to identify about their perception of the programme and also develop an understanding on the status of its implementation. The village representatives shared their initiatives and efforts for ensuring their participation in the programme.

Meetings with Panchayat Sevaks

To have a direct interface with panchayat sevaks a meeting was organised in some of the panchayats. As panchayat elections have not been held in Jharkhand, Block office and Panchayat Sevaks have been assigned with responsibility of filling the application forms for job cards and subsequently for work. In most of the places the panchayat sevaks assured that those who have been left out due to any season would be made to fill applications for job cards and work. In some the panchayats the sevaks filled in the applications for job card on the spot.

Nukkad Natak

Nukkad natak were organised with objective of awareness building and communicating the message with ease having greater retention in different blocks of Ranchi and Hazaribagh districts. The theme of Nukkad Natak was NREG act and its provisions. These Natak were performed mainly by members of youth clubs, Mahila Mandals. They also focussed on the wrong practises and what should be done at community level if the community members face such a situation. These Natak were able to build feeling of community ownership and commitment at grassroots.

Padyatra

During the week for the purpose of mass mobilisation, Padyatras were organised at village level by almost all the partners.

The padyatras proved to be very effective as they covered a large No of pockets which are difficult to reach and are not easily accessible. They were able to generate not only attention of rural people but also Block officials and media. Some of the CSO's like SGVK covered the entire of Lesseliganj block of Palamu district through Padyatra and so did Naya Savera in Vishnugarh block of Hazaribagh. Both men and women participated with equal enthusiasm in these padyatras.

Posters and Placards displaying salient features and provisions of the act admits loud slogans captured attention of the community. Pamphlets, handbills were distributed during padyatra. Posters were pasted and placed on places of public gathering.

Film Show

Film shows of the Docu-drama "Sau Din Rojgar, Kanooni Adhikar" proved to very effective tool in dissemination of information of grassroots. Film shows were organised in almost all the villages covered under NREGS week by CSO's. They generated lot of curiosity among the villagers as some of them had never been exposed to this kind of media. Film shows proved to be very effective tool in Hazaribagh, Ranchi and Deoghar Clusters which saw a very rainfall during the week.

Rally

Cycle and Motorcycle Rallies were also organised by some of the CSO's. These rallies were able to cover very large area in terms of reach and were able to communicate the message about NREGA to a cross section of villagers. During the rallies pamphlets, handbills and posters were also distributed for awareness generation. School children, Members from Youth Clubs and Project Staff participated in the rallies. All the rallies culminated at Block office to have interface with officials.

Miking

Miking was very effective at local "Haats" and "Bazar" especially in Deoghar cluster. Topography of Santhal pargana is very unique. Local Haats and Bazar attract folks from all villages. Miking proved very effective in communicating the

message about NREGA to the community in villages of Santhal Pargana. NREGA is not implemented in Deoghar district. Using different tools of communications, people over the district were sensitized about NREGA to include Deoghar also into the list of districts for NREGS Implementation. A signature campaign in 5 villages of Rampur, Laharjori, Manjtar, chopkiyari, Dudhani panchayats of Deoghar.

Some case studies/Testmonies

Testimony/Case Study

Shalmi Gagrai lives in village Naragasai panchayat Jrapokhar falling under Sonua block of chaibasa district. She came to know that application forms are being filled up for Job Cards under National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, hence she went to the Gram Sewak and asked for the application form. He replied that the forms are available in the market. So Shalmi went to the local market and purchased the form for Rs.2/-. Shalmi did not know how to fill up the form so she was cheated by a broker/agent and he took Rs.5/- as service charge and filled up her form. She went to the block office to deposit the form but neither the Block Development Officer nor the Gram Sewak was available at the block office. The other staffs were very much present in the block office but they refused to get the form deposited. She was again motivated by another agent and he said that he can get her Job Card application form deposited if she gave him a sum of Rs.20/- only. Shalmi did not have Rs.20/- with her. Further Shalmi had to visit the block office for four to five times in order to deposit the form and meet the Gram Sewak which she finally did. Further Job Cards were made and Shalmi had to visit the block office for another two days to collect her Job Card. This rigorous follow up to the block office for her Job Card made Shalmi lose her daily wages for labour work for a continuous five days. Ultimately Shalmi got her job card after rigorous chase-up

Case Study on Testimony

Village : Rengalbeda
Bolck : Sonua
Dist. : West Singhbhum

I, Amar Singh Purti reside in village Rengalbera, Panchayat – Bhalurungi of the West singhbhum district. I came to learn that application forms for Job Cards were being filled up under national rural employment guarantee scheme in my village. Since, I had no idea about the details of the application to be made, I went to the village Munda to find out the procedure to fill up the Job Card application. I was told by the village Munda that either the husband or the wife can only give application for the Job Card under NREGS. But since I had children (son as well as daughter) above 18 years of age, hence I wanted to know as to whether they can be made applicants or not to which the Munda replied that they can't do so as they are not married. Besides, the son can only be the applicant if he is married and his wife can apply for the Job Card.

