

**IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON THE LIVING  
CONDITION OF RURAL POOR - A STUDY IN  
BARPETA AND MARIGAON DISTRICTS OF ASSAM**

**A THESIS**

**SUBMITTED TO GAUHATI UNIVERSITY FOR THE  
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IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS**



**SUBMITTED BY  
HIMANGSHU KALITA**

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## **CERTIFICATE**

This is to certify that this thesis entitled ***“Impact of MGNREGA on the Living Condition of Rural Poor- A study in Barpeta and Marigaon districts of Assam”***, submitted by Himangshu Kalita in fulfilment of the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the faculty of Arts (Economics) of Gauhati University is a record of bona fide research work carried out by him under my supervision and guidance.

I further certify that the candidate has fulfilled all the requirements of PhD regulations and no part of this thesis has been submitted to any other university/institution for any research degree.

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## DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

I hereby declared that the thesis on *“Impact of MGNREGA on the Living Condition of Rural Poor- A study in Barpeta and Marigaon Districts of Assam”*, submitted by me for the award of the degree of Doctorate of Philosophy under the Department of Economics of Gauhati University is based upon my own research work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Ratul Mahanta, Associate Professor, Department of Economics, Gauhati University. Neither this thesis nor any part of it has been submitted before for any degree/diploma to Gauhati University or to any other Universities/Institutions.

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### **1.1 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act-2005**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a flagship program introduced by the government of India in 2005. The main aim is to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days work in a financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March) to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage rate to enhance the purchasing power of rural poor (GOI, 2005). Covered by four different laws under the constitution of India, the MGNREGA also follows some of the the Directive Principles of State Policy (Part IV, Article 41 Constitution of India). The law by providing a 'right to work' is in consistence with Article 41 that directs the State to secure to all citizens the right to work<sup>1</sup>. In coherence, It also seeks to protect the environment through rural works under Article 48A that directs the State to protect the environment<sup>2</sup>.

According to the Article 21 of the Constitution of India, right to life is guaranteed with dignity to every citizen of India, through an assurance of livelihood security. Again, Article 16 of the Constitution of India guarantees equality of opportunity in matters of public employment and preventing the State from discriminating against anyone in matters of employment on the grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, and descent, place of birth, place of residence or any of them.

Article 40 mandates the State to set up village panchayats and entrust them with such powers and authorities as may be necessary to enable these Panchayats to function as units of self-government. In the process of decentralization, initiated by 73rd amendment to the Constitution of India, Panchayats were granted a constitutional status. This is further reinforced by the

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<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Law and Justice, Govt. of India, 2008, p. 22

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, 2005, p. 22

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA that endowed these rural self-government institutions with authority to implement the law.

The overall objective of MGNREGA do hereby encompass the generation of additional employment and income for the rural people as they are mainly engaged in agricultural activity. When the harvesting season is over, they have limited work which is known as lean season. The MGNREGA activity is implemented during this lean season so that people can derive employment and income. MGNREGA basically involves unskilled manual work, so that farmers, self employed entrepreneurs, poor villagers and wage labourers can join easily in this type of work. Along with the development of rural household the Act also strives to develop rural areas by initiating activities like construction of roads, canals, land development, environment protection etc. The development of rural infrastructure and income generation of the rural people will ensure progress in the direction of economic growth, thereby raising the standard of living of the rural poor by reducing poverty. Thus, this study will highlight the relationship between employment, income generation and economic that play a pivotal role to reduce poverty.

## **1.2 Growth, Employment and Poverty Interlink**

There lies significant correlation between growth and changing rates of unemployment (Hussain, 1999; McKinley and Weeks, 2009). McKinley examines the importance of public finance in supporting a development strategy in the country of Moldova. In his opinion, public finance accelerates economic growth, generates employment and directs resources towards poverty reduction. Weeks states that poverty will reduce through an increase in employment and wages, in cases where earnings are below the poverty level. Such an increase requires a growth enhancing macro policy. Again to reduce the problem of unemployment one of the important priorities of economic policies is to increase the growth and employment opportunities. Therefore policy investment should link to create more employment opportunity by constructing investment programs which support the growth to eliminate unemployment (Al-Rawi, 2004).

Some scholars focus on economic growth as the prime eliminator of poverty reduction. These scholars are further divided into a number of groups,

including those who recommend pre-market policies (Bhagawati, 1985; Lal and Myint, 1996; Dollar and Kraay, 2002), those who support import substitution as a path to industrialization (Frank, 1969), and those who argue that a developmental state works best for stimulating the type of growth that effectively reduces poverty (Amsden, 1996; Johnson, 1982). Again, a large group of scholars criticize the pursuit of economic growth (Streeten, 1993), arguing that the rapid promotion of development and economic growth actually perpetuates poverty (Escobar, 1995), whereby creating an unsustainable threat to the environment and to the earth's supply of natural resources (Meadows, Randers, Meadows, 2004). Lastly, yet another group of scholars seek a middle ground, contending that economic growth is necessary but is not a sufficient condition for poverty reduction. De-emphasizing on economic growth somewhat in order to focus on human scale development helps to promote the kinds of growth that more directly reduces poverty (Schumacher, 1973; Chambers, Pacey and Thrupp, 1989; Max-Neef, 1991; Mehrotra and Jolly, 1997). Econometric studies (Kemal, 2004) also show a clear relationship between economic growth, employment, remittance and poverty.

The degree of employment intensity in course of the growth process is extremely important for achieving the goal of poverty reduction (Islam and Majeres, 2001). It reveals that if labour-based approaches could be mainstreamed into overall investment policies, it would enable the simultaneous pursuit of the objectives of economic growth, employment generation, and poverty reduction.

Similarly some other scholars demonstrate that sectoral growth can reduce poverty (Kaldor, 1967; Kuznets, 1971; Ranis and Fei, 1961). As the share of industrial production increases, the structures of employment witness changes- agricultural employment declines as a share of total employment and the share of industrial and service employment increases. On one hand, growth in agricultural sector will increase poverty, but growth in the urban sector may reduce poverty (Satchi and Temple, 2006). But Coxhead and Warr (1995) find that agricultural productivity reduce poverty. On the other hand, Loayza and Raddatz (2006) find that, growth in unskilled intensive sectors contribute to poverty reduction. Thus

growth in one sector of the economy will not automatically transfer the benefit to the poor. It will depend on the profile of the growth, its employment or productive intensity, the sectoral location of the poor and the extent of mobility across sectors (Hull, 2006). Ravallion and Dutt (2009) marked differences in the impact of poverty by sectors; with the development of primary and tertiary sector, poverty can be reduced either in rural or urban areas. But the growth in secondary sector had no positive effect on the poor in both rural and urban areas. The historical change noticed is that now tertiary sector delivers significant gains to India's poor.

It seems obvious that economic growth should reduce poverty, yet the issues remain controversial. Some scholars assert that economic growth does not eliminate poverty and may worsen the problems of the poor (United Nations 1997). For example, Dreze and Sen (1990) claim that economic growth does not generate benefits in terms of numerous non pecuniary measures of well-being. Thus, calls for increased government spending (Squires, 1993) or other redistribution of wealth (Todaro, 1997) are the logical extensions of the argument that growth does not ensure the elimination of poverty.

Growth in the rural economy accounted for the majority of China's success in 1980 (Ravallion and Chen, 2007). However, over the period since 1980, it has been observed that rural economic growth in China had a far higher poverty impact than urban economic growth. Similarly, growth in the primary sector did more to reduce poverty than its growth in either the secondary or tertiary sectors. World Bank research article, "A Comparative Perspective on Poverty Reduction in Brazil, China, and India," looked at the three nations' strategies and their relative challenges and successes (2012). During their reform periods, all three have reduced their poverty rates, but through a different mix of approaches.

During the 1980s, the main objectives and strategies for reducing poverty by providing for basic needs like food and shelter were pursued (Streeten, 1981). It is interesting to note that many countries undergoing structural adjustment increased their employment programs for poverty reduction without much initial involvement of the international institutions guiding the adjustment policies (the

World Bank and IMF, 2005). This in turn, brought changes only to a limited extent in the early 1990s when the long term potential for reducing poverty through employment became more widely recognized (Pranati, 2009).

During the period of crisis like natural disasters or economic depression wage employment was taken as relief work organized for the poor. In contemporary times, these programs are recognized in literature as a modern instrument of development policy, as they have shown tremendous potential to alleviate poverty as part of mainstream economic strategy (Tinbergen, 1994). That is, these programs have emerged as a tool that promotes strategic use of surplus manpower for promoting pro-poor growth leading to sustainable development (Tinbergen, 1994).

Employment plays a vital role for achieving the aim of poverty reduction and economic growth (Jamel, 2015). Thus, the battle against poverty is considered as one of the main objectives of the development policies. Poverty reduction through the growth and employment generation benefit poor households, particularly in rural areas (Mckinley, 2009). Consequently, international institutions such as World Bank, IMF, and OECD etc direct their policies and efforts towards the reduction of poverty. Thus, the objective of most of the developing countries of the world is to make economic growth more favourable to the poor.

From the above study we find that the experience of countries that succeeded in reducing poverty significantly indicates the importance of high rates of economic growth which is however, not a sufficient condition for poverty reduction. This is because the pattern and sources of growth as well as the manner in which its benefits are distributed are equally important from the point of view of achieving the goal of poverty reduction. Indeed, countries which have attained high rates of employment growth alongside high rates of economic growth are also the ones who succeeded in reducing poverty significantly. And in this regard, the importance of employment as the key link between growth and poverty alleviation is often pointed out. While this proposition has strong intuitive appeal, there is some scattered empirical support for it too. For example, a comparison between the experience of pre-crisis East and South East Asia on

the one hand and South Asia on the other clearly shows much higher employment elasticity of economic growth in the former where the record of poverty reduction was also much more impressive (Islam, 2001). This kind of evidence, however, needs to be compiled and analysed more systematically in order to make a case for an employment-intensive growth strategy. In other words, the nexus between economic growth, employment and poverty alleviation needs to be fully articulated and empirically substantiated. While this would involve some analytical work, a good deal of empirical work is required to monitor the labour market outcomes from the perspective of raising the incomes of poor households, and to identify policies, programs and interventions that could have a positive, poverty alleviating impact on such outcomes. The kind of work mentioned above bear significance because a large number of developing countries are currently engaged in formulating poverty reduction strategies; and yet policies for using employment as a route out of poverty are not often integrated into such strategies.

Therefore, many of the developing countries as a whole are engaged in addressing the most critical question that is, how to create hundreds of millions of job instantly for the poor with limited resources. The government of Bangladesh is fighting against poverty since 1974 by implementing Food for Work program (FFWP) in 1974, Rural Maintenance program (RMP) in 1983, 100 Days Employment Generation Program (100 EGP) in 2008-09 and providing for a secure and regular source of income to 700,000 of the poorest people where 33% were women. Again in 2009-10 the 100 EGP program has been upgraded as for Hard-Core Poor. The government of Pakistan has established Small and medium Enterprise Development Authority (SMEDA), Self Employment Scheme like Small Business Financial Corporation (SBFC), Punjab Rural Support Program (PRSP), Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and Zakat and Ushr System which are rigorous procedure for disbursement of funds through the government's administrative system. The purpose of the Zakat is to assist the needy, the indigent and the poor. A country like South Africa has implemented Reconstruction and Development Program (RDP) in 1994 to create Keynesian aggregate effective demand, Growth Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GERS) in 1996, Expanded Public Work Program (EPWP) in 2004 and 2009 in phase 2 to remove poverty in different sector in the economy. Again Argentina

government has introduced Plan Trabajar I, II and III an Emergency Employment Program (EEP) in 1995, 1997 and 2000 which were a social work program to combat with poverty and unemployment. The country also implements Employment Road to Economic Recovery in 2002 to provide safety net to deal with large scale social dislocation, poverty and unemployment. Similarly, the European Union (EU) supports the World Bank and the Social Fund for Development (SFD) to improve employment opportunities for the Egyptian unemployed youth The Emergency Employment Investment Project (EEIP) is funded by the EU with a EUR 70 million grant and the program has already supported 38,000 beneficiaries with work opportunities in the poorest districts of the country.

After independence, many plans, programs and policies have been implemented in India's planning process to fight against poverty notably through food subsidies, farm-input subsidies, subsidized credit schemes and welfare schemes. This type of scheme has benefited some section of the poor, but not all. While its benefits has been enjoyed by many of the non-poor. Since independence, rural employment has been the prime agenda of debate in the country as 74% of the unemployed population hails from rural India. During the plan period for the last three decades India has been implementing different innovative schemes for rural employment generation program. Some have helped to achieve the goals, be it short or long term, whereas others have faced technical and implementation snags. In the past, a number of schemes have provided temporary employments in public works program at the government's discretion, but the present day scenario brings with it legislation and rights-based approach for implementing pro-people development policies on the country. The prime goal of rural development is to improve the quality of life of the rural poor. In spite of spectacular growth achieved during the recent past, the benefits of the same could not be shared by the large number of people in rural areas. Hence, there is a need to give special focus on inclusive growth with emphasis on providing basic infrastructure services such as education, drinking water sanitation, electricity, housing, health, road connectivity as well as employment opportunities in both farm and non-farm sectors. There is a need to strengthen the

Panchayati Raj Institutions and other community based organizations with a focus on women and youth. There are several programs being implemented for the last five decades both by the government of India as well as state government apart from several NGO's intervention. However, the rural people still remain in absolute poverty in several pockets of the country, especially in the North East India.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem:**

Poverty and unemployment are among the main causes which have crippled the Indian economy for a very long period. Over the years various reports and data has been released from Govt., semi-govt. departments and other institutions which have supported the above statement and have reflected upon the severity of these problems. According to Reserve Bank of India Report 2013, Goa ranks best with least poverty rate of 5.09 percent living below poverty line and on the other hand Chattisgarh ranks highest (39.96 percent), followed by Jharkhand and Manipur while the national average stand at 21.92 percent. The poverty scenario is graver in case of Assam as the poverty rate stand at 31.98 percent which is higher than the all India average.

In case of Unemployment status Assam has the highest unemployment rate<sup>3</sup> (199 per 1000 persons) and Gujarat comes with the least unemployment rate (10 per 1000 persons), whereas the national average stood at 51 per 1000 person. (5<sup>th</sup> Annual Employment Unemployment Survey 2015-16, GOI). So, it can be observed that in case of Assam there are some lacunas which are hampering the development of the state and ultimately resulting into poor performance ranking in poverty and unemployment.

The World Bank's Global Monitoring Report for the year 2014-15 on the Millennium Development Goals states that India has been the biggest contributor towards poverty reduction between the period 2008 and 2011, with around 140 million or so lifted out of absolute poverty (Chakraborty, 2013 & Manas, 2014). The reason can be attributed towards the fact that there is decline in poverty leading towards India's rapid economic growth since 1991 (Bhagawati and

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<sup>3</sup> Unemployment rate =  $\frac{\text{total number of unemployed people}}{\text{total workforce}} \times 1000$



Panagariya, 2013; Swaminathan and Anklesaria, 2011; Ravallion and Datt, 2002). Another reason stated is India's launch of social welfare flagship programs such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Midday Meal Scheme in Government schools (Klonner and Oldiges, 2012, 2014). In a study in 2012 (Klonner and Oldiges), conclude that MGNREGA helps reduce rural poverty gap (intensity of rural poverty), seasonal poverty, but not overall poverty.

Several studies relating to the evaluation and assessment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have been conducted in national and state level in different parts of our country, but very few studies have been conducted in Assam (Goswami, 2008; Hazarika, 2009; Bordoloi, 2011; Dutta, 2012; Bhowmik, 2013 etc). This has led to major research gaps as these studies are not enough to fulfill all the research queries relating to Assam. This issue shall be addressed in the course of this study. Henceforth, a need for a thorough and extensive investigation is still required to be carried out in order to make the rural development program self sustained and result oriented. Thus, the study will contribute towards the existing literature available on poverty, income, employment and rural development in Assam.

#### **1.4 Brief history of MGNREGA**

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was passed by the Government of India in September 2005 and on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2009 the Act was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which was a revolutionary step for India's poor. MGNREGA is the world's largest guarantee scheme of India to fight poverty and generate employment. It is internationally the first ever law, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. Since independence, it was being demanded that right to work should be included in the list of fundamental rights. The MGNREGA goes beyond poverty alleviation and recognizes employment as a legal right and "people's act" for all of the job seekers in rural areas. In July 2004, the draft of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was prepared by concerned citizens and sent to the National Advisory Council. The NREGA was passed in the monsoon season by the Parliament on August 23, 2005 and came in

to effect on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2005, by receiving the assent of the President and was notified on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. The NREGA was started as a pilot project from 14<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 in certain selected and most backward districts of the country. The NREGA of 2005 covered 200 districts from 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2006, known as Phase I districts, and since April 1, 2007, this was extended to cover 130 additional districts known as the Phase II districts and since April 1, 2008 as last phase include all the districts of the country. The main aim of this Act is to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days work in a financial year (1<sup>st</sup> April to 31<sup>st</sup> March) to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage rate to enhance the purchasing power of rural poor<sup>4</sup>.

The MGNREGA was supposed to be the most unique scheme after independence as it provides statutory right to employment. The government has also statutory obligation to provide employment to every household in a financial year (Mathur, 2007 and 2008). The scheme gives unprecedented opportunities to build the foundations of social security system in rural India and revive village economies, promote social equity and empower the working class. It is a demand driven scheme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work evoked by wage seekers.

The MGNREGA seeks to fulfill the dream of Mahatma's "Gramya Swaraj". Therefore, it is not just wage employment program, but one that is legally enforceable, and changes can be initiated only through constitutional amendment. Thus, this Act provides the legal foundation for work guarantee, and the scheme is the means by which this guarantee comes into effect. It is a national legislation, but the scheme is state specific. It draws on India's long experience with wage employment generation scheme. The journey of rural development program was started in India from the post independence period in 1950s by implementing Community Development Program and National Extension Services (1953) in the villages of rural India. The aim of the program was to create awareness among rural communities regarding the potential and means of development. In 1960-61, Intensive Agriculture District Program was introduced

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<sup>4</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, vol.3; 86.

to increase the income of the cultivator; it was followed by Area Development Program (1966) for the development of specific areas such as Hills, Deserts and Boarder areas. Similarly, Drought Prone Area Program was launched in 1970 to minimize the adverse effect of drought on production of crops, livestock and productivity of land. After that, in 1971 Crash Scheme for Rural Development was launched to provide employment to 1000 persons in every district for 10 months in a year. Other important rural development programs during 1970s was Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Program (1972), Small Farmers Development Agency (1971), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Scheme (1972), Integrated Rural Development Program (1974), Command Area Development Program (1976) Food for Work Program and Antyodaya Program (1977). Again in 1980s two important rural development schemes were implemented, namely, National Rural Employment Program (1980) to provide self employment ventures for Below Poverty Line people and Rural Landless Employment Program (1983). After 1990s the government of India restructured some rural development programs such as Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (1993), which was later on merged with Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana, NREP and RLEGP and made a rural infrastructure program. By restructuring the IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, GKY, MWC, SITRA; Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana was implemented in 2000-2001. During the plan period, the government of India also introduced Sampoorna Gramin Yojana (2001) which later on merged with National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. The NREGA was first introduced in 200 districts in 2006; in 2007 it covers another 130 districts of India and in 2008 it covers all the districts of the country. The Act was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in 2009.

#### **1.4.1 Objectives of MGNREGA**

The main objectives of the program are:

- Ensuring social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities,
- Ensuring livelihood security for the poor through the creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity,

- Strengthening drought proofing and flood management in rural India,
- Empowerment of the marginalized communities, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), through the processes of a rights based legislation,
- Strengthening decentralized participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives,
- Deepening democracy at the grass roots by strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs),
- Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.

Thus, MGNREGA demonstrates a transformative approach to poverty reduction in relation to its rights based approach. Therefore, it is different from the earlier employment generation schemes taken by the Government of India in its planning process in a number of important ways. First, MGNREGA is an Act enshrined in India's Constitution, entitling any poor rural household to 100 days of employment. Second, this is the first public work program that has been national in coverage, organized and mainly funded from the central budget but implemented at the state level by the Gram Panchayats, instead of private contractors. Also an indirect goal of MGNREGA is to strengthen the grassroots processes of democracy by means of transparent and accountable mechanisms such as social audit and monitoring and evaluation systems. Third, MGNREGA marks a shift from allocated work to demand based work. After applying for registration, the person will be provided a job card. Next, he/she has to seek employment through a written application and choose the duration of work. Under this law, there is also a legal guarantee that the work requested has to be provided by the Panchayat within 15 days. Otherwise, the state has to provide an unemployment allowance at a quarter of the wage for each day employment that is not given, thereby providing the Panchayat an incentive for effective implementation. Wages will be paid at the wage rate to the wage earner through their Bank/Post office account. Fourth, at least one third of the workers should be women. Thus, MGNREGA has become a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India, through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic governance. Water conservation, drought proofing (including plantation and afforestation), irrigation canals, minor irrigation, horticulture and

land development on the land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY and land reform beneficiaries, renovation of traditional water bodies, flood protection, land development, rural connectivity etc. are the prime areas to work under MGNREGA.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study proposes to enquire upon the following questions:

- Has MGNREGA been successful in giving more employment in reaching out to the rural poor? Who are the MGNREGA beneficiaries? In what type of work have they engaged under this scheme?
- Has MGNREGA wages been higher than reservation wages?
- Is there any impact of this scheme on labour supply market? Has MGNREGA been successful in checking rural urban migration?
- What determines participation in MGNREGA?

### **1.6 Objectives**

The following objectives have been formulated for the study :-

- To assess the effectiveness of the scheme in creation of employment and reaching out to the rural poor.
- To analyse the problems faced by the implementing agencies as well as beneficiaries and to identify the administrative drawbacks.
- To study the impact of MGNREGA on rural labour market and wage rate.
- To estimate the factors that determines MGNREGA participation.

### **1.7 Methodology**

#### **1.7.1 Study Area**

The field study has been conducted in Barpeta District and a comparison is furnished with Marigaon District of Assam. Selection of the above two districts has been done by using secondary data from the official source of MGNREGA in 2013-14. During 2013-14, highest number of job cards were issued (2.50 Lakhs) in Barpeta District. But, the total number of households (HH) that demanded employment (34.91 thousand) and that received employment (33.27 thousand) is lowest (13 percent only) in Barpeta district as compared to job cards issued. Due to poor infrastructure and poor irrigational facilities, cultivators are engaged in

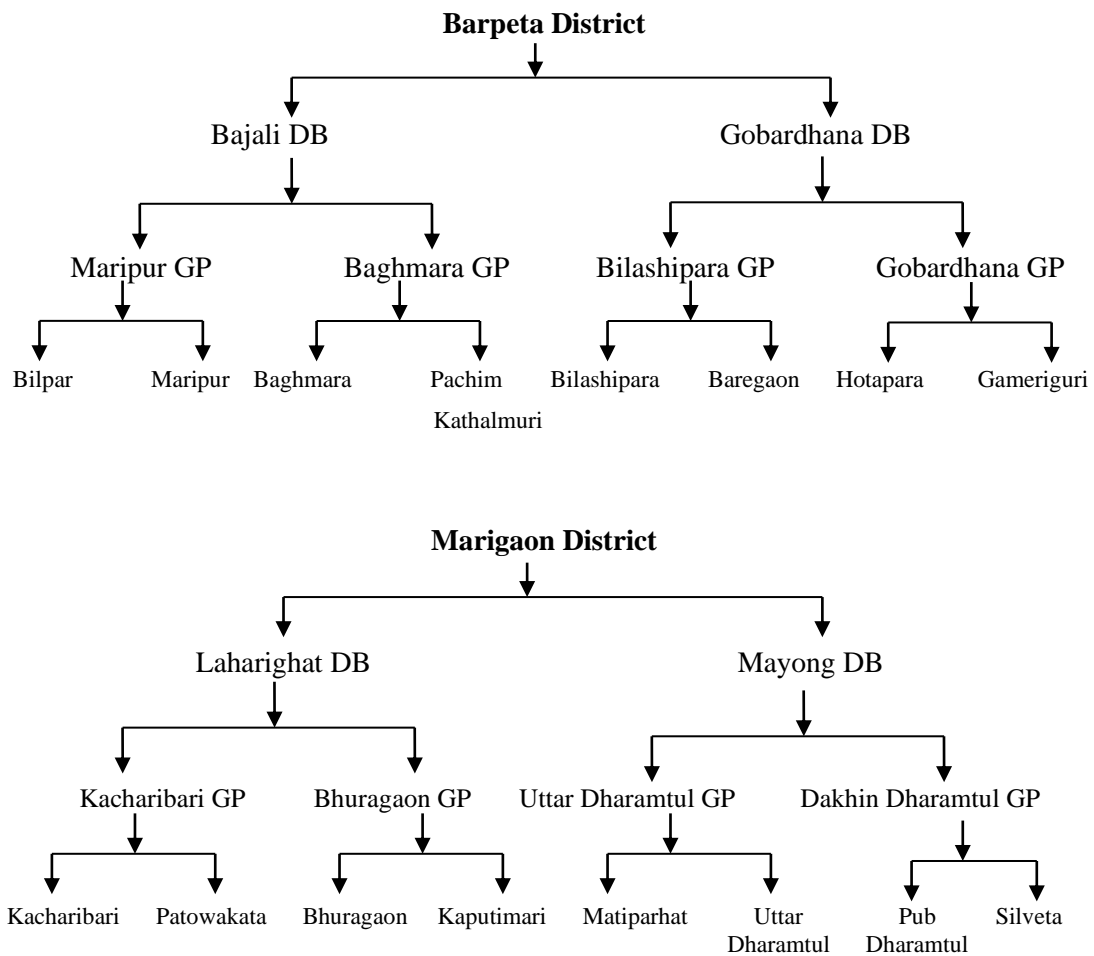
agricultural activities only during the monsoon session. Therefore, for most of the year the workforce are unemployed and poor. Similarly, Marigaon district was selected on the basis of highest number of households getting 100 days employment (5 thousand) in the same year. The district also generated highest number of employment for women (6.93 lakh mandays) and SC population (4.99 lakh man days). In some literature, such as (Panda et. al.2011; Hazarika 2009), the performance of Marigaon district is quite satisfactory. Moreover, in both the districts out of the total population more than 91 percent people live in rural areas as per 2011 census, which is much higher than the state average (86 percent). Again, both the districts are industrially backward because there is no industrial estate and industrial area in the two districts (Statistical Handbook, Assam 2011). To make a comparative study, a district of the same phase was intended to be selected, so that this would not have a negative impact on the result. Therefore, both Barpeta and Morigaon were selected from the second phase of MGNREGA implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2007, so that appropriate comparative can be carried out in the same duration of time. The study covers a period of ten years, from financial year 2006-07 to 2015-16.

### **1.7.2 Data Source**

The study uses both primary and secondary data. The secondary data has been gathered from the various published and unpublished sources, official website of MGNREGA, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, books, referred journals, periodicals, publications, various monitoring and evaluation reports of the Ministry of Panchayats and Rural Development (Govt. of India), Government of Assam Report, various operational guidelines and notifications of the Ministry (Govt. of India), report from different institutions like World Bank, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Overseas Development Institute, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance, Economic survey of India, Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2011, Census of India 2011 and from unofficial sources. On the other hand, the primary data has been collected by conducting sample surveys through a semi-structured schedule from beneficiaries and non beneficiaries of MGNREGA work.

### 1.7.3 Sampling Design

The field study has been conducted at four levels i.e. district, block, panchayat and village applying multistage sampling method. From each district two Development Blocks(DB) were selected purposively. One DB is selected on the basis of lowest cumulative number of households (HH) provided employment while the other DB is selected on the basis of dominance of minority and tribal people<sup>5</sup>. Next, from each DB, two Gram Panchayats (GP) have been selected using the same criteria mentioned above. In the third stage, two villages from each GP have been selected in consultation with the president/secretary of the concerned Panchayat. Finally, a proportionate number of HH from each village have been selected. Selected villages from the two districts are shown below.



<sup>5</sup> Minority indicates Muslim community Tribal people indicates Schedule Caste/Schedule Tribes

### 1.7.4 Sample Size

In every Gram Panchayat proportionate number of beneficiaries from two different villages has been selected randomly from the list of job card holders/beneficiaries available with MGNREGA website. A total number of 320 households were surveyed for the study, out of which 130 households were from Barpeta district and 190 households from Marigaon district. Another 50 number of non-beneficiaries household were taken as controlled group from all the selected GP of two districts who are willing to work under MGNREGA, but unable to get job card.

