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PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF MGNREGA: A CASE STUDY OF LONGLENG DISTRICT

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ABSTRACT
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social welfare programme aimed at enhancing livelihood security to the rural households through guaranteed wage employment. The mandate of the act is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Despite its broad scope and ambitious goals, the scheme's implementation often varies significantly across regions, facing challenges that hinder its full potential. This study evaluates the performance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in Longleng district, Nagaland, during the financial years 2020–2023. Relying exclusively on secondary data obtained from the Ministry of Rural Development's Management Information System (MIS), state government records, and other published sources, the analysis focuses on key parameters such as employment generation, asset creation, women's participation, and age-wise distribution of beneficiaries. The findings reveal that women participants is above the suggested 33.3 percent in all three financial years and rural connectivity projects accounted for the largest share of assets created, while participation among older age groups remained limited. These results highlight the programme's contributions to rural infrastructure and livelihoods, while pointing to demographic and implementation-related challenges that warrant policy attention.

KEYWORDS: *MGNREGA, Performance, Employment, Participation*

INTRODUCTION
Rural India, often referred to as the heart of the country, continues to face numerous challenges. Despite the country's tremendous efforts, village conditions remain far from satisfactory, with the majority of them still extremely poor. According to 2011 census, over 70 percent of Indians live in rural areas, many of whom do not even own adequate land holdings or have alternative service opportunities to produce or access essential goods. In the absence of adequate employment opportunities, rural people are unable to generate enough wages to sustain their livelihood. According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS, 2020-21), the unemployment rate among rural male youth of age 15-29 years was 12.5 percent while it was 14.1 percent among females. In the usual status, unemployment rate was 3.9 percent among males and 4.1 percent among females in rural India. In countries where the economy is predominantly rural, with agriculture absorbing the major share of the labour force, rural development programs are key to economic progress.[1] The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a social welfare programme aimed at enhancing livelihood security to the rural households through guaranteed wage employment. It was notified on September 7, 2005 and came into force on February 2, 2006. The mandate of the act is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.[2]

MGNREGA was introduced in Nagaland in phases, out of 200 districts in the first phase of MGNREGA, the Government of India has allotted one district in Nagaland state as a backward status, namely Mon district for implementation of MGNREGA during 2005-06. However, the actual implementation could start during 2006-07 only. Since then, in second phase four more districts viz, Kohima, Mokokchung, Wokha and Tuensang were declared as MGNREGA districts and in third phase Dimapur, Zunhebhoto, Longleng, Kiphire and Peren were included in the MGNREGA districts. Thus, all districts in the state were covered under the MGNREGS from fiscal 2008-2009 onwards.[3]

[1] *N.P. Abdul Azeez, S.M. Jawed Akhtar (2015). Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Provisions, Implementation and Performance. New Century Publications, New Delhi, p. 1*
[2] *MGNREGA Operational Guidelines 2013, 4th Edition. Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Rural Development, Government of India. New Delhi, p. 3*
[3] *Kedise Pucho (2017), Impact of MGNREGA on Rural Livelihood in three districts of Kohima, Mokokchung and Dimapur. State Institute of Rural Development Nagaland: Kohima, p 5*

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Objectives of the MGNREGA

i) It ensures social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities
ii) It ensures livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity
iii) Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India
iv) Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), through the process of a rights-based legislation
v) Strengthening decentralised, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives
vi) Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions
vii) Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance [4]

