



RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF BIHAR

Samriddhi

April-June 2013 Issue



Mission Growth

**INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT
ACHIEVED THROUGH
COLLECTIVE EFFORTS**





Samriddhi

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We look forward to your
valuable comments and
suggestions to make this
newsletter a truly interactive
communication platform to
help take our development
initiatives forward. We seek
your support through
contributions in the form of
letters, case studies and stories
of success, problematic issues,
news items, experiences, past
and upcoming events, as well
as announcements.

Please send your feedback and
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Editorial

After the success of the first edition of *Samriddhi*, the Rural Development Department, Government of Bihar, is back with the second edition of the newsletter. Keeping a finger on the pulse of rural development in the state, the publication aims to bring you the latest updates on the state's flagship programmes, achievements, challenges and solutions, and steps taken towards the future. Its objective is to mirror the varied stages of development of these programmes, capture the role played by our officials, technology and

other facilitators, and highlight the corrective measures such as social audits to make the operations transparent and efficient.



Our driving force remains the upliftment of the rural poor in Bihar. Job guarantee and inclusive development are our key focus areas. The mission is to transform their lives by reducing poverty through skill development and securing employment, supporting them in building their homes and empowering them to build a strong village.

At the outset, we would like to thank our readers for the numerous messages of appreciation and support for the last newsletter. This has been the impetus behind the changes

we have made to the content and look of *Samriddhi*. The flagship programmes are in their second stage now and so it was apt for the newsletter to catch the pace and bear a contemporary, user-friendly appearance. The newsletter will be available in Hindi and English in print and online, for anyone interested in Bihar, India and the world to share ideas, seek solutions to common problems and learn from each other's work.

We look forward to your mail.



Chief Minister Nitish Kumar attended the social audit at Bhelwa Gram Sabha as an observer

Social audit conducted in Bhelwa

THE PROCESS IS A STEP TOWARDS ENHANCING LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY IN LOCAL BODIES

The term 'social audit' has been in currency since the 1950s, but in the current scenario it has proved to be a reality check and quality control for welfare schemes across the world. The recent flurry of interest in the process in the last eight years in India and neighbouring countries has made it mandatory to track the status and quality of work on the ground. In the same spirit, the Bhelwa Panchayat, in Madhepura district, conducted a social audit in June.

The Bhelwa panchayat is one of the six panchayats in Bihar that have received a special package of `20 lakh from the Central Government under the Panchayat Empowerment Scheme. To conduct the social audit, a special Gram Sabha was organised at the Bhelwa Middle School ground, whose purpose was also to sanction the work to be undertaken with funds received from the package. Attended by almost 2,000 people, the Sabha began by noting the achievements of the previous year, followed by discussion on the proposal and reports prepared for the audit and registration of complaints.

The audit process eventually led to the discussion on the MGNREGA schemes. After reading the new letters issued from the department, the Mukhia gave details of the 11 schemes

undertaken during the year. The details of estimated and utilised amounts, number of workers involved and project duration were exchanged and complaints addressed, with the aim of ensuring transparency in the system.

To make the process authentic, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, along with six Cabinet colleagues and department secretaries, attended the Gram Sabha as an observer. He later praised the exercise and highlighted the importance of social audit in development schemes. He also praised the local body in maintaining transparency.

A social audit is a way of measuring, understanding, reporting and ultimately improving an organisation's social and ethical performance. It helps to narrow gaps between vision/goal and reality, and between efficiency and effectiveness. It's a technique to understand, measure, verify and report on and improve an organisation's social performance. The process also creates an impact upon governance and values the voice of stakeholders, including marginalised groups, whose voices are rarely heard. The recent social audit in Bhelwa helped its people believe in and progressively contribute to the development of the region. ■

Social audit creates an impact upon governance, and values the voice of stakeholders, including marginalised groups, whose voices are rarely heard

MGNREGA Social Park at Katihar

TEAM SPIRIT HELPS MGNREGA DEVELOP MORE THAN JUST A JOB GUARANTEE

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a landmark in the history of social security legislation in India and promises to be a major tool in the struggle to enhance livelihood security of every household. In its second stage now, the Scheme is also helping people come together and build a world they can share.

A shining example of this was on display at Korha, Katihar, where job card-holders from Mahadalit families of Mushari tola were given work of 100 man-days to build a MGNREGA Social Park. The card holders meticulously planted 1,200 trees on the fallow land of the Kolasi primary school. Keeping the biodiversity of the area in mind, they planted diverse varieties of trees such as amla, mahogany, mango, kadam, guava, pomegranate, Ashok, Akeria, mahua and palm trees. The old, decaying pond near the land was also beautified. During a field visit, District Magistrate Birendra Prasad Yadav came across the good work and directed his colleague and Senior Deputy Collector Uttam Kumar to ask all the departments to put in a coordinated effort to refine the park.

Meanwhile, the district offices received an order from the DM to build a Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra. After

permission from the Education Department, the Gram Sabha built the MGNREGA Bhavan on the land available. Under the able leadership of the DM and discussions with the Deputy Development Commissioner, it was directed that all newly-built Bhavans be provided with fittings and solar electrification. This process would be financed under the Fourth State Finance Commission.