### 1.8 Line of Analysis

The study uses both empirical and analytical methods. Data has been collected from both primary and secondary sources, though emphasis has been given on primary data collected from field study through the canvassing of two structured interview Schedule among job card holders and Panchayat officials. The field data has been cross examined with available official statistics. Moreover, focus group discussion has also been conducted to avail village level data. In this study, both qualitative and quantitative methods of research have been used. Various tabular as well as, graphical and basic statistical approaches to represent the data have also been used.

Objectives	Data source	Line of analysis
1. To assess the effectiveness of the scheme in creation of employment and additional income to the rural poor.	Primary and secondary data	Descriptive and through table and graph.
2. To analyse the problems faced by the implementing agencies as well as beneficiaries and to identify the administrative drawbacks.	Primary data	Descriptive and analytical through table.
3. To study the impact of MGNREGA on rural labour market and wage rate.	Primary data	Regression analysis and table and graph
4. To estimate the factors that determines MGNREGA participation	Primary and Secondary data	Regression analysis, binary



		logistic model
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### 1.9 Variables Used

The main objective of the entire study is to examine whether the MGNREGA is successful in employment generation, and whether it provides for increased wages and improved quality of life among rural poor people. For this, the field study would endeavour to bring out the impact of the scheme on various important attributes which contribute to the enhancement of quality of life such as

- (i) Land holding pattern of the beneficiaries of this scheme
- (ii) Details of livestock creation prior to and after utilization of the scheme
- (iii) Status of household assets gathered before and after the scheme in vogue
- (iv) Acquisition of movable and immovable assets by the beneficiaries during the year of implementation of the scheme
- (v) House type
- (vi) Beneficiaries of the scheme having electricity connection

### 1.10 Limitations of the Study

- The study is limited to two districts only out of 27 districts of Assam<sup>6</sup>. Therefore, the conclusions based on the findings may not present the full story.
- MGNREGA works are planned and implemented during the lean agricultural season where it continues mostly between November and March. Due to the rigidity of time for field work, it is not possible to visit many worksites where works are ongoing.
- Due to shortage of time household data collection is limited to only 370, which may not give clear picture about the whole area of study.

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<sup>6</sup> Although the number of district now increased in Assam from 27 to 32, total districts in Assam shown in MGNREGA is still 27 only.

### **1.11. Layout of the Thesis:**

The study is an exploratory one based on both primary and secondary data. The thesis is divided into six chapters with different contents.

#### **Chapter I:- Introduction**

In this chapter, there will be a brief discussion about economic growth, poverty and unemployment problem in the economy of the world as a whole and Assam in particular. It also includes the background of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and its implementation in India. The objective of the study, research quarries, and research methodology, limitation of the study and tools and techniques of analysis will also be included.

#### **Chapter II: - Literature review**

This chapter provides a review of the different studies which are related to the study. The review has been done in regional level, state level and national level.

#### **Chapter III: Overview of MGNREGA in Assam in General and Districts in Particular**

This chapter gives a broad overview about the implementation of MGNREGA in the country and state along with the districts of Assam. It gives the overall scenario of the Act with table and graph.

#### **Chapter IV: Methodology**

This chapter provides a detailed description of the theoretical framework adopted for the study. It gives idea about the study area, data source, sampling design and survey area of the study. .

#### **Chapter V: Results and Discussions**

The result followed by discussion based on both primary and secondary data has been placed in this chapter.

#### **Chapter VI: Findings, Summary and Conclusion**

This chapter sums up all major findings and conclusion of the whole study.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Meaning of Rural Development**

According to a World Bank Report, rural development “is a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people-the rural poor including small and marginal farmers, tenants and the landless” (World Bank). The term ‘rural’ means an area which is characterized by non urban style of life, occupational structure, social organization and settlement pattern. Development is often defined in terms of technological and industrial development. But, development of rural areas and its people means raising their standard of living. It is the development of rural areas through the extension of irrigation facilities, construction of school buildings, promotion of education facilities, health care and road etc.

The Ashridge Conference on social development defined rural development “as a movement designed to promote better living for all in the whole community with the active participation and initiative of the community

According to South African Rural Development Framework (SARDF, 1997), rural development can be defined as “helping rural people set the priorities in their own communities through effective and democratic bodies by providing the local capacity, investment in basic infrastructure and social services, justice, equity and security, dealing with the injustice of the past and ensuring safety and security of the rural population, especially that of women”.

In the words of Robert Chambers (1983), “Rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural men and women, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek livelihood in rural areas to demand and control more of the benefit of rural development. The group includes small farmers, tenants and landless”.

From the above observations it becomes clear that rural development is a multidimensional process, which includes the development of socio-economic condition of the people living in the rural areas and ensures their participation in the process of development for complete utilization of physical and human resources for better living conditions. It extends the benefits of development to weaker and poorest section of rural society. It also enhances both the capacity and the capability of administrative and socio-economic development agencies and agricultural marketing units working in the rural areas.

Many of the available literatures are skeptical about the proper implementation of National Employment Guarantee Scheme. Some of the authors feel that the government lacks adequate capacity to implement EGS without large leakages and corruption. These fears are genuine as there had been problems regarding implementation of this scheme in the past.

## **2.2 North eastern context**

The various program of rural development implemented in the West Garo Hill district of Meghalaya created some impact both on poverty reduction and improvement in village life But compared to the investment and also the depth of the problems related to the quality of life of the villagers, the achievement was far below the expectation (Haloi, 2000). The study reveals that the success of rural development program is limited due to lack of people's participation and political interference in the selection of beneficiaries and multiplicity of the administrative control.

Sharma (1988) observed that the quality of life and standard of living of the people of Assam has not made any significant improvement over the twenty five year period, 1955-1980. Her study reveals that between the periods of 1975-1980 the nutritional level and leisure aspects had a fall in the state. Adhyapok (1999) in his study "Rural Development Program in Assam" found that poverty alleviation, employment and income generation of the rural people through rural development program might be regarded as strategic policy for the development of the rural economy. He suggested that selection of beneficiaries under self employment and wage employment schemes were to be done in a planned manner by the implementing agency at the grass root level.

Subramaniam (2001) observed that rural poverty in North East India was below the national average in the early seventies but has gone above it in the early nineties. The poverty alleviation program had failed to achieve their targets where the chief causes of the failure were geographical isolation, poor infrastructure, and insurgency, and absence of approaches and direction of development policy. In the study it was found that extensive areas of Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura have very poor banking networks due to poor road facilities. Traditional barter system still exists due to poor marketing facilities.

Goswami (2003) in his doctoral work explained that the various rural development programs implemented in Jorhat district of Assam fail to give satisfactory results. Certain socio- economic, political and technical problems were responsible for poor performance of the schemes.

*Dynamics of Rural Development*, a compiled study edited by Das (2007) points out that effective implementation of rural development program depends on the proper identification of the beneficiaries for whom the schemes are chalked out.

Enactment of MGNREGA is a bold step addressed especially to the problem of galloping rural unemployment. It commands a position of an unparalleled significance in the eradication of unemployment problem in the rural areas (Borgoahai, 2005).

Goswami (2008) also explains that MGNREGA has a positive impact on the lives of millions of people across the poorest districts of the country. He also observes that works without engagements with local contractors is the most remarkable feature of the program. He hopes that the poor people will get direct benefit from the Act.

Hazarika (2009) observed that the MGNREGA is a wage employment program, providing minimum wage employment to casual, unskilled labour, especially during lean season. Its longer aim is to generate savings and assets in the countryside, to promote a growth process based on local development. The

researcher found that the program has indeed a positive impact on women empowerment, in so far as it has addressed a number of practical gender needs.

In another survey in Marigaon and Bongaigaon district (Hazarika, 2009) also found that women are becoming self dependant which implies gender empowerment in the two districts. But he also found that most of the panchayat representatives have large number of job cards which is against the Act.

Panda et al. (2009) found that MGNREGA has a significant role in women empowerment, especially the rural tribal women in Sikkim and Meghalaya by enhancing the confidence level among women and by ensuring some degree of financial independence. On the other hand, only 42 percent of respondent remarks in a survey conducted by Panda and Umdors (2011) reveal that MGNREGA is helpful to uplift women in Assam. There has been no change in the status of women in the four survey districts except Tinsukia. Bardoloi (2011) observes that MGNREGA is able to build social relationship among the rural people and also reduces the gender difference for some works which are in practice in rural areas. So, MGNREGA is a new lifeline of the rural people who earn their livelihood as wage earners.

Ministry of Home Affairs, Govt. of India (2011) reported that MGNREGA is slowly and steadily transforming the 'geography of poverty'. It has great positive impact on the downtrodden states like Manipur and Nagaland.

In a study in two gram panchayats of Lakhimpur district of Assam (Dutta, 2012) during 2009-10 and 2010-11 it was found that MGNREGA is only partially successful especially in generating employment to the needy households of the study area. The study conducted by Dutta was based on secondary data.

Goswami et al. (2014) has made an overall analysis of the implementation process of MGNREGA in Assam. They found significant differences in secondary and primary data. Secondary data reveals that the implementation of the Act is poorly governed, and at the same time, primary data indicates some loopholes in the implementation process of MGNREGA. The study also found that due to the problem of payment of wage through Banks or Post offices which

are situated far from the villages, the willingness of the beneficiaries to work under MGNREGA gets reduced.

MGNREGA is the most realistic approach to the problems of rural poverty and employment. By providing 100 days employment the Act actually ensures the economic security of the rural poor (Das, 2016). Now, the government is legally responsible to provide 100 days work to the rural poor.

It is observed that among the North Eastern states, Tripura is doing well. Since, from the point of efficiency it is better than other North Eastern states. Still there are provisions and scopes for further improvement. Low level of awareness among the rural people is one of the most important issues (Bhowmik, 2013). Most of the rural people are not aware that it is a 'right based approach' and feels privileged when favoured by the authorities with work. Due to the lack of sufficient monitoring, the present strength is not adequate to fulfill the provision of the scheme.

### **2.3 National context**

It was realized in various studies during the seventies of the last century that the benefits of growth can reach the masses only through the adoption of redistributive policy in the country. Most of these studies advocated 'growth plus strategy'. Though these studies are not generally explicit in their policy and recommendations this may be considered as belonging to the growth school (Mishra, 1997).

Patel (2006) pointed out some important constraints of MGNREGA implementation and highlighted the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Most of the study conducted in different states (e.g. Jacob and Varghese, 2006; Louis, 2006; Khera, 2008; Jandu, 2008; Khera and Nayak, 2009; Khera and Muthiah, 2010; Trivedi and Aswal, 2011; Jeyaranjan, 2011; Shrinivasan, 2012) found that MGNREGA has been successful in creation of employment for women in the rural areas. Some studies (e.g. Puri, 2008; Bhatia and Dreze, 2006) reveal that MGNREGA is a successful central government scheme to improve the condition of the rural poor.

A study made by Lanjouw et al., (2008) found that high non-farm wages have had a more significant role in the diversion of labour from agriculture than MGNREGA.

A survey of women workers in north Indian states conducted by Khera and Nayak (2009) found that in many states women participation is much lower than what is prescribed by the law. But the participants felt that MGNREGA employment offers a new sense of independence to women. Payments of MGNREGA wages through bank is considered as 'magic pill' for ending corruption.

Ambasta et al. (2008) expects it is not possible to realize the massive potential of the MGNREGA, if we deploy the same ossified structure of implementation that has deeply institutionalized corruption, inefficiency and non-accountability, into the very fabric of Indian democracy. He expects that if the Act is properly implemented, the MGNREGA holds out the prospect of transforming the livelihoods of the poorest of the poor and heralding a revolution in rural government in India.

Khera (2009) studies the socio economic consequences of the NREGA for women workers in six states of the country. They found that in spite of the drawbacks in the implementation of the legislation, significant benefits have already started accruing to women through better access to local employment, at minimum wages, with relatively decent and safe work conditions. They also discuss barriers to women's participation.

A critical study by Kumar (2009) observes that different wages are paid in different states and funds are not properly utilized in some states.

Jha et al. (2009) found that the size of land holding is a negative predictor of participation in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Program. The study compares land inequality ratio of NREG and slack season agricultural wage rates, political interference, and geographical remoteness across the two study area and conclude that program capture may be an issue in the state of Andhra Pradesh, largely because of these reasons.



NREGA (Johnson, 2009) doesn't just provide money to poor households; it provides money when they need it most, that is, when they are hit hard with bad weather.

Administrative Staff College of India conducted a study (2009) to understand MGNREGA's processes, procedures and impact, the study found that increase in groundwater in Anantpur has resulted in the creation of assets, improved agricultural yields in Anantpur, Adilabad and Guntur districts and has reduced migration. The study also showed that the program is facing delays in wage payments and poor quality of assets.

Goswami (2009) stresses upon the rise of information technology in all levels of implementation of MGNREGA works in Andhra Pradesh and that is why MGNREGA is successfully implemented in the state. Some research papers (e.g. CAG, 2007; Vanaik & Siddharth, 2008; NCAER, 2009; Anindita & Bhatia, 2010) discuss about the wage system in MGNREGA scheme. After completion of work, wages are not paid to the beneficiaries. Due to corruption and irregularities, wage has not been received by the beneficiaries even after wage payment is made through banks.

Nair et al. (2009) observes that wage rate for women workers in agricultural works have shot up from Rs. 80 to Rs. 110 for a full day's work. Even though many new workers are coming into the rural labour market as a result of the NREGA, many of them are young workers, who are not willing to work in the agricultural sector. The unwillingness of workers to come for agricultural works is mainly due to low wages with more efforts in agricultural works.

Babu, et al. (2010) studied in Tripura, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bangle to highlight issues related to MGNREGA and Schedule Caste (SCs) and Schedule Tribes (STs) in each of the states. The study elaborated issues of MGNREGA implementation, awareness levels among the beneficiaries and other impacts of the scheme with regard to agriculture wage and migration.

Deininger et al. (2010) found that NREGS targets the poor. However, a higher propensity of participation for households playing a leadership role in the village points towards some influence of village leaders in the allocation of work. The study also points out towards significant and positive impacts of NREGS participation on consumption expenditure, intake of energy and protein, and asset accumulation, which suggest that the short term effects of NREGS on participating households were positive and greater than program cost.

North East Social Trust (NEST) carried out a research (2010) and found that BPL families have failed to get a job card and get registered in the state which is the prime objective of the Act.

Bedi et al. (2010) studied about the functioning of NREGA in Birbhum district of West Bangla. The study reveals that in order to serve as an effective 'employer of last resort' the program should provide proportionately more job-days during the agricultural lean season and wages should be paid in a timely manner.

Banerjee et al. (2010) found that MGNREGA is aimed at countering some of the development woes of the Indian state in the backward region. The Maoist is active in some of the most backward areas and the government has been accusing them of stalling development. Hence, the current solution operationalised by the government is to flush out those opposing development by force and then proceed with developing these areas. He examines these issues through a case study of the MGNREGA in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa.

Bhatia (2010) studied about the problem of NREGA workers who do not have banks or post offices near their homes. Their difficulties are further exacerbated if the transaction is processed through the post offices because of poor record keeping and the inability to cope with mass payment of MGNREGA wages.

Ahirrao (2010) observed that the utilization of resources available with the state government is also an important indicator to measure the success of the state in implementing the MGNREGA. The states which are able to utilize more

resources reflect that on an average, they have been able to produce more person days of work and create more infrastructure in the villages.

Holmes et al. (2010) finds that MGNREGA has improved economic status and decision-making power slightly for some women in some households, mostly in terms of their own decision making on what food items they prefer to be bought for household consumption.

Bassi, et al. (2010) found that the nature of water management activities chosen under the scheme and the callous way in which these activities are planned and implemented in different regions, without any consideration to their physical and socio-economic realities of the regions concerned, are creating several negative welfare effects.

Bhattacharyya et al. (2010) found in their research activity in three Indian states- Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan that there are serious deficiencies with regard to consumption of various nutrients in all the three states. With this as a background, they model the impact of two policy intervention (NREGA and Public Distribution System) on nutrient intake and stated that there are significant effects of the two policy intervention on nutrient intakes.

NREGA scheme marks a historic opportunity for pushing ahead with governance reforms in rural India. However, the scheme suffers from a few weaknesses in its implementation process and more effective measures need to be undertaken before its possibilities become a reality (Keshava, 2010)

Dreze (2011) found in his study that MGNREGA funds, at the initial stage of implementation of the scheme, are not reaching the poor based on misleading accounts of a CAG report. The field study undertaken indicate positive finding and show an improvement, fewer instances of corruption and leakages under than programs like the National Food for Work Program.

Tiwari et al. (2011) records that desilting has provided several sustained environmental services, including a rise in the groundwater level, an increase in irrigated area and better soil fertility, thereby increasing food production, and contributing to water and food security in the villages of drought-prone Chitradurga district In Chitradurga, about 62% of the total cultivable land is dry

land. Only about 9% of cropland (63,631 ha) is irrigated. Further, 79% of the irrigated land is dependent on tube wells, 9% each on tanks and canals and 3% on open wells.

Palanichamy (2011) conducted a case study on 100 respondents where the chi-square value is less than 0.05, and the researcher concluded that there is Relationship between annual income before joining MGNREGA and annual income after joining MGNREGA. Thus it may be concluded that the total annual income progressively changes in the family because of MGNREGA. Hence there are significant changes in income before and after implementing MGNREGA .At the same time he further reports that there is a gap in getting job in MGNREGA and says that all the respondents (100) got employment only for 15 days.

Thakur (2011) has explained in his study about the role of MGNREGA and its impact on wage and work relation. In his study, he explains that due to creation of employment opportunities as a result of MGNREGA, the rural inhabitants have been benefited and there has been continuous increase in rural labour as they have been receiving guaranteed wages. As a result of this, the rural scenario has been changing and it has been affecting agricultural sector in a positive way.

Dutta (2011) found that MGNREGA has helped the rural poor. He has made a survey in two gram panchayats in Lakhimpur district of Assam. He believed that MGNREGA is the largest employment providing and poverty alleviation program launched by the government. The scheme has helped in larger financial inclusion of the rural poor and generation of job opportunities in most backward areas and has also helped the rural inhabitants to earn a moderate level of income.

Basu (2011) compared the MGNREGA Districts and non-MGNREGA districts and found that the Probability of a casual worker being engaged in public Works increased by 2.5 percentage points more in MGNREGA districts compared to non-MGNREGA Districts.

Babu et al. (2011) studied about the impact of MGNREGA on labour markets in Betul and Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh and found that after the

implementation of the Act, fallow land has been brought under cultivation; there has been a change in cropping pattern from dry land crops to irrigated crops and from traditional to cash crops. Although, there was no distress migration by the sample farmers, migration continued unabated in the study area.

Sanyal (2011) in his analytical study regarding India's rural employment program conclude that the government has taken a historic move by enacting the MGNREGA, which is perhaps the largest employment generating program in the world ensuring a one-step-ahead move towards guaranteeing the right to work in a country with a population over a billion.

Another research by Azam (2011) confirmed the analysis—Comparing 2007–08 and 2004–05, it was seen that the Fraction of days spent in public works employment increased by 1.2 percentage points during the dry season in the programs' districts. A large part of this can be attributed to the female labour force participation directly in the Scheme. However, it is difficult to suggest that this casual labour in MGNREGA is actually labour from the agriculture sector. The shortage in agricultural labour and their diversion from farms may be due to factors outside MGNREGA. In fact, post 2004–05, there has been a negative trend in labour force participation.

Amar (2011) observed that MGNREGA has had a ripple effect in the areas where the rural workforce would migrate to and has been the single most effective mechanism to push up wages for agricultural labour, i.e. it helps in stopping or at least slowing down migration of rural workforce to urban areas.

Hazra (2011) suggested that rural employment generation programs in rural areas, if properly planned and implemented at the ground level as part of the current strategy, adopted for rural development can play the role of a catalyst to create economically productive and socially useful assets for the entire rural population and this notion appears quite apparent when we think of the emerging, sustainable as well as the potential impact of the country's biggest employment generation program, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme.

Parminder et al. (2011) found that due to high dependency of children, elderly and other members of the family who do not work gender discrimination against women found increasing. Women were paid lower wages as compared to their male counterparts. The unemployment rate was also found to be higher in case of females than males. If gender disparity need to be ameliorated then females have to upgrade themselves with latest technological knowhow through vocational training camps and implementation of equal pay equal work policy.

Dheeraja et al. (2011) studied the impact of MGNREGS on gender relations in 102 districts in 27 states. The study found that gender relations in favour of women increased in the post MGNREGA period. Self esteem, self image and confidence levels of women improved through their participation under MGNREGA.

Kumar (2011) in his analytical study regarding the Act found that the Act is really a boon for the rural people. If it is implemented transparently, corruption will be eradicated and certainly it enhances the standard of living of the rural poor.

Jha (2011) explains relatively neglected issue of real income transfers, net of the opportunity cost of time, under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. They have done a survey in three states, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to depict various individual and social characteristics of the population in these states as well as those of the participants in the NREGS. They also model the stochastic dominance comparisons of per capita monthly expenditures of participants with and without alternative employment opportunities in the absence of NREGS as well as the determinants of such opportunities.

Khosla (2011) studies the effect of caste reservation policies on the provision of public goods and services in GPs in Andhra Pradesh using data from NREGA scheme. The study found that the effect of reservation varies tremendously in different social, political, and institutional context, shedding light on the conflicting results of similar studies.

Using macro level data Indumatib et al. (2011) in the drought-prone states of Karnataka and Rajasthan as well as in an irrigation-dominated state like Andhra Pradesh, it observed that the impact of MGNREGA wages on the economic scarcity of labour is more prevalent in Karnataka and Rajasthan; however this impact is relatively modest when compared with the impact of hike in nonfarm wages. Though the provision of food security through the Public Distribution System (PDS) has also contributed to the economic scarcity of labour, the relative hike in non-farm wages is contributing to higher economic scarcity of labour rather than PDS and MGNREGA wages. In other words, labour is being diverted away from agriculture due to more lucrative non-farm wages.

Mangatter (2011) in his survey at Bolpur subdivision (West Bangle) showed that the MGNREGA currently fans the flames of rural entrepreneurship rather than broadly fuelling it. Merely 17 percent of the sample households could use MGNREGA assets or other incomes to run expand or start rural business. He also revealed the causes for MGNREGA's limited impact on rural entrepreneurship and showed what condition the act could become a catalyst for rural business initiatives.

Dasgupta et al. (2011) found that women's participation in the NREGA has been increasing. Equal wage of men and women raise women's bargaining power, and is potentially a critical factor in reducing gender disparities in the labour market.

Ghosh (2011), compare wage differentials between MGNREGA activities and other wage employment activities and the pattern of migration from rural to urban areas across five district of West Bangle. The MGNREGA wages are found to be higher than the wage for agricultural workers in the state and this led to the distortion of the wage labour market. Net effect of MGNREGA has been negligible.

Bonner et al. (2012) found that state level politics have minimal impact on MGNREGA's implementation. According to them the success of the act highly depends on the strength of the district, block and GP's administrative. In Tamil Nadu, MGNREGA's favourable performance is primarily due to effective administrative capacity which is not seen in Uttar Pradesh. They also found that

the obstacle of MGNREGA's implementation in both Tamil Nadu and UP include the state's reluctance to disburse unemployment allowance to workers, and the questionable productivity of assets created through MGNREGA's public work projects.

Analysing Bhalla's (2012) index of state level corruption on MGNREGA, Ravallion (2012) comments that though there is corruption in the implementation of MGNREGA, simple indices that claim to measure corruption and make an assessment of interstate levels of corruption can end up offering us a wrong understanding.

In an overview on food security in India, Behera (2012) observed that income generating program like MGNREGA has helped in providing support to fight against hunger and food security. Though, a major breakthrough has been achieved in eliminating mass hunger or famine, food insecurity among the actual BPL community of the country still prevailed. The concept of food security refers to an all time access of food to all sections of population in the country.

Akhtar (2012) points out that the ecological aspect is one of the best features of the MGNREGA as it designates imbalance between human and natural resources creating a sustainable economic security through green jobs. MGNREGA has also been able to contribute to ecological restoration through its design.

Singh (2012) Reports that Women's empowerment was not among the original intentions of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), and is not among its main objectives. However, provisions like priority for women in the ratio of one-third of total workers, equal wages for men and women, and crèches for the children of women were made in the Act, with the view of ensuring that rural women benefit from the scheme in a certain manner. Provisions like work within a radius of five kilometers from the house, absence of supervisor and contractor, and flexibility in terms of choosing period and months of employment were not made exclusively for women, but have been conducive for rural women. Nevertheless, women have availed of the paid employment opportunity under MGNREGA in large numbers.



Krishnan et al. (2012) finds that 77 percent of the respondents spent more than 50 percent of their MGNREGA earned income for food consumption and also reported that they are in a position to fulfill their basic needs from this income. 80 percent of the respondents reports that they save less than 25 percent of their MGNREGA earnings due to their poor economic conditions. He further reports that the water conservation works undertaken under this scheme has directly provided employment and increased area of paddy cultivation from 54 hectares to 71 hectares and pave the way to improve the livelihood and food security of the villagers.

Dutta et al. (2012) found considerable un-met demand for work in all states. The extent of the un-met demand is greater in the poorest states, ironically where the scheme is needed most. Labour market responses to the scheme are likely to be weak. The scheme is attracting poor women into the workforce, although the local level rationing processes favour men.

In a study at Bihar (Charan, 2012) it is found that MGNREGA ranks among the most powerful initiative ever undertaken for transformation of rural livelihood in India. The family income improved by NREGA program and it is one of the best poverty eradication programs in India (Gundegowda et. al. 2012)

In a comparative study in the state Odisha and other states of the country (Kaur, 2013) discuss about women participation rate in MGNREGA. It reveals that women participation rate in MGNREGA is satisfactory in some states, but Odisha it is not satisfactory (37.39%) like other states. The study discusses some issues which hinder women participation in MGNREGA in Odisha.

Dhiraja (2013) studied in four states regarding the participation of women in MGNREGA. The study finds different factors responsible for motivating women participation in MGNREGA. The study also finds some hindering factors for the participation of women. Through linear regression analysis the studies try to find out the above factors.

Roy (2013) find some negative factors regarding the presence of contractor and delay in payment of MGNREGA wages.

Shridhar et al. (2013) specially compares the MGNREGA wage and reservation wage such as whether the MGNREGA wages are higher than the reservation wage and factors determinants of reservation wage.. Due to the differences of wages, what type of impact fall on rural urban migration and local labour market? The study found that as a whole there is no impact of MGNREGA on rural urban migration because the net benefits from MGNREGA jobs are negative.

Ahangar (2014) in his study of Shahbad block of Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir has talked about the positive sides of MGNREGA. In his study, he has highlighted the role of MGNREGA in upliftment and empowerment of women of Shahbad block. MGNREGA has provided the women with opportunities of doing works other than just doing domestic tasks of homemaking. Women have become aware of their rights and they have been taking part in decision making and implementation process. Women have been financially independent because of the schemes like MGNREGA. Women have now also become the earning members of their family

Rahul et al. (2014) found that the outcome of MGNREGA is positive. The scheme has been beneficial in providing employment of 100 days per year to the rural poor who volunteered themselves for unskilled manual labour. The number of households in rural areas to complete 100 days employment has been on positive side for most of the states of India considered in the study. MGNREGA has been successful in supporting the process of financial inclusion of the rural inhabitants.

Kabita et al. (2014) found in a survey in Sonitpur district of Assam that performance of MGNREGA is not satisfactory in the district. The scheme could not ensure the 100 days job guarantee to the majority of the job card holders. The study observed that the scheme fails in respects of providing employment avenues to the unemployed in a large scale. In fact the tune and essence of the Act could not shine in the state of Assam.

Krishnan et al. (2014) MGNREGA tries to achieve Millennium Development Goals and efforts are on towards total eradication of poverty by 2015. Even though there are some problems, MGNREGA is the most successful

poverty eradication program introduced in India. It provides the money in the hands of poor; particularly women directly without any middlemen, even their husbands were not have the rights to receive it.

Sugapriyan, et al. (2015) has tried to analyse the performance of MGNREGA via Data Mining Technique. They have studied the workers in Kanchipuram, Walajabad and Uthiramerur blocks in Kanchipuram district. They have concluded that the MGNREGA scheme has potentially been successful in bringing the rural poor above the poverty line. It has emerged as a financial support so as to up bring the rural households to improve their standards of living and help them enjoy an improved level of economic status. More proper implementation of the scheme shall yield more fruitful and positive results.

Ravi and Englar (2015) have studied regarding the impact of MGNREGA on food security, savings and health outcomes in Andhra Pradesh. They found that MGNREGA significantly increases the monthly per capita expenditure on food and non food consumables, which provide food security to the household.

Pamecha and Sharma (2015) found in their study at Dungarpar district of Rajasthan that the Act has brought significant changes in the lives of the rural household. In the study, 86 percent beneficiaries have reported that the annual income had risen.