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1. Gourd Goal Banik and Khanindra Sarma (2018) conducted a study on management of rural development through MGNREGA in Kamrup district of Assam. The authors observed that out of the total job card holders, only 40% of the job cards are active. 100% of Job card holders agree that daily wage rate is not sufficient, unemployment allowances & delayed payment charges are not paid totally. According to more than 80% Job card holders, job demand is not recorded, works are not allotted within 15 days of demand and 81% Job card holders are not satisfied with MGNREGA. Although the Government has promised 100 days guaranteed employment to the Job card holders, they receive much lesser no of work-days in the year. The authors also point out that although MGNREGA claims to be the largest rural development programme in the world; in reality the results of the scheme are far from satisfactory. The potentials of the schemes have not been capitalized in the expected manner over the years. The authors assert that if the schemes under MGNREGA are properly implemented, then it may totally change the rural landscape so as to make the Indian economy a much stronger one in all respects.
2. Moameren Pongen (2020) in her paper "Implementation of MGNREGS in Mokokchung district Nagaland: Issues and Challenges" highlights that though there is visible improvement in building the community asset, the programme has failed to achieve its core objective of improving the livelihood of the rural poor due to its poor implementation.
3. Narendra Kumar Rath and Sri Ashok Kumar Nanda (2018) discusses the importance of gender equality in economic development and highlight the economic benefits of empowering women. The study reveals that women's participation in Gram Sabha meetings and social audits is generally low due to lack of awareness and information dissemination among women workers. The paper identifies various factors that affect women's empowerment through MGNREGA, including institutional failures, unequal wage payment, corruption, lack of worksite facilities, and limited awareness of rights and entitlement.
4. Nistha Sharma and Sanjeev Mehrotra in their study analysed the performance of MGNREGA in Udam Singh Nagar district, Uttarakhand. They observed that many of the assets under the MGNREGA scheme are not planned or implemented in a structured manner due to the lack of technical competence of the executing agents at different levels.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To evaluate the performance of MGNREGA in Longleng district
- To provide suggestions to enhance its performance

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts an analytical approach, relying primarily on secondary data from the MGNREGA Management Information System, official reports of the Ministry of Rural Development, and the Rural Development Department of Nagaland. The analysis focuses on the financial years 2020–21 to 2022–23 for key indicators such as employment generation, work completion, age-wise distribution, and asset creation. The collected data were compiled, tabulated, and systematically analysed to assess the programme's performance in Nagaland, with particular emphasis on Longleng district. Findings are presented in a structured format to highlight trends, key achievements, and gaps in implementation.

BRIEF PROFILE OF STUDY AREA

Longleng town was established in 1951 with Shri Ranjan, Assistant Political Officer, as the first administrator, and later on gained the status of a full-fledged revenue district on 24 January 2004, headed by the Deputy Commissioner. Longleng district is predominantly inhabited by people belonging to the Phom tribe. Longleng district, the home of the Phom Nagas, is the tenth district of Nagaland, formed by transferring three circles, namely Tamlu, Yongya, and Longleng, out of Tuensang district. Longleng district

[4] *MGNREGA Operational Guidelines (2013) Op.cit., p 3*

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has one state and three district boundaries. On the east, it shares a boundary with Tuensang and Mon districts of Nagaland.[5] On the north, it shares a boundary with Assam. On the south, it shares its boundary with Tuensang and Mokokchung districts of Nagaland. Demographically, according to the 2011 Census, the district has a total of 11,580 households with a population of 50,484, comprising 26,502 males and 23,982 females. Longleng has a total of 46 villages and eight hamlets. All 46 villages are recognized and inhabited. As per the 2011 Census report, 84.90% of Longleng's population lives in the rural sector, with relatively high poverty rates, making it one of the largest populations living below the World Bank's $1.90-a-day poverty line in Nagaland. Longleng is primarily an agrarian economy. Very few people are engaged in white-collar jobs, and the majority of the people are agriculturists.[6]

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employment Generation in Nagaland for financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23

In Nagaland, as per the report from MNREGA official records, a total of 13.68 lakh job cards were issued over three financial years (2020-21 to 2022-23), with 97.55% issued to Scheduled Tribe (ST) households, reflecting the tribal-dominated population of the state. The Scheduled Caste (SC) and others categories accounted for only 84 and 33,519 job cards, respectively. A total of 12.27 lakhs households were provided employment, showing a steady increase from 3.92 lakhs in 2020-21 to 4.21 lakhs in 2022-23. Approximately 89.68% of the households issued job cards were provided employment, indicating strong participation. However, only 137 households completed 100 days of employment over three years, highlighting limited achievement of the scheme's target.