Once the MGNREGA Bhavan was built, Kameshwar Prasad Singh, BDO, Korha, Katihar, ensured the Bhavan was equipped with modern fittings, completed in three phases. It was inaugurated by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar with a tree plantation drive, where the CM directed the local representatives to employ a solar water pump to maintain a steady water level in a pond near the park. An estimate of ₹9,35,000 was prepared to be sent for approval to the office of Deputy Development Commissioner Radhey Shyam Sah, towards this end.

The MGNREGA Social Park at Katihar is an example of what a society and its various members can accomplish as a team. The beautiful park was built with the participation of all stakeholders, from the Gram Sabha to the Chief Minister. Today, the park is visited by locals and people from Katihar in large numbers. ■

It has been directed that all the newly built MGNREGA Bhavans in the state would be provided with fittings and solar electrification. This process would be financed under the Fourth State Finance Commission



(Clockwise from top left) Chief Minister Nitish Kumar during the inauguration and tree plantation drive; Secretary, RDD and other dignitaries at the Park



Officers during the orientation programme at the Purnea division

A call for transparency

POLICE OFFICERS AND SENIOR DEPUTY COLLECTORS ARE BEING TRAINED ON MGNREGA AND IAY

The success of flagship welfare programmes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Indira Awas Yojna (IAY) are often marred due to corruption, police delay in attending to grievances and administrative apathy and ignorance. In an attempt to address these handicaps, the government of Bihar has designated every Wednesday as MGNREGA Diwas. Focusing on regular social audits and awareness programmes, the Rural Development Department (RDD), along with the Home Department, recently conducted an orientation programme for police officers and Senior Deputy Collectors on MGNREGA and IAY.

After the feedback received during the Seva Yatra, the programme aimed at familiarising police officers and officials engaged in MGNREGA Diwas with the guidelines and important circulars of MGNREGA and IAY. The workshop encouraged officials to register complaints of embezzlement and corruption and corner middlemen at a faster rate and on a regular basis. The move is part of state government's zero-tolerance policy towards corruption in these schemes. So far, the officers of Saharsa and Purnea divisions have been trained by officers of the

Rural Development and Vigilance. The training at Saharsa was presided over by Bimla Nand Jha, Divisional Commissioner, Saharsa. Training on MGNREGA was given by Satish Ranjan Sinha, while Yogendra Ram, DDC, Saharsa took over training on the provisions of IAY.

Pran Mohan Thakur, DM, Saharsa outlined the provisions of the schemes and need for transparency, supervision and effective redressal of complaints related to corruption and violation of guidelines. The Saharsa Commissioner emphasised the need to supervise the quality of work during MGNREGA Diwas, as building quality permanent assets is an important objective of the Act. A representative from the Vigilance department briefed officers on the police perspective, in cases such as

gathering evidence in complaints relating to these schemes.

At Purnea, 26 police officers and 13 Senior Deputy Collectors have been trained. Arun Prakash, DDC Purnea presided over the meeting and gave a presentation on IAY. Satish Ranjan Sinha made a presentation on MGNREGA, while a Vigilance officer shared his observations on conducting investigation on matters related to the schemes. The RDD plans to take the initiative to other divisions soon. ■

The workshop
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MGNREGA workshop reviews POs

THE TWO-DAY WORKSHOP WITNESSED NEW VIGOUR AND EMPHASISED KEY STEPS FOR DEVELOPMENT



Officers attending the workshop

The Department of Rural Development (RDD), Bihar, has consistently been at the forefront of the MGNREGA programme to implement it at the ground level, with the focus on integrated rural development in a holistic manner.

The sheer enormity of the scale presents several challenges, which have been innovatively and effectively dealt with. In the six years since the programme was formally launched, the RDD has been trying to put together a large-scale workshop for a review of all the Programme Officers (POs) and officials under one roof.

Finally, it was decided to conduct such a workshop on MGNREGA, where a common platform for interactive learning would be provided to share knowledge and discuss best practices, so that everyone arrived at a common understanding. The thrust of the workshop was 'A New Vigour & Motivation' to meet challenges in an efficient people-centric manner. With this in mind, the two-day MGNREGA workshop was conducted on December 20-21, 2012, for POs of all 38 districts of Bihar in Shri Krishna Memorial Hall, Patna, under the aegis of the Minister of Rural Development, Bihar, Secretary, RDD, and other department officials.

The workshop was attended by more than 600 officials and non-officials, directly or indirectly related to the implementation of MGNREGA across Bihar. The special attendees included Honourable Minister for Rural Development, Nitish Mishra; Secretary, Rural Development, Amrit Lal Meena; NREGA Commissioner Pradip Kumar; Additional Secretary Mithilesh Kr Singh; Secretary, Social Forestry Mithilesh Kumar; Commissioner Munger S M Raju; Commissioner Swarojgar Arvind Kumar Choudhary; Special

Secretary RD Krishna Mohan; and Secretary, Forest & Environment Deepak Kr. Singh.

The agenda of the workshop covered, among other aspects, brainstorming on different aspects of MGNREGA, highlighting convergence with line departments, promoting the use of new technologies, ensuring social audits and participation of beneficiaries, model estimates and technical supervision.

