

Chapter 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The majority people of India as well as the state of Assam live in rural areas in which considerable sections belong to below poverty line. According to the 2011 Census, there is 85.92 % rural population in Assam. In such situation, the Central as well as State Government of India has introduced various wage and self employment programmes basically after Independence for socio-economic upliftment of rural people. The main poverty alleviation programmes of India which were adopted after Independence are CDP, IRDP, JRY, RLEGP, NREP, NREGA etc, which aim to redistribute the rural income and accomplish a massive upliftment of the rural people. The present study is based on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which provides 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The present study entitled, “Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in Jorhat district of Assam” is designed with the objectives i. e. the organizational set up and planning of NREGA, implementation of NREGA in Jorhat, Socio-economic background of the beneficiaries and impact of the Act among the rural people. Thus, the study has attempted to find out how the planning of NREGA is formulated; how the Act has been implemented in Jorhat as well as to what extent the Act has made an impact on the rural people in Jorhat district of Assam. The study has revealed that the Act has not been properly implemented in rural areas. The Act has been unable to make impact among the rural people of Jorhat district of Assam. On the other hand, the planning of NREGA in Assam is ad-hoc in nature and suffers from a number of shortcomings such as lack of planning skills at

district and block levels, lack of training in capacity building as well as proper orientation among the officials who are entrusted to draw the blue print of the programme at the field level.

The Summary of the Chapter '**The Organizational Set up and Planning of NREGA**' is given below

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is the flagship rural employment guarantee programme of the Government of India. The scheme aims at better livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The section 16 (3) (4) of the Act states that every Gram Panchayat should prepare a development plan and maintain a shelf of works and forward it to Programme Officer for security and preliminary approval prior to the commencement of the year in which it is proposed. The development plan is like a rolling plan, since the approved shelf of projects may carry over from one financial year to the next.

But NREGA operational guidelines envisaged preparation of shelf of projects after the assessment of local needs and infrastructural needs and infrastructural gaps in the area. The major responsibility of preparing this shelf of projects is entrusted to the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). The preparations are assumed as a continuous process and include adequate number of projects which could be executed during the course of plan period or at least three years on the basis of the average allocations available to the district. The works in the shelf of projects are expected to cover all blocks and areas within the block to the extent possible so that a balanced growth could take place in the entire district and employment could be available to employment seekers as near to the village as possible. During the preparation of shelf of project of the Act, a conscious effort has to be made particularly to include those areas which would benefite the weaker section of the society with priority to the areas

predominantly inhabited by Scheduled Caste, Schedule Tribes and landless labourers. The workers meant for the direct benefit to the SCs/STs has invariably to be earmarked in the shelf of projects. The projects had to be arranged in an order of priority and no work outside could be taken up for execution under the programme. An annual action plan for the district is to be prepared on the basis of the shelf of projects by the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) before the commencement of the financial year. Thus, as per the norms of the programme planning the major task was the preparation of shelf of projects by DRDA.

In the context of Assam however the notion of shelf of projects was not understood in its original meaning and an adhoc arrangement of preparing an annual action plan on a year to year basis was adopted which led to a number of dilemmas. It is therefore felt that it would be more appropriate to explore first the actual planning activities in the field level.

Throughout the state schemes were initially suggested by the people individually or jointly by indicating their preferences for specific schemes in the area. After the comprising of shelf of projects on the basis of recommendations of the Gram Sabha to Gram Panchayat, the Gram Panchayat has to forward the development plan with its priorities to the Programme Officer (PO) for preliminary scrutiny. The PO has to consolidate the Gram Panchayat proposals and the proposals to the Intermediate Panchayat into a block plan and after the approval of the Intermediate Panchayat, forward it to the District Programme Coordinator. The DPC consolidates the Block Plans and proposal from other implementing agencies and district Panchayat should approve the block wise shelf of projects. The whole procedure is time consuming and caused long delays in approval of the schemes at the district level. The delays in the approval of the schemes could be minimized to some extent in comparison to the earlier stage phases but because of ad-hocism in the planning process, particularly in preparation of annual action plan on a year to year basis in place of shelf of projects

remained a major weakness of NREGA planning in Assam. It also reflects the lack of planning skills which are found among the implementing agencies in the context of Block and District level. It has been found during the study that the GP and Block Levels officials were quite unaware about the know-how the schemes are planned. This is more evident from the fact that annual action plan could not be prepared anywhere before the commencement of the financial year in which NREGA works had to be taken up. The shelf of project is not prepared from the GP to District level. In Jorhat district, the Project Director of DRDA (PD) argued that the shelf of projects was nothing but an annual action plan which had to be prepared every year by DRDA. From the view of PD, there are no differences between shelf of projects and the annual action plan. This shows the level of confusion among the officials of the implementing agency about the programme. In this regard, *Singh. V. P. (1995)* in this study mentioned that the concept of shelf of projects was not clearly understood throughout the State. The practice was of preparing annual actions plan every year and the whole process of planning was repeated year by year. It caused not only delays in the preparation of annual actions plans every year but also affected the quality of assets created under the programme as most of the works could be started at the fag end of the financial year and under pressure. As a result quality could not be maintained in a number of NREP works. The whole process is still running in the planning process of NREGA in the context of Jorhat district of Assam.

Another weakness of the planning of NREGA in Assam has been observed in the preparation of estimates of the schemes in which apart from technical dimensions of the scheme it was imperative to prepare the estimates in terms of wage and non wage components of the cost and estimated employment in person days to be generated by the work. In the studying of schematic plan under NREGA in Jorhat, the estimates of the schemes are prepared by Block Level Steering Committee (BLSC) after the recommendation of GP, but they had no much interest and prepared

estimates of the schemes in their own style without following NREGA norms in this regard.