Later I visited the Gram Sewak four to five times for the application form for the Job Cards but I did not get any form from him. Training that the time for filling up the application shall lapse, I went to the market and purchased the form for a sum of Rs.2/-, filled up the form etc. Then I got my photograph done from Sonua for Rs.30/- (Rupees thirty only) and went to the Gram Sewak to deposit the application form. The Gram Sewak rebuked me and said that the time for depositing the form has lapsed and he will not take it. But my persuasion and pleading helped and he accepted the application form.

Later when the Job Cards were made and I went to the village Munda to take my Job Card, he mentioned that a sum of Rs.10/- has to be deposited for the Gram Sewak before taking his/her Job Card. I had no other option but to pay a sum of Rs.10/- to the Munda and take my Job Card. Later I went to the Gram Sewak and told him that since I had received the Job Card how and when should I apply for the Job which he got irritated and said that since there is no Job then what is the purpose for applying for the same ? I was astonished by his statement.

Some of the CSO,S conducted surveys in their respective areas.

Some of the Partners had given memorandums to authorities about their complaints

One copy of such memorandum is given below :-

**THE COPY OF MEMORANDUM HAS BEEN ATTACHED SEPARATELY DUE
TO MAILING PROBLEMS.**

a) Fact Sheet of the survey of Palamu block

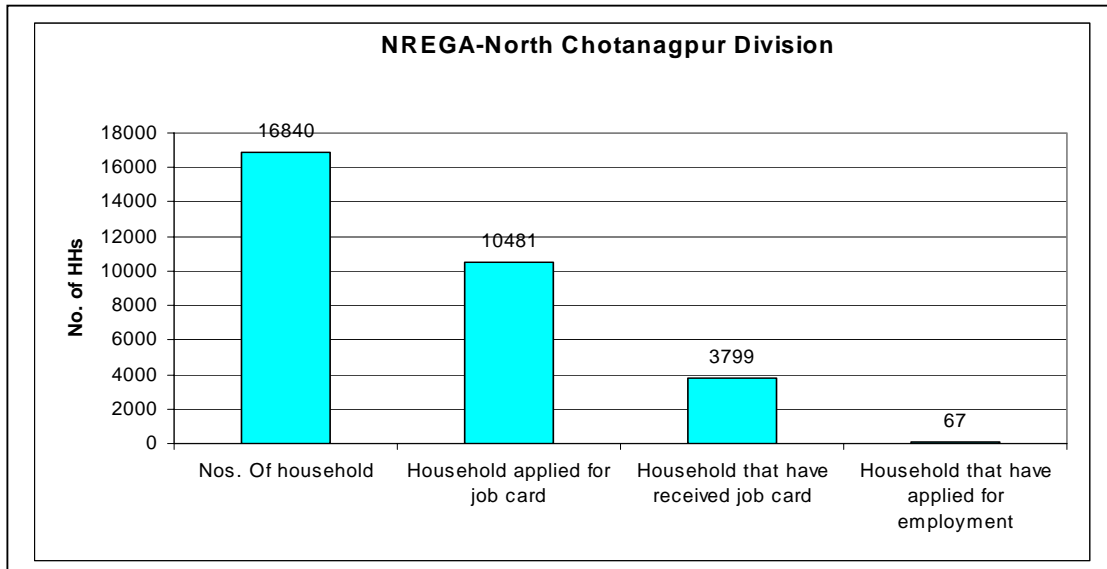
- Total no of surveyed village 21
- Total no of surveyed household 2000
- Total no of households in the selected villages 2959
- Total no of population of selected villages 16250
- Name of the caste in the selected villages – bhuia, Ravidas, Paswan, Oroan, Chero, Muslim, Teli, Kahar and others.