Meena, emphasised the importance of putting in efforts to improve the image of MGNREGA, creation of visible assets and the convergence of MGNREGA with JEEViKA. He pointed out that Andhra Pradesh's Sharm Shakti Sanghathan an inspiring model.

The Secretary stressed on the importance of MGNREGA Diwas, as well as the fund transfer mechanism. He underlined that the MIS management is the only option for quality implementation. He stated that from ₹400 crore, the figure recorded has gone up to ₹1,200 crore, thanks to efficient MIS management. He also praised S M Raju's experiment on forest conservation in the state, which is acknowledged nationally and internationally.

Meena also stated the importance of linking MGNREGA efforts with the Hariyali Mission, as shared by the Chief Minister on August 15. Under this, each BPL family will get 20 plants to nurture. He reiterated the need to provide right of employment to all beneficiaries by providing them ₹14,400 annually as part of moral as well as administrative duties. A film on MGNREGA, made by the Bihar Rural Development Society, was also unveiled by the Secretary, who recommended all DDCs to make such films for their districts in the coming quarter. ■

RDD Secretary
emphasised the importance of putting in efforts to improve the image of MGNREGA and its convergence with JEEViKA

A sharing of ideas

THE SECRETARY, RDD, TOOK UP QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE WORKSHOP ON MGNREGA



Commissioner MGNREGA, RDD Secretary, RDD Minister and Speaker of Legislative Assembly address the members; and participants at the workshop

The officials of Rural Development Department (RDD), Bihar, met the Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and Members of Legislative Council (MLCs) during the Budget session (February 26 to March 7) to update them on the status of various welfare schemes running in the state. Addressed by the RDD Minister and Secretary, the meeting saw the members posing queries on the development stages of schemes across districts, challenges and solutions, and future initiatives.

Replying to a question, RDD Secretary, Amrit Lal Meena revealed that, so far, ₹9 lakh has been paid as Unemployment Allowance in district Araria. If work is not allocated against the demand within 15 days, the department is liable to pay the allowance, but due to negligence and laxity of MGNREGA staff, such cases have not been coming to light. This is probably because of the provision that the Unemployment Allowance paid will be recovered from the person responsible. Suitable action is being taken in this regard.

On a question raised by the honorable members about the release of funds to districts, he replied that due to reasons such as audit objections, this had been stopped in districts like Sitamarhi and Muzaffarpur. After the minister's intervention, the fund transfer has restarted.

Any payment under MGNREGA will now have to first be passed by the Panchayat executing body. Women SHGs will also be the executing body of MGNREGA at the Gram Panchayat level

The members suggested proper investigation in case of complaints against any MGNREGA schemes. They favoured strict action against defaulters rather than blockages of funds, which also came in the way of the majority of non-defaulter schemes, in turn delaying wages to labourers.

Meena clarified that the Mukhiyas, accused by members of allegedly grabbing job cards of many beneficiaries, play no role in the IAY Scheme. The families are selected from the BPL list, in ascending order of priority. Any payment under MGNREGA will now have to first be passed by the Panchayat executive body. Women SHGs will also be the executing body of MGNREGA at the Gram Panchayat level.

Another question was on the Mukhiya and Panchayat Sachiv being able to debar certain married families from IAY benefits on the ground that the father had been allocated funds for construction. The Secretary replied that in those districts where the SC/ST Category list has been exhausted from the BPL list, the new married SC/ST families would be included and IAY benefits sanctioned to them. He mentioned that the names of SECC families, left out during the enumeration process, will be included after the draft publication.

The Honorable Minister, RDD, Bihar, also praised the Awaas Soft and MGNREGA Soft websites, where anyone can access information on their constituencies, thus promoting transparency and accountability. He also advised the honorable members that they can register the demand of any MGNREGA worker through the Vasudha Kendra.

Members recommended that the Aam Sabha be strengthened through increased people's participation. There is a provision of support of ₹1 lakh by the state government for accidental death under MGNREGA, which was recommended to be increased to ₹2 lakh. ■



Rural Development Minister, Nitish Mishra and Panchayati Raj Minister, Bheem Singh light the lamp at the BDO workshop in Patna

BDO workshop discusses key issues

THE MEET ASSESSING CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVEMENTS ACTED AS AN INFUSION OF ENERGY FOR OFFICERS

A one-day workshop for Block Development Officers (BDOs) of various districts of Bihar was organised by the Rural Development Department (RDD) at Ravindra Bhavan Sabhagrah, Patna. The objective was to assess the challenges, achievements and technical glitches faced by the officers while implementing the initiatives of the RDD.

The workshop was graced by the Honourable Minister, Rural Development, Nitish Mishra; Honourable Minister, Panchayati Raj, Bheem Singh; Secretary, RDD, Amrit Lal Meena; Secretary, Panchayat Raj, Amitabh Verma; CEO, Bihar Rural Livelihood Project (JEEViKA), Arbind Chaudhary; MD Beltron, Atul Sinha, and other dignitaries.

Talking about the state's achievements, Meena pointed out the successful application of the Indira Awas Yojna, where cent per cent of the funds were spent on the intended purpose, thanks to the right planning and leadership skills of the BDOs.

Amitabh Verma, Head Secretary, Panchayati Raj, reiterated that every officer should aim to execute plans with maximum transparency with the joint efforts of government and public representatives, so that the beneficiaries receive their due.