Thus, the planning of NREGA in Assam is ad-hoc in nature and suffers from a number of shortcomings such as lack of planning skills at district and block levels, lack of training in capacity building and proper orientation among the officials who were entrusted to draw the blue print of the programme at the field level. The lack of participation of the people in the planning of NREGA is also one of the barriers for implementation of the scheme. Although priority was given to the building of rural link roads in the context of national to block level, no effort has been made to prepare a shelf of projects as well as inventories of the existing roads. The whole process is also found other the schematic plan (other permissible work) which are taken under NREGA.

The Summary of the Chapter '**Implementation of NREGA in Jorhat**' is given below:

The chapter has attempted to explore the implementation of NREGA in terms of permissible works, financial performance, person days etc. The study has tried to explore the implementation of NREGA in Assam as well as Jorhat and Kaliapani Development Block in general and Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat in particular. Regarding providing of employment under the Act, the state as well as district scenario reveals that 100 % people who have applied for jobs have got employment under the Act. It is found regarding the State, District, Block and Panchayat level data that the preferences are given to rural connectivity due to lack of proper communication in rural areas.

It is found from the state level scenario that a little more than one-third having 34.2 % schematic plan was successfully completed under the Act during the period of 2009-10. In the context of Jorhat district of Assam, 512 schematic plans were prepared of which 218 (42.58 %) schemes were successfully completed while in case of the

year 2010-11, 782 schematic plans were formulated of which only 69 having less than one-tenth 8.82 % Schematic plans were success. It is also found in the study that out of total 43 (19 in 2009-10 and 24 in 2010-11 year) total schemes in Kaliapani Development Block; all the schemes were not successfully completed under the Act. It caused not only delays in the preparation of annual action plans every year but also affected the quality of assets created under the programme as most of the works could be started at the fag end of the financial year and under pressure. As a result quality could not be maintained in all the permissible works taken up under the Act. Hence, it is observed from the study that majority of the schematic plans were not successful in case of Assam. Apart from this, it has been observed that five year perspectives plans as well as annual plans have been prepared under the Act. It has also been observed that priorities of works mentioned in the annual plan is influenced by the block and district officials, instead of Gram Sabha. The five years perspectives plan in the context of district level is not found from the office of DRDA. Regarding this, there is a lack of awareness among of the some implementing agencies on how the plans and priorities in the plans can be modified by the Gram Sabha. It is also mentionable that no much major deviations were observed in the context of wage and material cost (60:40) in case of state, district, block level during the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 year.

Out of availability of total fund in all the levels, it is found that finance is not a constraint in implementation of NREGA and that the State Government of Assam has not been able to fully utilize allocations made under these programmes. It is revealed that in the entire district, state as well as block level a huge amount of fund was left unutilized and carried over for the next financial year. It has been seen to be a continuous trend year by year. Due to this reason, majority of the schematic plans taken up under the Act have not been successful.

It is also found regarding implementation of the Act, the lack of orientation of DRDA and block officials in rural development programmes are major factors

responsible for such launches in execution of rural development programme. There is a need to develop a cadre-based structure for planning and implementation of rural development programmes in the state. It is noticed during the study of Kaliapani Development Block and Panchayats that the officials do not regularly inspect the schemes under the Act. The person days provide an actual picture about the implementation of the Act. The average person days of Assam in the year of 2009-2010 were 34.29 days as per households and only 26.16 days of average in the context of 2010-2011 year. In 2009-10, 11.69 Lakhs person days were provided for the rural people of Jorhat district of which 17.08 average person days are taken by per households. In the context of 2010-2011 year, total 11.12 Lakhs person days were provided and 24.23 days as the average persons days. The study indicates that the Act has not been properly implemented in the rural areas of Assam as well as Jorhat District of Assam. They were deprived of 100 days of work in a financial year which are to be provided according to the guide line of the Act. The study regarding 100 days availed employment in a financial year, in 2009-2010 is only 6.09 % households while 2.51 % total household had completed 100 days of work in a financial year of 2010-2011 in case of Assam. In the context of Jorhat district 0.22 percent (2009-10), 0.68 % (2010-11) household completed 100 days of work in a financial year. On the other hand in case of Kaliapani Development Block, no household have got 100 days of work in the financial year of 2009-2010 & 2010-2011. It may be said from the study that the Act cannot contribute to the economic upliftment of rural people.

Gaon Panchayat is the vital implementing agent of the Act. Regarding implementation of the Act in the Panchayat, two schematic plans were taken by the No. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat in two financial years. Regarding financial performances in the construction of Bogoriguri road under Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat in 2009-2010 year plan, the wage and material ratio were respectively 41.34 % and 58.66 %. The data of wage and material ratio provides a deviations

regarding implementation of the Act in the Panchayat. Because, the material cost can not be exceeded 40 % of total cost. On the other hand, only 20 % work was physically progress in case of Ring Bandh of Teok river in the year of 2010-11.

It has been found from the study of Gaon Panchayat that the demand of jobs is manipulated. The finding of the field indicates that people are not aware that they have to demand for work. As of now people are getting work because a good numbers of works has been started in different places. There is also apathy regarding Panchayat in providing receipts against the application given by the workers demanding jobs. It has been also found from the study that some of the beneficiaries have not received their job card in the study No. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat. It is also observed during the field study that the response time in providing employment under the Act is not satisfactory.

The chapter '**Socio-economic Background of the Study beneficiaries**' may now be summarized as follows:

The present study has been conducted in three villages of No. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat for observing the impact of the Act among the beneficiaries of rural people. In the present study, socio-economic background represents the economic and social scenario of the NREGA beneficiaries in terms of Age Group, Sex, Marital Status, Religion, Caste category, Language known, Educational qualification, types of family, occupation, Monthly income, total land, domestic animals and bank account etc.