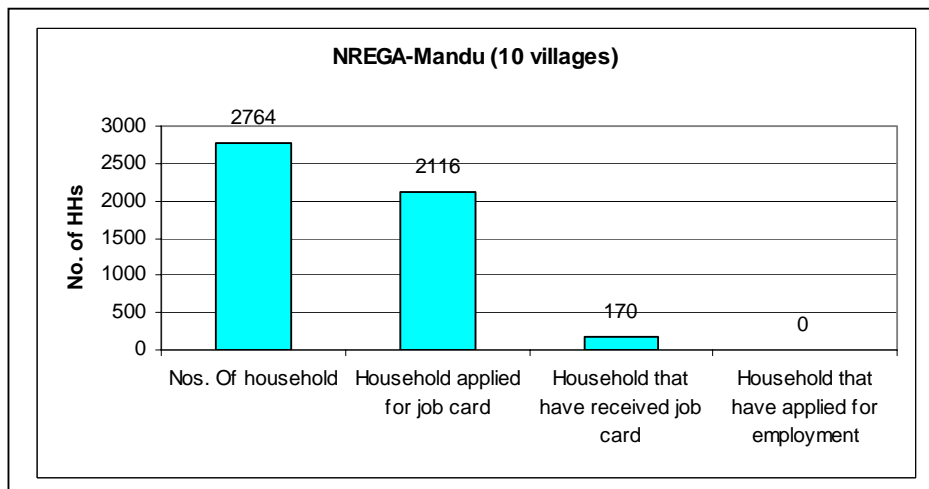
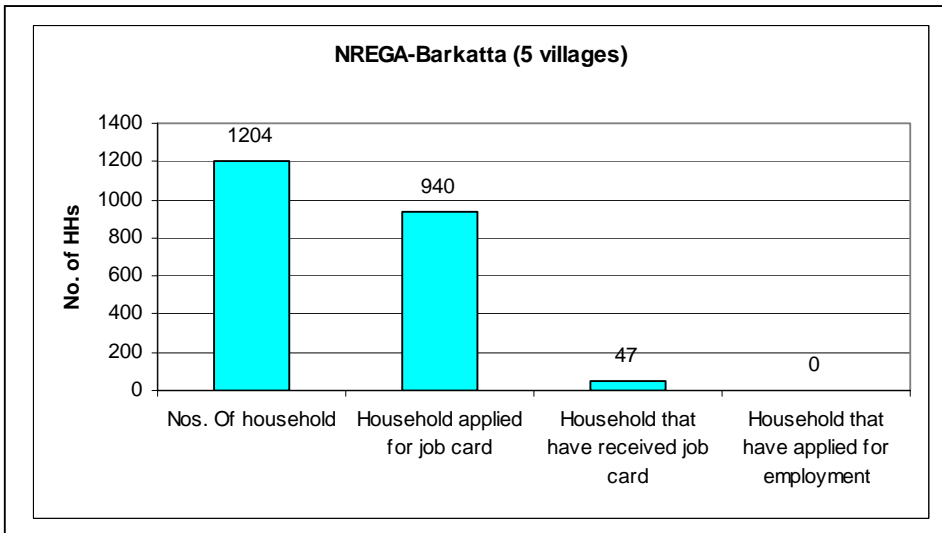
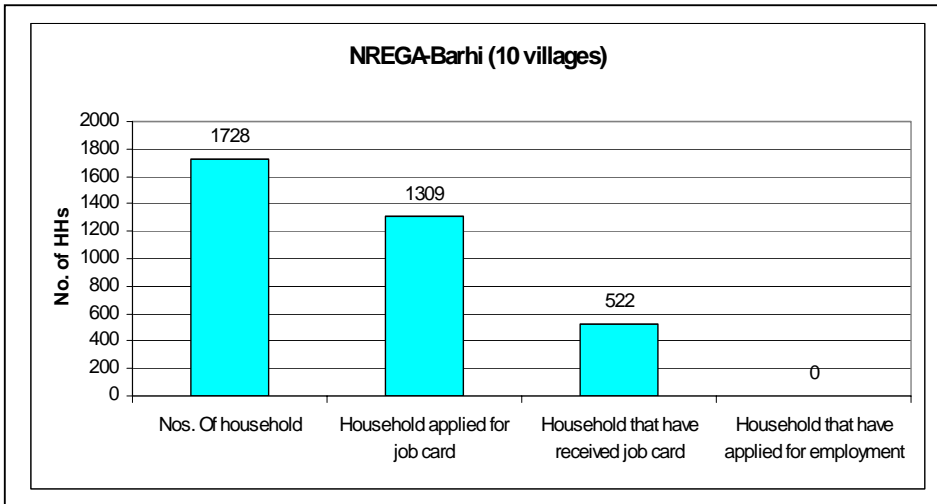
Fact findings of the survey