Pankaj et al. (2010) studies on effectiveness of MGNREGA on women empowerment in four states of India and found that women workers have gained from the scheme primarily because of the paid employment opportunity, and benefits have been realized through income consumption effects, intra-household effects and the enhancement of choice and capability. Women gained to some extent in terms of realization of equal wages under the NREGS, with long term implications for correcting gender skewness and gender discriminatory wages prevalent in the rural labour market in India.

Goswami et al. (2014) in their study regarding the status of MGNREGA in Assam found that the Act is poorly governed in Assam because there are several loopholes in the implementation of the MGNREGA. Although the Act was envisaged to be a demand driven program, it has largely remained supply

based program in Assam. He suggested that increasing the bank ATMs at the locality will help the beneficiary to easily release their wages.

Barah et al. (2014) studied on wages effect on women worker in Sonitpur district of Assam and found that women workers were benefited by raising income and were able to involve in creation of community assets, self empowerment etc. the writer also identified certain barriers to women's access in MGNREGA.

Lack of proper knowledge about the MGNREGA program of the beneficiaries is responsible for poor performance of the Act (Techi et al. 2014). The study found that the job card holders are unable to get actual wages as per MGNREGA. Some of the beneficiaries do not have bank account and their wages are not being credited in bank account.

Although different studies were conducted relating to the assessment and evaluation of MGNREGA in different parts of our country, a thorough and extensive investigation is still required to make the MGNREGA program self sustained and result oriented. After studying some of the well known studies in this field by the earlier researchers our study made on "An impact assessment study of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Development Program (MGNREGA) in Barpeta and Marigaon district of Assam" will contribute something new to the existing literature on rural development.

# **CHAPTER III**

## **OVERVIEW OF MGNREGA IN ASSAM IN GENERAL AND SELECTED DISTRICTS IN PARTICULAR**

In this chapter the researcher wants to summaries the important observations that were made during the collection of secondary data for the study. The data which is discussed in this chapter is the result of compiled data which is available from the MGNREGA website. The researcher will try to do justice with the information collected from these secondary sources and henceforth will try to make this chapter more informative and useful from the perspective of the thesis.

### **3.1 MGNREGA Coverage**

While studying in detail all the aspects of MGNREGA, the coverage i.e. the scope of the scheme can be considered as one of the important aspects. It states that when all the adult members of rural households are willing to do unskilled manual work, the households are required to apply for registration to the local Gram Panchayat (GP). The GP in turn will provide a job card to the households after proper verification of the application. After that, the household has to apply for employment to the GP indicating the time and duration for which work is sought. Then, the GP has compulsion to provide work to the willing members of the household within 15 days of submitting the application or from the date when work was actually sought. This system of the MGNREGA scheme has been implemented in the country from 2006-2007. Table-3.1 will try to reflect the general overviews of MGNREGA in India during the last ten years since 2006-07 to 2015-16.

**Table 3.1 : Overview of MGNREGA in India from 2006-07 to 2015-16**

	2006-07 (200 dists)	2007-08 (230 dists)	2008-09 (615 dists)	2009-10 (619 dists)	2010-11 (626 dists)	2011-12 (626 dists)	2012-13 (626 dists)	2013-14 (626 dists)	2014-15 (626 dists)	2015-16 (626 dists)
Households employed (crore)	2.1	3.4	4.5	5.3	5.5	5	4.9	4.8	4.2	4.8
Man days of Employment generated (crore)	90.5	143.6	216.3	283.6	257.2	209.3	230.5	220.4	166.2	235.2
Work Provided per year to households who worked (days)	43	42	48	54	47	42	46	46	40	49
Central Release (Rs. crore)	8640.9	2610.4	29939.6	33506.6	35768.9	31275	29908.7	32746.3	2139.1	35974.6
Total Funds Available (including Opening Balance) (Rs. crore)	12073.6	9305.8	37397.1	49579.2	54172.1	8812.49	46463.8	42103.9	7588.1	43380.7
Budget Outlay (Rs. crore)	11300	12000	30000	39100	40100	40000	33000	33000	33000	33000
Expenditure (Rs. crore)	8823.4	5856.9	27250.1	37905	39377	37303	39778	38553	36025	44003
Average Wage per day (Rs.)	65	75	84	87	92	105	121	132	143	154
Total Works taken up (lakhs)	8.35	17.88	27.75	46.2	51	73.6	104.6	93.5	97.7	122.6
Works completed (lakhs)	3.87	8.22	12.14	22.6	25.9	27.56	25.53	27.42	29.44	36.05

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

### **3.1.1 Household Coverage**

As observed from the table-3.1, since the inception of the Act in 2006-07 in 200 districts, 2.1 crores households were employed and 90.5 crore person day was generated. Gradual improvement in the implementation of the scheme can be observed till 2010-11 where 5.5 crore households were employed and 257.2 crore person day generated. Afterwards, a declining trend has been observed. The increase in employment during first four years may be due to the coverage of all districts of the country. Whereas, the decrease in employment from 2009-10 can be attributed to the fact that such huge expansion and coverage created some loopholes in the implementation process. Another factor is that in the second and third phase of MGNREGA implementation, comparatively more developed districts was included than in the first phase.

### **3.1.2 Average days work per Households**

Again, in terms of number of days of employment provided per household, the number of days increases from 43 days in 2006-07 to 54 in 2009-10. After 2010-11, the number of days also going to decreases due to the inclusion of comparatively developed districts of the country.

### **3.1.3 Total person day generated**

Similarly, the number of person day generated was 90.5 crore in 2006-07 and gradually increases in the successive years and went up by 213 percent to 283.6 crore in 2009-10. From 2010-11, the person day generation gradually declines and keeps fluctuating up to 2015-16. The data shows that the number of person day generated decreases by about 70 percent from 283.6 crore in 2009-10 to 166.2 crores in 2014-15. This fluctuation is chiefly due to the change of government and government policies both in the centre and state.

### **3.1.4 Average Wage per Day**

The average wage paid per day also increases from Rs 65 in 2006-07 to Rs 154 in 2015-16. This wage rate is different for different states of the country. The enhanced wage earnings have led to a strengthening of livelihood resources base for

the rural poor in India from the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005.

The data reveals that 2009-10 was the highest performance year in all respect and 2014-15 was the very poor performance year during the last 10 years. In 2009-10, new government was formed in the centre and in 2014-15 leading political party of the government was changed. General perception is that the performance of last year functioning of a government becomes worst and starting years performance is best. This situation is fully observed in the implementation of MGNREGA also.

### 3.2 Assam Chapter

The world's largest employment generation scheme MGNREGA was introduced in Assam in three phases. The first phase was introduced in 7 districts of Assam in 2006-2007. In the second phase another 6 districts was proposed and in the third phase MGNREGA covers all the districts of Assam. Since the commencement of the Act, i.e. from 2006, 10 years has been completed and hence it requires a thorough study to examine the impact of the Act on the rural people in the state. The overview of the districts of Assam in phase I, II and III is shown in Table-3.2.

**Table 3.2: Overview of MGNREGA works undertaken in the Districts of Assam 2015-16**

Sl. No	Districts	Average Days of work provided per house hold that got work	Man days of work (Lakhs)	Expenditure (Rs lakhs)	HHs provided with work (Lakhs)
<b>Phase I</b>					
1	Bongaigaon	31.74	13, 29 (3%)	765(1%)	.41(2.7%)
2	Dhemaji	39.74	23.63(5%)	1811(3%)	.59(3.9%)
3	Goalpara	24.85	6.02(1%)	1507(2%)	.24(1.6%)
4	Karbi angling	14.89	10.22(2%)	2131(3%)	.68(4.5%)
5	Kokrajhar	48.31	39.72(8%)	2638(4%)	.82(5.5%)
6	Lakhimpur	35.11	18.03(4%)	4009(6%)	.51(3.4%)
7	NC Hills	NA	NA	NA	NA
<b>Phase II</b>					



8	<b>Barpeta</b>	<b>50.39</b>	<b>24.83(5%)</b>	<b>2824(5%)</b>	<b>.49(3.3%)</b>
9	Cacher	38.12	32.54(7%)	5687(9%)	.85(5.6%)
10	Darang	41.03	21.89(5%)	2827(5%)	.53(3.5%)
11	Hailakandi	23.6	13.47(3%)	1551(2%)	.57(3.8%)
12	<b>Morigaon</b>	<b>34.32</b>	<b>29.77(6%)</b>	<b>3973(6%)</b>	<b>.86(5.7%)</b>
13	Nalbari	25.37	4.55(1%)	345(.5%)	.18(1.2%)
<b>Phase III</b>					
14	Baska	26.39	25.16(5%)	1903(3%)	.95(6.3%)
15	Chirang	45.5	25.69(5%)	3033(5%)	.56(3.7%)
16	Dhubri	34.17	9.82(2%)	1320(2%)	.29(1.9%)
17	Dibrugarh	19.03	12.69(3%)	960(1%)	.67(4.5%)
18	Golaghat	27.99	17.98(4%)	2368(3%)	.64(4.3%)
19	Jorhat	24.85	14.15(3%)	2116(3%)	.57(3.8%)
20	Kamrup	33.45	17.69(4%)	2693(4%)	.53(3.5%)
21	Kamrup (M)	13.41	.48(0.5%)	92(0%)	.04(0%)
22	Karimganj	26.82	4.17(1%)	749(1%)	.15(1%)
23	Nagaon	43.94	64.16(13%)	10335(17%)	1.46(9.7%)
24	Sivasagar	21.95	10.06(2%)	1534(2%)	.45(3%)
25	Sonitpur	18.39	16.09(4%)	2326(3%)	.87(5.6%)
26	Tinsukia	22.73	9.87(2%)	725(1%)	.43(2.8%)
27	Udalguri	34.31	17.80(4%)	1511(2%)	.52(3.5%)
<b>State Total</b>		<b>32.37</b>	<b>486.32(100%)</b>	<b>62090(100%)</b>	<b>15.02(100%)</b>

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

### 3.2.1. Average days work per households

As observed from the Table-3.2, highest number of average days of work was provided in Barpeta (50.03 days) district of Assam, which is our study area. On the other hand, Morigaon (34.32 days) is just above the state average (32.37). According to the Act, the household should get 100 days employment per year, except Barpeta district, no other district of Assam touches 50 days of employment.

### **3.2.2 Person day generated**

The total person days generated in Assam in 2015-16 is 486.32 lakhs. Highest percentage of person day was generated in Nagaon (13 percent) district followed by Kokrajhar (8 percent) and Kachar (7 percent) district. The person day generation was far below in Nalbari and Kamrup districts (less than 1 percent).

### **3.2.3 Expenditure details**

The amount of expenditure was highest in Nagaon (17 percent) district followed by Cachar (9 percent) district. Highest number of household gets employment in Nagaon (9.7 percent) and Baska district (6.3 percent) of the state in financial year 2015-16.

The overall performance of Nagaon and Kokrajhar district is comparatively good and the performance of Nalbari and Kamrup Metro district is far below in respect of employment generation in 2015-16.

Now, the study examines the demand supply gap in distribution of MGNREGA work in all the districts of Assam, which implies that, MGNREGA has failed to provide 100 percent employment to rural people. Huge gap is shown in the observed data.

As observed from Table-3.3 highest demand supply gap is found in Cachar (16697) district followed by Sonitpur (15115) and Jorhat (12250) district. It can be attributed to the fact that there is large number of household in the above mentioned two districts, i.e. Cachar, Sonitpur and Jorhat. When we calculate the unemployment rate among the districts, it is found that Nalbari district has the highest unemployment rate, i.e. out of 1000 job seekers 205 are unable to get employment under MGNREGA.

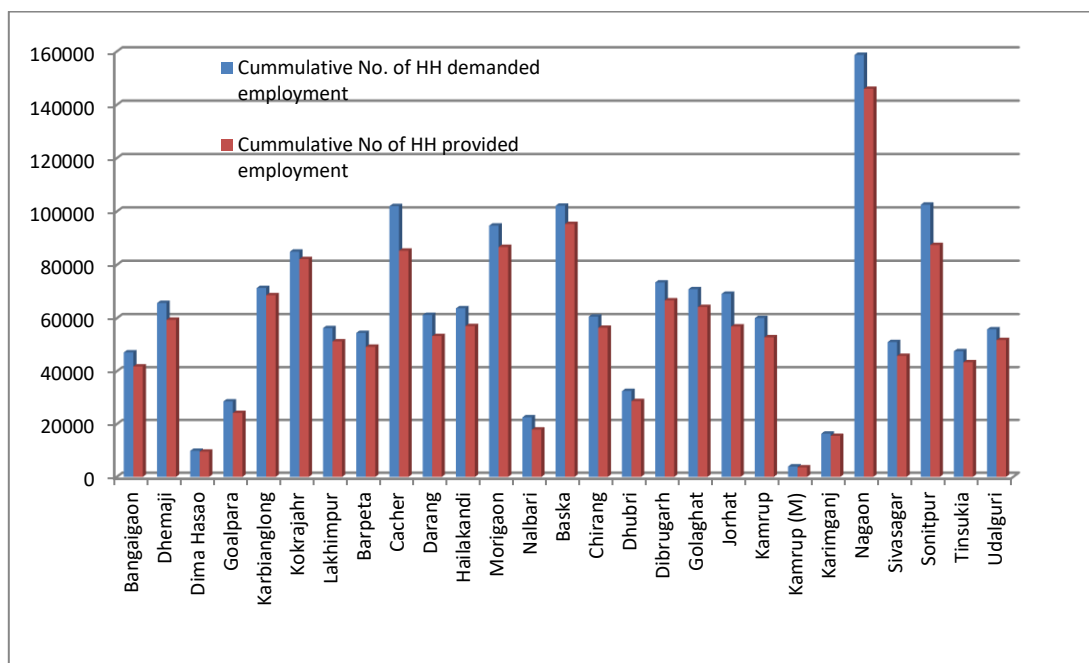
**Table 3.3: Demand supply gap of employment generation in 2015-16 in  
MGNREGA**

Sl. No.	District	Cumulative No. of HH demanded employment	Cumulative No of HH provided employment	Demand – Supply gap in the employment	Unemployment Rate
1	Bangaigaon	47173	41859	5314	113
2	Dhemaji	65757	59460	6297	96
3	Dima Hasao	9885	9564	321	32
4	Goalpara	28599	24232	4367	153
5	Karbianglong	71357	68673	2684	38
6	Kokrajahr	84986	82225	2761	32
7	Lakhimpur	56333	51355	4978	88
<b>8</b>	<b>Barpeta</b>	<b>54528</b>	<b>49286</b>	<b>5242</b>	<b>96</b>
9	Cacher	102055	85358	16697	163
10	Darang	61261	53358	7903	129
11	Hailakandi	63753	57082	6671	105
<b>12</b>	<b>Morigaon</b>	<b>94752</b>	<b>86750</b>	<b>8002</b>	<b>84</b>
13	Nalbari	22575	17943	4632	205
14	Baska	102218	95363	6855	67
15	Chirang	60645	56469	4176	69
16	Dhubri	32547	28729	3818	117
17	Dibrugarh	73436	66733	6703	91
18	Golaghat	70911	64247	6664	94
19	Jorhat	69200	56950	12250	177
20	Kamrup	60108	52878	7230	120
21	Kamrup (M)	3955	3621	334	84
22	Karimganj	16394	15531	863	53
23	Nagaon	158747	146034	12713	80
24	Sivasagar	51092	45841	5251	103
25	Sonitpur	102601	87486	15115	147
26	Tinsukia	47610	43444	4166	88
27	Udalguri	55872	51874	3998	72
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1668353</b>	<b>1502345</b>	<b>166008</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

Therefore, keeping in mind the data of unemployment rate, the Nalbari district is found to be in the most deplorable condition, although the demand supply gap is 4632; which is relatively less in comparison to other districts. Similarly, unemployment rate is above 100 in another 10 number of districts out of 27 districts of Assam. It implies that MGNREGA fails to capture all the needy poor households in Assam. And also highest number of employment demanded (158747) and employment provided (146034) can be found in Nagaon district of the state. This is because, Nagaon district has the highest number of rural population and Kamrup (M) has lowest number of rural population (census, 2011). Fig-3.1 shows the district wise employment situation of Assam.

**Fig. 3.1: Household demanded and provided employment in different district of Assam (2015-16)**



Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

### 3.3 Gap in work execution

From the secondary data, it is found that the percentage of work completion in all the districts of Assam has been found quite satisfactory in 2013-14, but the

situation is worse in 2015-16. Huge number of works undertaken remained incomplete in 2015-16, which implies the lack of physical development in the rural areas in Assam.

**Table 3.4: Number of Work started and completed from 2013-14 to 2015-16 in MGNREGA**

Sl. No	District	No of Works Started			No of Works Completed (% of completion)			Gap in work execution		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	Bangaigaon	1289	670	5439	1140 (88%)	360 (54%)	1370 (25%)	149	310	4069
2	Dhemaji	4994	64	1757	4991 (99%)	33 (52%)	36 (3%)	3	31	1721
3	Dima Hasao	1556	182	341	1453 (92%)	156 (86%)	66 (19%)	113	26	275
4	Goalpara	6294	1125	857	6249 (99%)	488 (43%)	23 (3%)	45	637	834
5	Karbianglong	8046	970	1261	8032 (99%)	730 (75%)	192 (15%)	14	240	1069
6	Kokrajahr	13726	429	3866	13309 (97%)	292 (68%)	144 (4%)	417	137	3722
7	Lakhimpur	3648	1866	1159	3520 (96%)	1429 (77%)	363 (31%)	128	437	796
8	Barpeta	4399	399	1710	3973 (90%)	240 (60%)	68 (4%)	426	159	1642
9	Cacher	3841	1767	3177	3426 (89%)	913 (52%)	199 (6%)	415	854	2978
10	Darang	8757	2217	2185	8258 (94%)	1246 (56%)	32 (2%)	499	971	2153
11	Hailakandi	3777	422	946	3274 (87%)	5 (1%)	9 (1%)	503	417	937
12	Morigaon	16785	896	1798	15595 (93%)	556 (62%)	84 (5%)	1190	340	1714

13	Nalbari	3338	760	919	3331 (99%)	564 (74%)	16 (2%)	7	196	903
14	Baska	5910	817	2023	3670 (62%)	170 (21%)	22 (1%)	2240	647	2001
15	Chirang	2982	1168	1897	2955 (99%)	1045 (89%)	533 (28%)	27	123	1364
16	Dhubri	4293	462	4082	4248 (99%)	255 (55%)	36 (1%)	45	207	4046
17	Dibrugarh	6329	661	1461	5028 (79%)	89 (13%)	3 (.21%)	1301	572	1458
18	Golaghat	8688	1350	5043	7925 (91%)	323 (24%)	154 (3%)	763	1027	4889
19	Jorhat	4741	304	3748	4329 (91%)	166 (55%)	235 (6%)	412	138	3513
20	Kamrup	5649	1365	2273	5294 (94%)	489 (36%)	71 (3%)	355	876	2202
21	Kamrup (M)	481	117	55	458 (95%)	26 (22%)	1 (2%)	23	91	54
22	Karimganj	4064	380	350	4053 (99%)	344 (91%)	139 (40%)	11	36	211
23	Nagaon	8360	1943	2950	7386 (88%)	899 (46%)	152 (5%)	974	1044	2798
24	Sivasagar	5696	2046	1541	5276 (93%)	905 44%	110 7%	420	1141	1431
25	Sonitpur	9343	588	1917	9277 (99%)	265 (45%)	1917 (13%)	66	323	1654
26	Tinsukia	3028	848	683	2382 (79%)	45 (5%)	1 (.15%)	646	803	682
27	Udalguri	2534	132	955	2228 (88%)	116 (88%)	61 (6%)	306	16	894
	<b>Total</b>	<b>152558</b>	<b>23948</b>	<b>54393</b>	<b>141060 (92%)</b>	<b>12149 (51%)</b>	<b>4383 (8%)</b>	<b>11498</b>	<b>11799</b>	<b>50010</b>

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

Table-3.4 shows work completion rate is decreasing in every successive year and gap in work execution is increasing in most of the districts. Here, it is also worth mentioning that a work which might be undertaken in a year might not be completed in the same year and is carried forward to the next years. So, the year of starting a work and completion is usually different. So, the works which were started in 2013-14, sometimes could not be completed in the same year. The highest percentage of work was completed (99 percent) in the district of Dhemaji, Goalpara, Karbi Anglong, Nalbari, Chirang, Dhuburi, Karimganj and Sonitpur district of Assam in 2013-14. The performance of Karimganj district is good in all three years (2013-14, 2014-15, 2015-16) as compared to other districts of Assam.

The situation of work completion is worse in most of the districts of Assam, i.e. 22 districts, which could not achieve even 25 percent of the work in 2015-16. These situations suggest that there are deficiencies in the provision of MGNREGA work in all the districts of Assam. The progress of work was slowed down in 2015-16. This may be due to starting of election process and formation of new government in Assam. The performance of Karimganj is comparatively good than all other districts of Assam. One of the main problems as put forward by the Presidents of all the selected Gram Panchayats (GP) relating to the work completion was the delay in release of funds for different project.

Now the question is after carrying out the review of MGNREGA by the government every financial year, why is the gap still increasing every year?

### **3.4 Category wise Employment Status**

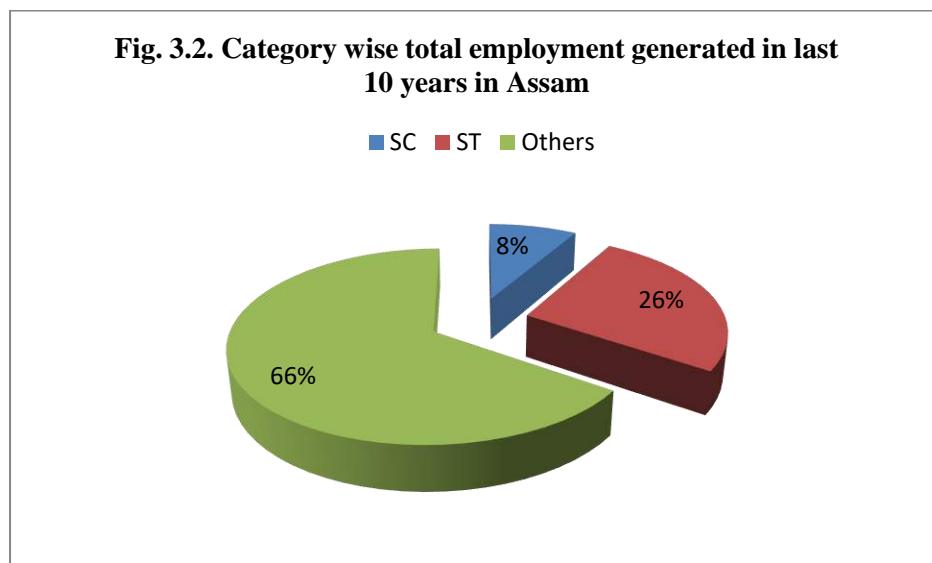
The Category wise employment status of the scheme in Assam from 2006-2007 to 2015-16 is presented in the Table-3.5.

**Table 3.5: Category wise employment status under MGNREGA in Assam from 2007-08 to 2015-16**

Year	Employment Generated (lakh man day)						
	SC	%	ST	%	Others	%	Total
2007-08	40.69	8.13	191.37	38.26	268.19	53.61	500.25
2008-09	78.08	10.42	258.32	34.50	412.40	55.08	748.80
2009-10	89.03	12.11	227.36	30.92	418.78	56.97	735.17
2010-11	19.78	5.53	69.94	19.51	268.58	74.96	358.30
2011-12	31.72	8.99	63.28	17.91	258.30	73.11	353.30
2012-13	18.83	5.99	65.36	20.81	229.83	73.18	314.04
2013-14	19.65	6.58	48.29	16.18	230.52	77.23	298.47
2014-15	12.80	6.07	31.98	15.16	166.17	78.77	210.95
2015-16	25.38	5.22	91.18	18.75	369.76	76.03	486.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>335.96</b>	<b>8.39</b>	<b>1047.08</b>	<b>26.14</b>	<b>2622.53</b>	<b>65.47</b>	<b>4005.61</b>

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

It is disheartening to observe that the percentage of Schedule Caste and Schedule Tribes are only 8 percent and 26 percent respectively. The lion share of employment is obtained by the other categories (66 %) which includes Other Backward categories and General category

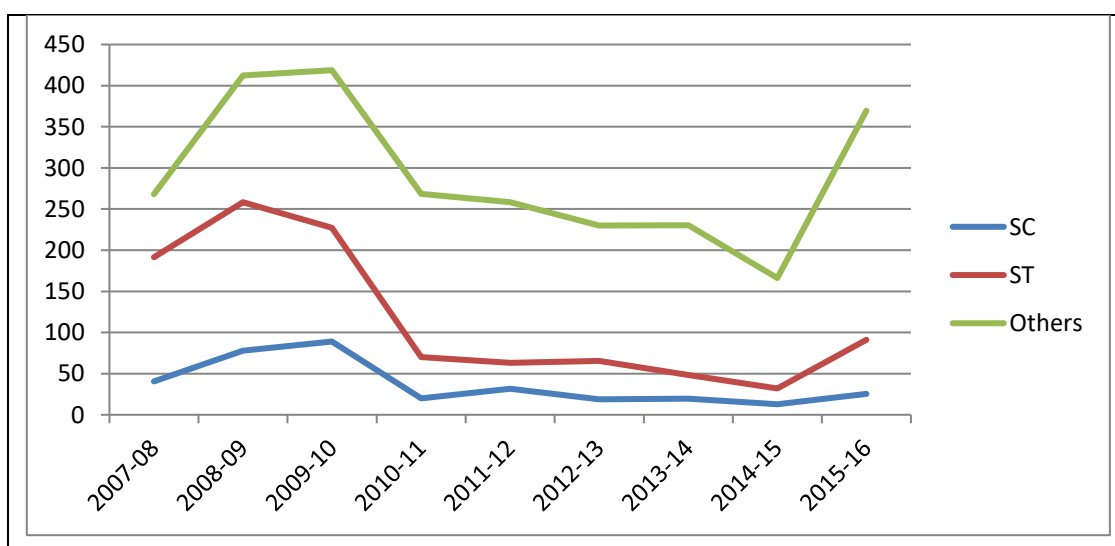


Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)



It is observed from table-3.5 that during the first three years of MGNREGA implementation in Assam, the success rate was higher in case of employment generation. But from 2010-11, the shares of the Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribes (ST) in total man days generated in Assam have declined over the years, which is not considered to be a good sign of the Act. While the share of SC declined from 12.11 percent in 2009-10 to 5.22 percent in 2015-16 with some improvement in the intermediate period. The percentage share of ST falls from 30.92 to 18.75 percent during the same period. Interestingly, the percentage of employment is increasing in case of other categories which includes OBC/MOBC and GENERAL category. But, the Act targeted high workforce participation from marginalized groups like SC/ST. The data shows that the status of employment generation increases for SC from 8.13 percent in 2006-07 to 12.11 percent in 2015-16, due to the expansion of MGNREGA in all the districts of Assam. But in case of ST category the rate of employment generated declined, whereas for other categories (OBC/MOBC and General) the number of person day generated increased. Thus, MGNREGA fails to continue the target in respect of employment generation for vulnerable sections like SC/ST over time. It becomes clearer from the Figure-3.3 as shown below.

**Fig. 3.3: Category wise Trend of Employment under MGNREGA from 2007-08 to 2015-16**



Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

One of the important objectives of MGNREGA is to provide 100 days work to every household in a year. But the data available in official source of MGNREGA from 2006-07 to 2015-16 shown in Table-3.6 clearly indicates that during the starting year the percentage of 100 days employment was only 18.4 percent. The percentage of employment gradually declined from the second year of MGNREGA implementation in the country and becomes less than 2 percent in 2010-11, 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15. The data also reveals that from the inception of MGNREGA in Assam only 130.56 lakhs rural households were provided employment. Out of which only 5.08 percent households were provided for 100 days of employment. It indicates that MGNREGA fails to provide stipulated number of work to the rural poor.