As far as sex of the beneficiaries in three villages is concerned, all the three villages' beneficiaries are more than nine-tenth male beneficiaries, followed by less than one-tenth percentage of female beneficiaries. The overall study of three villages reveals that majority of the beneficiaries (95.30 %) are male while only (4.70 %) are female beneficiaries. It indicates a negative scenario about the participation of women in the Act.

Regarding caste group among the NREGA beneficiaries in three villages, in village No. 1, majority beneficiaries (62.78 %) are General caste, followed by 37.22 % who are OBC. In the context of village no. 2, more than three-fifth consisting 60.79 % beneficiaries are OBC while 39.21 beneficiaries are in General Caste. In village No. 3, majority 65.21 % are OBC, 23.92 % General Caste while the rest 10.87 % belongs to ST. The overall studies in the three villages reveal that more than half percent (65.21 %) are General Caste, followed by 46.20 who are OBC. On the other hand, except village no. 1, the majority beneficiaries belong to the OBC categories.

Educational qualification is one of the indicators for observing educational categories who got the majority work under the Act. As far as educational qualification among the beneficiaries is concerned, most of the beneficiaries consisting 53.33 % in village no. 1 studied up to Primary level, while 16.67 % have attained education up to High School Level, 15.0 % beneficiaries has attained Higher Secondary, and 5.56 % does not have any formal education. Apart from this, 7.22 % Graduate level and 1.11 % each of the beneficiaries have Post Graduate and Technical level of education. In village no. 2, educational qualification of most of the beneficiaries is up to Primary Level with 47.05 %, while 19.61 % have High School level of education, 13.73 % beneficiaries have education up to Higher Secondary level, 9.80 % have Graduate level, 7.85 % total beneficiaries does not have any formal education and the rest 1.96 % beneficiaries have Technical level of education. The study reveals in the context of village No. 3 that a little more than two-fifth having 41.30 % are educated up to Primary level, followed by High School level (21.74%) and Higher Secondary (17.39%). The percentage of illiterate beneficiaries is 6.52 and graduate 10.87 % only and rest a few 2.17 % have Graduate Level of education. The overall studies of three villages indicate that more than half percent having (50.18 %) beneficiaries are educated up to Primary level.

The monthly income of the beneficiaries has determined the economic status in the society. For that purpose, the present study observes the economic conditions of those who want to do work under the Act. It has been found from the study that majority of the beneficiaries in the context of village no. 1 and village no. 2 are within Rs. 1000-2500 which constitutes 46.11 % and 58.83 % respectively. In village no. 1, one-third of beneficiaries have monthly income within Rs. 1000, followed by 13.89 having Rs. 2500-4000, 3.89 % have Rs. 4000-5500 monthly income and rest 2.78 % have more than Rs. 5500 monthly income. In the context of village no. 2, the number of beneficiaries between the income level within Rs. 1000 are 19.61 %, within the Rs. 2500-4000 Monthly Category income group are 6 (11.76 %), 3 (5.88 %) beneficiaries has monthly income Rs. between 4000-5500, only 2 (3.92 %) beneficiaries' monthly income has more than Rs. 5500. In village no. 3, the study show that more than half (52.17 %) of the beneficiaries have within Rs. 1000 monthly income, followed by 28.26 % who have Rs. 1000-2500 monthly income and 10.87 % monthly income is Rs. 2500-4000. Among the remaining, 6.52 % are Rs. 4000-5500 monthly income and other only one beneficiary (2.17 %) have more than 5500 monthly income categories. It's also mentionable regarding families monthly income that majority of the beneficiaries' families' income in the context of village 1 & village 2 within Rs. 1000-2500 with 40% & 54.90 % respectively, majority of the beneficiaries in the context of village no. 1, village no. 2 and village no. 3 have within Rs. 1000-2500 of monthly income with 46.11 %, 49.02 % and 41.30 % respectively. In village No. 1, one third of beneficiaries have monthly income within Rs. 1000, followed by 13.89 % having Rs. 2500-4000, 3.89 % have Rs. 4000-5500 monthly income and rest 2.78 % have more than Rs. 5500 monthly income. In the context of village no. 2, the number of beneficiaries between the income level within Rs. 1000 are 29.41 %, within the Rs. 2500-4000 monthly category income group are 6 (11.76 %), 3 (5.88 %) beneficiaries has monthly income Rs. between 4000-5500, only 2 (3.92 %) beneficiaries monthly

income has more than Rs. 5500. In village no. 3, the study shows that a little less than two-fifth (39.13 %) percent of the beneficiaries have within Rs 1000 monthly income, followed by 28.26 % who have Rs. 1000-2500 monthly income and 10.87 % total beneficiaries monthly income is Rs. 2500-4000. Among the remaining, 6.52 % have Rs. 4000-5500 monthly income and remaining only one beneficiary (2.17 %) has more than Rs. 5500 monthly income categories.