Women Participation Rate

Women participation rate is the number of female workers provided with employment versus the total number of workers provided with employment.

Table 1.1: Percentage of women workers in Nagaland from Financial Years 2020-21 to 2023-24

Financial Years	Percentage of women workers
2020-21	36.4%
2021-22	38.1%
2022-23	42.9%

Source: Compiled from MGNREGA Management Information System, Nagaland.

The number of women participants is above the suggested 33.3 percent in all financial years under observation, indicating a consistent upward trend in women's participation in the workforce. The highest percentage was recorded in 2022–23 (42.9%), reflecting notable progress in creating opportunities for women over the three-year period.

Table 1.2: Employment generation from financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23 (Longleng District)

Years	Cumulative No of Households Issued Job Card				HHs Provided Employment	HHs Completed 100 days Employment
	SC	ST	Others	Total		
2020-21	2	21628	105	21735	21563	0
2021-22	1	21655	83	21739	21308	0
2022-23	0	21656	0	21656	20806	0
Total	3	64,939	188	65,130	63677	0

Source: Compiled from MGNREGA Management Information System, Nagaland.

The table 1.2 shows the job card issued and household completed 100 days of work in a year among the different categories of households during the year from 2020-21 to 2022-23. In Longleng, 97.77% of households issued job cards were provided employment, compared to 89.68% in Nagaland. This suggests higher participation in Longleng district compared to the state average. No households in Longleng completed 100 days of employment in any years, compared to a total of 137 households in Nagaland over three years. While Longleng district demonstrates relatively high participation rates in terms of households provided employment, it falls short in achieving 100 days of employment. This raises concerns about the efficiency of programme implementation and the accessibility of its benefits.

- **Age wise distribution**

The age wise distribution of beneficiaries into 6 age groups of 18-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-80 and greater than 80 is given in Table 1.1.

[5] *District Census Handbook Longleng, Village and Town Wise Primary Census Abstract (PCA), Directorate of Census Operations Nagaland. p. 9.*

[6] *Jamir, Chubakumzuk. (2020). A gender analysis of Kohima and Longleng Districts of Nagaland, India. International Journal of Economics, Business and Politics. 4 (1), 221-236. pp 226-228*

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Table 1.3. Age wise Distribution of persons employed under MGNREGA in Financial year 2022-23 (Longleng District)

BLOCKS	18-30 years	31-40 years	41-50 years	51-60 years	61-80 years	Greater than 80 years
Longleng	0.45	20.26	25.91	26.53	26.48	0.38
Sakshi	0.03	4.39	8.02	7.68	7.35	0.21
Tamlu	0.06	5.64	6.09	4.98	4.93	0.02
Total	0.34	20.55	27.04	26.01	25.67	0.4

Source: Compiled from MGNREGA Management Information System, Nagaland

Table 1.2 shows that there are significant disparities in age-wise participation. Beneficiaries aged 41–50 years constituted the largest group, reflecting their active engagement with the scheme. In contrast, participation among youth (18–30 years) was exceptionally low at just 0.34%, lower than the participation rate of individuals aged over 80 years (0.4%).

Table 1.4: Women participation rate (Financial Year 2020-21 to 2022-23 in Longleng district)

Financial Years	2020-21		2021-22		2022-23	
Blocks	**Total**	**Female**	**Total**	**Female**	**Total**	**Female**
Longleng	12083	5294	11832	3122	11343	6932
Sakshi	4350	3062	4350	515	4327	1857
Tamlu	5130	2485	5126	2596	5136	2417
Total	21563	10841	21308	6233	20806	11206

Source: Compiled from MGNREGA Management Information System, Nagaland.