The Minister of Rural Development said that the BDOs would be provided with further opportunities, motivating those present at the Sabhagar with a new energy. Honourable Minister, Panchayati Raj, Singh urged the Panchayat secretaries to strengthen the Panchayati Raj with the available resources.

He also stressed the importance of timely payment of allowance to public representatives, regular meetings of the Panchayat Samiti, organising Gram Sabhas, implementation of programmes depending on the local needs, felicitating local representatives and maintaining a positive and helpful relationship amongst officials, for holistic development.

Choudhary, CEO, JEEViKA, offered his vote of thanks to the attending members, who played a vital role in setting up women self-help groups, which are necessary for the economic empowerment of women. Dr Dharmendra Singh Gangwar, Principal Secretary, General Administration Department, Government of Bihar, shed light on the various aspects of the Right to Information Act. This was an important topic of discussion and almost every BDO present took part in it. The MD, Beltron, Atul Sinha stressed the importance of developing the technical areas so that the district head offices and block head offices could be better connected. Setting up the "Biswan" was also discussed.

The workshop concluded with a discussion of all the key aspects, brainstorming for solutions to overcome shortcomings, efforts to maximise achievements, knowledge and ideas, with a promise for putting in conscious efforts in development. Such was the enthusiasm within the members who attended the workshop that they were later heard saying, "If here is where the lightning will strike, I will build my house right here!" ■



The under-construction houses, funded by Indira Awas Yojana, at Samastipur

Smooth delivery of IAY fund to beneficiaries

DESPITE DELAYS IN GETTING FUNDS FROM THE CENTRE, DRDA-SAMASTIPUR ENSURED THERE IS NO COST CUTTING

Gauri Devi, a resident of Bihar's Samastipur district, had always dreamt of a home of her own. It was not that the government had no plans for families like hers that could not afford a roof. The Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) was undertaken with an aim to provide the poor in rural areas with the basic need of habitation. The programme not only provides social status, but also gives the people a sense of financial security. The problem though was the handicaps in the system that distanced them from the funds meant for the purpose.

The IAY has been in effect from January 1, 1996, with a revised version in effect since April 1, 2004. Nearly 75 per cent of the revenue for this project comes from the central government, while the state funds the rest of 25 per cent and executes the programme.

Those slated to receive support compensation as part of this project include individuals living below the poverty line (BPL) in rural areas, those living in makeshift tents, those belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward castes, independent bonded labourers, widows or immediate family of Army men and paramilitary forces who lost their lives in the line of duty, and retired soldiers.

Samastipur is one such district in the state of Bihar, where the number of people living below the poverty line is above average. Hence, like the other districts, the BPL beneficiaries here have been receiving support compensation for proper habitation facilities. But, after a preliminary case registered against the disappearance of Indira Awas funds in the district of Hassanpur in the year 2006-07, the Central Government's

contribution towards the second installment for the year 2011-12 was not obtained from the Rural Development Ministry, Government of India. Among the challenges the district faced, the first was to ensure that the objection raised by the Centre towards issuance of funds be resolved. The second was to obtain the first installment sanctioned by the Union Government towards the

IAY by the end of the financial year 2012-13, so that it could be disbursed to the beneficiaries, ensuring there was no need for cost cutting in the remaining funds sanctioned by the Centre in the current financial year.

Accepting these challenges, the district administration began execution of the work plan. Under one such plan, it was ensured that the various issues raised by the Ministry of Rural Development must be resolved from time to time, with an aim

With the help of constant monitoring and execution of plans, timely monitoring and supervision, all the problems were solved with considerable ease



to provide beneficiaries with the full payment by March 31, 2013 even if the funds towards the IAY were issued by the last week of March, 2013.

To achieve this, without waiting for the arrival of funds, the beneficiaries were selected Panchayat wise from the waiting list according to the target, and this list was published and objections invited. These objections were attended to, solved and attested by the concerned authorities. Camps were then held for the final list of selected beneficiaries. At the camps, bona fide certificates, documents and photographs of the beneficiaries were obtained and with the help of these, bank accounts were opened for them. The bank account numbers and IFSC codes were registered at the block level so that funds could be transferred to the beneficiary on an immediate basis. The block Indira Awas Yojana's bank account number was registered at the district-level to ensure that the received funds could be transferred through RTGS as soon as these arrive.

With the help of constant monitoring and execution of plans, timely monitoring and supervision by Senior Deputy Collectors and Sub-divisional Magistrates, all the problems were solved with considerable ease.

After the District Rural Development Authority officials solved all these discrepancies and when the first installment of

funds, ₹5,084.014 lakh was sanctioned by the Centre and deposited on March 5, 2013, the main challenge was to ensure that all the registered beneficiaries receive their shares before March 31, 2013.

In accordance with the plan, the funds were immediately sent to the block level Indira Awas Yojana's bank accounts through RTGS on March 4, 2013. The Block Development Officers were directed to transfer the funds to selected beneficiaries through RTGS without further delay. They were also directed to update the beneficiaries' bank passbooks with the transferred ₹30,000 with the help of their subordinates, so that a list could be submitted to the people's representatives.