It has been found from overall beneficiaries' views regarding monthly income of the beneficiaries' family, majority of the beneficiaries' families' income in the context of village 1 & village 2 within Rs. 1000-2500 with 40% & 54.90 % respectively. In village No. 1, there are 24.44 % beneficiaries who have monthly family income within Rs. 1000, 18.89 % have monthly income between Rs. 2500-4000, 8.89 % have Rs. 4000-5500 monthly family income, 3.33 % have Rs. 5500-7000 and 2.22 % each of the beneficiaries have between Rs. 7000-9000 and above Rs. 9000 of families income. In village no. 2, 11.77 % beneficiaries families have earned Rs. 1000 monthly income, 23.53 % have between Rs. 1000-2500, 1.96 % have above Rs. 9000 and 3.92 % of each of total beneficiaries have Rs. 4000-5500 and Rs. 7000-9000 of monthly family income. In village no. 3, the study shows that majority (36.96 %) of the beneficiaries families have within Rs. 1000 monthly income, followed by 30.44 % who have between Rs. 1000-2500 monthly income and 8.70 % each of the beneficiaries' family monthly income is between Rs. 2500-4000 & Rs. 4000-5500. Among the remaining, 6.52 % have between Rs. 7000-9000 monthly income and other only two each of the beneficiaries (4.34 %) have between Rs. 5500-7000 and more than Rs. 9000 monthly family income categories.

Regarding occupation of beneficiaries is concerned, out of 180 beneficiaries in village no. 1, majority of the beneficiaries (55.0 %) are agriculturalist, followed by more than one-fourth (25 percent) of the beneficiaries' are house wives/ students/ unemployed person, a little more than one-tenth (11.67 %) unskilled workers, while

5.56 % of the beneficiaries petty business, 2.22 % white color workers and 1.11 percent each of the beneficiaries skilled workers and govt. jobs. In village no. 2, 52.94 % have agriculture as a main occupation while 25.49 % are house wives/ students/ unemployed person, 11.77 % unskilled workers. Among the remaining, 3.92 % each beneficiaries are white collar and petty business as a main occupation, and only 1.96 % is skilled workers. The study also reveals in village no. 3 that more than one-third (28.26 %) of the beneficiaries are housewives, students and unemployed persons, followed by almost half percent of total beneficiaries are engage in agricultural sector. Among the remaining, 10.87 % are unskilled worker, 4.34 % are white collars, and 2.17 % are engage in business sector. The overall studies of three villages' reveal that more than two-fifth beneficiaries consisting 45.12 % are depended on agriculture as a main occupation.

Father's occupation determines the economic status of his son/ daughter. As regards beneficiaries fathers main occupation is concerned, in both village No.1 and village No. 2, majority of the beneficiaries father consisting 58.33 % and 43.13 % respectively are unemployed person. In village no. 1, 27.22 % are agriculturalists, 3.33 % have government jobs while 6.66 % of beneficiaries' fathers are engage in unskilled works as a main occupation. Among the remaining, 2.22 % beneficiaries father have engaged white color work, 1.11 % of total beneficiaries fathers are retired person and a few 0.56 % each of the beneficiaries fathers have skilled works and petty business as a main occupation. The study also shows in case of village no. 2, 31.37 % have agriculture as a main occupation, 9.80 % have unskilled worker, 5.89 % have engaged in petty business while 3.92 % have white colors worker. On the other hand, one each of beneficiaries' father (1.96 %) is engaged in respectively Government Jobs, Skilled works and retired person. It is found in case of village no. 3 that more than one-third (36.95 %) of beneficiaries father are agriculturalist, followed by 30.43 % unemployed persons. Among the remaining, 8.70 % are Government worker, 8.70 % are white

collars, and 8.70 % are unskilled worker. There are no representatives of skilled workers as a fathers' main occupation.

Majority of the beneficiaries of village no. 1 (59.44 %), village no. 2 (64.71 %) and village no. 3 (50 %) have Kuccha house pattern. In village no. 1, 20.56 % beneficiaries have Assam Type, 12.22 % have Semi Pacca, 6.67 % have 'L' Pattern while only 1.11 % have RCC housing pattern. In the context of village No. 2, 13.72 % each of the beneficiaries have Assam Type and Semi Pacca housing pattern while the rest 7.85 % having 'L' Pattern. The study also reveals in village no. 3 that 32.61 % beneficiaries have Semi Pacca, followed by 10.87 % have Assam Type and 6.52 % who have 'L' Pattern of house.

It has been found regarding electric facilities of the beneficiaries that majority of the beneficiaries in the context of village no. 1 (75.56 %) and village no. 2 (72.55 %) have their own electric facility. In the context of village no. 3, a little less than three-fourth (73.92 %) do not have their electric facility while a little more than one-fourth 26.08 % have electric facility. The overall studies of three villages reveal that 66.67 % beneficiaries have electric facility, followed by 33.21 % who do not have their electric facility.

Land also helps to determine the economic status of the beneficiaries. As own land in villages is concerned, cent percent of total beneficiaries in village no. 1 and village no. 2 have own land in the village. In the context of village no. 3, only one beneficiaries consisting 2.17 % do not have their own land in the village and the beneficiary stays in their relative's house.

From the overall study regarding total size of land among the beneficiaries, it has been found in the context of village no. 1 that majority of the beneficiaries (57.22 %) own 6-10 Bighas of total size of land, followed by a little more than one-fifth (25.56 %) of the beneficiaries who own within 5 Bighas of land, 13.33 % beneficiaries having 11-15 Bighas of land, 3.33 % of the beneficiaries own 16-20 Bighas of land

while only remaining 0.56 % beneficiaries own 21-25 Bighas of land. In the context of village no. 2 and village no. 3, majority of the beneficiaries have 0-5 Bighas of total land with 49.02 % and 56.53 % respectively. In village no.2, 20 beneficiaries having percentage of 39.21 own 6-10 Bighas of land while 5.88 % each beneficiaries having 11-15 Bighas and 16-20 Bighas of own land. In village no. 3, a little less than one-fifth consisting 19.57 % beneficiaries own 11-15 Bighas of total size of land, 15.21 % beneficiaries having 6-10 Bighas of land while 6.52 % beneficiaries own 16-20 Bighas of land. The remaining 2.17 % beneficiaries own 21-25 Bighas of total land.

