

## Chapter 13

# Findings of the Beneficiary Survey

### 13.1 Introduction

Sampled beneficiaries were interviewed to assess their perception and experiences with the Scheme, during the course of audit.

Sampling plan for the survey was the same as that adopted for the performance audit, i.e., till the gram panchayat (GP) level (para 2.1.4 of Operational Guidelines) of the Report. Within each selected GP, 10 beneficiaries were selected by Systematic Random Sampling procedure from the consolidated list of beneficiaries of the selected villages in the selected gram panchayats. The beneficiaries were interviewed through a structured questionnaire in the local language.

38,376 beneficiaries (26,115 males and 12,261 females) were interviewed from 3,837 gram panchayats in 27 states and three Union Territories. The state/UT sample size varied from 50 in Dadra & Nagar Haveli to 4,600 in Uttar Pradesh.

### 13.2 The questionnaire

The survey questionnaire, apart from capturing basic information about the beneficiary (age, education level, caste group, etc.) and the household (main occupation, annual income, number of adult members, type of dwelling unit and kinds of household assets), sought to capture the following:

- a) Awareness levels of the beneficiary
- b) Issues relating to registration and job card
- c) Work-site distance, facilities, supervision, use of machines and muster rolls
- d) Wages- basis, timely payment and mode of payment
- e) Gram sabha meetings
- f) Transparency and monitoring
- g) Impact analysis

The survey was conducted by the members of the audit parties of the Indian Audit & Accounts Department who were deployed for the performance audit of MGNREGS. In case a particular beneficiary was not available, another member of the same household was interviewed.

### 13.3 Constraints

The audit team faced a number of constraints in this exercise which are outlined below:

- The population from which the sample was selected comprised only beneficiaries. Potential beneficiaries or persons excluded from the Scheme were not covered in the survey.
- The beneficiary data of Sikkim and Lakshadweep could not be included in this report.
- Despite the intention to interview the beneficiaries independently, often the interviews were carried out in the presence of gram sarpanch or some panchayat official, which might have induced certain bias in the responses of the beneficiaries.
- Certain selected areas were not included in the exercise due to difficulties in physical access and for security reasons, and were replaced.
- At times, the survey teams found it difficult to interview the beneficiaries alone. The beneficiaries were unwilling to be separated from the group. This again could induce the possibility of bias in the responses of the beneficiaries interviewed.
- As noted above, if the beneficiary was not present, then some other member of the household was interviewed. In such cases, the views of the actual beneficiary might have been different from those recorded.

### 13.4 Beneficiary Profile

The average age of the beneficiaries was 41 years. 65 *per cent* of the houses had a separate electricity connection. 55 *per cent* of the beneficiaries had a BPL card. About one third (31.95 *per cent*) of the beneficiaries were women and 52 *per cent* belonged to the SC or ST categories. The detailed beneficiary profile is given in the box below:

#### **Beneficiary Profile**

**Average age:** For 38,376 beneficiaries surveyed, the average age was 41 years (range: 36 years for Jharkhand to 48 years for Odisha).

**Sex:** At the all India level about one third of total beneficiaries were women. But this ratio was less than one fifth in Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

**Literacy level:** 43 *per cent* beneficiaries reported themselves to be illiterate.

**SC/ST/OBC:** At all India level 26 *per cent* of the beneficiaries belonged to SCs, 26 *per cent* to STs and 30 *per cent* reported that they belonged to OBCs. Thus, a significant percentage (81 *per cent*) of beneficiaries interviewed belonged to weaker sections of the society.

**Household size:** The average number of adult members in the household was three at the all India level, with highest of five in Nagaland and a low of two in Tamil Nadu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Puducherry.

**Annual household income:** The average yearly household income as reported by the beneficiaries at the all India level was ₹ 20,047. The figures for Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Andaman & Nicobar Islands were higher than average (all with more than ₹ 30,000 as annual income), and in Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, the yearly household income as reported was between ₹ 11,000 and ₹13,000.

**Main occupation:** The reported main occupation were – self employment (agriculture)- 34 *per cent*, self employment (non-agriculture)- six *per cent*, casual labourers- 55 *per cent*, others- two *per cent*. Thus, a significant proportion (About 90 *per cent*) of interviewed beneficiaries were either casual labourers or small and marginal farmers.