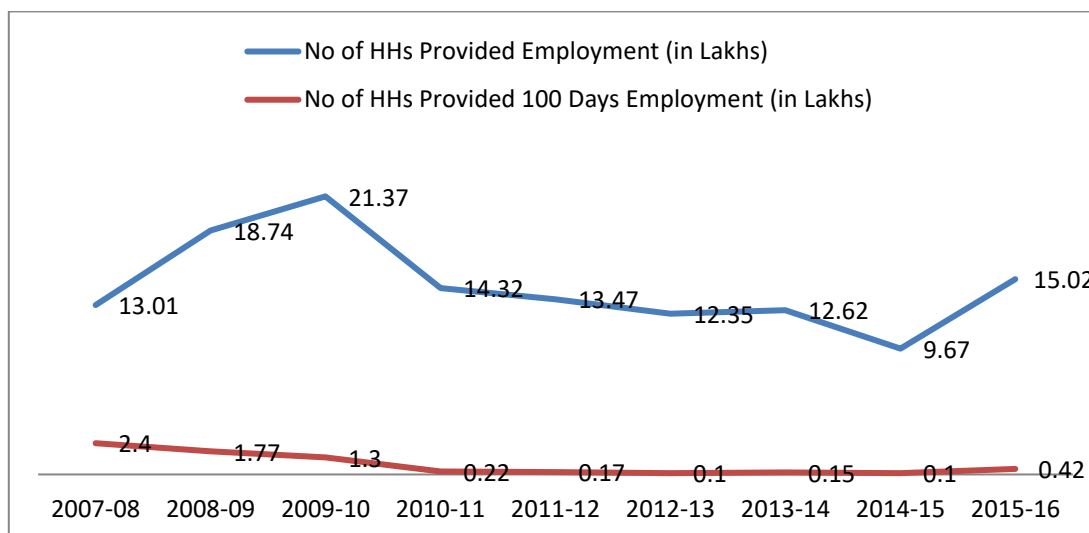
**Table 3.6: 100 Days Employment provided in Assam from 2007-08 to 2015-16**

<b>Year</b>	<b>No of HHs Provided Employment (in Lakhs)</b>	<b>No of HHs Provided 100 Days Employment (in Lakhs)</b>	<b>%</b>
2007-08	13.01	2.40	18.41
2008-09	18.74	1.77	9.43
2009-10	21.37	1.30	6.10
2010-11	14.32	0.22	1.57
2011-12	13.47	0.17	1.27
2012-13	12.35	0.10	0.79
2013-14	12.62	0.15	1.23
2014-15	9.67	0.10	1.08
2015-16	15.02	0.42	2.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>130.57</b>	<b>6.63</b>	<b>5.08</b>

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

The information of Table 3.6 is presented in Figure 3.4.

**Fig. 3.4: Household provided 100 days employment under MGNREGA from 2007-08 to 2015-16**



Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

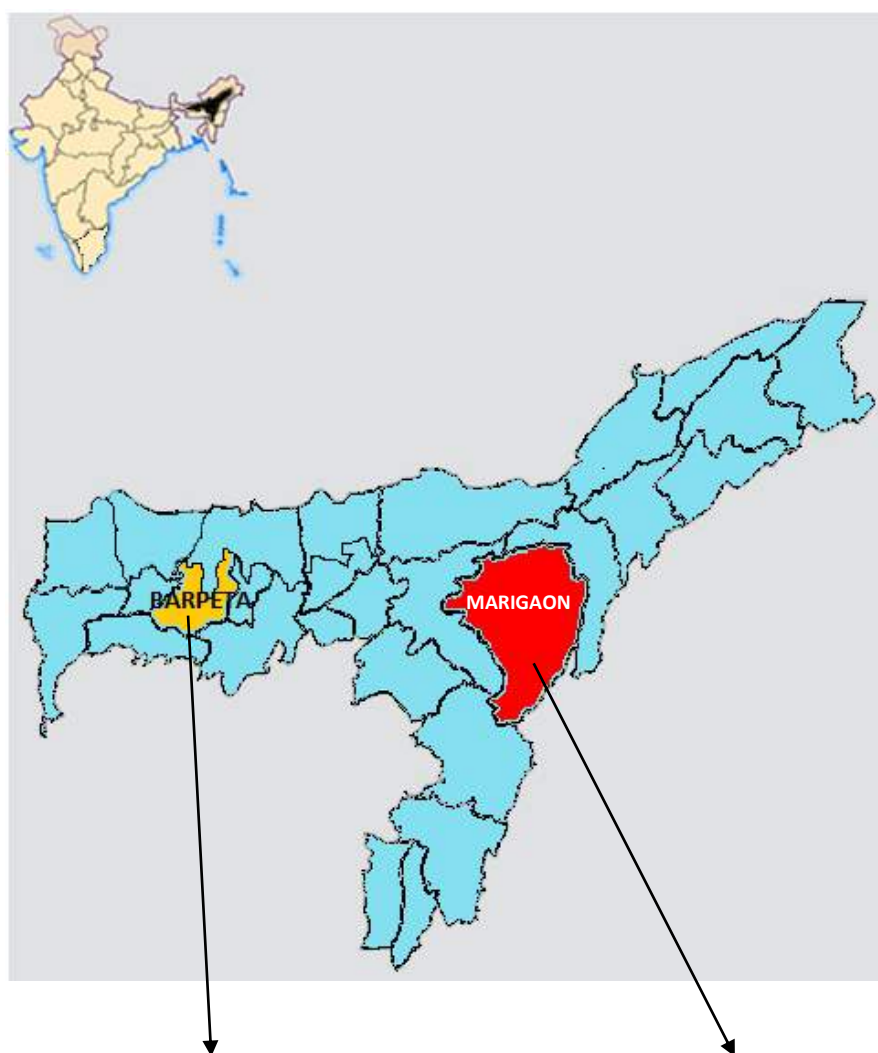
### 3.5 General Overview of the Barpeta and Marigaon Districts

This section covers the socio-economic status of the two selected districts-Barpeta and Morigaon, which includes district border, demography, occupation, education and some statistical information of the two districts.

The study area for the present study constitutes sixteen villages of the two districts of Assam i.e. Barpeta and Marigaon district. Baghmara, Pachim Kathalmuri, Maripur and Bilpar from Bajali block of Barpeta district and Bilashipara, Baregaon, Hotapara and Gameriguri villages from Gobardhana block of Barpeta district were selected. Again, Bhuragaon, Kaputimari, Kacharibari and Patowakata village from Laharighat block of Marigaon district and Pub Dharamtul, Silveta, Dakhin Dharamtul and Matiparbat from Mayong block of Marigaon district were selected for study. In the year 2013-14, highest number of job cards were issued in Barpeta district of Assam, and so the district was selected for study. On the other hand, Marigaon dostrict was selected on the basis of overall performance of MGNREGA in providing highest number of 100 days employment in 2013-14. The performance of Marigaon district is good because in 2011-12 and 2012-13 also Marigaon district was second in providing 100 days employment. Moreover, in both the districts out of the total population more than 91 percent people live in rural areas

as per 2011 census, which is comparatively higher than other districts and the state average (86 percent). Again, both the districts are industrially backward because there is no industrial estate and industrial area in the two districts (Statistical Handbook, Assam 2011). To make a comparative study, a district of the same phase was intended to be selected, so that this would not have a negative impact on the result. Therefore, both Barpeta and Morigaon were selected from the second phase of MGNREGA implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2007, so that appropriate comparative can be carried out in the same duration of time. The rationale behind the selection of the two districts is on the basis of above mentioned reason.

**Fig. 3.5: Location Map of the Barpeta and Marigaon District**





### 3.6 Barpeta District

#### 3.6.1 District Border

Barpeta District covers an area of 2282 square km. (Rural: 2245.62 Sq.Km. and Urban: 36.38 Sq.Km) and is bounded by the Bhutan Hills and Baga District in the North, Nalbari District in the East, Kamrup and Goalpara district in the South and Bongaigaon and Chirang District in the west. The district is spread within 26°45' to 26°49' North latitude and 90°45' to 90°15' East latitude.

#### 3.6.2 Demography

According to 2011 census, the total population of Barpeta district is 1,693,622. The rural population stands at 1,546,269, which is 91 percent of the total population. The remaining 9 percent (147,353) lives in the urban areas. Again, out of 147,353 populations in the urban areas, 51 percent (75,215) were males and the remaining 49 percent (72,138) were female. On the other hand, out of total population living in the rural areas 51 percent (791789) were males and the remaining 49 percent (754480) were females respectively (Census of India, 2011).

**Table 3.7: Rural-Urban Demographic Profile of Barpeta District of Assam**

Category	Rural	Urban	Total
Population (%)	91.30 %	8.70 %	100 %
Total population	1,546,269	147,353	1,693,622
Male Population	791,789	75,215	867,004

Female Population	754,480	72,138	826,618
Schedule Caste Population (%)	73,946 (78 %)	21,374(22 %)	95,320
Schedule Tribe Population (%)	25,829 (94 %)	1,515 (6 %)	27,344
Sex Ratio	953	959	-
Literates (%)	782462 (87 %)	114,596 (13 %)	897,058
Male Literates (%)	437,702 (88 %)	61,336 (12 %)	499,038
Female Literates (%)	344,760 (87 %)	53,260(13 %)	398,020

Source: Census of India, 2011

The sex ratio in the rural area of Barpeta district is 953 females out of 1000 males whereas the sex ratio in urban area of Barpeta district is 959 females out of 1000 males. The total number of households in the district is 3, 37,320. The schedule caste (SC) population is 5.63 percent, whereas the Schedule Tribe population is 1.61 percent out of total population as per 2011 census. The total worker in the district is 33.17 percent among which 25.95 percent are main workers and 7.23 percent are marginal workers. The detail of rural-urban demographic profile is shown in Table-3.7.

There are two sub divisions in the District one is Barpeta Sadar Sub Division and other is outlying Bajali Civil Sub Division. Barpeta district has 9 Nos. of Revenue Circles viz, Barpeta, Baghbar, Sarthebari, Barnagar, Kalgachia, Bajali, Sarupeta, Chenga and Jalah. It has 11 numbers of Developmental Blocks viz. Barpeta, Chenga, Paka Betbari, Gomfulbari, Sarukhetri, Gobardhana, Rupshi, Chakchaka, Bhawanipur, Mandia and Bajali. There are 129 Gaon Panchayats in the district. Total number of villages is 835 (Economic Survey of Assam, 2014-15). Also the number of Anchalik Parishad (AP) and Zila Parishad (ZP) is 11 and 1 respectively.

**Table 3.8: Block wise No of Gram Panchayat and Geographical Area in Barpeta District**

Name of Block	Geographical Area	No of GP
Barpeta	105 sq km	11

Chenga	146 sq km	9
Paka betbari	165 sq km	10
Gomfulbari	196 sq km	7
Sarukhetri	99 sq km	7
Gobardhana	63 sq km	6
Rupshi	163 sq km	12
Chakchaka	147 sq km	8
Bhawanipur	261 sq km	17
Mandia	587 sq km	27
Bajali	158 sq km	15

Source: Field Study

### 3.6.3 Occupation

As per population census, the workforce of the district is divided into main workers, marginal workers and non-workers. Out of 561,824 numbers of total workers, 90.87 percent are from rural areas. There are 439.453 main workers, 122,371 marginal workers and 1,131,798 were non-workers. The representation of rural population in the entire category of labour is quite vivid in the district. The details of classification of workers were shown in Table-3.9

**Table 3.9: Distribution of Workers in Barpeta and Marigaon District**

District		Main workers (In lakhs)			Marginal workers ( in lakhs)			Non-workers ( in lakhs)			Total workers ( in lakhs)		
		Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
Barpeta	Persons	4.4	3.9	0.45	1.2	1.1	0.5	11.3	10.3	0.9	5.6	5.1	0.51
	Male	3.9	3.5	0.40	0.55	0.53	0.02	4.2	3.9	0.3	4.4	4.0	0.43
	Female	0.50	0.44	0.05	0.66	0.63	0.02	7.1	6.5	0.63	1.1	1.0	0.08
Marigaon	Persons	2.6	2.4	0.21	0.90	0.86	0.03	6.0	5.5	0.48	3.5	3.2	0.24
	Male	2.2	2.0	0.18	0.36	0.34	0.02	2.3	2.1	0.16	2.5	2.3	0.20
	Female	0.39	0.37	0.02	0.53	0.51	0.01	3.7	3.4	0.31	0.93	0.89	0.04

Source: Census of India, 2011

### 3.6.4 Education

There are 1663 primary school, 296 middle school, 374 high school, 40 higher secondary schools and 21 junior colleges (Census of India, 2011). The literacy rate of Barpeta district is 63.81 percent of which 69.29 percent are males and 58.06 percent are females respectively. In actual number the total literate people in rural area are 782,462 of which 437,702 are male and 437,702 are female. On the other hand, the total literate people in urban area are 114,596 out of which 61,336 are male and 53,260 are female.

### **3.6.5 Economy**

On the other hand, the district of Barpeta is known as the important agricultural producing district of Assam. Paddy, wheat, mustered oil, jute, potato, pulses, fruits, vegetables etc are the main crops grown in the district. The district produce recorded amount of vegetables of different varieties under Robi crops. The main occupation of the inhabitants of Char areas is agriculture. There is 6 numbers of small towns in the district in terms of area coverage. No big industries either in public and private sector has come up due to lack of infrastructure and basic amenities. The district has some important small scale industries like bell/brass metal at Sarthebari town area and some brick kiln in scattered areas in private sector contributing to the state economy in some extent. The district supplies vegetables to different districts of Assam and a big *supari* market at Howly town from where *supari* is exported to other states of the country.

## **3.7 Marigaon District**

### **3.8.1 District border**

The district is bounded by the mighty Brahmaputra on the North, Karbi Anglong district on the South, Nagaon District on the East and Kamrup District on the West. Marigaon became a fully-fledged district on 29 September 1989, when it was split from Nagaon district. The district covers an area of 10, 83,165 Bighas and 13 Lessas (1551 Sq. Kms). Marigaon district is situated 26.15 North Latitude and 92 degree East Longitude.

### **3.7.2 Demography**

The total population of Marigaon district is 9, 57,423 where 92 percent live in rural areas and only 8 percent live in urban areas (Census of India, 2011). In total,



8, 84,125 people live in rural area where 4, 47,782 are male and 4, 36,775 are female. On the other hand, total 73,298 people live in urban areas out of which 37,528 are male and 35,770 are female. The SC and ST population in the district is 12.31 percent and 14.29 percent respectively. Total of 109,307 SC people live in rural areas, i.e. out of total SC population 93 percent live in rural areas. Again, 130,548 number of ST population live in rural areas, the percentage of which is 95 percent. The total number of households is 184,050. The sex ratio in the district is 974. Sex ratio in rural areas of Marigaon district is 975 female per 1000 male and in urban areas is 973 female per 1000 male. The population density in the district stands for 618 people per square Km which is the 7<sup>th</sup> highest in the state and is significantly higher than the state average which stands at 397 people as per the 2011 census.

**Table 3.10: Demographic Profile of Marigaon District**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Total</b>
Population (%)	92 %	8 %	100 %
Total population	884,125	73,298	957,423
Male Population	449,123	37,528	486,651
Female Population	435,002	35,770	470,772
Schedule Caste Population (%)	109,307	8,534	117,841(12.31 %)
Schedule Tribe Population (%)	130,548	6,229	136,777(14.29 %)
Sex Ratio	975	973	974
Literates (%)	485,530	54,372	539,902(68 %)
Male Literates (%)	260,603	29,095	289,698(72 %)
Female Literates (%)	224,927	25,277	250,204(64 %)

Source: Census of India, 2011

Marigaon district has 1 sub-division, 6 towns, 632 villages, 5 community Development blocks and 85 Gram Panchayats (as per Gazette Notification on March, 2007). Again, it has 7 Anchalik Panchayats, 1 Zill Parishad and 5 Revenue Circle. The revenue circles are Marigaon, Mayong, Bhuragaon, Laharighat, and Mikirbheta.

The geographical area of the district is 1551 Sq Km, Rural: 1525.50 Sq.Km and Urban: 25.5 Sq.Km.

**Table 3.11: Block wise No of Gram Panchayat and Geographical Area in Marigaon District**

Name of Block	Geographical Area	No of GP
Bhurbandha	270 sq km	13
Mayong	573 sq km	27
Laharighat	317 sq km	24
Kapili	56 sq km	8
Moirabari	89 sq km	17
Batadraba	6 sq km	1
Dalangghat	72 sq km	4

Source: District Census Report, 2011

### 3.7.3 Occupation

The total workers in the district is 351,148 (36.68 percent ) of which 53 percent are male and 19.79 percent are female. The number of main workers is 260,968 (27.26 percent) out of which 221,150 are male and 39,818 are female. Total number of marginal workers is 90,180 (.42 percent) in which 36,834 are male and 53,346 are female. Again, total non-workers is 606,275 (63.32 percent) where 130,143 are male and 27,469 are female. Details are given in Table-3.11.

### 3.7.4 Education

There are 1050 primary schools, 179 middle schools, 141 high schools, 22 higher secondary schools and 6 junior colleges (Statistical Handbook, Assam 2011). Average literacy rate in Marigaon district is 68 percent out of which males and females are 72 percent and 64 percent respectively (Census of India, 2011). In actual number, 485,530 people are literate in rural region of which males and females are 260,603 and 224,927 respectively. Also in total, 54,372 people are literate in urban areas, of which 29,095 are males and 25,277 are females (Census of India, 2011).

### 3.7.5 Economy

After Kamrup (m) Marigaon is the second smallest district in Assam. The majority of people in this district depend on agriculture and fishery. The economy of Marigaon district is rural agrarian with low rate of urbanization. People belonging to various ethnicities and religions lead peaceful coexistence and are engaged in works of various types, mainly in the primary sector in the economy. The district has 29 industrial units registered which is only 2 percent of State total. Again, the district has a total of 620 SSI units as on 31-12-2010 (Statistical Handbook 2011, Assam). Ultimately, the district is very backward industrially and most of the people are engaged in agriculture and allied activities.

### 3.8 Decadal Variation of Population in Barpeta and Marigaon District

The decadal population variation in two districts shows that there has been a steady increase in the population of both the districts since 1921 and it had reached the peak in the year 1981. The immediate post independence period witnessed high growth of population mainly due to influx of refugees from erstwhile East Pakistan. The decadal growth rate of population is comparatively high in Marigaon district in comparison to Barpeta district. This high growth of population in the post independence period changes the demographic profile of the district. The details of the decadal variation of population are shown in The Table-3.12.

**Table 3.12: Comparison of Decadal Variation of Population in Barpeta and Marigaon District**

District	1901-1911	1911-1921	1921-1931	1931-1941	1941-1951	1951-1961	1961-1971	1971-1981	1991-2001	2001-2011
Barpeta	18.65	34.49	72.29	47.64	16.62	34.39	33.91	40.97	19.62	21.40
Marigaon	15.84	31.94	41.35	15.37	36.65	37.89	37.51	50.90	21.35	23.39
Assam	16.99	20.48	19.91	20.40	19.93	34.98	34.95	53.26	18.92	16.93
India	5.75	-0.31	11.00	14.22	13.31	21.64	24.80	48.53	21.54	17.64

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2011

### 3.9 Religious Distribution of Population in Barpeta and Marigaon District

The population distribution of the religious groups in the district is shown in the Table-3.13. The percentage of total Muslim population in Marigaon district is 52.56 percent and 70.74 percent in Barpeta district, i.e. highest majority of population in both the districts belongs to Muslim religion. The second religion having the most number of followers is Hindu religion in both the districts. The growth rate of Muslim population is 29.24 percent from 2001 to 2011 in Assam (Census of India, 2011).

**Table 3.13: Religious distribution of rural population of Marigaon District**

District	Hindu	Muslim	Chris- tian	Sikh	Buddhist	Jain	Others	Not Stated
Marigaon	451882	503257	834	113	65	244	11	1017
	47.2%	52.56%	0.09%	0.01%	0.01%	0.03%	0.00%	0.11%
Barpeta	492,966	1,198,036	1,020	112	49	399	14	1026
	29.11%	70.74%	0.06%	0.01%	0.00%	0.02%	0.00%	0.06%

Source: Religion Census, 2011

### 3.10 Land and Its Quality

The Marigaon district falls under the central Brahmaputra Valley agro climatic zone under the Eastern Himalaya region. This region has high forest cover and as such the region is naturally endowed with suitable condition for agricultural production especially cereals. Soil structure of the district is mainly alluvial in nature. This results in heavy run-off, massive soil erosion and floods in lower reaches and basins. Large scale floods cause substantial damage to crops in the district. The major portion of the geographical area of the Marigaon district is put to

agricultural uses. The total cropped area under different crops in the district works out to 1.21 lakh hectares forming about 76 percent of the total geographical area.

**Table 3.14: Land Utilisation Pattern in Marigaon and Barpeta District (Area in Hector)**

District	Total Area	Forest Cover	Non Agricultural use of Land	Fallow Land	Net Sown Area	Total Cropping Area	Multiple Cropping Area
Marigaon	158765	13207	28167	8363	92011	126417	34406
Barpeta	264510	48013	27104	1305	159311	263747	104436
Assam	7850005	1853260	1217503	128164	2810597	4159977	1349380

**Source:** Census of India, 2011

The district is also endowed with tributary rivers, Kolong, Sonai etc, along with a few natural wetlands like Gouranga beel, Mer beel etc. These water sources are important reservoirs of fisheries. The district has a total of 35 registered beel fisheries and 5 river fisheries. A total of 7 eco-hatcheries are there in the district according to 2010-11 censuses. The normal rainfall of the district is 17772.4 mm. However, nearly 60 percent of the rainfall is received during the four months when intensity of rainfall is very high.

On the other hand, In Barpeta district more than 75 percent people are engaged in agriculture since most of the areas of Barpeta district is used for agricultural purposes, raising crops in different seasons. A substantial part of land goes to wasteland, roads and communication, human settlement etc. 3.05 percent area of land is used for agriculture and 2.34 percent area has water bodies. The agricultural practice is traditional bound. Dominating cropping pattern is food crops. Rice cultivation occupies 2344 sq Km of the total cropped areas and rice is the dominant crop. The other cultivated crops are wheat, pulses, mustard seeds, potato, vegetables etc.

### **3.11 Human Development Index**

As per Human Development Report 2014, Morigaon stands for 20<sup>th</sup> rank and Barpeta stands for 11<sup>th</sup> rank. The major HDI components of Morigaon and Barpeta district are shown in Table-3.15.

**Table 3.15: Indices of Human Development**

	<b>Health Index</b>	<b>Education Index</b>	<b>Standard of Living Index</b>	<b>Development Index</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Morigaon	0.10	0.69	0.46	0.42	20
Barpeta	0.40	0.65	0.41	0.49	11

Source: Human Development Report, 2014, GOI

### 3.12 MGNREGA in the Selected Districts – An Overview

Barpeta and Morigaon district is selected for carrying out the field study. The secondary data about the overall employment situation under MGNREGA in 2015-16 are as follows-

**Table 3.16: Categories of Participation of People in MGNREGA in 2015-16**

District	Cumulative no of HHs issued job cards (in thousands)				Cumulative no of HHs demanded job(in thousands)	Provid ed employment (in thousands)	Cumulative person day generated (in lakhs)					Wom en as % of Total	No of HHs complet ed 100 days
	SC	ST	Others	Total			SC	ST	Others	Total	Women		
Barpeta	8.6	3.6	245.6	257.8	54.5	49.3	.83.	. 27	23.7	24.8	9.9	40.10	5343
Morigaon	19.3	25.2	136.5	181.1	94.7	86.8	2.78	2.9	24.1	29.8	10.1	33.88	1451
Assam	273.1	773.	4 35.8	4626.8	1668.4	1502.3	25.38	91.2	369.9	486.3	163.3	33.59	42233

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

Table-3.16 states the status of employment generated during the financial year 2015-16 in the sample districts i.e. Barpeta and Marigaon as well as the state as a whole. According to the Act more than one third of the beneficiaries of the program should be women. It is observed that the participation of women in national level stand at 49 percent in 2015-16, whereas the participation rate of women in Assam just touches the reservation line (34 percent). The status of women employment is not satisfactory in Marigaon district i.e. 33.88 percent only, while the rate is slightly higher in Barpeta district (40.11%) than the reserved line. Out of 49 thousand employments provided to households only 10 percent, i.e. 5343 number of households get 100 days employment in Barpeta district. Whereas the situation is worse in Marigaon district as out of 94 thousand households only 2 percent, i.e. 1451 number of households get 100 days work. Also it is worth mentioning that, state average of households getting 100 days job was only 3 percent, which is much below the satisfactory level.

Likewise, employment provided as compared to demand is found to be rather discouraging in Marigaon district, while the situation is somewhat better in Barpeta district; which is reflected from the demand supply gap of the data. The demand supply gap of Barpeta district stands at 5.2 thousand-and the same for Marigaon district is 7.9 thousand in 2015-16. The cumulative number of households issued job card and cumulative number of person day generated for SC/ST category is lower in Barpeta district than the Marigaon district because the percentage of SC/ST population is also lower in Barpeta district. But we have already mentioned that according to population census 2011, the percentage of SC/ST population out of total population in Barpeta district is only 6 percent and 2 percent respectively, whereas, the percentage of SC/ST population out of total population in Marigaon district is 12 percent and 14 percent respectively.

On the basis of the above analysis, it is found that that MGNREGA can't fulfill the target to upgrade the rural poor people. Every year the government is

trying to improve the implementation process, so that the needy people should get employment under the Act, but still it fails to achieve the goal.

### 3.13 Performance of MGNREGA in selected blocks in Barpeta and Marigaon districts

This section wants to analyse the performance of MGNREGA in the selected blocks of the two districts. As per census 2011, the total rural household and rural population of Bajali block in Barpeta district is 20,217 and 91,183 respectively and Gobardhana block is 12,873 and 64,089 respectively. Whereas, the total rural household and population in Laharighat block is 43,680 and 240,979 respectively and 53,741 and 282,402 in Mayong block under Marigaon district. This data is mentioned because the cumulative number of HH registered under MGNREGA in Bajali and Gobardhana block of Barpeta district is much lower than the Laharighat and Mayong block of Marigaon district. This is natural because of the population status of the two districts as per 2011 census.

**Table 3.17: Employment status in the selected Blocks in Barpeta and Marigaon district in 2015-16**

S. No	Name of Blocks	Cumulative no of HH issued job card (in thousands)			Cumulative no of HH demanded work (in thousands)			Cumulative no of HH provided work (in thousands)			Works completed 100 days		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	Bajali	15284	15345	16123	2564	2071	2539	2443	1882	2323	12	29	105
2	Gobardhana	10374	10456	10573	2546	1378	2705	2455	1365	2647	59	10	300

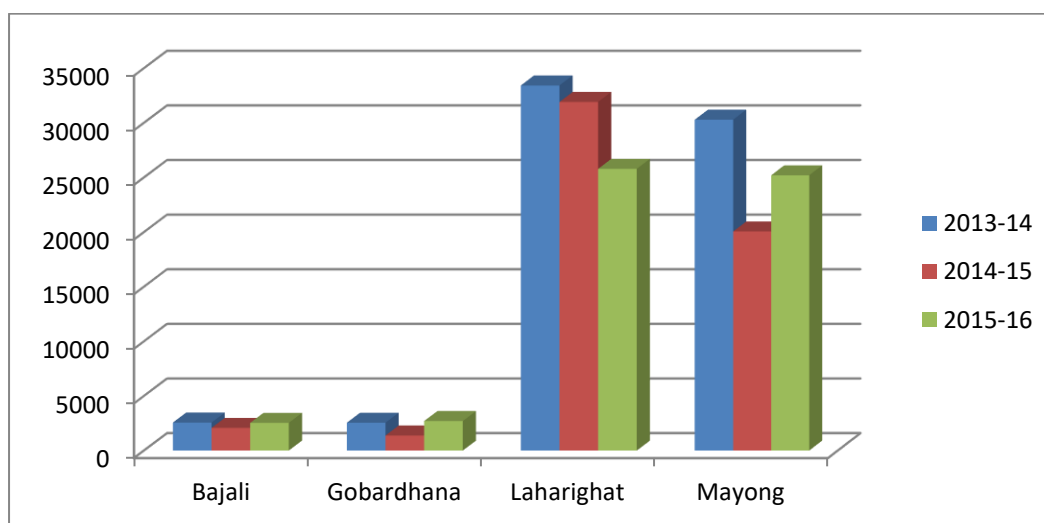


3	Laharighat	42598	45312	47329	33417	31913	25789	32668	26944	22519	3379	124	421
4	Mayong	46764	47938	48931	30290	20056	25196	29841	18982	24185	844	389	267

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

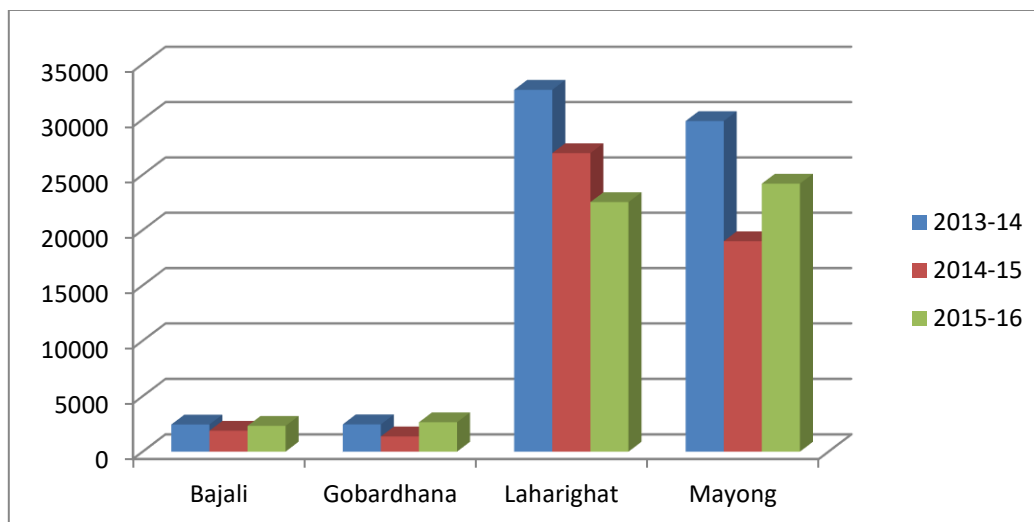
Table-3.17 shows that the number of registered households is increasing in all the blocks of the two districts from 2013-14 to 2015-16. The performance in respect of demand for work was comparatively good in 2013-14 and 2015-16 than 2014-15 in all the selected blocks of the two districts. This was due to formation of new panchayat committee in 2013-14. It is also observed from the table that the highest number of households (3379 in 2013-14) completed 100 days work in Laharighat block of Marigaon district in 2013-14. But, it sharply decreases in the next successive years. In Bajali block, the number of households completed 100 days is increasing from 2013-14 to 2015-16, whereas the number of days decline in Mayong block of Marigaon districts. The performance is represented in Figure-3.5 and Figure-3.6.