As regards the overall attitudes of the beneficiaries towards the crops grown, it has been found that majority of the beneficiaries of all three villages NREGA beneficiaries have grown both Sali and Rabi Crops with the percentages of respectively village No. 1 is 45.46%, village no. 2 is 41.17 % & village no. 3 is 36.96 %. The overall studies of three villages reveal that majority three villages' beneficiaries consisting 43.32 % have grown Sali + Rabi crops, followed by 36.10 % who have grown only Sali crops. Among the remaining of three villages, 2.53 % have grown Rabi crops, 1.44 % each of beneficiaries have grown both Sali + Ahu and Ahu + Rabi crops while 6.50 % of total beneficiaries of three villages have no responses regarding the crops grown. Thus, the study reveals that Sali and Rabi are the main crops which are produced mostly by the beneficiaries of the three villages.

The Chapter '**The Impact of the Act among rural people**' may now be summarized as follows:

The study has been conducted in three villages of Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat namely Komar Khatowal, Dulia Gaon and Gohain Pather. It is revealed during the study that the two villages' beneficiaries namely Komar Khatowal and Dulia Gaon have got job under the Act. On the other hand, the beneficiaries of Gohain Pather have not got job under the Act. One of the observations found in the study is

that there were inner conflicts among the members of GP. For the situation, majority of the beneficiaries have not got job under the Act.

NREGA as a wage employment programme has made an impact in every sphere of life of the rural people. The study has shown the three villages beneficiaries' views regarding the impact of the Act among the rural people. As per the beneficiaries' views regarding awareness of NREGA, it is revealed from the study that majority of the beneficiaries of the villages are not aware about the key provisions of the Act. According to the provision of the Act, social audit of the scheme has to be done by the Gram Sabha. It may be said that effective social audit is an important instrument for effective implementation of NREGA. But in respective Panchayat, there has been no social audit after completion of work as reported by the beneficiaries. Regarding views of providing the social audit of the scheme among the NREGA beneficiaries in three villages, in village no. 1, majority beneficiaries (84.79 %) has known, followed by 15.21 % who have come to know that social audit of the scheme has been done. In the context of village no. 2, more than half percent consisting 58.82 % beneficiaries are not responded in this regard. In village no. 3, majority 86.96 % have not known for providing the social audit of the scheme, while the remaining 13.04 % have reported that social audit of the scheme has been done.

As time taken for obtaining registration number/Job Card after submission of application is concerned, more than 75 % beneficiaries in the context of village No. 1 & 2 have taken their registration number/ job card after 15 days of submission of application. However, 80.43 % have not received their job card after submission of application. An interesting data resulting from the study is that the person days is less than 25 in spite of 100 days which are to be provided according to the guideline of the Act. The study focuses that the Act has not been properly implemented in the area and hence it can not impact among the rural people.

As awareness of gender equality is concerned, majority 71.11 % of total beneficiaries in village no.1 are aware about the gender equality regarding wage payment, followed by 26.11 % who are not aware about this provision while the rest 2.78 % of total beneficiaries have not reported about this provision of the Act in the context of village no. 1. In case of village no. 2, 82.35 % are aware, followed by 15.69 % who are not aware and remaining 1.96 % beneficiaries have not reported regarding this key provision of the Act. Apart from this, a half percent beneficiary in the context of village number 3 is aware of the provision of gender equality of the Act. On the other hand, a little more than two-fifth (41.30 %) beneficiaries are not aware, while the rest 8.70 % have not responded in the key provision of the Act. Regarding the awareness of 10 % extra wage payment condition under the Act if work is place more than 5 km radius, it is found in case of village no. 1 that a little less than seven-tenth having 69.45 % are not aware while 26.11 % of total beneficiaries are aware about this provision of the Act and another 4.44 % have not reported about the 10 % of extra wage payment condition if work place is more than 5 km radius. In case of village no.2, 82.35 % is aware, 15.69 % are not aware and rest a few 1.96 % have not reported about this provision of extra wage payment in the Act. In context of village no. 3, 93.47 % is aware while 6.53 % are not aware about this provision of extra wage payment in the Act. Apart from these, a total number of 50.98 % beneficiaries in village no.2 and 50 % beneficiaries in village no.3 are aware that they are entitled for minimum wage for agricultural labourers in the state. However, in village no. 1, 51.11 % are not aware about minimum wage rate for agricultural labourers in the state.

Regarding the awareness about the validity of job card, more than eighty percent beneficiaries in all the three villages reported that job card is valid for five years. The percentages are respectively 83.89 %, 90.19 % and 91.30 %. Beside, a total 47.22 % in village no.1, 33.33 % in village no.2 and 45.65 % beneficiaries in village no. 3 reported that they are aware regarding the providing of job card/registration number

after 15 days of date of application. On the other hand, all the beneficiaries in village no.2 and village no.3 have obtained the work in their own village. On the other hand, all the beneficiaries in the context of village no.3 have not got the job under the Act.

According to the 9 section of the Act, during the time of payment, muster rolls should be read out and job card entries should be made. Muster rolls are a unique identity number which are used by from the Programme Officer to the Gram Panchayat. As the beneficiaries' responses about the muster rolls read out during the payment, it is found that a little less than three-fifth beneficiaries consisting 59.44 % and 84.31 % in village no. 3 mentioned that muster rolls were not read during the payment. On the other hand, all the beneficiaries in village No.3 have not reported about muster rolls read out during time of payment.