**Ration cards:** About 55 *per cent* of the beneficiaries had BPL card and 28 *per cent* had APL ration card. The remaining beneficiaries either did not have ration cards or had other kinds of (Annapurna, Antyodaya, etc.) ration cards. The states/UTs with respondents having more than 80 *per cent* BPL ration cards were- Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Puducherry. On the other hand states/ UTs with more than 50 *per cent* reported to be having APL ration cards were- Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tripura, Uttarakhand and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. On an average seven *per cent* of respondents across India reported not having any kind of ration card, but in Jharkhand, Manipur, Meghalaya and Odisha, more than 20 *per cent* of beneficiaries reported as not having any type of ration card.

**Type of dwelling unit:** About 55 *per cent* had kutcha or temporary mud-thatch type of dwelling units, 24 *per cent* had semi- kutcha units and 16 *per cent* had pucca or permanent stone/brick type dwelling unit. In Jharkhand and Tripura more than 95 *per cent* beneficiaries lived in kutcha houses and in Andhra Pradesh, Goa, Tamil Nadu and Andaman & Nicobar Islands only 10 to 20 *per cent* beneficiaries lived in kutcha houses. For pucca or permanent dwelling units beneficiaries in Goa topped the list with more than 80 *per cent* having pucca houses. In Andhra Pradesh and Punjab about 40 *per cent* beneficiaries lived in pucca houses. Overall 79 *per cent* beneficiaries had temporary or semi-temporary dwelling units.

**Other assets in household:** 65 *per cent* had electricity connection, 27 *per cent* had TVs, 37 *per cent* had toilets, 35 *per cent* had bicycles and six *per cent* had motor cycles in their households.



*MGNREGS Beneficiary being surveyed in Tripura*

### 13.5 Awareness Levels of Beneficiaries

Awareness levels of the Scheme were tested by asking four direct questions:

- On the number of days a member of a household was entitled to work in a year,
- On the minimum wage rate,
- On the prescribed wage payment schedule, and
- On the quantum of work for securing minimum wages.

Based on the responses of the beneficiaries the awareness levels were indicated as high, medium or low by the interviewer in the field. In the analysis “High” and “Medium” level of awareness were treated as being aware in the report.

It was seen that only 39 *per cent* of the beneficiaries were aware about the four major aspects of the Act.

The low degree of awareness amongst the beneficiaries would diminish their ability to fully exercise their rights.

The results related to awareness on individual aspects of the Scheme are given below:

### 13.5.1 100 Days of Work

About 72 *per cent* of the beneficiaries were aware of the number of days of employment to which they were entitled. In states of Bihar (52 *per cent*), Gujarat (28 *per cent*), Maharashtra (57 *per cent*) and Odisha (43 *per cent*), the awareness levels were low. However, smaller states/UT; Kerala, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and Puducherry, had a high level of awareness (90 *per cent* or more).

### 13.5.2 Timely Payment of Wages and Minimum Wage Rate

About 70 *per cent* respondents were aware of the timeliness within which the wages were to be paid. The awareness level of the minimum wage was 77 *per cent*.

Audit also noted that in the sample set of beneficiaries, those aware of the prescribed period for the payment of wages, were nearly identical (0.93 correlation coefficient) to those aware of their entitlement to 100 days employment.

### 13.5.3 Daily Work Load and Wage Calculation

Only half of the interviewed beneficiaries were aware of the prescribed quantum of work which entitled them to full wage payment. Similarly, only about 56 *per cent* of beneficiaries were aware of the manner of wage calculations.

It suggests a need for the states/UTs to step up Information, Education and Communication activities. As noted in para 4.7 of this Report, despite the passage of seven years, 12 states and two UTs were yet to formulate IEC plans and in five states and four UTs the funds received for this activity were under-utilized.

## 13.6 Registration

To evaluate issues relating to registration for the employment, three questions were designed:

- Whether oral request for registration was entertained,
- Whether the registration process was open throughout the year, and,
- How much money was paid for registration.

About 30 *per cent* of the beneficiaries stated that oral requests were not entertained.

Across India 43 *per cent* replied that they had actually submitted a written request. Only 37 *per cent* of these beneficiaries were provided a receipt against the request.

There were isolated instances of money being paid for the registration process.



## 13.7 Job Card

Job cards were checked to see whether essential details were recorded. The details checked were:

- Whether photograph of the beneficiary / joint photograph was attached;
- Whether signature / thumb impression of the beneficiary was present on the job card, and;
- Whether employment and payment details were regularly updated.