For the success of the plan, a district-level core group was formed. The core group could foresee that it was possible that some of the beneficiaries wouldn't be able to attend the block level passbook distribution camp to be held on March 23, 2013, and so suggested a second passbook distribution camp day to be held on March 31, 2013 for them. The information was held back till March 23, 2013, when all the block offices were informed of this development. The remaining passbooks were then dispersed on March 31, 2013 to the remaining beneficiaries. ■

— The writer is Saket Kumar, Deputy Development Commissioner, Samastipur

Achievements

The district was successful in disbursing ₹10,483.561 of the sanctioned ₹11,474.965, which calculates to a figure of 91.36 per cent. Through all these steps, the Rural Development Ministry at Samastipur successfully completed a time-bound work plan, covering a total of 26,655 of the selected 33,426 individuals benefitted from the Indira Awas Yojana, by March 31, 2013.

Saran, a MGNREGA success story

NINE MONTHS AGO, MGNREGA FACED HUGE CHALLENGES IN THE DISTRICT, BUT THERE HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL TURNAROUND

Alleviation of poverty has been a priority for the government, which aims to ensure that every villager is benefited by the waves of development. After the state government's directive to the Rural Development Department (RDD) to ensure that developmental work reaches each individual of every village, the District Rural Development Agency of Saran has been working to alleviate poverty through direct interventions.

The substantial efforts to implement rural development schemes in Saran, which lies in the Ganges, Sarayu and Gandak basin, are yielding positive results now. Among the various rural development measures, the ambitious Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) was implemented in Saran in 2006. About 1,04,361 tasks were conducted from the financial year 2006-07 to 2012-13 and 4,453 tasks have been completed. The rest are nearing completion. In this process 1,38,14,394 man-days were created, benefiting millions of underprivileged families.

Just nine months ago, the MGNREGA scheme faced huge challenges in the district. Many seats for the post of Panchayat Rojgaar Sewak remained vacant at the Gram Panchayats, the implementing units for MGNREGA. Salaries were not paid on time and workers lost interest due to lack of growth prospects. It was the same story with the Block Workers. The officials also faced a lack of proper training facilities. There was almost no communication between workers at the district and Panchayat levels. Team spirit was missing.

Human resources

Hence, the first focus was on optimising the potential of human resources. A training-cum-awareness workshop was organised for this purpose for all Panchayat Heads and MGNREGA workers to understand the challenges that faced MGNREGA. To keep interest levels up, it was decided to hold a weekly



meeting in a district block, where MGNREGA workers and Panchayat Heads would together evaluate panchayat-wise plans. A date-wise roster was chalked out and published.

After it was discovered that MGNREGA workers had not received their honorarium for over six months, it's being done on a priority basis. To counter the negative image, they have been asked to highlight positive work done under MGNREGA through pictures and articles. In the monthly appraisals, officials doing a good job will receive appreciation, while poor performers will be motivated to improve their outputs or consequently face strict action if required. Workers, stationed at the same place for more than three years, have been posted near their home-blocks in different phases. This also minimises commuting time. They were also provided with cameras to shoot the functioning of the schemes. To speed up performances, the programme officers file a daily M.I.S. and send SMS bulletins every morning. In another positive step, the practice of filing weekly FIRs on discovering misappropriation has been stopped and instead, officials or workers charged will get time to present their cases after which legal action will be taken, if needed. The idea is to create a positive working environment, with a focus on human resources, which is critical to the process.

To energise the Gram Panchayat and MGNREGA workers, they have been enrolled in various training programmes. The three best Gram Panchayats were honoured by the chief minister. With guidance from the Bihar Government, the RDD has successfully handled challenges from MGNREGA. The

MGNREGA Scheme in Saran District : Statistics			
	2011-12	2012-13	% Increase
1	2	3	4
No. of Completed Schemes	726	901	24.10
Created Person Days	1,40,3277	30,35,496	116.31
Women Participation	2,72,155	5,79,806	113.04
SC/ST Participation	2,86,893	6,06,301	111.33
Total Expenditure	3,207.42 lakh	6889.03 lakh	114.78



Development activities in progress at Saran

District Programme Coordinator has steered the District Rural Development Agency of Saran on the path ahead. Thus, from being ranked at number 33, Saran has climbed to the 9th rank within one-and-a-half years in the district-level listing released by the RDD of the Bihar Government.

Livelihood and beyond

The goal of the right to livelihood, MGNREGA, has been fruitfully enacted with appropriate management of human resources, yielding far-reaching results on social and economical fronts. Its successful execution has provided livelihood to people in their own economic environ, preventing the need for rural masses to migrate to other states. This has also had a positive impact on women's education, health and nutrition. Families of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes are sending their children to schools, thus curbing the curse of child labour. The control of child labour and providing universal education are the biggest investments in the development of human resources.

The workers employed under the scheme get their wages paid through the post-office or banks, which has sparked the trends for savings. Today, they are able to fulfill their basic necessities with their small savings. At the same time, they are confident enough to look for optional source of income

MGNREGA has helped create assets at local levels in different Gram Panchayats through health, environmental and conservation schemes

through husbandry, retail, etc. They are also keen to impart higher education to their children. Economic prosperity is empowering the social network. MGNREGA has helped create durable and essential assets at local levels in different Gram Panchayats through health, environmental and water conservation schemes, under which various activities like tree plantation, rejuvenating traditional water bodies and digging ponds, drainage work, drought-proofing, rural connectivity and work on land of SC/ST have been performed. The health centres, too, have become operational. The life of rural people has been rejuvenated through improved infrastructure.