Work Site Facilities such as drinking water, shade, crèche etc have been provided to the workers in order that the rural people can smoothly complete their works. But, it is found from the view of the beneficiaries that there is no provision of drinking water facility in the working area. In the planning of NREGA, work should be provided within 15 days from date of seeking the employment, if the work is not provided within the 15 days then the applicant should taken the unemployment allowance according to the guideline of the Act. But, all the beneficiaries did not get the unemployment allowance of the Act in spite of not getting the proper work days under the provision of the Act.

It has been observed that, the successfully implementation of the Act would help in the economic upliftment of the rural people. Basically, it is found in the context of rural people that the economic condition of the people is extremely bad. In such a situation, NREGA helps in economic settlement among the rural people by providing work to those who are willingly to do unskilled manual work under the Act. The Act also makes impact among the people of rural areas in every sphere of life. Due to the implementation of the Act, it basically provides health facility, educational

facility, food security as well as helps in providing economic security among the rural people. The Act is also able to provide consumptions facility and able to increase the purchasing power of the rural people. Therefore, the present study has tried to find out the how to the implementation of the scheme has made an impact in rural areas in the context of three villages of Jorhat district of Assam. From the study, it is observed that, the Act has not been able to make an impact among the rural NREGA beneficiaries as have been expected. The reason behind this is that the Act has been unable to provide the proper work days under the Act. It is also observed that the all the beneficiaries of village no.3 have not received single days of work under the Act. As per impact on economic structure, it is found from the study that 72.77 % of total beneficiaries replied that NREGA is completely unable to provide the economic changes particularly in their working area, followed by 17.78 % beneficiaries who mentioned that the Act has helped to economically settle in rural areas. In village no.2, majority beneficiaries having 56.86 % mentioned that the Act could not bring economic changes while the other 31.37 % total beneficiaries reported the Act helped to bring the economic changes in the family. On the other hand, 93.47 % beneficiaries reported that the Act was unable to bring the economic changes in the rural family. The overall observation regarding the reasons for showing impact of NREGA on education in rural people, it reveals that majority of the beneficiaries in the context of village no.1 (66.67 %), village no.2 having a little more than three-fifth (78.34 %) and a little less than cent percent (97.83 %) mentioned that NREGA is unable to provide the adequate educational facility as the beneficiaries expected. Thus, it can be said from the study that that the Act has neither created employment opportunity nor facilitated infrastructural development in the rural area.

It also reveals regarding impact on NREGA on Health and Nutrition, it is found in the village no.1 that 87.22 % have mentioned that NREGA is completely unable to provide while only 6.67 % beneficiaries reported NREGA is able to provide

health and nutritional facility among the beneficiaries in the village. However, 6.11 % beneficiaries have not reported regarding its impact on health & nutrition. In village no 2, a little less than four-fifth having 78.43 % beneficiaries mentioned that it has not been able to impact, followed by 6.67 % who responded that the Act impact on health & nutrition and rest 6.11 % beneficiaries have not reported about the impact of NREGA on health and nutritional facility. In the context of village No.3, all the beneficiaries mentioned that the Act did not provide health and nutritional facility among the rural people of the village.

Regarding women of rural area, the provision of the Act states that 'Priority' should be given to women in the allocation of work, "in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries should be women" (Schedule II, paragraph 6). According to 7.1.2 section of the Act, equal wages are paid to both men and women workers, and the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 should be complied with in provision 5.52 provision mentioned that if some applicants have to be directed to report for work beyond 5 km. of their residence, women and older person should be given preferences to work on the worksites nearer to their residence. It is one of the important provisions (6.8.2 provision of the Act) that if more than five children below the age of six years are present at the worksite, a person (preferably a woman) should be engaged under the NREGA to look after them. It is good sign that the women who have their child are also engaged herself in the planning of NREGA. Through the different provisions of the act related to women, it is observed that the Act obviously helps in the socio-economic upliftment of rural women. Regarding this, one question comes in to the mind that how far NREGA has succeeded in providing the work for women for socio-economic upliftment in society.

There are 835 NREGA beneficiaries in Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat where only 73 are women NREGA beneficiaries (*Source: Kaliapani Development Block*). The female beneficiaries' percentage of the Panchayat is only 8.75. On the other hand,

the study conducted 277 total beneficiaries of all three villages, where only 13 beneficiaries (Village 1 have 7, village no.2 have 4 and village no.3 have only 2 women beneficiaries) consisting 4.70 % are female. In this regard, it is found that a little less than one-tenth beneficiaries are female in the context of Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat and three villages. It shows from the study that the Act can not follow the provision i.e. one-third should be female beneficiaries according to guideline of the Act. It is also found that all women beneficiaries were unable to get work under the Act. To observe the implementation of the Act and its impact among rural women, it is necessary to observe the responses of rural women in this regard.

Regarding views of women beneficiaries for the satisfaction towards the planning of NREGA, it is found that 71.42 % beneficiaries in the village are 'Unsatisfied' towards the planning of NREGA while 14.29 % 'Somewhat satisfied' towards the planning of NREGA. However, the remaining 14.29 % have not reported about the satisfaction of the planning of NREGA. In village no.2, all the three beneficiaries are 'Unsatisfied' towards the planning of NREGA while 25 % 'Somewhat satisfied' of the planning of NREGA. All the two beneficiaries in village no.2 are not satisfied about the planning of NREGA. It is found that all the women beneficiaries in all the three villages have not reported regarding the implementing process (work-sites facilities) of NREGA. Hence, it can be said that the Act has been completely unable to make any impact among the rural women of this Panchayat. On the other hand, all the women beneficiaries had not got the unemployment allowance under the Act.