In 55 *per cent* of the cases, it was seen that the job cards suffered from one or more shortcomings.

Photographs of adult members who were applicants were to be attached to the job cards. The cost of job cards along with the photographs was to be borne as part of the programme cost. Only 35 *per cent* of the persons surveyed had job cards with joint photographs attached and about 14 *per cent* of the job cards across the country had no photographs. In Jammu & Kashmir (64 *per cent*) and Odisha (63 *per cent*) more than 60 *per cent* respondent's job cards had no photograph. Similarly, in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra and West Bengal about one third to one fourth respondent's job cards had no photograph.

In more than one third of the job cards checked it was seen that the signature / thumb impression was missing. Also 39 *per cent* of the job cards did not have updated payment entries and 33 *per cent* did not have updated work entries.

Significantly, in Jammu & Kashmir, the following entries were not up to date in job cards:

- payment entries in 99.87 *per cent* cases
- work entries in about 80 *per cent* cases and
- the signature column was blank in 66 *per cent* cases.

All these deficiencies indicate absence of regular system of updating the job cards.

## 13.8 Works and Employment

### 13.8.1 Number of Days of Employment

According to Central Employment Guarantee Council figures, the average number of days of employment provided in 2011-12 was 43. Average number of days of employment for the year 2011-12 at all India level was evaluated as 53 days on the basis of the responses of the sampled beneficiaries.

In Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura, beneficiaries responded to have received more than 80 days of employment per household in the year 2011-12. Other states/UT viz. Arunachal Pradesh (21 days), Assam (28 days), Chhattisgarh (33 days), Odisha (32 days), West Bengal (25 days) and Puducherry (28 days) could provide annual employment only to a limited extent.

### 13.8.2 Waiting Time in Getting Work

On an average, the work was provided to beneficiaries after nine days of the job request. However, 99 *per cent* of the beneficiaries who were not provided employment within 15 days were not paid the statutory unemployment allowance.

### 13.8.3 Distance of Work Site

The work site was at an average distance of 2.6 kilometers from the habitation. Beneficiaries from Haryana, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Andaman & Nicobar Islands reported to have travelled more than four km for work. In only 18 *per cent* cases did the beneficiary receive the mandatory extra wages for travelling more than five kilometers for work.

### 13.8.4 Usage of Machinery

Although usage of machinery was not permitted in MGNREGS works but beneficiaries in 14 states reported the use of machinery.

### 13.8.5 Facilities at Work Site

As per the Operational Guidelines, certain basic facilities have to be provided at the work-site. These include:

- drinking water
- shade
- first-aid, and
- crèche (if there are more than five children below the age of six years)

About eighty *per cent* of the beneficiaries reported that one or more of these facilities were not provided at worksites. Significantly, only 18 *per cent* of the beneficiaries said that crèche facility was provided. Further, only about 50 *per cent* of the beneficiaries reported that facilities for first-aid and shade were provided at work sites and one fourth reported that drinking water facility was not provided at the work site.

### 13.8.6 Muster Rolls at Work Site

Muster rolls should be available and maintained at the work site. Seventy eight *per cent* of the beneficiaries reported that muster rolls were kept at the work site and attendance was marked on them. However, in the case of Goa (43 *per cent*), Jammu & Kashmir (31 *per cent*), and Uttrakhand (40 *per cent*) marking of attendance was less than 50 *per cent* indicating systemic lapses.

## 13.9 Payment of Wages

### 13.9.1 Basis

The directions are for the payment of wages on piece rate (on the basis of measurement of work) or daily rate basis. Overall, 34 *per cent* reported payment on piece rate basis. Hence, the quantum of work performed was not the dominant criteria for wage payment. The states/UT where the payment basis was predominantly the 'number of days worked' (where more than 80 *per cent* of beneficiaries replied that wages were based on number of days only) were- Assam, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Punjab, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. On the contrary the states/UTs where the piece rate payments were resorted to were Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Puducherry.

### 13.9.2 Timely Receipt

Sixty five *per cent* beneficiaries across the country reported that they received wages within 15 days of work, 16 *per cent* reported receipt of payments within 30 days, 11 *per cent* between 30 to 60 days, four *per cent* reported significant delays in receipt of wages (60 to 90 days) and two *per cent* reported very large delays (more than 90 days) in receipt of their wages.