Villagers have started gathering for Gram Sabhas again, contributing ideas in the interest of their village and community development. They are committed to implementation of the programmes and maintaining transparency about them.

The grand performance, infrastructural development and economic growth of rural areas under MGNREGA proves the scheme's enormous worth. It's truly an essential part of overall human development. It nurtures confidence and self-respect and steers poverty-stricken masses towards the path of prosperity and progress, thus elevating the social structure.

— The writer is Raman Kumar, Deputy Development Commissioner, Saran, Chhapra



MGNREGA work in progress at Jehanabad

PMRDFs support Integrated Action Plan

YOUNG PROFESSIONALS ARE WORKING AS PMRDF IN 10 DISTRICTS OF BIHAR TO SPEED UP DEVELOPMENT

The Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows (PMRDF) Scheme is being launched to reach out to talented and inspired young professionals, who believe in action and are willing to be part of a larger change. This is an opportunity to work in districts where the central government is implementing an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) to fast-track development and will support the district administration in implementing and monitoring development programmes.

In Bihar, 17 PMRDF have been appointed in 10 IAP districts of Arwal, Aurangabad, Gaya, Jamui, Jehanabad, Kaimur, Munger, Nawada, Rohtas and West Champaran. The fellows are given exposure on government schemes, from the point of view of administration and public, serving as a link between both.

Role of a fellow

Under MGNREGA, it's part of the PMRDF's role to facilitate the job-card registration and demand registration, facilitate the block-level staff to identify works in Mahadalit tolas,

besides undertaking an analysis of weekly demand registration reports, ensuring implementation of innovative tools for demand registration, such as an application box at the Panchayat level, registration through call centres, etc. They also have to measure achievement against the target set on a weekly basis. The profile includes looking into delayed payments, facilitating intervention meetings with postal department staff wherever required, mentoring the 10 lowest performing Panchayats through fortnightly meetings.

As part of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), monitoring of self-help group (SHG) mapping has to be carried out and the database uploaded in the management information system (MIS).

The JEEViKA (State Rural Livelihoods Mission) calls for coordination between the department and the team at the district level and sensitising the Panchayati Raj Institutions at the Gram Panchayat level in implementation of social protection programmes such as public distribution system, pension, ICDS, etc.

Achievements

During the strike of the Panchayat Rojgar Sevak in December, in Jehanabad, the fellows decided to involve SHGs in MGNREGA, with the support of the administration. Six pilot programmes began on January 1, 2013 focussing on six Mahadalit tolas from three blocks—Jehanabad, Makdhupur and Ghosi—where women SHGs were given the status of an implementing agency. The panchayats chosen in Jehanabad were Shikariya and Mandebhigha. Capacity-building training was provided to women SHGs to access NREGS and increase their participation. Hands-on training to women job card holders was given to operate as NREGS mates, perhaps for the first time in Bihar.



(Above) The fellows during their training, and (below) development work in progress



It's part of the PMRDF's role to facilitate job-card registration and demand registration, and facilitate the block-level staff to identify works in Mahadalit tolas

Initiatives taken

This involves building frameworks for tracking performance, designing a performance appraisal tool for MGNREGA staff, conducting field studies and analysis of data to guide the district on various focus areas, providing IT and technical support, facilitating opening of bank accounts of job card-holders. Other initiatives include convergence of MGNREGA with fisheries, agriculture, irrigation departments and assisting the department in finalising different policy notes such as human resource management, social audit, convergence with various line departments, convergence with JEEViKA, etc.

Under Indira Awaas Yojana, a field study of implementation was taken up, besides monitoring performance indicators and looking after the MIS of the scheme. The PMRDF provided assistance to the administration in SHG mapping, coordination between the department and JEEViKA team at the district level for convergence and facilitating the MIS entry of the recorded details. ■



The MGNREGA workers at Tariyani in the new uniform

Revolutionary initiatives for MGNREGA

SEVERAL INITIATIVES IN TARIYANI, SEOHAR HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR WORKERS TO ACCESS INFORMATION

Implementing Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) became outstanding in Tariyani when the administrators made place value additions to the programme, ranging from a dress code for the workers to spreading awareness through games and road-shows.

Dress code

A cheerful dress code is enlivening the environment of MGNREGA workers, along with passing on a serious social message. A positive initiative in the field of rural development, the dress code ensures transparency and accountability in the functioning of schemes being implemented. Villagers can now easily identify a “vanposhak,” as he/she will be dressed in green, embossed with the slogan “Plant trees, save Earth, emphasising the importance of social forestry.

This small initiative in Tariyani Block is now being replicated in four out of nine divisions of Bihar—Tirhut, Saran, Patna and Munger. Lakhs of vanposhaks are now seen wearing the green uniform and looking after plants. The Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi has now implemented the MGNREGA dress code as the Muzaffarpur model on roadside plantation.