Suggestive Measures

Some of the suggestive measures for proper implementation of the Act are summarized below:

- a. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) clearly articulates 100 days of job guarantee for every rural household. However, the intent of the Act is not

reflected in the implementation of the Act. The Gram Panchayat level study indicates the person's days in this regard. Therefore, ensure at least a minimum of 100 (one hundred) days of work in a financial year under the Act for every household.

- b. The civil society organizations should be involved by the Government to widespread the intent of the Act at the grass root levels. In such situation, the rural households feel confident enough to demand jobs. If jobs are not provided, they should ask for unemployment allowance as their rights.
- c. For successful implementation of the scheme in rural areas, the Act should introduce flexibility and focus on poverty within the programme. It is very difficult to understand the potential of demand regarding issue and demanding the jobs under the Act. Both these parameters are not relevant for the allocation of funds as a high numbers of job cards in all level do not reflect the potential demand of genuinely deserving households requiring guarantee. On the other hand, there is a need to review the poverty indicators of the very poor areas of the state including agricultural production, flood problem, suicide death, and beggary problems affected as well as SCs and STs dominated area etc. to allocate higher volume of funds. This type of preferences analysis will improve the overall performance of the scheme for targeting the poorest of the poor to ensure 100 days of employment.
- d. Attempts should be make the plans more practical. In this regard, the implementing agencies basically GP should play a vital role. The availability fund of the schemes should be properly utilized by the agency of rural development.
- e. Selection process of the job card holder in the areas should be free from political pressure.
- f. The wages should be increased from the meager amount of Rs 100. The economic situations of the rural people are very poor and miserable. Due to inflation, the low wages can not help the economic settlement of rural people. The other sectors

provide better wages for any other work. Therefore, the wages should be increased for complete participation of the people in the Act.

- g. Awareness regarding the key provisions of the Act among NREGA beneficiaries as well as rural people is the need of the hour. In this regard, the implementing agencies should take the active role of creating awareness among the NREGA beneficiaries for key provisions of the Act.
- h. The Block and Panchayat should play a vital role for implementation of NREGA. Therefore, greater autonomy should be provided to Gram Panchayat to plan and execute need based works. Appropriate mechanism are required for NREGA, which allow Panchayats to enjoy the flexibility of the programme and encourage them to take up works that are extremely important to build long term sustainable productive structure that may enhance the livelihood promotion capacity within the village. The Gram Sabha should play an important role in the formulation of the schematic plan. In this regard, Gram Panchayat (GP) should organize Gram Sabha for the proper implementation of the scheme. The members of GP should also be encouraged among the beneficiaries.
- i. There is a need to improve the quality of internal and external agencies reviewing the internal and external issues of the monitoring and evaluation agencies. There is need for more systematic attention for in-depth analysis of the poorest of the poor and poorly forming district.
- j. Social audit of the scheme should be strictly maintained. The GP has the responsibility to give the social audit of the scheme in the Gram Sabha to see the people how they have implemented the Act in their area. It can be said that most of the implementing agencies have been busy establishing mechanism by recruiting the staff and developing the norms of expenditure. This process of social audit is also the mainstream in case of different implementing agencies of the states of Assam. Hence, there is a need to systematically review and decide on the 'common

minimum' steps and processes that must take place in every social audit. The implementing agencies should take a new dimension, which should be based on their capability and commitment to the social audit process.

Conclusions

The overall conclusion, which can be drawn on the basis of the findings are that the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) have not been able to provide economic security among the NREGA beneficiaries in Assam. The State Government has been unable to provide to every household in rural areas at least 50 % days of work out of 100 days in a financial year in accordance with the scheme made under this Act. The majority people of India as well as Assam live in rural areas where considerable sections belong to Below Poverty Line. The NREGA beneficiaries are socio-economically backward than the other sections of people. The conditions of some beneficiaries are very pathetic and poor. They are unable to provide three primary needs of human beings. Therefore, through NREGA tries to remove the problems of rural poverty and provides employment opportunity among the rural people. From the study of literature review, it was found that all the poverty alleviations schemes for rural development basically failed in rural areas of India because of programme planning and implementation are adhoc in nature. In this context *Singh V. P. (1995)* in his studies 'Planning and Implementation of NREP in Assam' mentioned "the concept of shelf of projects was not clearly understood throughout the State. The practice was of preparing annual actions plan every year and the whole process of planning was repeated year by year. It caused not only delays in the preparation of annual actions plans every year but also affected the quality of assets created under the programme as most of the works could be started at the fag end of the financial year and under pressure. As a result quality could not be maintained in a number of NREP works". He also argued in his studies that the strength of NREP in Assam was success of the implementing agency in ensuring

people's participation in a number of NREP scheme. The whole weakness process in NREP in Assam is still prevalent in the planning process of NREGA not only in the context of Jorhat district of Assam but also all over the India.

Lots of deviations were found regarding the planning and implementation of the Act in Jorhat district of Assam. From the study of this Act in Jorhat district of Assam, it reveals that it has been unable to provide infrastructural development in rural areas. The work complementation progress for infrastructural development under this Act is not satisfactory in the district as well as in the block level. It is found from the study that 22392 schematic plans for 2009-10 year for Assam and 311136 plans for 2010-11 were prepared in Assam in which 9403 schematic plan having 41.99 % in 2009-10, 10650 plans consisting 34.2 % was successfully completed under the Act. In the context of Jorhat district of Assam, 512 schematic plans in 2009-10 year were prepared of which 218 (42.58 %) schemes are successfully completed while in case of the year 2010-11, 782 schematic plans are formulated of which only 69 having less than one-tenth 8.82 % Schematic plan were successful. It is also found in the study that out of total 43 (19 in 2009-10 and 24 in 2010-11 years) total schemes in Kaliapani Development Block; all the schemes were not successfully completed under the Act. As a result, it has been unable to provide infrastructural development as well as guarantee of wage employment among the rural people of Jorhat district of Assam. The rural people are unable to take proper work days in a financial year. Most of the people in spite of living in below poverty line are not interested in doing wage employment under the NREGA. On the other hand, lack of people's participation is one of the problems of NREGA. In this regard, the implementing agencies should play a vital role for implementation of NREGA in rural areas. One of the major attractions is found regarding food component in rural areas that 35 kg Rice in Rs. 3 per kg. are provided by the State Government for many rural families who live in Below Poverty Line. So, the rural families are not interested to doing the work under this Act.