Women participation rate for financial year 2020-21 is 50.27%. Financial year 2021-22 is 29.25% and financial year 2022-23 is 53.85%. The three years average for women participation rate for this district is 44.45%. The performance for women participation in Longleng district is quite high except for the financial year 2021-22. As we can see, the participation rate of women is almost on par with men, with the average participation rate much higher than the mandated reservation requirement of 33%. Longleng's average participation rate (44.45%) exceeded the state's average of 39.13%, reflecting stronger inclusion of women in the district's MGNREGA workforce and significant progress toward gender equity.

Work Completion Rates

Table 1.5: Total works completed from Financial Year 2020-21 to 22-23 (Longleng District)

Blocks	Completed			In progress/ Suspended Work			Approved not in progress			Proposed not yet approved		
	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Longleng	48	0	37	149	185	240	408	1511	627	969	1042	983
Sakshi	19	0	0	21	35	50	150	359	211	310	343	331
Tamlu	28	0	48	42	59	55	197	472	290	557	639	604
Total	95	0	85	212	279	345	755	2342	1128	1836	2024	1918

Source: Compiled from MGNREGA Management Information System, Nagaland

The performance of MGNREGA in terms of work completion showed notable crests and troughs. The work completion rate is calculated from the number of works approved and started. The work completion rate dropped to 0 in the financial year 2021–22, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the completion rate rebounded in 2022–23, although it remained lower than the pandemic levels of 2020–21. This inconsistency shows vulnerabilities in programme resilience and the need for ways to maintain continuity during crises. The number of works in progress or suspended increased steadily from 212 in 2020–21 to 345 in 2022–23. A large backlog of approved works exists, with 755 works in 2020–21 increasing to 2342 in 2021–22, before slightly reducing to 1128 in 2022–23. The number of proposed works not yet approved also remained high, exceeding 1800 in each year.

Asset Creation

Asset creation is a crucial component of MGNREGA for improving rural infrastructure. In the financial year 2020–21 to 2022-23, Longleng district achieved progress in specific sectors:

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Table 1.6: Number of the asset created (Financial years 2020-21 to 2022- 23 in Longleng district)

Category of Asset Created	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Rural connectivity	41	0	26	67
Flood control and protection	6	0	5	11
Water conservation and water harvesting	7	0	17	24
Drought Proofing	16	0	11	27
Micro irrigation works	0	0	10	10
Renovation of traditional water bodies	5	0	5	10
Land development	7	0	0	7
Rural sanitation	8	0	0	8
Fish eries	5	0	16	22

Source: Compiled from MGNREGA Management Information System

Among the total assets created during the financial years 2020-21 to 2022-23, the majority were in the area of rural connectivity, with 67 works completed. This was followed by 27 works for drought proofing, 24 works related to water conservation and water harvesting, 22 fisheries-related works, and 11 works for flood control and protection. Additionally, there were 10 works for micro irrigation, 10 for the renovation of traditional water bodies, 8 for rural sanitation, and 10 works for land development. No assets were created in the financial year 2021-22.

CONCLUSION

MGNREGA is without doubt the most transformative programme for rural India, with the potential to improve livelihoods and infrastructure. In Longleng district, the scheme has made progress in areas such as gender inclusion and certain asset creation projects. However, systemic challenges, such as the lack of completed employment days, limited youth participation, and gaps in work completion, hinder its full potential. Awareness about MGNREGA should be increased, especially among younger populations, to encourage their participation. Basing on the lower rate of progress made during and post pandemic, it is also important to develop contingency plans to ensure uninterrupted implementation during emergencies like pandemics. Addressing bottlenecks that prevent workers from completing 100 days of employment will further strengthen the programme. By implementing the proposed recommendations, MGNREGA can fulfil its mandate in a much more effective way and contribute to the holistic development of Longleng district.

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