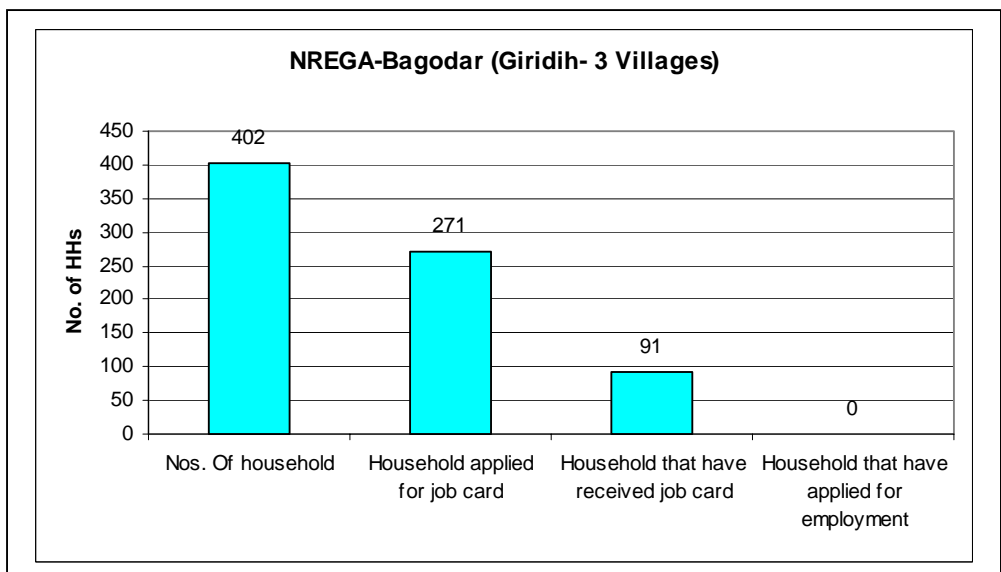
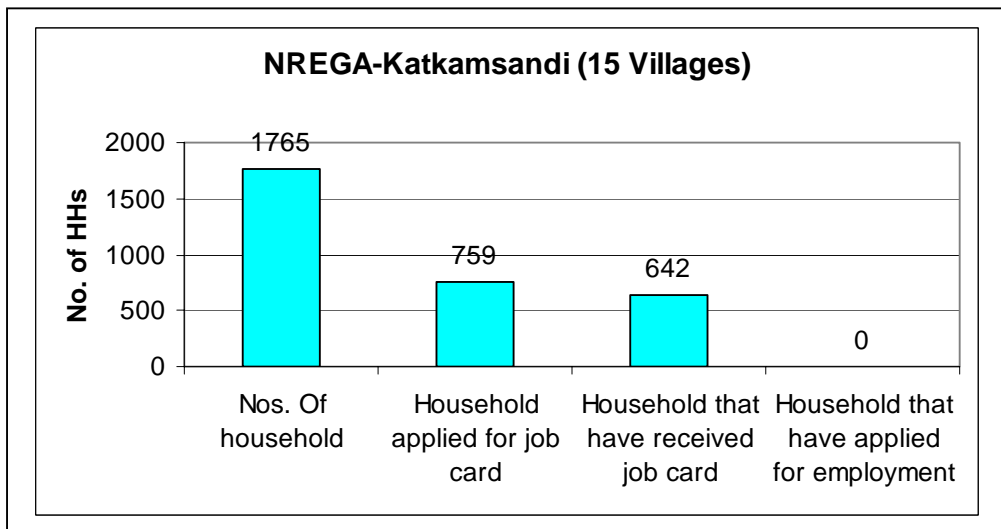
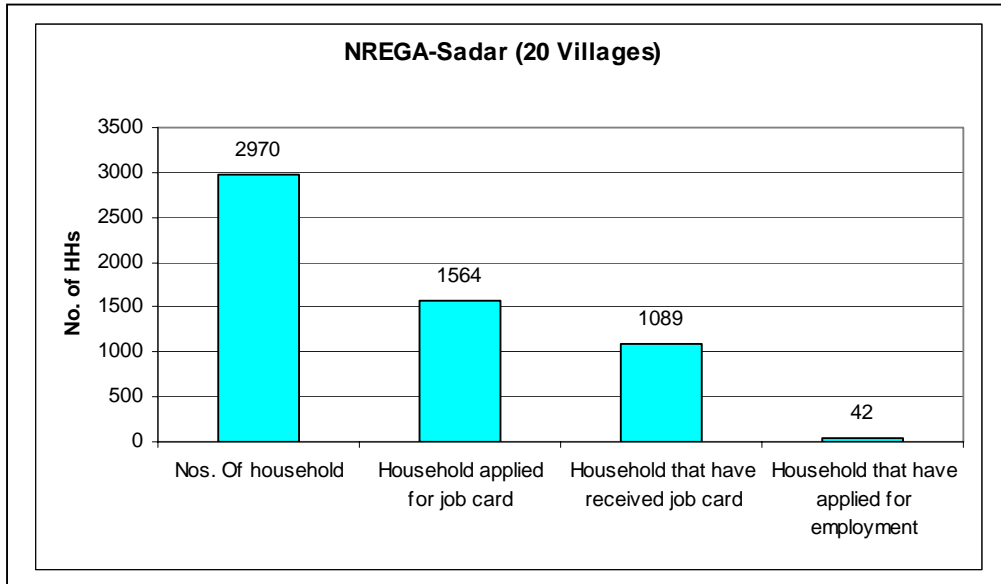
- 80% families had applied for job card.
- Only 50% applied families got job card.
- 80 – 85% families spent money for job card preparation (Min.20 Rs. &Max.150 Rs.)
- 60 – 70 applicants applied for job card.
- After 60 – 70 days for applied job card applicants got job card.
- App. 6% Job card holders applied for job.
- Lack of women participants on NREGA.
- Lacking in information dissemination on NREGA through govt.
- Most of the work had been implemented by contractor/middlemen.
- From 5 villages of selected **21 villages job card had captured by middleman.**