The efficiency of payments of wages was high (more than 80 *per cent* respondents reported to receive payments within 15 days) in some of the states/UT *viz.* Mizoram, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Apart from these states, timely payment (i.e. receipt of payment within 15 days) was reported by more than 75 *per cent* of the respondents in Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. Delayed payments were reported by significant number of beneficiaries (more than 50 *per cent*) from Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttrakhand, West Bengal and Puducherry.

### 13.9.3 Mode of Payment

Significant number of cash payments was reported from Andhra Pradesh (19 *per cent*), Arunachal Pradesh (73 *per cent*), Manipur (53 *per cent*), Meghalaya (70 *per cent*), Mizoram (26 *per cent*), Tamil Nadu (98 *per cent*) and Puducherry (28 *per cent*). Overall 13 *per cent* of the beneficiaries replied that they had received payments in cash.

For other channels of payments - payment through banks were highest (41 *per cent*) followed by post offices (25 *per cent*) and bank correspondents (seven *per cent*). In Bihar, Gujarat and Jharkhand more than 70 *per cent* of beneficiaries received payments through post office whereas Tripura used bank correspondent for their payments.

## 13.10 Role of Gram Sabha

Gram panchayat prepares a shelf of possible works to be taken up after considering recommendations of gram sabha. The gram sabha was to also monitor the execution of works



and conduct regular social audits of all the projects under the Scheme. For these activities, it was necessary that gram sabha meets regularly and there was active participation of beneficiaries.

In terms of a national average, three gram sabha meetings were reported to be held annually. Beneficiaries from Maharashtra reported five gram shaba meetings, whereas those from Jammu & Kashmir and West Bengal reported just one meeting on an average in a year. Physical participation in any of the gram sabha meetings was 63 per cent for the country as a whole.

The Annual Plan for MGNREGS works and the shelf of works for the village was to be discussed in the gram sabha meetings. However, only 56 *per cent* of the participants replied that the MGNREGS works were discussed in the gram sabha meetings, indicating significant gaps in the village level planning and participation. In Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal, less than 50 per cent of the participants stated that the MGNREGS works were discussed in the gram sabha meetings.

### 13.11 Transparency and Monitoring

Mechanisms of transparency are sought to be ensured by various means *viz.* pasting of updated details on the walls/ public places, regular visits by departmental officials, mechanisms of social audit, existence of regular grievance redressal mechanisms. They were reviewed through the questionnaire.

Only 46 *per cent* of the participants reported that details of MGNREGS works were painted or pasted on the public walls. This practice was nearly absent in Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Odisha, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, but was significantly high in Haryana, Meghalaya and Rajasthan.

The Operational Guidelines require 100 *per cent* monitoring by Village Monitoring Committees, and by the block level officers. In addition, there was to be monitoring at the district and state level. Each work-site was to be visited by a combination of the BDO, Programme Officer, Assistant Engineer, Executive Engineer, VMC members and district level functionaries. This would imply that each project would be visited by multiple officers. This mechanism was absent as in the interviews 24 *per cent* beneficiaries reported that the work site was not inspected even by a single functionary. This indicates significant gaps in the monitoring process.

The concept of social audit as envisaged under the Scheme was yet to take shape. Only about 22 *per cent* reported that social audit of MGNREGS was carried out in their village. More social audits were reported by beneficiaries from Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. In Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Nagaland, Tripura and Dadra & Nagar Haveli, the percentage of social audit carried out at the village level was nil.

## 13.12 Impact of MGNREGS

This exercise also sought to gauge the impact of MGNREGS on the lives of the beneficiaries. 31 *per cent* of the beneficiaries felt that MGNREGS did not bring a significant change in their lives.

However, there are large variations in these figures across the states. In smaller states/UT like Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Andaman & Nicobar Islands, over 90 *per cent* of the beneficiaries felt that MGNREGS helped them in a significant way. However, in Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra and West Bengal the feeling of the Scheme being beneficial was subdued as only less than half of the beneficiaries felt that MGNREGS had helped them significantly.

Sixty three *per cent* of the beneficiaries responded that MGNREGS had helped them avoid migration in search of work. In addition, 53 *per cent* of the beneficiaries also felt that MGNREGS helped them avoid doing works which they did not want to.

Further, about 71 *per cent* of respondents felt that useful assets had been created in their villages through MGNREGS. However, in Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Kerala and Tamil Nadu only less than half the beneficiaries felt that useful assets had been created under the scheme.

Finally, on the question of improvement in family income- 75 *per cent* of beneficiaries felt that there was no improvement in their family income or that the improvement was only marginal.