**Fig. 3.6: Cumulative no of HH demanded work in different blocks of two districts**



Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

**Fig. 3.7: Cumulative number of HH provided employment in selected blocks of two districts**



Source: www.mgnrega.nic.in

The multistage sampling method was applied in the selection of study areas.

**Table 3.18: Selected districts, Blocks and Panchayats and Villages for Field Study**

DISTRICT	BLOCK	PANCHAYAT	VILLAGE	
BARPETA	BAJALI	BAGHMARA GP	1. BAGHMARA	2.P KATHALMURI
		MARIPUR GP	1. BILPAR	2. MARIPUR
	GOBARDHANA	BILASHIPARA	1. BILASHIPARA	2. BARIGAON
		GOBARDHANA	1. HOTAPARA	2. GAMERIGURI
MORIGAON	LAHARIGHAT	BHURAGAON	1. BHURAGAON	2. KAPUTIMARI
		KACHARIBARI	1. PATOWAKATA	2. KACHARIBARI
	MAYONG	U DHARAMTUL	1. U HARAMTUL	2. MATIPARHAT
		D DHARAMTUL	1. P DHARAMTUL	2. SILVETA

The structural status of the two districts and their population according to 2011 census are shown in Table 3.19.

**Table 3.19: Number of Blocks, GPs and Population of selected Districts and Assam**

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Districts</b>	<b>Number of Bocks</b>	<b>Number of Village Panchayats</b>	<b>Rural Population</b>	<b>No of HHs</b>
1	Barpeta	12	129	1693190	337,320
2	Marigaon	7	94	957853	184,050
Total		19	223	2651043	521370
State Total		243	2204	31169272	6,387,047

Source: Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2011

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this section the researcher has described the theoretical framework adapted to analyse the expected wage or reservation wage and the factors responsible for MGNREGA participation. The chapter also includes the study area, data source, sampling design, survey duration and questionnaires.

#### **4.2 Theoretical Framework**

In order to analyse the association and relationship between different variables like , family income, household size, market wage, MGNREGA wage, expected wage, category, awareness, religion, caste, land area, wage difference, live stocks, gadgets, transport, electricity, distance, age, occupation, education, unemployment rate, the correlation matrix is used.

The correlation matrix computes the correlation coefficients of the columns of a matrix. That is, row  $i$  and column  $j$  of the correlation matrix is the correlation between column  $i$  and column  $j$  of the original matrix. It is to be noted that the diagonal elements of the correlation matrix will be 1 (since they are the correlation of a column with itself). The correlation matrix is also symmetric since the correlation of column  $i$  with column  $j$  is the same as the correlation of column  $j$  with column  $i$ .

#### **4.3 Estimation of Reservation Wages**

In order to understand the migration status in the study area, the concept of reservation wages has been estimated. The reservation wages also called expected wages which is the lowest wage at which the workers were willing to work. The concept of reservation wage has been used to know the impact on migration, because if the MGNREGA wage is higher than the reservation wage, then the MGNREGA is successful to control migration (Sridhar KS et al, 2013).

##### **4.3.1 Variables used for estimation of Reservation wage**

Dependent or exogenous variable

## Reservation wage

It is the wage the worker demanded from the employee. It is hypothetical and the lowest wage at which the workers would be willing to accept a new job. It can also term as asking wage or expected wage. The estimation of reservation wage is important because if the workers are unable to recieve this wage from the employee they may not participate in that work for a longer time. If the MGNREGA wages is much lower than their asking wage, then the job seeker may not be interested to work under MGNREGA. Therefore, the study asked carefully regarding their expected wage so that they can fulfill their minimum household needs and can improve the standard of living in the society.

In order to estimate the reservation wage, the following multiple linear regression models have been used (Gujarati, 1995).

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{i1} + \beta_2 X_{i2} + \beta_3 X_{i3} + \dots + \beta_n X_{in} + \varepsilon_i \text{ for } i = 1, 2, n \dots \dots \dots (4.1)$$

Where,

Y = Dependent variable (reservation wages)

X<sub>1</sub>, X<sub>2</sub>, X<sub>3</sub>, .X<sub>n</sub> = Independent variable

β = Intercept

β<sub>1</sub>, β<sub>2</sub>, β<sub>3</sub>....., β<sub>n</sub> are coefficient of respective variables.

ε<sub>i</sub> is the error term

Independent or explanatory variables

Group

Group is formed from the beneficiary respondents and non-beneficiary respondents. Non-beneficiary respondents were taken as control group. This group was taken to know the reason why they were outside the MGNREGA and is there any impact on the MGNREGA beneficiary.

## Occupation

Occupation implies the primary occupation of the household head. Different occupations have different impact on MGNREGA wage and reservation wage. Hence, utmost care is taken in collecting data so that the primary occupation of the households can be understood and their linkage with MGNREGA activities.

### **Gender**

Gender means the sex composition of the respondents. Generally, it is a notion that male worker get more wages than female workers in local market. But, under the scheme of MGNREGA both male and female workers get equal wages.

### **Age square**

Age square is used to understand the continuity of the workers and to know the effect of age on reservation wage. It explains the rate of increase in age and the rate of expected wage.

### **Education**

Education is referred to the total education attainment or the literacy level of the head of the household. It is measured in terms of schooling level attained by the head of the household. Highly educated workers may have positive impact on reservation wage.

Education square: It gives idea of the effect of knowledge of education over the years. The sign of the education square variable depicts the rate of change of this variable on the other.

### **Family education**

Family education referred here is the highest education level of any family member. It may be the head of the household or children of the family.

### **Unemployment Rate**

Unemployment rate is the total number of unemployed persons per thousand job seekers. It is measured at the panchayat level considering the total number of work provided divided by the total number of job card holder multiplied by 1000. The formula was

$$\text{Unemployment Rate} = \frac{\text{cumulative number of HH provided employment}}{\text{cumulative number of HH having jobcard}} \times 1000$$

### **Family income**

Family income means yearly income of the family from different sources both primary and subsidiary. Income has positive impact on reservation wages, thus it is considered an important variable for the estimation of reservation wage.

### **Household size**

Total number of members of a family is the household size. It is expected that if the household size is higher than the expected wage may be high.

### **Market wage**

Market wage is the wage prevalent in the local market. It may be agriculture wages, factory wages or daily wages in that locality. If market wages is high the expected wages of the labour may be high.

### **Category**

Category means APL and BPL families. It is based on the socio-economic survey by the central government. The BPL households have a unique number received from the government and get a card. Generally, BPL household may have more expected wages than the APL families.

### **Land amount**

It is the total cultivable and homestead land of a household. The household which has more amount of land, the expectation wage of that family may be high.

### **Caste**

Caste includes SC, ST, and General including OBC/MOBC. It is the household status of a family. The variable is used to understand the effect of different caste on reservation wages.

### **Electricity**

Here, electricity means a household having electricity connection. It gives socio-economic status of a household. The variable is considered important for reservation wages.

### **Distance**

Distance is measured in terms of Km from his locality to the nearby town. If a village falls in a nearby town/city, the people would like to go to the city in search of job, and then they may have lesser interest to work under MGNREGA.

## **4.4 Estimation of MGNREGA participation**

Factors to determine the participation on MGNREGA

A logistic model was estimated to identify the factors that influence the probabilities of the rural household decision whether the rural people want to participate in the MGNREGA job. As the dependent variable is a binary, taking the value 1 for MGNREGA beneficiary and 0 for otherwise. The logit model is- (Cox, 1958)

$$Pr(Y=1|X_1, X_2, X_3 \dots, X_n) = F(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{i1} + \beta_2 X_{i2} + \beta_3 X_{i3} + \dots + \beta_n X_{in}) \text{ -----(4.2)}$$

$$Pr(Y=1|X_1, X_2, X_3 \dots X_n) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \dots + \beta_n)}} \text{ -----(4.3)}$$

### **4.4.1 Variables used for estimation of MGNREGA Participation**

Dependant or exogenous variable for equation (4.2)

#### **1. Group**

Group includes both MGNREGA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries (taking a value of 1 for MGNREGA beneficiary and 0 for non-beneficiaries). The variable is considered as independent variable to observe the impact on participation.

Dependent or explanatory variables for equation (4.2)

### **Occupation**



Occupation implies the primary occupation of the household head. If the earning of primary occupation is good in respect of income generation the participation rate may have negative impact.

### **Gender**

Gender means male and female participation. Gender means the sex composition of the respondents. Generally, male workers get more wages than female workers in local market. But, in MGNREGA both male and female workers get equal wages. So it may have positive impact on women participation in MGNREGA.

### **Age square**

Age square is considered to know the effect of change of age on MGNREGA participation.

### **Education**

Education is referred to the total education attainment or the literacy level of the head of the household. It was measured in terms of schooling level attained by the head of the household. Higher educated workers may have negative impact on MGNREGA participation.

### **Family education**

Family education is referred to the highest education level of any family member. It may be the head of the household or children of the family. Family education has effect on MGNREGA participation.

### **Family income**

Family income means yearly income of the family from different sources both primary and subsidiary. If family income is more the MGNREGA participation may be low.

### **Household size**

Total number of members of a family is the household size. It is expected that if the household size is higher than the expected wage may be high.

### **Category**

Category means APL and BPL families. It is based on the socio-economic survey by the central government. The BPL households have a unique number received from the government and get a card. Generally, BPL household may have more expected wages than the APL families.

### **Awareness**

Awareness of households about the MGNREGA planning and implementation process is an important factor for MGNREGA participation.. Joining of MGNREGA planning, wages, unemployment allowance, and worksite facilities, delay payments etc. mainly depends on awareness among the households.

### **Religion**

Religion includes Hindu and Islam only. The variable is used to observe the participation effect.

### **Land amount**

It is the total cultivable and homestead land of a household in acres. The household which has more amount of land, the expectation wage of that family may be high.

### **Caste**

Caste includes SC, ST and General including OBC/MOBC. It is the household status of a family. It has also effect on MGNREGA participation.

### **Livestock**

The total number of livestock like bullock, cow, goat, pig, chicken, duck etc in a family is considered as livestock in numbers. If the number of livestock is large, there is less inclination to participate in MGNREGA work.

### **Gadgets**

Household gadgets include Mobile phone, Radio, TV, Tape recorder, LPG, Pressure Cooker etc in numbers. The variable is considered because of the perception that if any household has large number of gadgets, the participation in MGNREGA work is less.

## **Transport**

Transport means number of vehicles and cultivable tools in a household. It includes bicycle, two wheeler, three wheeler, tractor, car, cart etc. If a cultivator has large cultivable land with number of agricultural tools and machinery and more household transport items, less participation is observed in MGNREGA work.

## **Electricity**

Here, electricity means a household having electricity connection. It gives socio-economic status to a household. It may have impact on MGNREGA participation.

## **Distance**

Distance is measured in terms of Km from ones locality to the nearby town. If a village falls in a nearby town/city, the people would like to go to the city in search of job, and then they may have lesser interest to work under MGNREGA.

## **4.5 Graphical presentation**

In some cases bar diagram and Pie diagram is used to represent the occupational distribution of respondents, household caste status and some performance indicator of the respondents. In order to explain the secondary data we have used diagram, so that it makes the result easily understandable.

## **4.6 Study Area**

The study area covers two districts out of 27 district of Assam, namely Barpeta and Morigaon district. Barpeta district is selected on the basis of secondary data of the district which shows the highest number of registered job card holder for the year 2013-14 (please refer to Appendix). But, the total number of HH demanded employment and provided employment is lowest in Barpeta district in 2013-14 as compared to job card issued. And Marigaon district was taken for comparison with Barpeta district in which highest number of HH gets 100 days employment in the same year. The district also generates highest number of employment for women (693177 mandays) and SC population

(498818 mandays) during 2013-14. From these two districts, two blocks from each district and two panchayats from each block were selected for survey. One block from the highest number of registered HH and another from lowest number of registered HH. Two villages from each Panchayat were selected for field study. Bajali block of Barpeta district had the lowest cumulative number of households and Gobardhana block had the majority of minority people. Baghmara and Pachim Kathalmuri from Bajali block and Bilashipara and Gobardhana from Gobardhana block have been selected randomly. On the other hand, Mayong from Marigaon district had the lowest cumulative number of households, whereas Laharighat has the minority coverage area. Uttar Dharamtul and Dakhin Dharamtul from Mayong block and Bhuragaon and Kacharibari GP from Laharighat block have been selected randomly from Marigaon district. After that job card holder's individual household were selected randomly from MGNREGA official website for in-depth study.

#### **4.7 Data Source**

The study utilizes both primary and secondary data. The secondary data is gathered from various published and unpublished sources, official website of MGNREGA, referred journals, various monitoring and evaluation reports of the Ministry of Panchayat and Rural Development, State Government reports, various operational guidelines and notifications of the Ministry of Panchayat and Rural Development, report from different institution like World Bank, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Overseas Development Institute, Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), Economic Survey of India, Census of India 2011 and from unofficial sources. The primary data were collected by conducting sample survey through a semi-structured schedule from beneficiaries and non beneficiaries of MGNREGA work.

#### **4.8 Sampling Design**

Multistage sampling method has been used for carrying out the field study. In the first stage, two districts of Assam have been selected. In the second stage, two blocks from each district have been selected at random. Next, two GPs

from each block have been selected. After that, two villages from each GP have been selected. The two districts have been selected on the basis of data available in official source of MGNREGA. In Barpeta district, highest numbers of job cards were issued during financial year 2010-11 among all other districts of Assam. Marigaon district was selected on the basis of highest number of person day generated in the same financial year. From each district one block has been selected on the basis of lowest cumulative number of HHs provided employment during 2010-11 and second one is from minority or tribal areas. Similarly one panchayat has been selected on the basis of lowest cumulative number of HH provided employment during 2010-11 and second one is from minority or tribal area. Bajali block of Barpeta district had the lowest cumulative number of households receiving employment and Gobardhana block had the majority of minority people. On the other hand, Mayong from Marigaon district had the lowest cumulative number of households registered under MGNREGA (2010-11), whereas Laharighat has the minority coverage area. From each block two Gram Panchayats (GP) have been selected randomly. From each panchayat two villages (one general category and other backward/tribal category) were selected in consultation with the president/secretary of concerned panchayat for collecting field data. After that job card holder's individual household were selected randomly from MGNREGA official website for in-depth study. Total 320 MGNREGA beneficiaries and 50 non beneficiaries as control group were taken for study. From Barpeta district 130 beneficiaries and from Marigaon district 190 households were surveyed. The respondents were selected from the MGNREGA website, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India. The study uses the systematic random sampling method by generating random number for the selection of beneficiaries and those who have not got job card as non beneficiaries. On the basis of proportion of population in the village, total 320 beneficiaries across the villages were taken for in depth study. Again 50 non beneficiaries were surveyed from the same Gram Panchayats. From each village 6 non beneficiaries and 2 more from Bhuragaon GP (as household is more) were selected so as to get 50 non beneficiaries. Focus group discussion has been done in each village in the presence of village head, in order to have some idea about the performance of MGNREGA in those villages.

#### 4.8.1 The distributions of selected villages

The multistage structure of selected blocks, panchayats and villages are shown in Table- 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of Selected Village**

District	Block	Panchayat	Village	
Barpeta	Bajali	Baghmara GP	1. Batiamari	2.P Kathalmuri
		Maripur GP	1. Bilpar	2. Maripur
	Gobardhana	Bilashipara	1. Bilashipara	2. Barigaon
		Gobardhana	1. Hotapara	2. Gameriguri
Morigaon	Laharighat	Bhuragaon	1. Bhuragaon	2. Kaputimari
		Kacharibari	1. Patowakata	2. Kacharibari
	Mayong	Uttar Dharamtul	1.Uttar Dharamtul	2. Matiparhat
		Dakhin Dharamtul	1.Pachim Dharamtul	2. Silveta

Source: Prepared by the researcher

#### 4.8.2 Sample size from different Panchayats

The selection strategy of number of beneficiaries and non beneficiaries are shown in Table- 4.2.

**Table 4.2: Beneficiary and non beneficiary selection for primary surveys**

Block	Panchayat	No of House Hold	No of sample beneficiaries selected (%)	No of non beneficiaries selected
Bajali	Baghmara	1213	24 (7.5)	6

	Maripur	1040	20 (6.2)	6
Gobardhana	Bilashipara	1841	36 (11.2)	6
	Gobardhana	2512	50 (15.6)	6
Laharighat	Bhuragaon	2763	56 (17.5)	8
	Kacharibari	2328	48 (15)	6
Mayong	Uttar Dharamtul	1781	36 (11.2)	6
	Dakhin Dharamtul	2501	50 (15.6)	6
	Total		320 (100)	50

Since the population in the Panchayats of Marigaon district is larger than Barpeta district, more respondents was taken from Marigaon district (190) than Barpeta district (130).

#### 4.9 Survey duration and Schedule

The field survey was started from July 2013. The questionnaire used for household data collection was divided into four sections (please refer Appendix). The questionnaire was prepared in such a way that all the information relating to individual level as well as household level can be drawn out. The first section of the questionnaire dealt with household's individual information. The second section dealt with the assets information of the household like number of livestock, gadgets, transport items, house type and electricity connection as well MGNREGA income. Section three contains information about MGNREGA including awareness, job card, banking status, number of worker in the family, subsidiary occupation, yearly income, migration status of the households. Section four explains the overall views about MGNREGA and asks suggestions from the beneficiaries to improve the scheme. These questions were adopted from the available literature with modification according to the objectives of the study. The field study was done by the researcher himself during 2013-14.

For the analysis of various descriptive statistics, the SPSS version 16.0 was used. The STATA 11.0 version has been used to estimate multiple linear regressions.



## **CHAPTER V**

### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter mainly focuses on analyzing and discussing the data as collected during field survey of the selected districts of Assam. In order to carry out the survey, a schedule is prepared and henceforth, direct interview is carried out in 370 households which is which is collected from 16 villages in the two selected districts of Assam-Barpeta and Marigaon.

#### **5.1 Overall Household characteristics**

The main study area for collecting field data was Barpeta and Marigaon district of Assam. During field survey, more emphasis was laid on households which were in accordance to the objectives of the research and insightful for the study. The schedule was prepared in such a way that it could gather overall households' information. The socio economic and demographic profile of the respondents was prepared, which was examined in terms of religion, caste, category, education, occupation of the workers. The socio economic characteristics of MGNREGA beneficiaries and non beneficiaries whom we surveyed are listed in table-5.1.

The overall scenario of the socio economic status was measured in terms of educational attainment, occupation and family size of the respondents. In table-5.2, in case of gender participation among the respondents, male workers are more than female workers in the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, where, 9 percent women were recorded against 91 percent of male workers for beneficiaries group and 4 percent female against 96 percent of male for non-beneficiaries. That is, the dominant role is played by male workers.

**Table 5.1: Socio economic and demographic profile of beneficiaries and non beneficiaries**

Variables	Categories	Beneficiaries (percentage)	Non- beneficiaries (percentage)	Difference(t/ Chi-square test)
Gender	Male	292 (91%)	48 (96%)	1.18
	Female	28 (9%)	2 (4%)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	
Age	Less than Mean	150 (47%)	28(56%)	5.22*
	Mean age (45 and 35 yrs)	3 (10%)	7(14%)	
	Greater than Mean	138 (43%)	15(30%)	
Religion	Hindu	190 (59.4%)	24 (48%)	2.29***
	Islam	130 (40.6%)	26 (52%)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	
Community	SC	63 (19.7%)	10 (20%)	3.64
	ST	33 (10.3%)	1 (2%)	
	OBC/MOBC	57 (17.3%)	10 (20%)	
	GEN	167 (52.2%)	29 (58%)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	
Education	Illiterate	94 (29.4%)	8 (16%)	6.76***
	Elementary	91 (28.4%)	22 (44%)	
	Secondary	106 (33.1)	16 (32%)	
	High Secondary	26 (8.1)	4 (8%)	
	Degree and above	3 (0.9%)	0 (0%)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	
Category+	BPL	135 (42.2%)	6 (12%)	1.80*
	APL	161 (50.3%)	1 (2%)	
	No Card	24 (7.5%)	43 (86%)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	
Occupation	None	23 (7.2%)	2 (4%)	3.43
	Agriculture	116 (37.2%)	15 (30%)	
	Animal Husbandry	1 (0.3%)	0 (0%)	
	Private sector	11 (3.4%)	2 (4%)	
	Own Trade	53(16.6%)	9 (18%)	
	Wage Labour	110 (33.4%)	22 (44%)	
	Others	6 (1.9%)	0 (0%)	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>320 (100%)</b>	<b>50 (100%)</b>	

Source: Field Study

Note: + based on production of card by the Households

\*, \*\* and \*\*\* represents level of significance at 1%, 5% and 10%

The mean age of the beneficiary respondents is 45 years and 35 years for non-beneficiaries. In case of beneficiaries 47 percent respondent's age fall below the mean age and 43 percent respondent's age is higher than the mean age. In case of non-beneficiaries also more than 56 percent respondents falls below the mean age. And only 30 percent respondents are above the mean age. That means 56 percent young age group (below 35 years) non-beneficiaries are still unable to get job card.

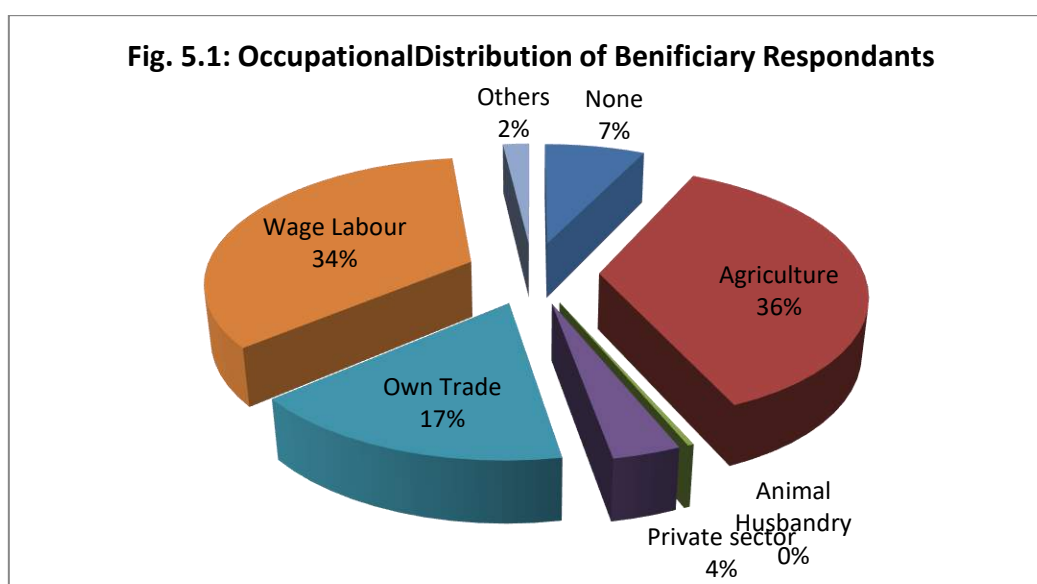
In case of religion, 59 percent respondents belong to Hindu and 41 percent to Islam religion for beneficiary respondents, while 48 percent respondents are Hindu and 52 percent respondents belong to Islam for non-beneficiary respondents.

Nearly 30 percent beneficiary respondents are from disadvantaged social groups (SC and ST) and 52 percent are from general group and nearly 17 percent from Other Backward Communities (OBC). The sample that was collected for the study represents all the communities which are essential for social science research.

It is important to note that the education levels of the respondents are below secondary level (6 percent). 29 percent respondents are illiterate. That means majority of the workers are with secondary education. Therefore, it may be inferred that higher educated people are less involved in the MGNREGA work. Though MGNREGA is associated with unskilled labour, yet for proper implementation of a scheme education is very important. Education plays an important role in the creation of awareness and participation in the program. But it is observed that illiterate and lower educated people are mostly associated with MGNREGA work.

In case of poverty level, although there is a statistical difference between APL and BPL families, it has been observed from field study that most of the households are poor but due to some reason like partition of family, irregular socio-economic survey etc. they could not avail the BPL card.

Again it is observed that highest number of respondent's primary occupation is either agriculture (37 percent) or wage labour (33 percent). All the beneficiaries expressed that MGNREGA is their subsidiary work. Other workers include drivers, factory workers, business people, artisans, street hawkers and people in service sector, whose proportion is marginal. Occupation is important to know to which social and occupational groups the program is reaching. It can be observed that 37 percent of workers are from cultivators and 33 percent of the workers are wage labourers. On the other hand, nearly 17 percent respondents have their own trade. In case of non-beneficiaries also, majority of the respondents are cultivators (30 percent) and wage labourers (44 percent). A nominal portion of the respondents are engaged in private sector, animal husbandry and others like drivers, handymen, factory workers etc. 7 percent of beneficiaries respondents and 4 percent non-beneficiaries respondents have no work. The occupational patterns of the respondents are represented in Fig-5.1.



Source: Field Study

Household characteristics regarding age, household size, annual income, and land size of the MGNREGA beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries as surveyed is discussed in the Table-5.2. On an average, the MGNREGA beneficiaries are older and have a larger family size than that of the non-beneficiaries. The mean age of beneficiary respondents were 4.18 and non-beneficiary respondents were

3.92, which is much smaller than beneficiary households. Therefore, it can be inferred that the family size of the MGNREGA workers were large. The mean income of beneficiary respondents was Rs 41,591, whereas the same is much higher for non-beneficiaries, i.e. Rs 52,400. Though, the land size of beneficiary respondents is higher than the non-beneficiary respondents, since, the amount of land area is very limited, so it may not have had any impact on workers participation.

**Table 5.2: Household Characteristics both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries respondents including income**

Characteristics	Age of the respondents		Size of the family		HH annual income		Total land owned (in Bigha)	
	Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Non-beneficiaries
Mean	45.23	35.74	4.18	3.92	41,591	52,400	3.70	2
Median	45	31	4	4	30,000	50,000	2.30	1.5
Mode	50	25	4	4	15000	40,000	0.50	0.20
Std Dev.	11.81	12.83	1.31	1.15	30,293	13.89	3.69	1.96
Minimum	20	20	1	1	10000	25000	00	00
Maximum	80	70	7	6	2 lakh	90,000	16	7

Source: Field Study

While the primary activity of 70 percent of beneficiaries is agriculture and wage labour, a majority (44 percent) of non-beneficiaries are wage labourers. Most of them (more than 95 percent in both cases) came to know about MGNREGA through Panchayat members, also 4 percent of the beneficiaries came to know through relatives. The non-beneficiary households came to know about MGNREGA from neighbors and relatives. Though they fall in the same category (poor) yet they are unable to avail the benefits of MGNREGA or get job

cards due to work in other places at the time of job card application and/or due to partition of family.