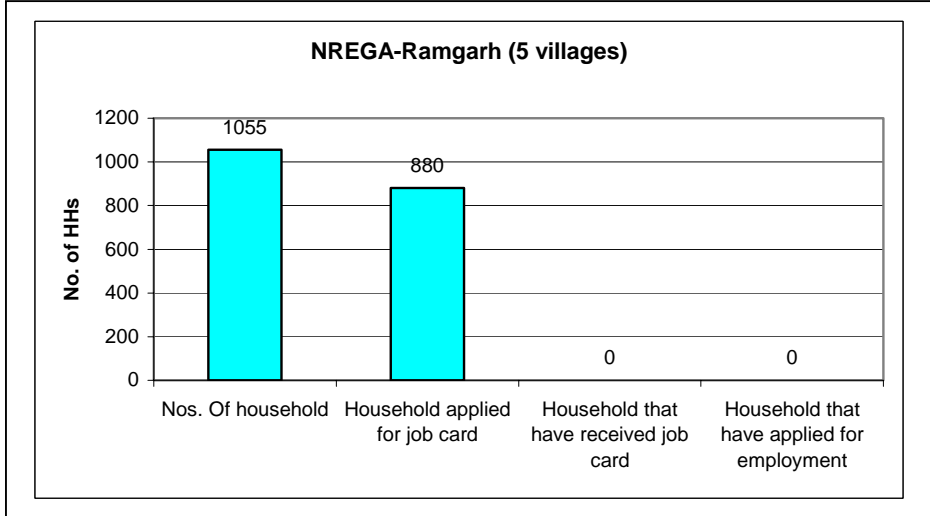
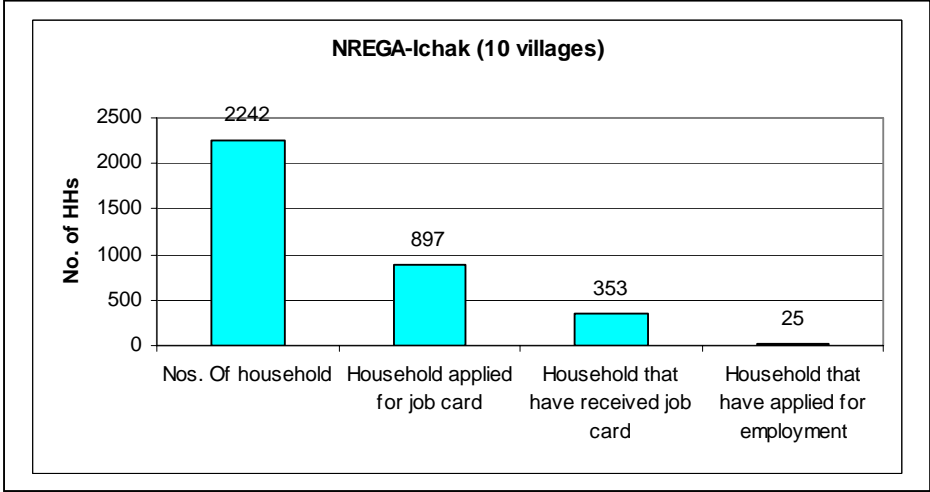
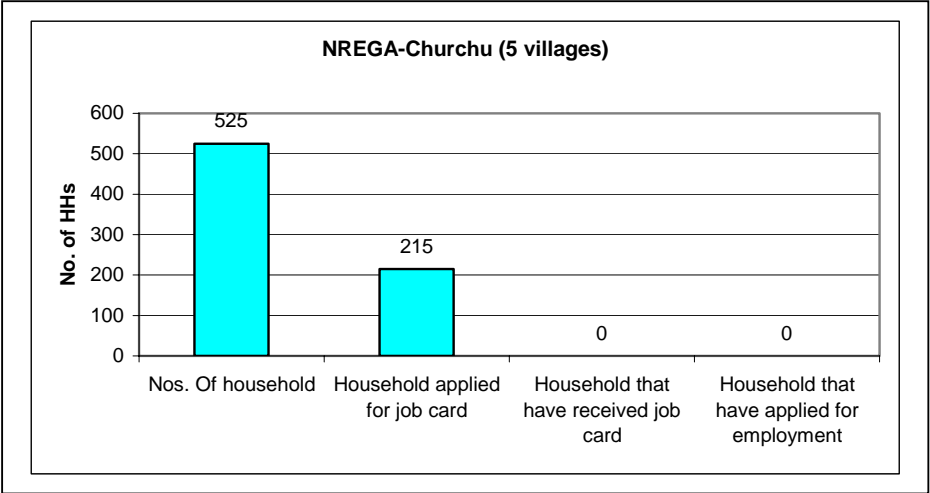
Survey findings North chotanagpur commisionary