Mobile umbrella centres

The MGNREGA mobile umbrella centres are a milestone in raising awareness for rural workers. Earlier, workers had to go to the block and district headquarters to file their complaints or for routine information regarding their work, payments, and other issues. Since redressal of complaints usually remained pending, resulting in discontentment, a number of mobile umbrella centres were set up to address the problem. These centres provide on-the-spot solutions to workers, who no longer have to waste time going to the block and district headquarters.

Ludo

The age of infotainment has touched all sections of society, be it senior citizens, those below the poverty line, children, and other sections. MGNREGA Ludo celebrates this trend and has introduced two games—Snakes & Ladders and Rocket & Parachute—for workers to play during their lunch break. The games are designed to not only break the monotony, but also increase awareness. It keeps spirits up and helps in intellectual development of the workers.

Akshar Gyan

MGNREGA Akshar Gyan book is a positive effort towards the intellectual development of rural workers. It has been prepared keeping in mind the needs of illiterate workers in the villages. It provides useful information about the MGNREGA through Hindi alphabets, and helps them understand the finer points of the scheme using illustrations and pictures. The basic purpose is to communicate important facts and details related to the various processes involved in implementing the flagship programme.

Road-shows

Awareness campaigns were launched through road-shows in “tolas” predominantly inhabited by communities belonging to Mahadalits/SC/BPL categories. Through this campaign, people became aware of the various aspects of the MGNREGA, such as muster rolls, job cards, identity certificates and appointment letters. Information on initiatives such as the dress code, MGNREGA office centres, etc., was also included. Thus, for the first time, rural workers in Mahadalit/Scheduled Caste/BPL tolas were introduced directly to basic facts relating to the MGNREGA. ■

Munger gets a Mobile Inspector

THE NEW MOBILE INSPECTIONS SYSTEM MAKES POSSIBLE FAST AND REGULAR INSPECTION OF MGNREGA ACTIVITIES

The process of inspection not just ensures transparency and accountability in the system, but also opens doors to far-reaching benefits for people at the receiving end. In a welfare scheme like MGNREGA, regular inspections are paramount for policy-makers, even as field officers follow hectic schedules. However, the case is different in the district of Munger. In a first-ever initiative at the district-level in Bihar and perhaps in India, the District Administration of Munger has come out with a smart and quick way to inspect MGNREGA activities on the ground. Supported by Mobile Inspections System, the field officers in the district use Android-based smartphones enabled with BizFrame software to record and assess the Scheme activities. The data is then transferred through the phone's network for third-party integration, to be recorded in the database and available as an instant report in one's email inbox.

“The Mobile Inspector System also makes the process economical. With an expenditure of about 0.00617% of the estimated cost of the Scheme, it's as low as ₹800 per block per month.”

— DDC, MUNGER

The backbone of the initiative has been the BizFrame software that has a built-in GPS location capture. The software takes images of the work done on the projects. The programme officer can customise the forms available in the mobile phone and choose from scores of ready templates. “Once the information is fed, the MGNREGA Cell at the District Rural Development Agency gets the Field Inspection Report. The benefit of the Mobile Inspections System is that the mobile forms capture the work and details on material, equipment and resource usage of an area, and automatically generate an instant report,” says DDC, Munger.

It's also an advantage that the Mobile Inspections System





District Administration, Munger
MNREGA Field Inspection Report



Date: 21/2/2013
Block: Dharhara

User: PO-dharhara
Panchayat: Mahagama

Scheme: kathor gawn ke tara aahar ke nikat kathor ke govind yadav ke khet ke aage tak sinchai nala ki khuda (0528006011/IC/8083)

Scheme No.:	06/2012-13
Estimated Amount:	486500
Work Start Date:	16/10/2012
Inspection Type:	Inspection
GPS Location:	

Persons working: 62
Civic Amenities: Yes
Last MB date: 21-02-2013

Board Present: Yes
Status: Ongoing
Last Inspection Date: 11-2-2013

Notes:





The Field Inspection Reports of Mahagama and Matadih panchayats give the details of MGNREGA activities

does not require an internet connection to record inspections and can operate in remote locations as long as the cellphone network exists. The application integrates with the device camera and there is no integration required with existing IT infrastructure. The automatic report generation feature and mailer service save hours of clerical work, travel time and cost of travelling.

Empowered by the software and convenience, the field officers now monitor MGNREGA and other welfare schemes more efficiently and on a regular basis. “With the technology, there is transparency in the system, quick disposal of complaints, proper documentation and increased accountability. The Mobile Inspector System also makes the process economical. With an expenditure of about 0.00617% of the estimated cost of the Scheme, it's as low as ₹800 per block per month,” shares the DDC. ■



The National Informatics Centre officials explain the eFMS software to the people present

Instant transfer of funds in real time

MGNREGA BENEFICIARIES CAN LOOK FORWARD TO DIRECT TRANSFER OF FUNDS THROUGH E-FMS

The state government has taken the initiative to ensure timely payment of wages to workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. This will be done by a direct transfer of funds into their accounts, using the electronic fund management system (eFMS), which enables the transaction in real time through the NREGA website.

The eFMS software has been developed by the National Informatics Centre under the Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi. The beneficiaries can open accounts in any bank, with a core banking system facility and money will be transferred in real time. The payment enabling agency only needs to direct the bank or post-office online to transfer the funds to the beneficiaries account, with a two-way online checking system of the transaction to be processed. It's a highly secured method of payment that uses a digital signature for verification. The e-FMS operates on the website www.nrega.nic.in and the details of the funds transferred are kept in the public domain.