All the MGNREGA beneficiaries had received job cards, but 69 percent beneficiaries do not keep their cards on their own. 99 percent of the beneficiaries are not aware about the law under MGNREGA and how to involve in the planning and implementation process. All the beneficiaries are unable to get work according to their demand. Nearly 98 percent of non-beneficiaries are not aware that they can apply for job card at any time in the Panchayat. About 2 percent non-beneficiaries are not interested to work under MGNREGA due to their engagement in other activities such as drivers, small contractors and own business in daily markets etc and they can't accept the prevailing wage rate. It is observed that, because of the lack of awareness on the part of non-beneficiaries, they are not involved in the program. All the beneficiaries had applied to the Panchayat for MGNREGA work during the lean season.

This study enquired to know about what the MGNREGA beneficiaries do, apart from their MGNREGA work. The study from the field found that, 7 percent of beneficiaries and 2 percent non-beneficiaries have no primary work. MGNREGA work is their main source of living, which reinforces the view that these workers needed the MGNREGA job much. On the other hand, a majority were engaged in agriculture and worked as casual labour in agriculture allied activities in their native village. All the beneficiaries desired more than 100 days work under MGNREGA. Before the implementation of MGNREGA in 2006, nearly 70 percent beneficiaries spent their time without work in the lean season i.e. after harvesting their crops.

On the basis of the resources available with the beneficiaries we can understand their economic situation. The Table-5.3 shows the amount of land holding, livestock, gadgets and transport items with the beneficiaries at the time of survey. Land holding status is very important to ascertain the economic condition of the respondents. Nearly, a total of 2.4 percent beneficiaries are landless or sub-marginal farmers with a majority (77.8 percent beneficiaries)

having farm size less than 1 hectare. The next 19.8 percent respondents have more than one hectare of land who are actually small farmers<sup>1</sup>.

**Table 5.3 Socio-economic Status of the Respondents**

<b>Particular</b>	<b>Sub-categories</b>	<b>Non-beneficiaries</b>	<b>Beneficiaries</b>	<b>Total</b>
Size of Holding	A. Landless	1 (2%)	8 (2.5%)	9 (2.4%)
	B.			
	i. <1 ha	45 (90%)	243 (75.9%)	288 (77.8%)
	ii. 1-2ha	4 (8%)	69 (21.6%)	73 (19.8%)
Livestock ownership	Number of livestock	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Total
	Less than 2(mean)	32 (74.5%)	154 (52.5%)	186(55.4%)
	Equal 2	7 (14%)	104 (32.5%)	111 (30%)
	Greater than 2	6 (12%)	48 (15%)	54 (14.6%)
Gadgets	Number of gadgets	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Total
	Less than 3(mean)	48 ()	267 ()	315 (28.4%)
	Equal to 3	0 (0%)	23 (7.2%)	23 (6.2%)
	Greater than 3	2 ()	31 (8.1%)	33(7.6%)
Means of transport	Number of Transport	Non-beneficiaries	Beneficiaries	Total
	Less than 2	47()	270 ()	317 (13.8%)
	Equal to 2	3 (6%)	43 (13.4%)	46 (12.4%)
	Greater than 2	0 (0%)	7 (2.2%)	7 (1.9%)

<sup>1</sup> Small farmer are those who cultivate in more than 1 hector of land

	Total	50 (100%)	320 (100%)	370 (100%)
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Source: Field Study

In Table-5.3, 90 percent non-beneficiaries and 76 percent beneficiaries have less than 1 hectare land holding which suggest that as the land holding size increases among MGNREGA workers, the demand for employment under this program will decrease. Nearly 17 percent of the respondents did not own any livestock. Again about 63 percent of the respondents own one to two livestock and around only 15 percent households have more than three livestock. In transportation we include farm machinery also. In this respect no respondents were found having tractor and other such machinery. Bicycle is the main transport item of about 72 percent of households. 12 percent households have two item of transport and only one percent has two wheeler vehicles. In actual practice, there is not much difference between the two groups in terms of size of holdings, gadgets, live stocks, and means of transport.

After discussing the socio economic status of the respondents, now the study will look at the objective wise analysis of collected information from the field. This study has four important objectives regarding the effectiveness of the most important and largest employment generation Act in India after independence, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), which was launched on February 2005 and implemented from April 2006 in India in a phase manner.

## 5.2 First Objective

**To assess the effectiveness of the scheme in creation of employment and reaching out to the rural poor.**

In order to understand the employment status in the selected Gram Panchayats, the study collects secondary information from the official source of MGNREGA. The study wants to find out the total number of households engaged in MGNREGA work, number of person work and number of of person day generated in last four years since 2012-13 to 2016-17. The study also looks whether the Act is successful in providing 100 days work to every household.



The status of last five years in the selected Gram Panchayats is shown in Table-5.4.

**Table 5.4: Performance of selected Panchayats under Barpeta district from 2012-13 to 2016-17**

Bajali Block	Gram Panchayat	Category	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17
	<b>Baghmara</b>	Total household work	35	643	353	127	99
		Total HH demanded work	65	649	388	132	101
		Total person work	36	656	355	128	150
		No of person completed 100 days work	0	0	0	0	0
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	2.36	3.47	3.39	1.19	2.5
		Average day employment provided per HH	6.74	5.4	9.6	9.3	26.06
		No of work completed	12	0	4	0	3
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	1.65	6.82	4.53	0.53	4.24
	<b>Maripur</b>	Total household work	9	64	30	245	55
		Total HH demanded work	10	68	70	252	61
		Total person work	9	83	43	583	146
		No of person completed 100 days work	0	0	0	20	0
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	50	1.18	0.59	10.59	1.18
		Average day employment provided per HH	5.56	18.47	19.6	43.22	21.55
		No of work completed	16	0	2	0	3
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	1	1.25	1.77	4.02	12.27
		Total household work	126	442	150	305	455
		Total HH demanded work	126	442	151	310	459

Laharighat Block	Gobardhana	Total person work	204	749	288	924	1316
		No of person completed 100 days work	0	9	0	29	41
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	2.22	10.52	4.11	16.62	26.43
		Average day employment provided per HH	17.59	23.79	27.43	54.48	58.09
		No of work completed	22	2	2	0	13
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	4.65	14.03	3.21	15.25	71.6
	Bilashipara	Total household work	111	204	77	288	282
		Total HH demanded work	111	204	77	303	286
		Total person work	313	551	252	988	921
		No of person completed 100 days work	0	6	0	40	5
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	3.58	7.03	3.06	16.95	15.19
		Average day employment provided per HH	32.29	34.05	39.68	58.85	53.87
		No of work completed	13	3	2	1	16
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	7.68	10.23	2.34	8.44	52.62
	Bhuragaon	Total household work	1062	1833	1140	726	506
		Total HH demanded work	1062	1853	1379	866	572
		Total person work	1083	1900	1162	1461	1036
		No of person completed 100 days work	1	278	0	6	0
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	43.13	109.85	23.91	19.28	8.95
		Average day employment provided per HH	40.61	59.93	20.95	26.56	17.68
		No of work completed	13	4	55	3	2
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	81.1	87.67	59.57	15.81	34.93
		Total household work	565	1039	1314	817	1141
		Total HH demanded work	565	1050	1440	859	1207

Mayang Block	<b>Kacharibari</b>	Total person work	566	1058	1395	1013	1646
		No of person completed 100 days work	0	0	0	0	1
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	23.90	33.95	23.93	16.46	28.21
		Average day employment provided per HH	42.29	32.67	18.21	20.15	24.72
		No of work completed	2	0	118	11	8
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	58.7	33.48	52.82	21.56	97.39
	<b>Dakhin Dharamtul</b>	Total household work	1246	1572	470	1006	698
		Total HH demanded work	1246	1573	475	1049	988
		Total person work	1257	1613	480	1034	734
		No of person completed 100 days work	0	0	0	0	0
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	27.19	41.69	8.10	31.59	13.70
		Average day employment provided per HH	21.82	26.52	17.23	31.41	19.62
		No of work completed	4	5	108	2	3
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	59.83	49.91	14.95	5.38	79.23
	<b>Uttar Dharamtul</b>	Total household work	555	820	343	459	298
		Total HH demanded work	557	826	347	474	303
		Total person work	556	823	343	460	298
		No of person completed 100 days work	4	0	0	0	0
		Total person day generated (in thousands)	12.84	24.37	4.95	9.45	4.70
		Average day employment provided per HH	23.14	29.72	14.43	20.59	15.79
		No of work completed	2	5	62	1	6
		Total expenditure (in lakh)	36.18	32.3	15.75	3.67	25.31

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

It is observed from Table-5.4 that the employment situation is comparatively less in Barpeta district than Marigaon district. The performance of the Act during 2012-13 in Barpeta district is poor than during 2013-14. The reason may be that during 2013-14, the new electoral body that was formed and the new representatives who were elected, worked well during that period. Baghmara GP failed to provide employment in 2012-13, 2014-15 and 2015-16. In the year 2013-14, the Panchayat provided employment to 643 numbers of households; and it was only 35 numbers in 2012-13. But the Panchayat failed to provide 100 days employment to any household during 2012 to 2017.

The average days of employment could not touché double digit number during the last four years. The situation of Maripur GP under Bajali block is poorest among all the Panchayats selected for study. The performance is comparatively good in 2015-16. But, it fails to create employment in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15. The Panchayat could not provide 100 days employment during last three years. 20 number of household obtained 100 days employment in 2015-16. But the data is questionable because during 2015-16, although the GP shows highest number of household being able to get better employment than the last three years, still it fails to complete any work during that year.

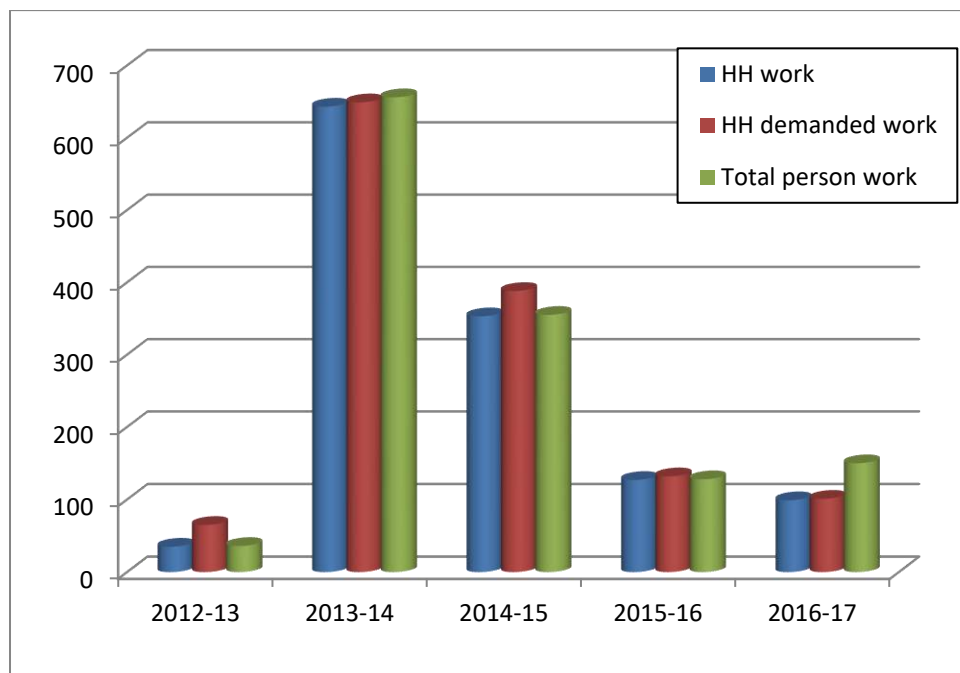
Similar situation is observed in Gobardhana GP under Gobardhana Block. Highest amount of money is spent by this Panchayat (nearly 15 lakhs) during 2013-14 and 2015-16 providing 100 days employment to 9 and 29 number of households respectively. By spending 15 lakhs and providing 100 days of employment to 29 numbers of household and creating 54 average days of employment, the GP fails to complete any number of works. But comparatively during 2013-14 and 2015-16 the performance of the Panchayat is satisfactory.

In Bilashipara GP under Gobardhana block, demand supply gap is minimal and 46 numbers of households obtained 100 days employment during last four years and average days of employment is also comparatively good.

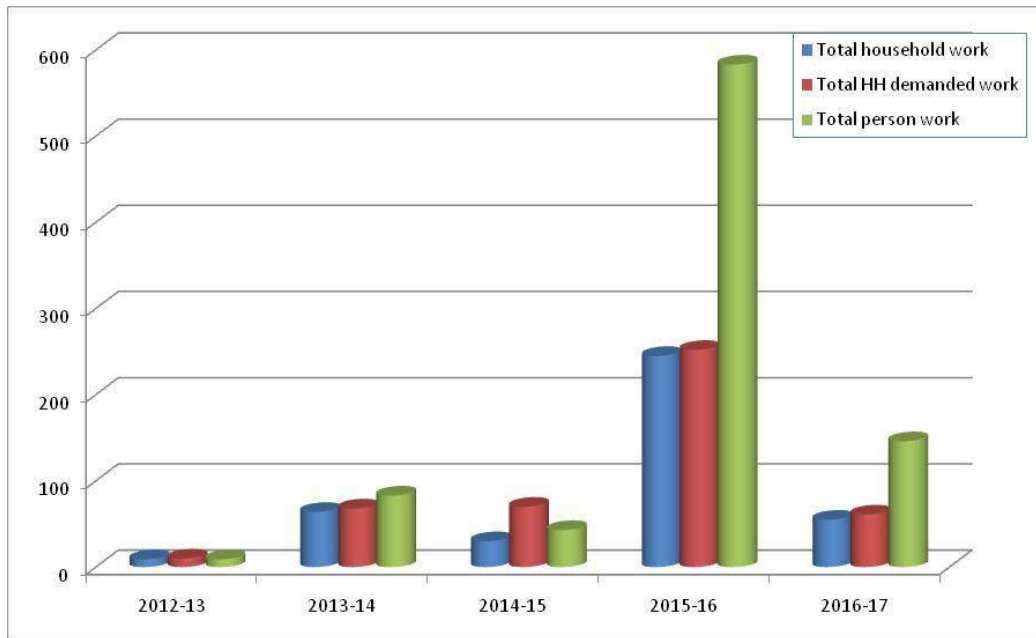
The performance of Marigaon district as compared to Barpeta district is good as per data in Table-5.4. The selected Panchayats were able to provide employment for the rural poor. Bhuragaon GP is the best in creation of 100 days employment as compared to other three selected panchayats. Embankment in the

river Brahmaputra was the main MGNREGA work during 2013-14, so the GP can provide highest number of employment by generating 110 thousand person day during that year. Kacharibari GP and Dakhin Dharamtul GP fail to provide 100 days employment to any household during 2012-16.

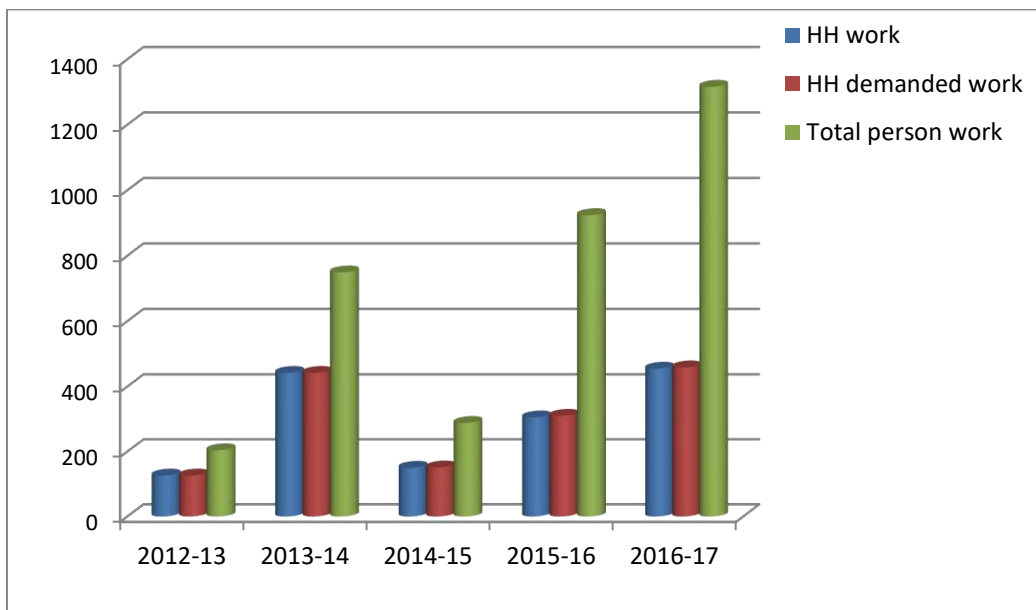
**Fig 5.2: Panchayat wise performance of Barpeta district**



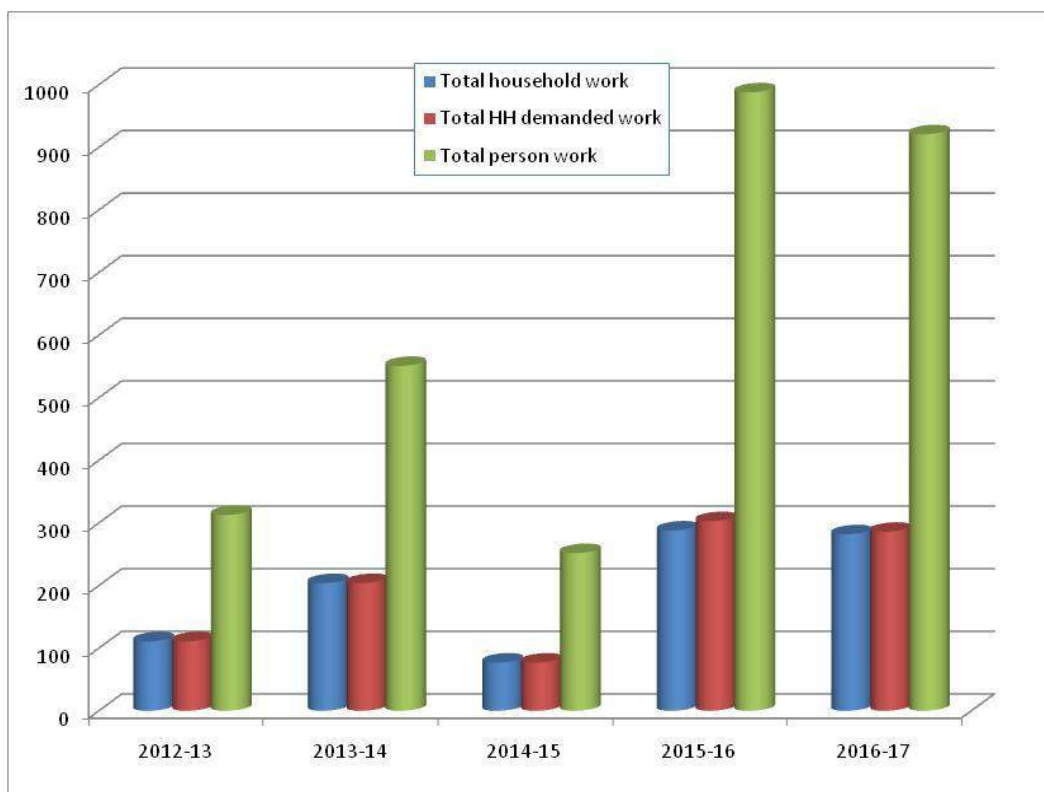
**Baghmara**



**Maripur**

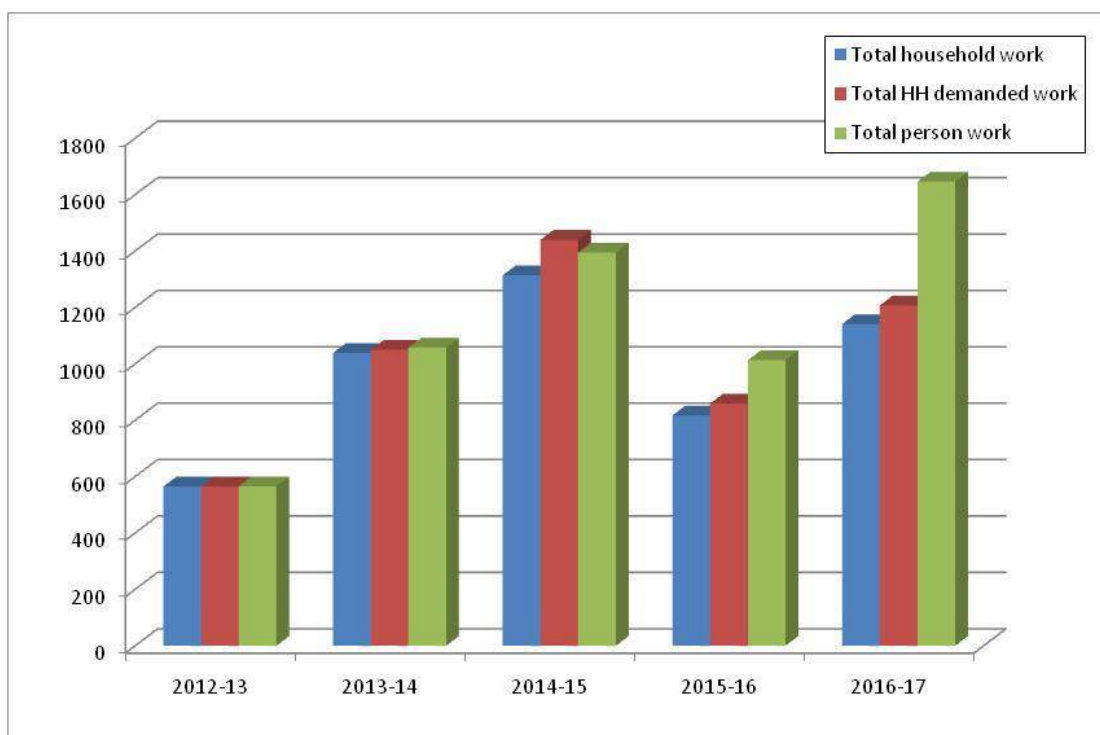


**Gobardhana**

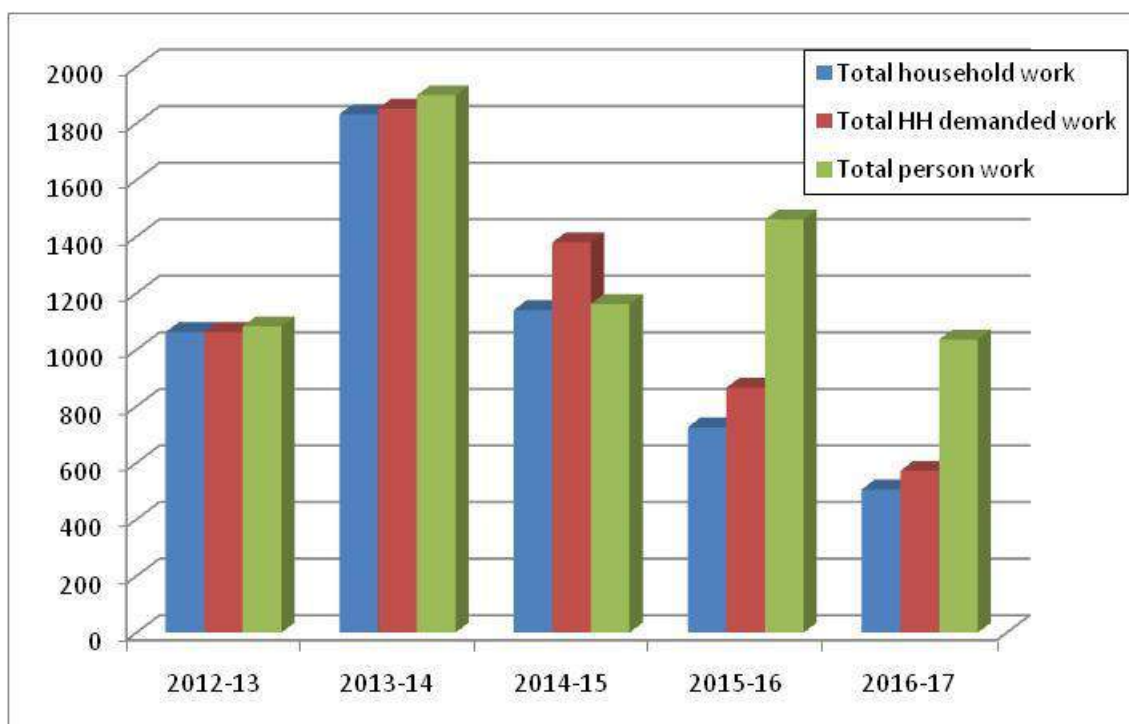


#### Bilashipara

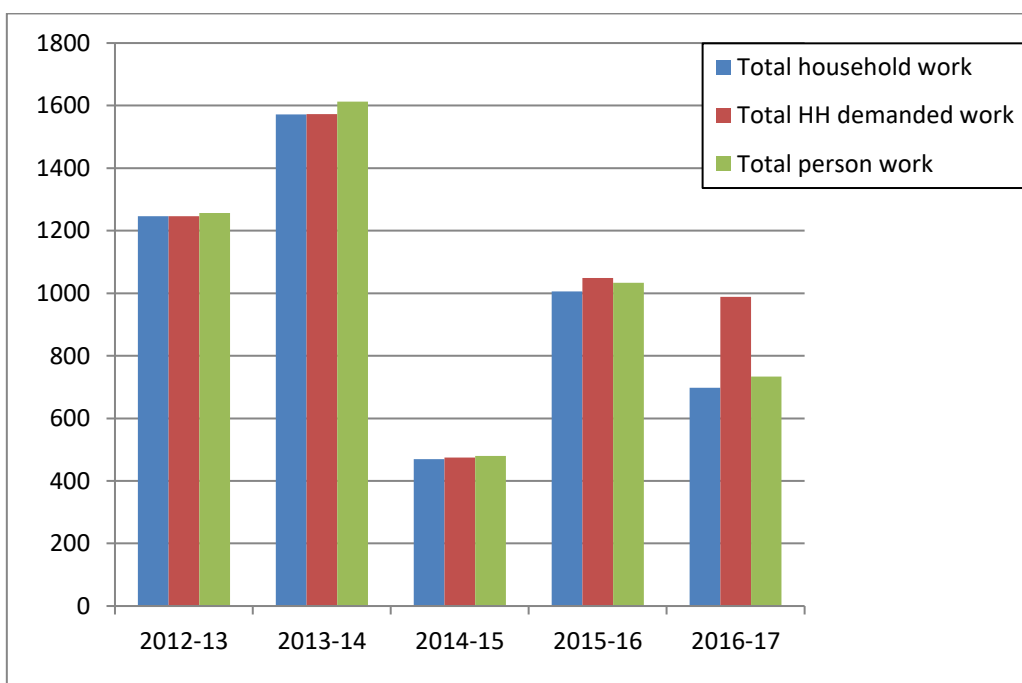
**Fig. 5.3: Panchayat wise performance of Marigaon District**



#### Kacharibari

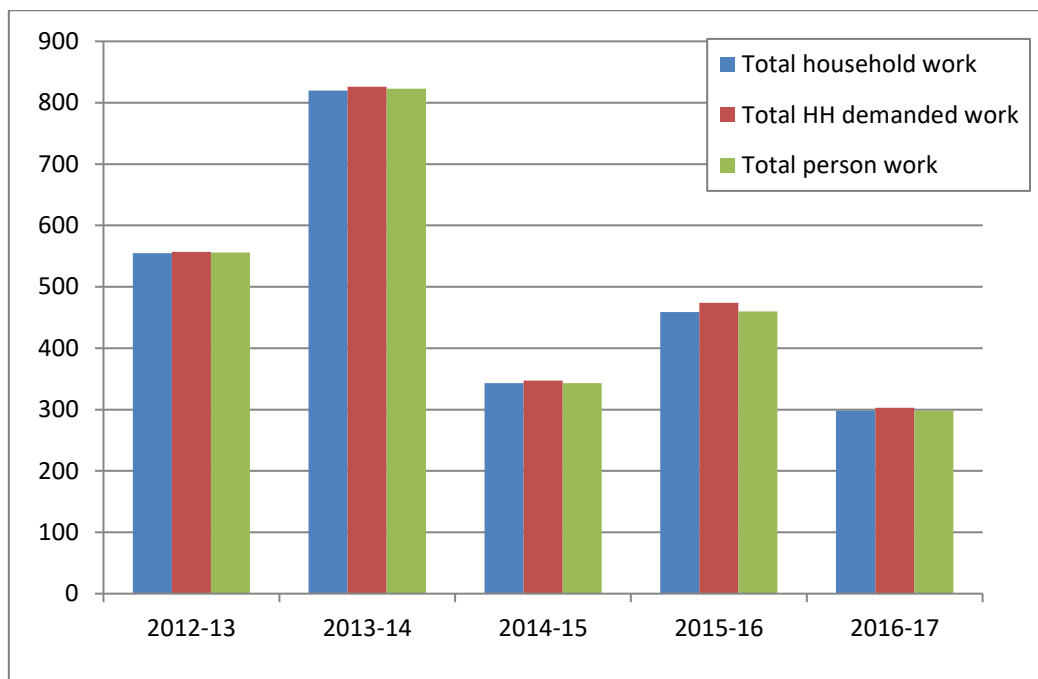


**Bhuragaon GP**



**Dakhin Dharamtul GP**





#### Uttar Dharamtul GP

From the focus group discussion in the villages, it is understood that no villagers actually applied for work but they received the work from the Panchayats. Panchayats only inform the villagers about the work. If any villager is interested to work he/she must be present at the work site when the work starts. Majority of the workers are interested to work stipulated 100 days under MGNREGA, but the respondents failed to achieve 100 days work. Even the state does not have to bear the burden of paying the unemployment allowance. Most of the respondents say that on an average, households received 20 to 30 days of MGNREGA work over the entire period (checked job card during field verification). Therefore, it is evident that MGNREGA fails to ensure livelihood security even in the short period. Again, the official data provided in the government records during 2013-14 to 2015-16 shows huge difference with our collected information from the job card of the respondents.