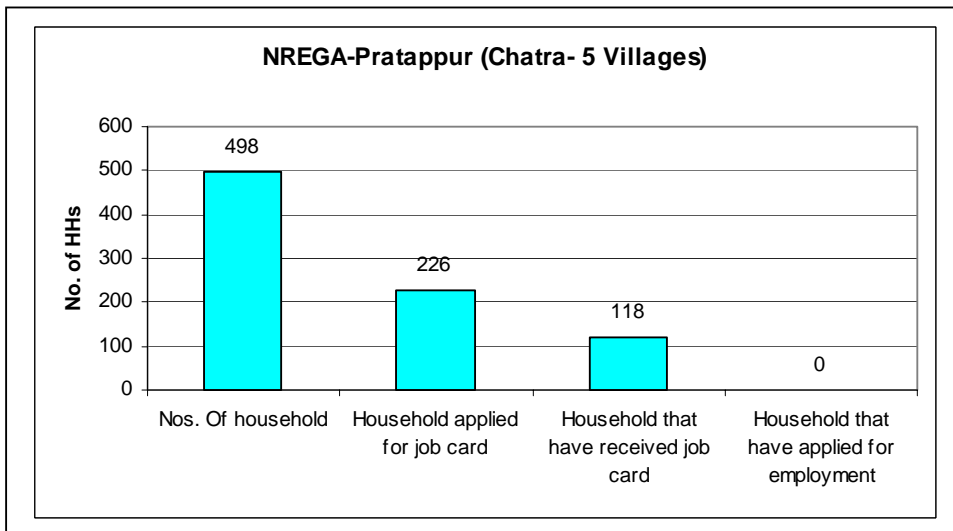
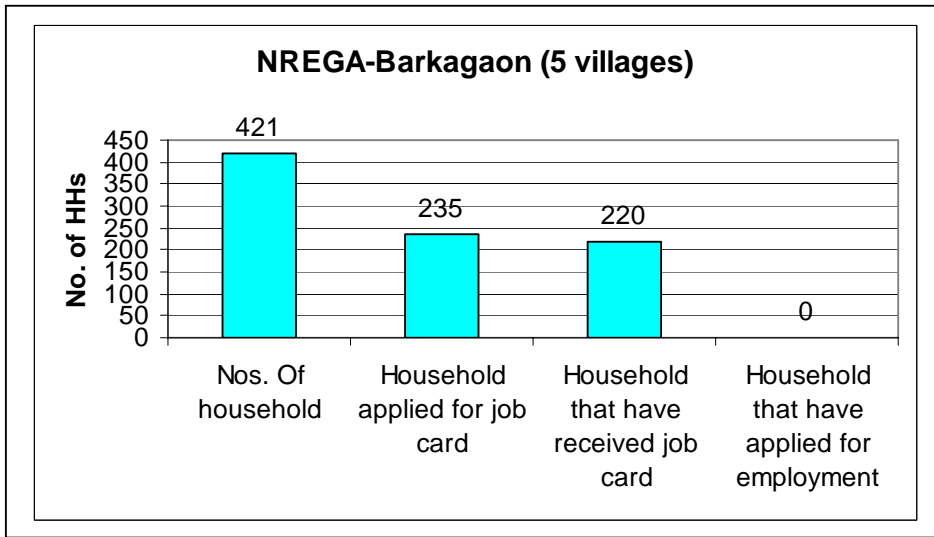
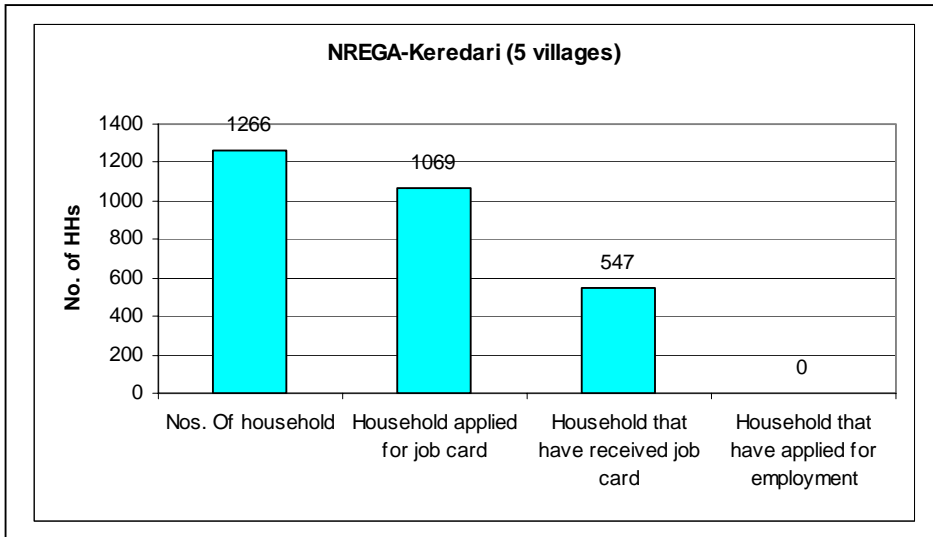
All the 21 partners of NBJK conducted survey in 11 Blocks . The findings are given below:











Study findings Santhal pargana commsiomary

Name of CSO,s(judav, Lok prerna,CDC,Badlao,chetna vikas. LCSS)

No of villages-76

No of households surveyed-3814

Job cards available-574

Study Findings Chaibasa

No of Villages –12

no of families applied for job cards-2765

applicants getting job cards- 1528

Findings South Chotanagpur Commissionerary

Districts surveyed

Ranchi

Simdega

Lohardaga

Gumla

DISTRICT-RANCHI

BLOCK-KANKE

Job card applied 224

Job card distributed 36

BLOCK-BERO

Job card applied 1512

Job card distributed 462

DISTRICT-SIMDEGA

BLOCK-KURDEG

Job card applied 613

Job card distributed 437

DISTRICT-GUMLA

BLOCK-SISAI

Job card applied 424

Job card distributed 50

DISTRICT-LOHARDAGA

BLOCK-KURU

Job card applied 1145

Job card distributed 938

Some Observations on Impact of NREGS Week:

- ▶ The Impact of NREGS week was very positive in spreading the message about the act and generated lot of enthusiasm in community will also allocated the attention of government officials and media. One very peculiar observation made was that not only the CSO's participated very actively in individual capacity but also collectively.
- ▶ The campaign led to greater awareness on NREGS in about more than 550 villages in 20 districts.
- ▶ Villagers in these villages can be said to be well equipped with information about provisions of the act to be able to demand for their right to work.
- ▶ Experience sharing by community led to identification of gaps in implementation of the act.
- ▶ Interface with officials at Block, District Commissioner level will definitely lead to bridging of gaps and speedy implementation of NREGA.
- ▶ IEC Materials like posters, wall writing, and radio programme will remind the community about NREGA.
- ▶ With widespread attention and coverage in media pressure was put on the authorities for speedy implementation measures. The Block officials in number of Blocks handed over the Job Cards to beneficiaries during the week.
- ▶ Interface with senior district officials in Regional workshops will lead to speedier follow-up (In North Chotonagpur commissioner, Commissioner Vishnu Kumar has issued orders for holding review meetings on NREGS with Block Officials in all the districts of Commissioner. He has also assured that provisions would be made for making available the receipt of application for Job Card as well for work.)
- ▶ Setting up of Information Centres on NREGA with help of CSO's in every Panchayat.
- ▶ The final and exact impact will be more visible after the rainy season. During this season the villagers are busy with work in their fields and the authorities also will start providing work after these months. It is hoped that more people will apply for Job Cards and more importantly give applications for work.

- ▶ It is believed that equipped with information about facilities of the act they will be able to also demand for facilities provided under the act at work place.

Issues and Gaps identified regarding implementation of NREGS:

- ▶ Judging from the experience sharing, surveys, collection of testimonials there is no doubt that coming of NREGA has generated great interest in rural areas. There is growing awareness about 100 days of employment and procurement of Job Cards. But from analysis of the information and data gathered it is clear that there is a long journey to follow for successful implementation of the act in the state.

Following issues and gaps have been identified:

A. Lack of awareness about NREGA

Awareness levels about NREGA vary from village to village panchayat to panchayat, Block to block and from district to district. Villages nearer to the block were found to be more aware about NREGS. In some areas none of the respondents had heard of NREGS and were found to be totally ignorant about it.

- ▶ There is low level of awareness about the features of the act. For majority of the respondents who know about job card or had applied for one, were not clear about the entitlements associated with the card. For them it was like a “BPL Card” or any other card which they must have but did not know how to use it.

- ▶ Further, very few people understand and knew that after getting the card they need to apply for the work to get employment. Awareness level about fundamental principle that the applicant has to apply for work was found to be very low, almost negligible. This came out very clearly in the public hearing at Palamu, only about 6% of the applicants knew that in order to get work they had to apply for it. In public hearing all those who presented their complaints said that they had not applied for work. There is very low level of awareness about other entitlements such as employment to be provided within 15 days, work in 5 km. radius, when, where and how to get wage payments, unemployment allowance, facilities at work site, one third works for women, creating jobs for disabled.

- ▶ Even among concerned officials both at Block and District level awareness about basic features of the act is very low. (When women from villages of

Torpa Block marched to BDO's office demanding one third reservation of work for women, the BDO refused to believe them and asked for a copy of guideline for reference. Later a copy of guideline was made available to him through women after which he has promised that after rainy season he will give them priority in work.)