Central Institute of Fisheries Education (2009) studied about NREGA in the context of Maharashtra and it's found some of the deviation regarding the views of GS and the beneficiaries, also job card are not issued etc. In this regard, the present study also found the similar result about the views of the members of GP and beneficiaries. During the study on Gaon Panchayat, it is noticed from the view of beneficiaries that the muster rolls are not properly maintained by the implementing agencies and they also manipulated the muster rolls of the Act. One of the major deviations is also found that the job card entries are not done in spite of getting the work under the Act by the implementing agencies. Hence, it can be said that the basic framework of the Act is faulty, therefore the implementation process is also been found faulty. It is also observed that lack of proper area planning is responsible for less infrastructural development of rural areas. Thus, it can be said that NREGA is not the solution of rural poverty; it's just wastage of money. Therefore, the Act is not much effective, neither creating infrastructural development nor providing guarantee to the wage employment among the rural people.

The person days provide an actual picture about the implementation of the Act. It reveals from the study of Vijayanand that NREGA is not only the main solution of unemployment problem in the context of Kerala (Vijayanand S. M 2008). The average person days in Kerala are only 24.73 % instead of 100 days. In this context the present study observed some of the similarities about planning of NREGA. It is revealed from the present study that the average person days of Assam in the year of 2009-2010 are 34.29 days as per households and 26.16 days of average in the context of 2010-2011 year. In 2009-10 year in the context of Jorhat district, 17.08 average person days and 24.23 average person days in 2010-11 are provided to per households. The study indicates that the Act is not properly implemented in the rural areas of Assam as well as Jorhat District of Assam. They are deprived of 100 days of work in a financial year which are to be provided according to the guide line of the Act. About providing 100

days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, only 0.22 percent in Jorhat during 2009-10 years and 0.68 % beneficiaries in 2010-11 have got the 100 days of employment in a financial year under the Act. On the other hand in case of Kaliapani Development Block, no household have got the 100 days of work in the financial year of 2009-2010 & 2010-2011. It may be said from the study that the Act can not contribute to the economic upliftment of rural people.

Regarding the impact among the beneficiaries in three villages of Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat, it reveals that the Act has been unable to make much impact among the rural people of three villages of Jorhat district of Assam. Among the three villages, two villages, namely Komar Khatowal Gaon and Dulia Gaon, have got the job under the Act. But one of the villages namely Gohain Pather where the beneficiaries are relatively poor in comparison to the other two villages have not got the job under the Act. The majority beneficiaries of the villages have not got the registration number of job card. It is also found from the study that the majority beneficiaries are not aware about the key provision of the Act. The beneficiaries of two villages have got less than 50 days of work under NREGA. On the other hand, in spite of not getting the proper work days in a financial year, all the beneficiaries of three villages have not got the unemployment allowance under the Act.

Chatterjee Amrita (2009) in her study of NREGA mentioned that the Act helped to bring the economic empowerment in the states of Chattisgarh and Tamil Nadu. It is found from the study that 93 % women beneficiaries had taken own decision for doing the work under the Act. It is also found from the study that NREGA earnings are increasing their contribution to household income. It also reveals from the study that the women beneficiaries have spent their wages for food purpose, children education, and health care purpose and thus NREGA has changed the economic scenario in the family structure of rural women. But in the present study, it is not reflected in the state to Panchayat level scenarios. In the context of no. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat, the Act is not able to provide single days of work not only in the

three villages that were studied but also all the villages of the Panchayat. Therefore, it can be mentioned that the Act is neither creating wage employment among the rural women in the Panchayat nor creating infrastructural development of rural areas.

Lots of weakness have been found in the programme i.e. long delays of wage payments (Arjan S Bedi, 2010), absences of proper worksites facilities, political interference, not providing the unemployment allowance for eligible beneficiaries etc. The major above weakness of the programme is also found in the context of present study. Regarding the study of No. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat, it is found that all the eligible beneficiaries of all three villages have not received unemployment allowance which is to be provided according to the guidelines of the Act. The study also reveals in the context of village no.1 and village no.2 that there is lack of proper worksite facilities in the working area. About the views of beneficiaries in the context of wage payment, they mentioned that the wages were not received within the 15 days of work. In this regard, it's found a deviation regarding the views of village No.1 and village No. 2.

Hence, it can be mentioned that the Act has been a completely failure in making an impact among the rural people as it had failed to provide the proper work days in a financial year according to the guide line of the Act. Therefore, the Act has been unsuccessful in removal of rural poverty. From the study, it can be said that 'rural industrialization' is one of the solution to rural poverty. As a result of growing industrial units in rural areas, it is helpful for the economic upliftment of rural people. One of the major observations is also found that 'Agro based industries' and 'Horti culture' can help in eradicating the rural poverty. Therefore, the wage employment programmes like NREGA is not the only solution of rural poverty. If the Act is properly evaluated, then obviously, the Act can be properly implemented in rural areas. Hence, in Assam as well as in Jorhat district and particularly No. 7 Pachim Teok Gaon Panchayat at present has been unable to contribute to upliftment of socio-economic status of the people as they expect.