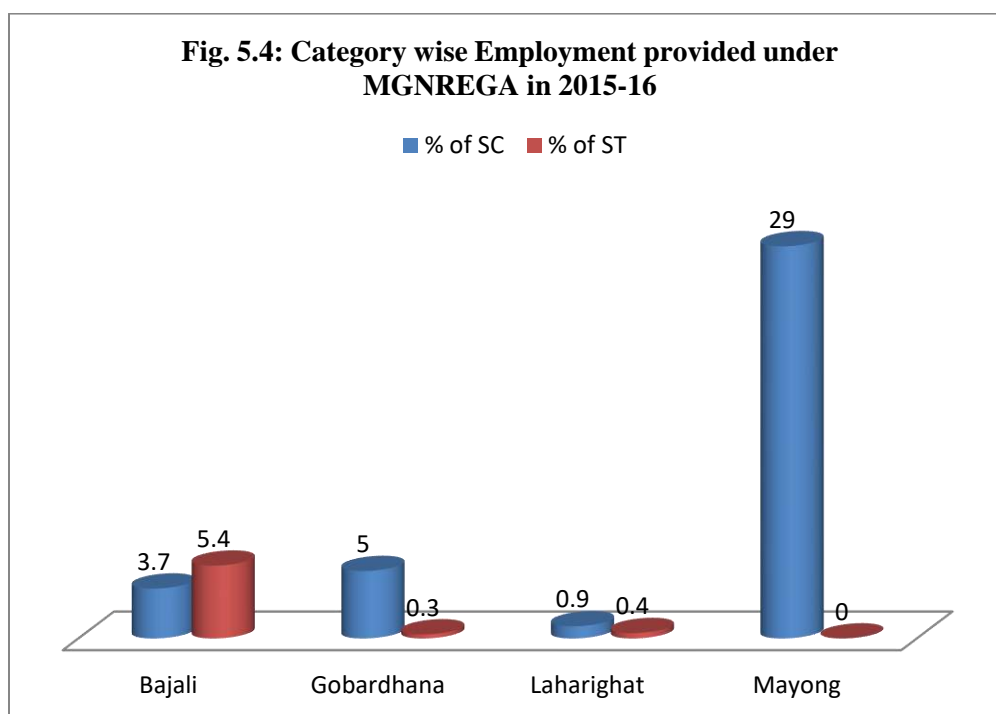
**Table 5.5: Coverage of disadvantage group under MGNREGA in Barpeta and Marigaon districts**

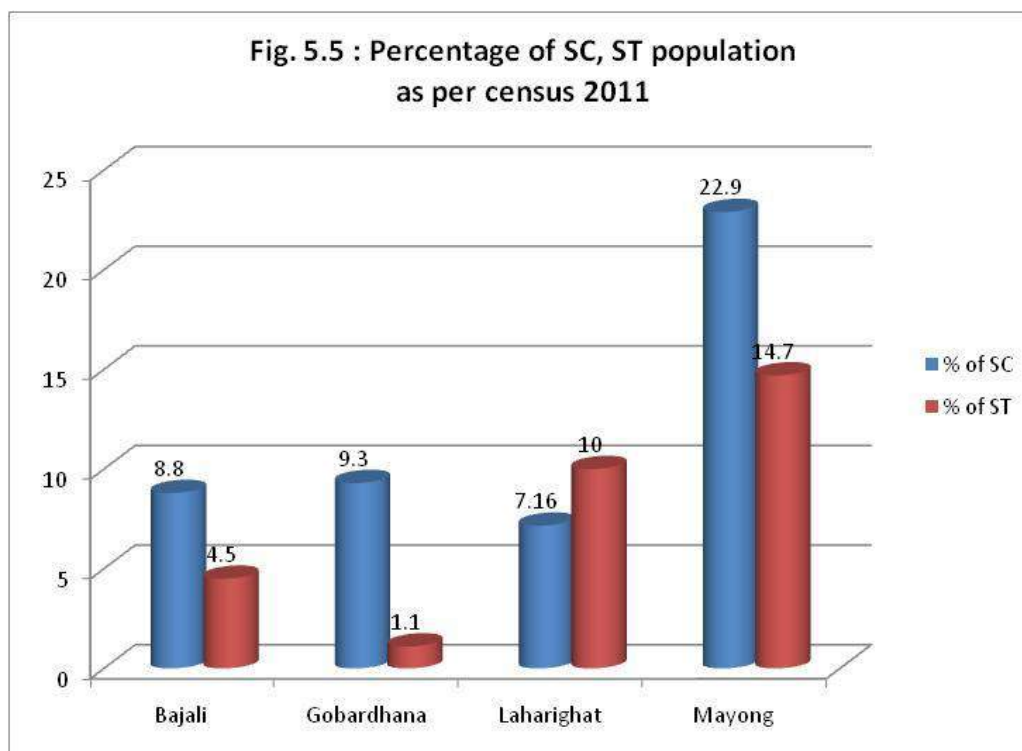
	Employment provided under MGNREGA in 2015-16	Percentage of SC/ST population (Census 2011)

Blocks	% of SC	% of ST	% of SC	% of ST
Bajali	3.7	5.4	8.8	4.5
Gobardhana	5	0.3	9.3	1.1
Laharighat	0.9	0.4	7.16	10
Mayong	29	0	22.9	14.7

Source: Researcher's calculation for field study

On the basis of the above analysis, this study found that MGNREGA could not fulfill the target to upgrade the rural poor people. Every year the government is trying to improve the implementation process, so that the needy people should get employment under the Act, but still it fails to achieve the goal.





The above two figure shows the difference between percentage of employment provided under MGNREGA to SC and ST population and total SC and ST population in the selected blocks as per census of India 2011. Except Mayong blocks, all other blocks failed to capture the disadvantaged group. Only Mayong block provides 26 percent employment to SC people, but negligible employment is provided to ST people where nearly 15 percent people are ST out of the total population.

The following table discusses about the spending of MGNREGA income by the household in different section. Since most of the household have obtained very limited work under MGNREGA, therefore, they have achieved very limited opportunities to fulfill their basic requirements in day to day life. Only 33 percent beneficiaries spend their MGNREGA on repayment of loan taken from the relatives and neighbours and nearly 4 percent spend their income on purchasing household gadgets. Table-5.6 below gives the expenditure pattern of MGNREGA income.

**Table 5.6: Expenditure from MGNREGA wages**

Sl No	Item purchased	Yes (percentage)	No (percentage)	Total
1	Homestead Land	0 (0%)	320 (100%)	320
2	Cultivable Land	0 (0%)	320 (100%)	320
3	Extension/Renovation of House	1(0.3%)	319 (99.7%)	320
4	Additional furniture	1 (0.3%)	319 (99.7%)	320
5	Household Gadgets	13 (4.1%)	307 (95.9%)	320
6	Insurance Policy	1 (0.3%)	319 (99.7%)	320
7	Spend for Children Education	2 (0.6%)	318 (99.4%)	320
8	Loan Repayment	106 (33.1%)	214 66.9%	320

Source: Field Study

### 5.3 Second objective

**To analyse the problems faced by the implementing agencies as well as beneficiaries and to identify the drawbacks**

There are many problems in the implementation process of the Act, although the Monitoring and Information System (MIS) of the MGNREGA is quite systematic and easily understandable where everybody can find out the required information from the website. But, in the actual field, the job card holders were facing problems regarding the demand for work, payment of wages, worksite facilities and sometimes work not provided according to the Act etc. Similarly, the Gram Panchayats were also facing problems from higher authorities like timely works were not sanctioned and fund were not released in time, due to which Panchayat representatives had to face difficulties with the job card holders. The views of the respondents were listed as shown in Table-5.7.

**Table 5.7: Problems Faced by the Beneficiaries of MGNREGA**

Problems	Frequency	Percent
1. Regular and timely work not given	32	10

2. Not paying timely	0	0.0
3. Not give good wages	0	0.0
4. Political reason	2	0.6
5. Others	18	5.6
6. Both 1 and 2 reason	79	24.6
7. Both 1 and 3 reason	165	51.6
8 All the reason	10	3.1
9. No comment	14	4.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field Study

According to the respondents, MGNREGA fails to provide regular employment for minimum 100 days and pays for lesser amount of wages as they get from local market. As expressed by 51.6 percent respondents during the field study they have found many problems crop up like regular and timely work not given and wage not paid as per market rate, while 24.6 percent respondents do not get payment due to political reasons. Before 2009-10, the Panchayats were unable to pay the wages only because of the delay in release of fund from higher authority. After that, wages were paid to the job card holders directly by transferring to their account by the blocks through e-banking system.

Nearly 51.6 percent MGNREGA workers are not satisfied with MGNREGA wages. According to them, they get more wages by engaging as agricultural labour in the local market, structural work in nearby town and other sectors. Although the Act provides unemployment allowances for not getting employment and delay in payment (0.25%) if payment is not received within 15 days of work completed, they are not able to get these benefits. Nearly 10 percent respondents say that MGNREGA does not give regular work within a year. 10 numbers of respondents express that more or less all the reasons are responsible for proper MGNREGA implementation. Out of 320 respondents, 14 respondents

have no comment regarding the problems and they are not interested to work under MGNREGA. Therefore, the most sensitive factors were irregular employment, delayed payment, less wages etc. Other factors like household work, wages less than market wage, own domestic work, lack of worksite facilities, selfishness of officials, problems for getting employment, hard work and sometime distance were responsible for non participation in MGNREGA work.

The poor people were unable to get work as per demand, there are no worksite facilities especially for women and unemployment allowance is paid to any person who does not get work as per his demand. The main problem is lack of awareness among the job card holders. The most common worksite facility provided was drinking water which is also not sufficient and safe for drinking. No crèches, no shade facility for women, no medical facility is available in the worksite, which can severely hamper female participation in MGNREGA works. The Table-5.8 will give clear picture regarding this matter.

**Table 5.8: Worker's Response Regarding MGNREGA Implementation**

<b>Research Quarries</b>	<b>Yes (percent)</b>	<b>No (percent)</b>
1. Getting work against demand	1 (0.3)	319 (99.7)
2. Awareness about MGNREGA	1 (0.3)	319 (99.7)
3. Involvement in MGNREGA Planning	2 (0.6)	318 (99.4)
4. Wage difference in MGNREGA and local market	320 (100)	0 (0.0)
5. Facilities in worksite	1 (0.3)	319 (99.7)
6. works provided within 5 km	320 (100)	0 (0.0)
7. Do you have Bank Passbook	29 (9.1)	291 (71)
8 Unemployment Allowance	0 (0.0)	320 (100)

Source: Field Study

In order to examine the accountability of the Gram Panchayats, the study has collected some specific projects taken by the selected Gram Panchayats and the status of the project during 2013-14 from both the districts. Table-5.9,

explains the different dates of a project and its completion time of selected Panchayats in Barpeta district. The difference between sanctioned date and work completion date takes more than one year to complete even when the project is only for 2 to 5 months. This is due to the skewed nature of fund flow in the implementation process.

There are two types of cost under MGNREGA project i.e. labour cost and material cost. As per Presidents of the Panchayats, after sanctioning a project, the president will get oral work order after two three months without getting funds. After completing the project, Panchayat has to submit muster roll to the respective block for the payment of labour cost showing the demand for job card holders. The block disburses fund through the bank account of the job card holder. But, the release of the remaining balance is not an easy task for Panchayats. Due to red tapism, the Panchayats are not able to collect remaining fund. Therefore to complete a project, it requires more than 1 or 2 years. Till the complete release of fund, the work is considered as 'ongoing', even after physical completion of the project.

**Table 5.9: Panchayat wise working status from 2014-15 in Barpeta district**

Work code	Sanction Date	Partial disbursement Date	Gap in month	Work started on(completion time)	Completion date	Gap in month
Baghmara GP						
97922	16/12/11	12/10/12	10 month	12/10/12 (5M)	29/05/2014	19 month
36455	05/07/2013	23/10/13	3 month	23/10/13 (1M)	29/05/2014	7 month
Maripur Anandpur						
35355	05/07/2013	10/11/2013	4 month	10/11/2013 (1M)	29/05/2014	6 month
100608	25/05/2013	17/12/2013	7 month	17/12/2013(3 M)	29/05/14	5 month
Bilashipara GP						
39151	06/07/2013	14/12/2013	5 month	14/12/2013 (1M)	04/07/2014	7 month
IF/4341	17/08/2012	13/02/2013	6 month	13/02/2013 (1 M )	04/07/2014	17 month
Gobardhana GP						
100556	27/05/2013	21/11/2013	6	21/11/2013	04/07/2014	8 month

			month	(2M)		
100560	27/05/2013	20/01/2014	8 month	20/01/2014 (3M)	04/07/2014	6 month

Source: Panchayat Gram Rojgar Sahayak and [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

As per the President of Baghmara GP, project code 97922 was sanctioned in December 2011 and works started nearly after one year and completed in May 2014. First part of the project was land development and second part was tree plantation. Land development work was completed in December 2012, but it took one and half years for releasing the fund by the higher authority. When the new Panchayat committee was formed in 2013, the remaining fund was disbursed and plantation work was completed. Sometimes, the government also directs to block the funds of any project showing the lack of fund in the budget. Table-5.10 below also shows the similar characteristics of selected Panchayats of Marigaon district.

**Table 5.10: Panchayat wise working process from 2014-15 in Marigaon district**

Work code	Sanction Date	Partial disbursement Date	Gap in processing	Work start on (completion time)	Completion date	
Bhuragaon GP						
116626	29/06/2013	15/11/2013	5 Month	15/11/2013 (2M)	05/12/2014	13Month
125949	22/11/2013	22/03/2013	5 Month	22/03/2013 (3M)	05/12/2014	9Month
Kacharibari GP						
100455	19/03/2012	18/12/2012	9 Month	18/12/2012 (1M)	05/12/2014	24Month
101036	19/03/12	19/02/2013	12 Month	19/02/2013 (2M)	05/12/2014	22Month
Dakhin Dharamtul GP						
103981	21/09/2013	20/02/2014	5 Month	20/02/2013 (1M)	26/06/2014	16Month



FP/44	20/03/2010	10/10/2010	7 Month	10/10/2010 (3M)	15/07/2014	9Month
Uttar Dharamtul GP						
101710	27/04/2012	18/11/2012	7 Month	18/11/2012 (3M)	01/09/2014	10Month
30007	04/08/2012	10/12/2012	4 Month	10/12/2012 (3M)	16/08/2014	20Month

Source: Panchayat Gram Rojgar Sahayak and [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

From Table-5.9 and Table-5.10, it is understood that, all the Panchayats have similar characteristics regarding the sanction and completion of the projects. Actually, this type of system is created by the implementing agency of the Act (MGNREGA).

Now, the study wants to know the types and progress of different work taken by the selected Panchayats during 2014-15, so that it can understand the success of the Panchayats and accountability thereby.

**Table 5.11: Panchayat wise progress of work in 2014-15 in Barpeta and Marigaon district**

Name of GP	DF			FC			LD			RC			Others		
	com	ong	app	com	ong	app	com	ong	app	com	ong	app	com	ong	app
Baghmara	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	2	0	-	-	-
A Maripur	1	0	0	-	-	-	1	0	0	0	5	0	-	-	-
Bilashipara	1	2	0	-	-	-	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	8	0
Gobardhana	-	-	-	0	2	0	2	3	0	0	4	0	0	4	8
Bhuragaon	39	0	24	0	5	0	12	10	0	2	5	0	1	5	0
Kacharibari	105	0	4	1	0	0	6	11	0	5	9	11	0	1	0
Dakshin Dharamtul	95	7	0	2	7	0	3	13	1	7	6	3	-	-	-
Uttar Dharamtul	61	47	6	-	-	-	0	7	0	1	10	0	0	4	1

Source: [www.mgnrega.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.nic.in)

(DF=drought proofing; FC=flood control; LD= land development; RC= road connectivity)

com = complete; ong = ongoing; app = approved

In Table-5.11, it is observed that the types of work undertaken in the selected GP, it is heavily skewed in favour of rural connectivity and land

development. Of course, more drought proofing work is done in selected Gram Panchayats of Marigaon district. As per data, the success rate is comparatively good in Marigaon district than Barpeta district. As per the Panchayat representatives, higher authority never approves the work as demanded by the Panchayats, due to which, Panchayats have failed to create required employment opportunities.

### 5.3.1 Role of Gram Sabha in Planning and Execution

The success of any Act/Scheme depends on the active participation of the local community in planning and implementation of the work. The local community must take part for the long term development of the village, as the local community is the best authority who can showcase its needs. Only the local community has the maximum incentive to make it work. But, the survey data reveals a poor picture of the part played by Panchayats in this regard. The survey found that only 1 out of 320 respondents have awareness regarding Gram Sabha and only 2 respondents participated in the planning process. Actually this portion of beneficiaries have direct contact with the Panchayats. The general poor people can't participate or they have no chance to participate due to the minimum number of Gram Sabha held at his/her place. Table-5.12 shows the clear picture regarding the number of Gram Sabha.

**Table 5.12: Number of Gram Sabha held from 2013-14 to 2015-16 in both districts**

	Name of GP	Number of Gram Sabha		
		2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
1	Baghmara	2	3	5
2	Maripur	1	2	4
3	Bilashipara	1	1	3
4	Gobardhana	2	3	3
5	Bhuragaon	3	3	5
6	Kacharibari	2	1	4
7	Uttar Dharamtul	1	2	4
8	Dakhin Dharamtul	1	2	4

Source: Field Study

The stipulated number of Gram Sabhas should be held 4 times in a year in different localities under the Panchayat. After carrying out discussion with ward

members of some Panchayats, it was understood that the ward members and even the Presidents of the Panchayats do not know the actual rules of Gram Sabha meeting. During the study period none of the Panchayats have had a good track record of Gram Sabha meeting. There was no social accounting in MGNREGA work in any Panchayats. This is a serious matter for the planning and execution of the MGNREGA. The Table-5.12 shows that during 2013-14 and 2014-15, the number of Gram Sabha is less than the stipulated number. It is evident that in terms of transparency and devolution of power to the Gram Sabhas, the Panchayats fail to do so. Only few Panchayats have successively fulfilled the stipulated number of Gram Sabha in 2015-16 with the help of State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Assam. From this year the state government has given full responsibility to make social audit in the Panchayats. Due to this reason, the number of Gram Sabha have increased from 2015-16. The newly introduced project 'AMAR GAON AMAR ACHANI' under Gaon Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), the SIRD are going to held Gram Sabha at every ward of the Panchayats, so that the local community can participate in the planning process for the development of their village.

#### **5.4. Third objective**

**To study the impact of MGNREGA on rural labour market and wage rate.**

To understand the labour market and wage rate three types of wages were collected from the field for discussion i.e. MGNREGA wage, market wage and expected wage. The MGNREGA wage means the wage generated from MGNREGA work only. This wage has been increasing from the starting of the Act. For the first year (2005-06) it was only Rs 51 which increases up to Rs 183 during 2016-17. The MGNREGA wage is different for different states based on the state government decision. The market wage implies the wage generated in the locality where people work as casual labour in agriculture and allied sector. This wage is also different in different localities in rural Assam. The expected wage or asking wage or reservation wage is the wage which the workers wants for their services and to run their families. In labour economics, the reservation

wage is the minimum wage rate at which a labour would be willing to accept a particular type of work. The average daily wage received by respondents from MGNREGA works in the study area is Rs 138. This amount is less than the average market wage and expected wage and even the minimum wage assured by the state government which is at Rs 250 (Labour Commissioner, Govt. of Assam, 2016) for unskilled labour. They think if they get according to their asking wage they can slightly improve their standard of living. Since the Panchayats fail to provide work against demand in their locality, it is not surprising that the rates of migration have increased. Focus group discussion reveals that if they can get 100 days work under MGNREGA during their lean season they would prefer to stay in the village.

**Table 5.13: Distinction between MGNREGA wages, Market wages and Expected wages**

	Beneficiary			Non Beneficiary	
	MGNREGA Wage	Market Wage	Expected Wage	Market Wage	Expected Wage
Mean	138.1	238.8	268.7	258	266
Median	152	200	250	250	250
Std	30.5	45.2	70.6	35.5	53.9
Minimum	68	150	150	200	200
Maximum	175	350	500	350	500

Source: Researcher calculation from Field study

The above table-5.13 states that the average MGNREGA wage (Rs 138.1) is less than the average market wage (Rs238.8). Similarly it is less than their expected wage (Rs 268.7) also. When the minimum market wage was Rs 150 the MGNREGA minimum wage was only Rs68 (2007-08). So, poor people are not benefited from MGNREGA work. They prefer to work in the local market. But still during the shortage of work in locality, they were engaged in MGNREGA

work. Due to the following reasons the poor people are willing to work under MGNREGA although the wages is less than their expectation.

- It is a group activity where all the villagers work altogether with smile.
- Local work local people, so work for local development.
- Due to financial help under government scheme.
- A sum of amount is paid at a time for a week or month..
- Social development, which develop social unity also.
- In case of contract work high rate of wage is possible in less work.
- Due to wants we must work anywhere

In the focus group discussion, the villagers express that the people who have migrated in search of job to nearby towns and other big cities are not interested to come back to join in MGNREGA job due to limited, irregular and low wage rate. So in the field study it was found that many villagers had migrated to different places in search of job. These migrated members of the families are generally of younger groups. Table-5.14 Shows the number of migrated people in the study area.

**Table 5.14: Total Number of Respondents Migrated**

Category	Number of people migrated		Total migrated
	Beneficiary (Percent)	Non-beneficiary (Percent)	
BPL	35 (25.9)	2 (66.6)	37 (26.2)
APL	27 (16.7)	0 (0)	27 (16.6)
No Card	5 (20.8)	6 (54.5)	11 (16.4)
Total	67 (20.9)	8(16)	75 (18.9)

Source: Researcher calculation from Field study

From the observation of Table-5.14, 25 percent beneficiary households and 67 percent non-beneficiary households out of total BPL households members have migrated (135 beneficiaries and 6 non beneficiaries). This percentage is higher than the APL and other categories, which clearly states that MGNREGA is unable to control migration, even the BPL households. This may be due to the irregular and limited work provided by the Panchayats. Due to the BPL character of that household, they work in other places at regular basis, because of which

they are not able to join in MGNREGA work. Out of total 161 APL category households 17 percent had migrated and the household who are unable to get any card due to partition of the family out of total 24 households, 5 i.e. 21 percent had migrated to other places. Overall 320 respondents i.e., 19 percent had migrated. Thus, MGNREGA can't stop migration to the migrated households. The respondents express that if they get regular work under MGNREGA at an equal amount of wage as that of local wage, they will automatically join in MGNREGA works.

Now, in order to study the impact of MGNREGA wages on the worker willingness in MGNREGA work, the study attempted to calculate reservation wages for future policy implementation (Sridhar, 2013).

#### **5.4.1 Distinction between reservation wages and MGNREGA wages**

The asking or expected wages at which the workers are willing to work is known as reservation wages. It may be different from current wage. The study wants to estimate the reservation wage to know the status of migration due to MGNREGA wage. It is predicted that there is a labour shortage in the construction sector in urban areas due to the implementation of MGNREGA in rural areas (Sridhar, 2013). It is found from the field survey that the daily average expected wage of the MGNREGA beneficiaries was Rs 269, whereas the expected wage of the non-beneficiary was Rs 266 on an average, whereas the average MGNREGA wage is Rs138 (Table-5.13). That means, the expected wage of the MGNREGA beneficiaries was higher than the non beneficiaries. The MGNREGA wage and the market wage of the beneficiaries were well below than the expected wage.

#### **5.4.2 Estimation of Reservation Wages**

We will use the linear regression model to estimate the Reservation wage (expected wage) from the respondent's labour market characteristics. The estimation of reservation wages is important mainly for two purposes. We can understand the difference between the worker's MGNREGA wages and reservation wages. That is, whether Reservation wages are higher or lower than MGNREGA wages, because it has implications for migration of workers. If the worker's reservation wage is higher than the MGNREGA wages, then we can predict that MGNREGA is not successful to control migration. Secondly, to

know the economic rent or the net benefit from the MGNREGA jobs, from which the policy maker can make policy to maximize economic rent for the benefit of the poorest people working under MGNREGA.

To analyse the relationship between the expected wage and various explanatory variables- group, occupation, gender, age, age square, education, education square, family education, unemployment rate, family income, HH size, market wage, category of respondents, land, caste, electricity and distance was considered because these variables may have impact on expected wages. The following multiple linear regression models have been used for this.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GR + \beta_2 OCC + \beta_3 GEN + \beta_4 AGE + \beta_5 ASQ + \beta_6 EDU + \beta_7 EDUSQ + \beta_8 FEDU + \beta_9 UNPLR + \beta_{10} FAMINC + \beta_{11} HHS + \beta_{12} MWAG + \beta_{13} CATE + \beta_{14} LAND + \beta_{15} CAST + \beta_{16} ELEC + \beta_{17} DIST + \epsilon_i$$

$X_1 = \text{Group}$

$X_2 = \text{Occupation}$

$X_3 = \text{Gender}$

$X_4 = \text{age}$

$X_5 = \text{age square}$

$X_6 = \text{Education}$

$X_7 = \text{Education square}$

$X_8 = \text{family education}$

$X_9 = \text{Unemployment rate}$

$X_{10} = \text{family income}$

$X_{11} = \text{household size}$

$X_{12} = \text{market wage}$

$X_{13} = \text{Category}$

$X_{14} = \text{land area}$

$X_{15} = \text{Caste}$

$X_{16} = \text{Electricity}$

$X_{17} = \text{Distance}$

Before the estimation of reservation wages, correlation coefficient has been calculated to see the relationship between variables. The result of correlation matrix shows that there is positive and moderate correlation between expected wage and market wage which is statistically significant. Similarly, religion as

well as market wage, caste as well as religion, wage difference as well as market wage has positive as well as moderate correlation and they are statistically significant at 5 percent level. Whereas, wage difference and expected wage is positively highly correlated. Again, unemployment rate and distance is highly negatively correlated and it is statistically significant at 5 percent level.



**Table 5.15: Correlation Matrix showing pearson's for selected variables of reservation wage:**

Variables	Fam inc	HH size	Mark wag	Mgnr Wage	Expect wage	Categ	Awar	Rel	cast	Land	W_diff	livest	gadgets	Trans	Elec	Dist	age	occu	edu	Unem rate
Fam_inc	1																			
HH_size	.01	1																		
Markwag	.23**	- .14**	1																	
Mgnrwag	-.27**	.06	-.19**	1																
Exp.Wage	.24**	-.12*	.55**	.05	1															
Category	.23**	-.05	.17**	-.47**	.07	1														
Awares	-.00	-.05	-.09	-.04	-.05	-.05	1													
Religion	.02	-.00	.51**	-.03	.15	.19**	-.04	1												
Caste	-.26**	.01	.22**	.08	-.25**	.05	-.00	.68**	1											
Land_hac	.25	.04	-.25**	.09	.01	.00	.02	-.32**	-.37**	1										
Wage_diff	.38**	-.13*	.56**	-.31**	.91**	.15**	.00	.11*	-.38**	.07	1									
Live_st	.08	.09	-.11*	-.03	-.08	.10	.00	-.07	.01	.20	-.11*	1								
Gadgets	.22**	-.03	-.14**	.02	-.08	.01	.00	-.19**	-.08	.24**	-.04	.08	1							
Transp	.10*	.04	-.03	.00	-.05	-.00	.02	-.19**	-.12*	.19**	-.06	.22**	.19**	1						
Elect	-.21**	.06	.01	-.01	-.12*	.13**	-.02	.29**	.28**	-.20**	-.17**	-.10*	-.34**	-.25**	1					
Distance	.01	-.00	.32**	.14**	.13*	.01	-.02	.26**	.26**	-.13*	.08	-.02	-.07	.07	-.01	1				
Age	-.05	.02	-.19**	.21**	-.15**	-.22**	-.00	-.20**	-.02	.19**	-.16**	.10*	.03	.03	-.02	-.00	1			
Occu	-.15**	.04	.10	.00	-.05	-.03	-.05	.08	.16**	-.34**	-.12*	.01	-.12*	-.08	.15**	.05	-.24**	1		
Edu	.04	-.05	-.07	.00	.01	.04	-.01	-.36**	-.21**	.13*	.00	.05	.20**	.26**	-.26**	-.00	-.21**	.00	1	
Unemp rate	-.12*	-.01	-.24	-.13*	-.32**	.04	-.03	.09	.17**	-.08	-.26**	.02	.07	-.15**	.14**	-.73**	-.00	.05	-.16**	1
Source: Researcher's Calculation                      *. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed), **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed).																				