B. Job Cards

Under NREGA all rural households are entitled to apply for a "Job Card". The responsibility of registering applications has been vested with BDO and Panchayat Sevaks in absence of gram sabha as Panchayat elections have not been held in the State. This institutional arrangement is proving to be a major hurdle as there are very few panchayat sevaks who were about it .(This problem was brought to the notice of commissioner, of North Chotanagpur Commissioner Mr. Vishnu Kumar by Mr. Badri Prasad of Chotanagpur Gramodaya Vikas Kendra)

- ▶ In majority of the villages, villagers in all the districts have paid anything ranging from Rs. 20/- to Rs. 120/- for making the job card.
- ▶ Majority of the people have been charged for photographs (from Rs. 30 to Rs. 60). (During interface the officials said that since no fund had been received for photographs the same has been charged from the applicants)
- ▶ People have been charged (from Rs. 2 to Rs. 5) for the application form.
- ▶ Applications are not received on plain paper
- ▶ There is also provision for receiving applications verbally but no where verbal applications have been permitted.
- ▶ There is misinformation that households listed in BPL list are only entitled for the Job Cards where as the act says that anyone who is willing to work as unskilled Labourer can apply for work.
 - ▶ In most of the cases names of disabled persons have not been included in list of Job Cards.
 - ▶ Misinformation was also found in some places only 20 people from one village could apply for job card. Also a tentative date was fixed for receiving the forms for job cards and on its expiry the Applications were not received. People left out do not know what should they do to make the job card. Also in some villages 2-3 cards have been issued in 1 family to different members.
 - ▶ In a few panchayats people have got work without a job card also (though about a few hundred only.)

C. Demand for Work

As mentioned earlier, majority of the people in the survey areas do not understand that in order to get employment / work under NREGA they have to apply for it. As a result while distribution of job cards is well under way in villages of Murhu in Ranchi, Raidih in Gumla, Villages of Kisko block in district of Lohardga, Teltainagar in Simdega, bandgaon in West Singhbhum) But the process of application for work has not begun in most of the places.

- ▶ Those who have got job cards and have applied for work have got work in time (span ranging from 1day Degri Vilage of Torpa Block in Ranchi to 1 month,Konderkera of Kamdera Block in Gumla district.)

- ▶ So far, employment generation under NREGA has been confined to the continuation of existing works. In most of the Blocks the BDO was unable to give figures for current employment under NREGA. But the surveys suggest that works have started only in handful of sites engaging few hundred people only.

- ▶ Also the employment generation under NREGA has been executed or shifted to NFFWP. In some places it has been reported that work has been made available through a contractor which is a violation of the act. It has been observed that in some places work had also been provided by Gram Samiti along with the Block.

Other implementing issues

Other implementing issues and gaps that emerged from field investigations are as following :

Presence of Bicholias:, In a few places Bicholias or middlemen are found to be acting as intermediary between people and block administration. The modus operandi of these middlemen is that they earn commission on getting the work done. It was found that some of them got forms for job cards from the block office and sold them to villagers. They were also found to be delivering the job card to the applicants on behalf of panchayat sevaks. The presence of Bicholias under NREGA is violation of the Act, which clearly states that nowhere presence of bicholias is permitted work not done according to Micro plans.

Work not done according to village plan

It was observed that work are not being done according to village microplans.

Secondly in absence of gram panchayats village plans are also not in place. The act talks about creation of potential assets & overall development at village level under NREGA. But no where no where work has been started in direction.

Lack of facilities at work place: Facilities provided under NREGA for labourers like shade, safe drinking water, first aid, crèche was not provided anywhere . The act also talks about deputing one woman to look after children below age of 5 years, in sites where there are more than 5 children.

Lack of mutual co-ordination between authorities at different levels:

During interface with officials at Block and district level it was observed that there is lack of coordination due to lack of uniformity of message. Consensus is lacking on the provisions / features of the act. The state has not finalised widespread guidelines as yet. There is urgent need that the state finalises the guidelines at the earliest.

The state NREGA guidelines had to be finalised by 2-Aug-06 but more than one month has passed but the state guideline has not been finalised nor has the state council been formed.

Need for Widespread awareness generation

During NREGS week celebration it was been observed that almost in all the districts there is need for a concentrated awareness campaign on priority basis . The Government and mass media should carry out a wide spread publicity campaign. So that people can take advantage of the benefits of the Act.

Some of the issues that need immediate attention are

a. Formation of state council.

The formation of State Council had to be done in six months after implementation of Act but more than 7 months have passed, the State has not yet completed the process of formation of State Council. As a result the implementation of Act is being delayed and there is no mechanism for redressal of complaints and gaps under the scheme.

b. Finalisation of State Guidelines

The State has yet to finalize the NREGA guidelines. As a result the officials at District & Block level are not well informed about the provisions of the Act which

is causing the gaps at implementation level. Due to it disabled people are not at all included and given priority as job applicants and applicants for Job Cards.

c. Need for Wide Spread Awareness by State on NREGS

There is immediate need that the State should carry Awareness Campaigns about the Act in rural areas, so that maximum benefits be taken by rural people.

d. Upgradation of State Website

The State website is not upgraded and except Palamau dist. shows some data, otherwise all the columns in the website show **Not Applicable** and figures of **Zero**.