The system would initially be introduced in a phased process in six districts of Bihar — Arwal, Jehanabad, Kishanganj, Patna, Sheikhpura and Sheohar — and then extended to other districts by the end of the financial year. The

three districts, Arwal, Sheikhpura and Sheohar, are the direct benefit transfer districts of the state. The launch of e-FMS will start with MGNREGA bank account holders and, in the next phase, will extend to post office beneficiaries. This will usher in an almost real-time transfer of payments in the

A highly secured method of payment, eFMS uses a digital signature for verification. The transactions are done online and the details of the funds transferred kept transparent

beneficiaries' accounts with complete transparency. To monitor the progress of projects, video-conferencing has also been introduced on a weekly basis.

Meanwhile, the Rural Development Department, Bihar conducted a training session on June 4, 2013 for e-FMS, imparted by officials from the Ministry of Rural Development and NIC, New Delhi. ■

More power to e-Shakti

MGNREGA WORK AT DANAPUR BECOMES MORE EFFICIENT AND TRANSPARENT WITH THE NEW IT PLATFORM

On May 1, 2013, Minister of Rural Development Nitish Mishra inaugurated the MGNREGA programme in Sarai Panchayat of Danapur block to begin work in the panchayats of three blocks—Dulhin Bazaar, Fatuha and Danapur—through the e-Shakti platform.

An ambitious project, e-Shakti was launched by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar in 2007 for increased transparency in the MGNREGA scheme. It has also enabled setting up of an IT platform to run the scheme with more speed, trust and transparency in the state. All MGNREGA beneficiaries receive biometric-enabled smart-cards, which are linked to their individual Central Bank of India no-frills zero-balance accounts.

The smart-card allows beneficiaries to mark their attendance on the worksite through biometric authentication using a hand-held device, while the Panchayat Technical Assistant uploads the measure of work done on weekly basis. On approval by the Program Officer, the e-Shakti application automatically calculates and deposits the wage amount to the beneficiary's linked account. Thereafter, the Business Correspondent helps beneficiaries receive their wages at the panchayat-level.

In the pilot district Patna, all MGNREGA schemes have been running completely through the e-Shakti platform in five model blocks, namely Barh, Bihta, Sampatchak, Bikram and



Rural Development Minister and other dignitaries during the inauguration

Naubatpur. A training programme on the e-Shakti project for all POs/PTAs/PRSSs of Dulhin Bazaar, Danapur and Fatuha was organised on April 8, 2013 at Bihar Knowledge Centre (BKC).

The inauguration programme started with lighting of the lamp by RDD Minister Nitish Mishra. Arvind Kumar Choudhary, Commissioner (Self-Employment), RDD addressed the gathering and explained the objectives of the e-Shakti project. Atul Sinha, Managing Director, BSEDC, and Seema Triphathi, DDC Patna threw light on implementation of the e-Shakti project in Patna and the roadmap for the future.

The RDD Minister Nitish Mishra marked the attendance of the MNREGS beneficiaries and inaugurated the e-Shakti project in Danapur, Fatuha and Dulhin Bazaar blocks of pilot district Patna. ■

Training across levels to strengthen MGNREGA

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT INITIATES CAPACITY BUILDING OF OFFICIALS ACROSS 38 DISTRICTS OF BIHAR



Rural Development Minister and Secretary unveil the Sarthi handbook

The Bihar Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development (BIPARD), the apex institute of training and research in various welfare sectors including rural development, has been running a largescale capacity-building and training intervention for officials and non-officials under MGNREGA. Operational across all 38 districts of the state, the programme, aptly titled Sarthi, aims to benefit the first 30,000 MGNREGA officials/functionaries, primarily Program Officers, Zila Panchayat members, Assistant Engineers, Junior Engineers, Computer Operators, Accountants, Mukhiyas, Ward

members and Panchayat Rozgar Sewaks. The workers underwent a three to five-day guidance session starting January 17, 2013 and, as of May 31, 427 Program Officers and 4,015 Panchayat Rozgar Sewaks had been trained. The programme will continue over the next six months.

BIPARD has selected IL&FS Education & Technology Services Ltd. (IL&FS-ETS) through a tender process for imparting the training programme. After a detailed Training Need Analysis (TNA) conducted in five districts of Madhubani, Gaya, Nalanda, Katihar and Siwan to understand the gaps in knowledge, skills and attitude of MGNREGA workers, the IL&FS-ETS, under the guidance of BIPARD and RDD, has developed a detailed content and pedagogy comprising relevant acts, rules, circulars and government orders for workers to follow. The programme entails facilitation of awareness and enhancement of knowledge of the MGNREGA Act and Bihar-specific implementation processes to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the scheme across levels.

The training programme is being delivered through modules for batches of 35-40 participants per batch, spread across districts, simultaneously. The deliverables of the project are being closely monitored and evaluated for improvisation with various checks and balances advised by the BIPARD and RDD. ■



(From top) The newly built MGNREGA Bhavans in Nalanda and at Uttar Kodha and Falka, in Katihar