The Table-5.15 states that, the groups (includes beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) have a statistically significant and positive impact on the individual's expected wage. The MGNREGA beneficiary's expected wage is higher than the non-beneficiary's. Actually, during field study it was observed that beneficiary's expectation wage is based on MGNREGA wage and non-beneficiary's expectation wage was based on local labour market wage. The non-beneficiary respondents think that they should get wages in MGNREGA as per local market without knowing the MGNREGA wages. But beneficiary respondents know the MGNREGA wage and expectation is high because of limited number of work under MGNREGA (100 days).

Occupation has positive impact, although it is insignificant. If the primary occupation is beneficial, their expected wage is also high. Gender has negative impact but it is statistically insignificant. Generally, men have higher expected wage as compared to women. But all workers under MGNREGA get equal wages. Age has negative impact and is statistically significant which means older people have less expected wage than the younger ones. While education has insignificant impact on the worker's expected wages, education square has positive impact although statistically insignificant. This implies lower educated people have higher expected wages. It is due to the fact that education has a peaking effect on the reservation wages at some point, after which it starts to impact the expected wage negatively. Moreover, educated people are not interested to work as casual labour. Family education has negative impact on expected wages although it is insignificant. Here, family education includes highest family education of the family. This is because the higher educated family has less interest to work as wage labour. The unemployment rate has negative impact and is highly significant. Family income and household size has negative impact but it is insignificant. Market wage is positive and highly significant. Market wage is positively significant which implies that as the local wage increases the expected wages also increases.

**Table 5.16: Estimation of Reservation Wages**  
(Dependant Variable: Expected wages)

Expected wage	Coefficient	Robust std error	P>  t	Collinearity Statistics VIF
Group( $\beta_1$ )	46.174*	11.854	0.000	1.649
Occupation( $\beta_2$ )	1.646	1.826	0.368	1.239
Gender( $\beta_3$ )	-3.560	9.911	0.720	1.357
Age( $\beta_4$ )	-3.583**	1.545	0.021	5.290
age square( $\beta_5$ )	.032**	.016	0.050	2.783
Education( $\beta_6$ )	-5.878	8.100	0.469	8.845
edu_square( $\beta_7$ )	.092	2.631	0.972	8.071
Family edu( $\beta_8$ )	-.901	3.235	0.781	1.290
unemp_rate( $\beta_9$ )	-.067*	.015	0.000	1.214
family income( $\beta_{10}$ )	-.000	.000	0.719	1.413
hh size( $\beta_{11}$ )	-2.421	2.103	0.250	1.203
market wage( $\beta_{12}$ )	.969*	0.065	0.000	1.920
Category( $\beta_{13}$ )	7.631	5.386	0.157	1.576
land_ha( $\beta_{14}$ )	2.867	5.854	0.625	1.455
Caste( $\beta_{15}$ )	-18.757*	3.145	0.000	2.561
Electricity( $\beta_{16}$ )	-5.351	6.151	0.385	1.288
Distance( $\beta_{17}$ )	-2.059*	0.697	0.003	1.327
_cons( $\beta_0$ )	224.413*	45.577	0.000	1.478
Number of observations=368, R-squared=0.5257, prob > F(17,350)=30.80<0.000				

Source: Researcher's estimation

\*, \*\* and \*\*\*statistically significant at the 1, 5 and 10 percent respectively.

The MGNREGA unemployment rate at the Panchayat level is highly significant and negatively impact the reservation or expected wages. This means as the unemployment rate is high; the expected wage will come down. Market wage, caste and distance has also a significant impact on reservation wages and market wages has positive impact, which means as the market wage increases the expected wages will also be high.

The overall significance of the model as given by the F statistics is found to be highly significant. The  $R^2$  value is also found to be comparatively low. The low  $R^2$  value is justified by the fact that we are using multiple regressions with cross section data. The explanatory variables, those found to have positive impact on expected wage rate are motivating factors for the wage earners to migrate to other places. The variables were also found to be significant.

Multiplying coefficient value with the average of the respective variables, the reservation wage is estimated as Rs 270.21 which means that this should be the minimum daily wage for those workers who are willing to work under MGNREGA. Here it is pertinent to mention that the wage structure per day for the unskilled labourer set by the government of Assam is Rs 250. So it can be inferred that, once this minimum reservation wages could be set for MGNREGA workers it may succeed to stop rural-urban migration.

## 5.5 Forth Objective

### To estimate the factors that determines MGNREGA participation

As the dependent variable is binary taking the value 1 for beneficiary and 0 for non-beneficiary, a binary logistic regression is carried out to identify the factors that influence the probabilities of the rural household's decision to participate in the MGNREGA jobs. Here, the independent variables are occupation, gender, age, education, family education, family income, household size, category, awareness, religion, caste and land area, livestock, gadgets, transport, electricity and distance on the group variable. The following model has been used.

Pr

$$(Y=1|X_1, X_2, X_3, \dots, X_k) = F(\beta_0 + \beta_1 OCC + \beta_2 GEN + \beta_3 AGE + \beta_4 EDU + \beta_5 FEDU + \beta_6 FINC + \beta_7 HHS + \beta_8 CA + \beta_9 AW + \beta_{10} REL + \beta_{11} CAST + \beta_{12} LAN + \beta_{13} LIVS + \beta_{14} GADG + \beta_{15} TRAN + \beta_{16} ELEC + \beta_{17} DIST$$

$$P_r(Y=1|X_1, X_2, X_3 \dots X_n) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_1 + \beta_2 + \beta_3 + \dots + \beta_n)}}$$

The overall significance of the model as given by value Wald chi-square is found to be highly significant. The goodness of fit as given by the value pseudo  $R^2$  is found to be comparatively low. But considering the fact that we are dealing with cross section data, this  $R^2$  can be accepted.

**Table 5.17: Result of the logistic regression**

group	Odds ratio	Robust std error	coefficient	z	p>  z
<b>occupation</b>	0.963	0.153	-0.037	-0.24	0.813
<b>gender</b>	0.361	0.436	-1.017	-0.84	0.400
<b>age</b>	1.043	0.025	0.042***	1.74	0.083
<b>education</b>	1.171	0.250	0.157	0.74	0.461
<b>Family edu</b>	1.560	0.340	0.444**	2.04	0.041
<b>Fam_income</b>	.999	6.09e	-0.000*	-3.57	0.000
<b>hh size</b>	1.294	0.187	0.258***	1.78	0.074
<b>Category</b>	0.063	0/037	-2.753*	-4.68	0.000
<b>awareness</b>	1.349	0.461	0.245***	1.223	0.000
<b>religion</b>	4.059	3.134	1.400***	1.81	0.070
<b>Caste</b>	0.730	0.220	-0.313	-1.04	0.297
<b>Land_ha</b>	7.252	3.835	1.981*	3.75	0.000
<b>Livestock_p</b>	0.740	0.178	-0.300	-1.24	0.214
<b>Gadgets_p</b>	1.714	0.433	0.539**	2.13	0.033
<b>Transport_p</b>	0.133	0.126	-2.010**	-2.12	0.034
<b>Electricity</b>	0.673	0.333	-0.395	-0.80	0.425
<b>Distance</b>	1.056	0.044	0.054	1.30	0.192
No of observation=367; Wald chi <sup>2</sup> =48.84; pseudo R <sup>2</sup> =0.497					

Source: Researcher's estimation

\*, \*\* and \*\*\*statistically significant at the 1, 5 and 10 percent respectively.

The result of the logistic regression as presented in the above table-5.17 shows that age, family education, family income, household size, category, awareness religion, land area, gadgets and transports have significant influence on the decision of the beneficiary respondents whether they will continue working under MGNREGA or find some other employment opportunities. While the coefficient age, household size and religion is significant at 10 percent, family education, gadgets and transport is significant at 5 percent and that of family income, category, awareness and land amount is significant at 1 percent level. On the other hand, occupation, gender, education caste, livestock availability, electricity connection and distance have no significant values. The result given in

Table-5.17 again reveals that the variables occupation, gender, family income, category, caste, livestock, transport, electricity have negatively affected in MGNREGA participation and among these factors only family income, category, caste and transport are statistically significant. Thus, if occupation is beneficial, the participation is less. Similarly family income is high; the chances to work under MGNREGA are less. Higher caste and APL category work less in MGNREGA. If the household's numbers of livestock and transport is more and have electricity, their participation rate is less in MGNREGA. But the odds ratio of the negatively affected variables is less than unity which implies that probability of participation is less than that of non-participation. The negative sign of coefficient value and less than unity odds ratio of these variables indicates that the household having higher beneficial occupation, higher family income, more livestock, more transport, having electricity were less inclined to participate in MGNREGA's work.

Thus, it can be inferred from the results that the perception of the beneficiary respondents about the wage structure under the MGNREGA is not positive and hence it increases the possibility that they would no longer work under MGNREGA. Again, the problems faced by the beneficiaries while receiving the wage from bank and post offices increase the possibility of them not working under MGNREGA. As reported by the beneficiary, the main problem was the location of bank and not having bank passbook in their hands. They have only the account number in their hand. Due to illiteracy, they are unable to enquire about various queries and these types of problems to the bank. They can collect their wage only from some bank agent by giving thumb impression. In some places due to the distances of the banks, they can't bear the transport cost because of poor financial position. These findings indicate a clue to have an idea of decreasing demand for work in Assam over the years.

## **CHAPTER VI**

### **FINDINGS, SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

As a wage employment program MGNREGA provides minimum wage employment to unskilled and casual labour during the lean season. So, the present study attempted to know the result of the MGNREGA after its implementation in the state of Assam during the last 11 years and how it was able to reduce poverty at the bottom level as well as how it could improve the purchasing power of the poor.

The success of the movement could better be explained through the fact that the scheme was not sufficient enough to provide employment to all unemployed masses of the state which is evident from the numbers of job cards issued or numbers of households that demanded employment.

#### **6.1 Overall Findings**

- ❖ The status of education of the beneficiaries was low. Educated people have job card but not interested to work under MGNREGA. More than 58 percent of the families were headed by either illiterate people or those educated only up to primary level.
- ❖ The main occupation of nearly 70 percent beneficiaries was agriculture and wage labour. It was noticed that all the beneficiaries had taken MGNREGA as subsidiary occupation only.
- ❖ Although there was gap in the demand and supply of employment under MGNREGA in both the selected districts, it was least amount in both the districts. The total number of households that were provided employment, as against the total number of households demanded employment, was 90 percent in Barpeta district in 2015-16 and it was 92 percent in Marigaon district. This percentage was 90 percent for all over the state. Therefore, it can be assumed that the demand supply gap of employment demanded

and employment provided is found to be in a satisfactory level as nearly 90 percent job seekers received employment in both the districts.

- ❖ The Act provides the rural people constitutional right of ‘right to work’ for maintaining livelihood security, economic and social infrastructural development of the rural areas. In this respect, the Act ensures minimum 100 days employment to every rural household. In Barpeta district, only 1.08 percent households have received 100 days employment in 2015-16, whereas in Marigaon district only 0.15 percent households have got 100 days employment in the same year. In Assam only 2.81 percent households have got 100 days employment. So, it can be inferred that MGNREGA totally fails to fulfill its basic objectives to enhance livelihood security by providing 100 days guaranteed employment in a financial year in rural areas whose adult members were willing to participate in unskilled manual work.
- ❖ While examining the category wise person day generation of employment, the study found that the percentage of person days generated for social groups seeking employment against the total person days employment generated to all category households was only 3.34 percent for SC and 1.08 percent for ST households in Barpeta district in 2015-16. Whereas, in Marigaon district, the percentage of person days generated to SC households against the cumulative number of person days generated was 9.32 percent and for ST only 9.73 percent in 2015-16. It therefore, clearly reflects that MGNREGA fails to reach the minority social groups to provide and generate employment. Thus, it justifies that more number of employment is needed to be generated for SC and ST Job card holder households in order to develop and strengthen their livelihood security under the Act.
- ❖ The average person day generation under MGNREGA for needy households is limited to 30 to 40 days per household since the inception of the Act and thus it can be inferred that limited employment to needy households only partially help in reducing their poverty and also to



improve livelihood security. The selected Barpeta district can only provide 50 average days of employment in 2015-16, which is highest among all the districts of Assam. The average days of employment in the state of Assam were 32 days in 2015-16.

- ❖ MGNREGA is not successful in ensuring the women employment by generating minimum stipulated number of employment to women not only in the single GP but also in the state of Assam. The Act fails to provide 33 percent employment in Assam as a whole, although the Act ensures 33 percent reservation for women.
- ❖ The gap between the number of job card holders and households demanding work is very high in both the districts. The gap is highest (only 21 percent HH demanded work) in Barpeta district among all the districts of Assam. In Bajali block of Barpeta district, out of the total job card holders only 17 percent, 13 percent and 16 percent households demanded employment in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. Similarly, in Gobardhana block only 25 percent, 13 percent and 26 percent job card holders demanded work in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. The percentages are comparatively higher (52 percent demanded work) in Marigaon district. In Laharighat block of Marigaon district out of the total job card holders, the percentage of households demanding work was 78, 70 and 54 in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 respectively. Also in Mayong block the percentage was 65, 42 and 52 respectively in 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16. So, comparatively in Barpeta district the percentage of employment demanded was very low during those three years. Thus, it is very important to find out the reason as to why a huge number of job card holders are not interested to work under MGNREGA. The respective authority must have the responsibility to find out the causes of concern of the low demand of the households for employment under MGNREGA.
- ❖ For MGNREGA work, the project cost includes the provision of safe drinking water, shade for resting, changing room, medical facilities and

recreation facility for children etc. But, all the female respondents clearly express their view that except drinking water facility, no other facilities are provided at the working site. Thus, the working women are not satisfied and are not willing to work under MGNREGA.

- ❖ Low level of awareness among the job card holders about MGNREGA and less involvement in planning and execution of the Act is another important loophole found in the field study. So, it can be inferred that awareness creation among the job card holders should have the prime priority of the Act. For this, Gram Sabhas has to be strengthened and it should be held at every Ward area for a minimum of four times in a year, so that the villagers can involve in planning and development process on their own through MGNREGA. For promoting participation and for bringing the benefits from the Act, awareness level about the MGNREGA in terms of rights and entitlements, procedures and grievance redressal system are important factors.
- ❖ Social audit is an important factor for workers participation. During field verification in 2013-14, the system of social audit was very poor because very limited numbers of Gram Sabhas were held at that time. But, after 2016-17, the SIRD has started social audit in every Gram Panchayats and have tried to involve the rural people in the planning process. So, there is a need for a special directorate for social audit in the state to capture all the Gram Panchayats in Assam.
- ❖ On focus group discussion it is found that in Muslim dominated GPs many ghost and proxy workers were working against original job card holders.
- ❖ Due to the skewed nature of the fund flow, works taken under MGNREGA can't be completed in the stipulated time. The sanction date and work completion date has huge gap although the works completion time is only 1 to 5 months.

- ❖ MGNREGA wages is much lower than the local market wages and worker's expectation wages. As per the study, average wage under MGNREGA is Rs 138 and average market wage is Rs 238, whereas the minimum wage for the unskilled worker under the state government is fixed at Rs 250. Due to this reason, there is no impact on migration of rural people to nearby town and other cities around the country. The estimated reservation wage is found to be Rs 270. Therefore, the MGNREGA wage in Assam could be raised to Rs 270 to check rural urban migration.
- ❖ Family education, family income, awareness, household size, land size, availability of live stocks, gadgets and transport are mainly responsible for not participation in MGNREGA work. The workers having more land, livestock, gadgets and transport are not interested to work under MGNREGA. They are mainly engaged in domestic works. These variables are statistically significant also.
- ❖ All the job card holders are not interested to work under MGNREGA. This is due to the low wages paid under MGNREGA than the market wages, Lack of interest among youth for active participation in such type of unskilled work, political interference, direct involvement of GP officials who are sometime biased and deprived few section of people and loses interest. Another section of people collected job card only for the purpose of getting other benefits like health and family welfare scheme from the government.
- ❖ Focus group discussions also express that there are some irregularities in the implementation process of the Act that are created by the GP. Nobody raises the voice against the GP. If anyone raises the voice against the GP, he/she will be debarred from MGNREGA work in future.
- ❖ Monitoring and Information System (MIS) of the MGNREGA is quite systematic, but practically there are some loopholes. But practically, during the visit of field study it was found that some people are not getting work under MGNREGA, yet their name was shown against the

number of days working in MIS report. Even deceased person's name also included in MIS.

## **6.2 Policy Implications**

- ✓ Regular job card should be issued to every needed person who demand job, so that job card can't be given on rent/hire to other person and to restrict proxy workers.
- ✓ Minimum wage act should be implemented in MGNREGA to restrict rural urban migration. Payment should be made in time. Bank and GPs have to be responsible to issue bank passbook and handover to the beneficiaries.
- ✓ Unemployment allowance should release for the job card holders to stop irregularities, proxy workers and to keep the justice of the Act. It will compelled the state government to create job for the workers.
- ✓ Electronic devices like mobile technology like whatsapp, facebook should be used for successful implementation of MGNREGA.
- ✓ There must be a positive vision of the Panchayat officials and representatives to develop their own locality. They should be devoted, dutiful so that the poor people can be benefited from MGNREGA work.
- ✓ Awareness among the people through Gram Sabhas and involving the villagers in planning process is necessary. So, Gram Sabhas should be strengthened to monitor proper implementation of the scheme and also to check corruption. Power should be handled in such a way so that it reaches to the level of the poor villagers. This will enable the entire development program under MGNREGA to reach the villages situated at a distance from the development blocks. For this special directorate should be established for social audit in the state to capture all the Gram Panchayats in Assam.

### 6.3 Conclusion

This study is an attempt to understand the socio- economic conditions of the MGNREGA workers, their conditions of work, their age, sex, caste, education level, earning, and expenditure including the problems faced by both job card holders and implementing agencies. Undoubtedly, MGNREGA is one of the largest rural employment programs implemented in India. After harvesting, the rural people can't find any income generating work in the villages. Due to non availability of opportunity to work in the locality and nearby towns, the people of rural areas are most affected with the problems of poverty. In many part of India, the cultivators and rural people are forced to migrate nearby localities due to livelihood constraints. When the Act came into force in India in 2005, the rural people hoped that they will get minimum 100 days guaranteed wage employment. MGNREGA has provision for inclusion of 33 percent reservation for women and priority for marginalized groups (SCs and STs), so that they can get employment and develop their locality through the creation of infrastructural development. It has enabled them with sufficient purchasing power and they are able to at least support their basic necessity i.e. food. Ultimately, it should reduce poverty at the bottom level as well as it can empower the poor in the short run. But, the Act fails to achieve its objectives. The scheme could not provide the 100 days job guarantee to the majority of the job card holders. Even the study observed that the scheme fails in respect of providing employment avenues to the unemployed in a large scale. In fact the tune and essence of the Act could not shine in the State of Assam. A big question arises that whether MGNREGA is successful in the studied circle or not, as mixed responses from beneficiaries has been observed in the present study. So, the respective authority should give special attention to ensure more employment for unskilled manual work regularly for the poor rural people. For these, the study recommends that the scheme should be implemented in a proper manner, with proper planning and effective supervision by respective authorities, and should be carried out proper monitoring at the grassroot level. In order to make the Act effective, awareness among villagers is of utmost necessary. This will help to reduce corruption and unemployment problems thereby attaining success in elevating poverty in the state of Assam and India as a whole.

Last but not the least, it must be mentioned that MGNREGA is a flagship program implemented by government of India in all over country from 2006-2007. Our study covers only two district of Assam which never reflects the situation of the whole country. So, there is scope for study the Act in wide manner for sustainable development, so that the Act can give huge employment to the rural people of the country as a whole and can reduce rural poverty in the economy.

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## MGNREGA-Impact Assessment Study Schedule A (for MGNREGA Beneficiaries)

### 1. IDENTIFICATION PARTICULARS

1.1 Name of the Respondent \_\_\_\_\_

1.2 Name of the beneficiary \_\_\_\_\_

1.3 Name of the head of the household \_\_\_\_\_

1.4 Address: Village \_\_\_\_\_ G.P. \_\_\_\_\_

Block \_\_\_\_\_ District \_\_\_\_\_

1.5 Religion:      1. Hindu      2. Islam      3. Christianity      4. Others(specify)

1.6 Caste:          1. SC          2. ST          3. OBC/MOBC      4. General      5. Others(specify)

### 2. Household Composition

SN	Name	Relationship with the beneficiary	Age (yrs)	Sex M-1 F-2	Marital status*	Ethnic affiliation** By language	Educational level #	Occupation (Primary)##
1	Head of HHLD							
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
7								

\* Married-1      Unmarried-2      Divorce/Seperated – 3      Widoer/widow-4

\*\* Assamese -1 Bengali -2      Bodo – 3      Others (Specify) – 4 \_\_\_\_\_

# Illiterate-0      Primary (1 to 5) -1 High School (6 to 10) - 2      Secondary (11 to12)-3      Degree & above - 4

## None - 0      Agriculture-1      Animal Husbandry-2      Govt. Service-3      Employed in private sector-4

Own Enterprise/Trade-5      Wage Labour-6      Retired - 7      Students-8      Others (Specify) -9 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Category of the beneficiary:      BPL – 1      APL – 2

4. Name of the work : \_\_\_\_\_

4.1 Scheme started on \_\_\_\_\_

**A. ASSET HOLDING:**

A.1 Area of land (in Bighas) owned/possessed by types:

Type of land	Before			After		
	Owned	Leased in	Total	Owned	Leased out	Total
Homestead						
Cultivable						
Others(specify)						

A.2 Number of livestock:

SLNO	Items	Before joining the scheme	After joining the scheme
1	Bullock		
2	Cow		
3	Goat		
4	Pig		
5	Chicken		
6	Duck		
7	Others(specify)		

A.3 Number of household gadgets by types:

SLNO	Items	Before joining the scheme	After joining the scheme
1	Mobile phones		
2	Radio		
3	TV		
4	Tape deck		
5	LPG		
6	Pressure cooker		
7	Others(specify)		

A.4 Number of means of transport by types:

SLNO	Items	Before joining the scheme	After joining the scheme
1	Bicycle		
2	Scooter		
3	Three Wheeler (Auto van)		
4	Cart		
5	Car		
6	Tractor		
7	Others(specify)		

## A.5 Type and ownership of dwelling house:

Types	Before joining MGNREGA		After joining MGNREGA	
	own	Rented	Own	Rented
Thatched-mud house				
Assam type brick house				
Semi RCC				
RCC				
Others (specify)				

A.6 Do you have domestic electricity connection?

Yes- 1 No - 2

A.7 If yes, whether before joining the scheme or after?

Before – 1 After-2

## A.8 Whether income from MGNREGA utilized in:

SLNO		
A	Purchase of additional homestead land	Yes -1 No – 2
B	Purchase of additional cultivable land	Yes -1 No – 2
C	Renovation/extension of the house	Yes -1 No – 2
D	Purchase of additional household furniture	Yes -1 No – 2
E	Purchase of additional household gadgets	Yes -1 No – 2
F	Purchase of additional insurance policy	Yes -1 No – 2
G	Providing better education for children	Yes -1 No – 2
H	Any other (specify)	Yes -1 No – 2

**B. About MGNREGA**

1. From which source you came to known about MGNREGA?	1.Gram Panchayat 2.Media 3.Poster 4.Gram Rojgar Sahayak 5. Others.....
2. Do you have job card ?	Yes -1 No – 2
3. If yes, how you obtain job card	1. By applying 2. By contractor 3. By relatives/friends 4. Any other.....
4. Whether job card issued timely ?	Yes -1 No – 2
5. If no, reasons -	
6. Whether you keep the job card with you?	Yes -1 No – 2
7. How applied for work?	1. Written 2. Verbal

8. If not written, Why	1. Not aware that a written application needs to be given. 2. Can't write 3. Don't know the procedure to write the application
9. Do you have written record/ passbook?	Yes -1    No – 2
10. Whether you get work under NREGA?	Yes -1    No – 2
11. Do you have Bank A/C / Passbook	Yes -1    No – 2
12. Do you get payment in time?	Yes -1    No – 2
13. If no, reasons	
14. Whether you receive payment for all days?	Yes -1    No – 2
15. Any problem under NREGA?	Yes -1    No – 2
16. If yes, specify	1. Regular and timely work not given under NREGA. 2. NREGA not paying timely. 3. NREGA does not give me good wages. 4. Any other _____
17. Awareness about MGNREGA Planning?	Yes -1    No – 2
18. Involvement in MGNREGA Planning?	Yes -1    No – 2
19. Getting work against demand?	Yes -1    No – 2
20. If no, give the reason..	
21. After demand, in how many days the Gram Panchayat provides work?	Number of days _____
22. Family members working under MGNREGA Scheme?	Male.....Female.....
23. Do you think you need more than 100 days employments from this scheme?	Yes -1    No – 2
24. Which government departments are working under MGNREGA in your village?	1. Agriculture/KVK 2. Forest 3. Horticulture 4. Irrigation 5. Others.....
25. Did you get unemployment support in case you didn't get the job demanded within 15 days of the time ?	Yes -1    No – 2
26. Per day wage given to you under MGNREGA	Rs .....per day.
26.(a). per day wage prevalent in labour market	Rs.....per day.
27. Whether the wage sufficient for the daily livelihood?	Yes -1    No – 2
28. (a) If no, what is your expectation?	Rs.....

28. (b) If no, how the shortfall is met?	1. Work as casual labour 2. Work as Cart-puller 3. Work as Rickshaw puller 4. Any other, specify.
29. Whether worked as casual labour when MGNREGA work is not sufficient	Yes -1    No – 2
30. If yes, whether the wage higher than MGNREGA?	Yes -1    No – 2
31. How the wage money is paid to you?	1. Cash 2. Bank account transfer 3. Post office 4. Cheque 5. Others.....
32. Payment is received after how many days ?	.....days

	Before joining the scheme	After joining the scheme
33. Total yearly family income?	Rs.....	Rs.....
34. Whether any adult family members migrated to other places in search of livelihood?	Yes -1    No – 2	
35. If yes, how many	Male.....Female.....	
36. If yes, where to?	1. Other village    2. Nearby town 3. Big city        4. Other (specify)	
37. If yes, Reason for migration	1. No scope in the village 2. Non availability of MGNREGA job 3. Prospects for higher wages 4. Lure of urban life 5. Any other (specify)	
38. Whether remits money to the family?	Yes -1    No – 2	
39. If yes, how much per month?	Rs.....	
40. If no, any reason (specify)		
41. Whether any adult members of your village migrated to other places in search of livelihood?	Yes -1    No – 2	
42. Any difference between MGNREGA wage and wage in local labour market	Yes -1    No – 2	
43. Do you think that due to MGNREGA work there is shortage of labour in agriculture and allied activities in the area?	Yes -1    No – 2	

## C. Overall views on the scheme:

1. Is it helpful as a livelihood option?	Yes -1      No – 2
2. Suggestion for improving the scheme? : _____ _____	
3. Any other livelihood option in your mind? : _____ _____	
4. Are you interested in working under MGNREGA?	Yes -1      No – 2
5. If yes, reasons : : _____ _____	
6. Any person in the village who do not have job card but interested in working under MGNREGA?	Yes -1      No – 2
7. If yes, reasons? : _____ _____	
8. Whether Notices related to MGNREGA scheme etc put up in Panchayat offices regularly?	Yes -1      No – 2
9. Whether any facilities provided at the work site?	Yes -1      No – 2
10. If yes, state briefly : _____ _____	
11. Is work always given within 5 km of the village?	Yes -1      No – 2
12. If not, whether extra wages given as compensation?	Yes -1      No – 2
13. Are you aware about the grievance redressal mechanism	Yes -1      No – 2
14. Have you ever made use of it?	Yes -1      No – 2

Date: \_\_\_\_\_