

Sustainable Asset Creation under MGNREGA Scheme in Assam-A Study of Sivasagar and Dhemaji Districts

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Abstract:

In order to ensure sustained income in the long run leading to improvement in the quality of lives of the rural people MGNREGA pointed out a list of nine to create sustainable properties through implementation of the programme in the rural areas. However, the Act also allows creation of personal properties through the programme which are more particularly required by the vulnerable sections of the society which were denied of such benefits so long due to social oppression. Since the inception of MGNREGA, around 252 lakh works have been completed throughout the country as on 31st October 2016 ; of these, almost 51 per cent are works related to water (water conservation, flood control, irrigation, drought proofing, renovation of traditional water bodies and micro-irrigation), and over 19 per cent works are related to rural connectivity. At such a scale, MGNREGA works have the potential to benefit rural communities by improving irrigation facilities, enhancing land productivity and connecting remote villages to input and output markets.

As per the MGNREGA the following categories of works are permissible:

1. Water Conservation and Water Harvesting (Digging of new tanks, / ponds/ check dams).
2. Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies (Distillation of tanks/ ponds/ old canals/ traditional open well).
3. Provision of irrigation on land owned by SC/ST beneficiaries of land reforms, beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana (AYJ).
4. Micro irrigation works (Minor irrigation projects).
5. Draught Proofing (Afforestation & Tree Plantation).
6. Flood Control & Protection (Drainage in water logged areas, Construction & embankment).
7. Land development & soil conservation works.
8. . Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access. The construction of roads may include culverts where necessary and within the village area may be taken up along with drains.
9. The state government may notify any other work in consultation with the central government.

Based on the recommendations of state Governments, the Government of India approved several projects like Rural Sanitation, Rural Drinking Water, Fisheries, Coastal Avenues, etc

It is important to refer here that before the Parliamentary Election 2014, the erstwhile UPA Government decided that the individual household toilet work to be covered under the Nirmal Bharat

Abhiyaan Scheme in convergence with MGNREGA or independently under MGNREGA. Later, when the B.J.P led N. D. A. Government came to power, it was observed that the previous government's decision to create a convergence between MGNREGA and toilet construction did not work well. Therefore, the Government de-linked construction of toilets from MGNREGA and brought it under the ambit of "Swachh Bharat" (Clean India) Abhiyaan.

In the present chapter an attempt has been made to depict a pen-picture of the present status of the various categories of properties created through the MGNREGA in the districts of Sibsagar and Dhemaji in Assam.

6.1. Present Status of the works done – Number of Projects Approved, Completed and Ongoing

On the basis of data collected from the concerned sample Development Block offices of Sibsagar and Dhemaji districts, a picture of the present status of the MGNREGA projects is depicted for eight years from the financial year 2008-09 to 2015-16, in terms of the number of projects approved, completed and ongoing as on 31st March 2016 in Tables 6.01 and 6.02 here.

Table-6.01

Year and sample Development Block wise breakup of the status of the MG-NREGA projects of Sibsagar

Year of approval	Gaurisagar Dev. Block (No.)			Amguri Dev. Block (No.)			Total (No.)		
	Approved	Completed	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	Ongoing
2008-09	09 (100.0)	09 (100.0)	-	08 (100.0)	08 (100.0)	-	17 (100.0)	17 (100.00)	-
2009-10	05 (100.0)	05 (100.0)	-	04 (100.0)	04 (100.0)	-	09 (100.0)	09 (100.00)	-
2010-11	05 (100.0)	05 (100.0)	-	05 (100.0)	05 (100.0)	-	10 (100.0)	10 (100.00)	-
2011-12	10 (100.0)	10 (100.0)	-	15 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	-	25 (100.0)	25 (100.00)	-
2012-13	28 (100.0)	28 (100.0)	-	27 (100.0)	27 (100.0)	-	55 (100.0)	55 (100.00)	-
2013-14	24 (100.0)	23 (95.83)	01 (4.17)	67 (100.0)	66 (98.51)	01 (1.49)	91 (100.0)	89 (97.80)	02 (2.30)
2014-15	65 (100.0)	50 (76.92)	15 (23.08)	47 (100.0)	18 (38.30)	29 (61.70)	112 (100.0)	68 (60.71)	44 (39.29)
2015-16	08 (100.0)	-	08 (100.0)	21 (100.0)	-	21 (100.0)	29 (100.0)	Nil	29 (100.0)
Total	154 (100.0)	130 (84.42)	24 (15.58)	194 (100.0)	143 (73.71)	51 (26.29)	348 (100.0)	273 (78.45)	75 (21.55)

District as on 31 March 2016.

Source: Concerned Development Block offices.

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of approved number of projects during the concerned year.

Table 6.01 shows the number of MGNREGA projects approved, completed and ongoing in the two sample Development Blocks, of Sibsagar district for eight consecutive years from 2008-09 to 2015-16. The table reflects that in the two sample Development Blocks (D.Bs) of Sibsagar district 273 assets were constructed and construction of 75 others is in progress.

The table shows that in both the sample Development Blocks (D.Bs), all the projects approved during the financial years up to 2012 -13 were duly completed as on 31st March, 2016. It can further be seen from the table that only 2.30 per cent of the projects approved in 2013-14, 39.29 per cent of those approved in 2014-15 and 100.00 per cent of those approved in 2015-16 were yet to be completed when the field survey was being conducted by this investigator.

In both the sample Development Blocks, the rate of progress in work is almost the same all through the years under reference with the exception that out of the total projects approved during the year 2014-15, only 38.30 per cent of the projects in Amguri Development Block (D.B) reported to have been completed as against 76.92 per cent of those in Gaurisagar Development Block (D.B). Thus, progress in Amguri Development Block was somewhat sluggish so far as the projects approved in 2014-15 were concerned. Table 6.02 captures data relating to the status of the various MGNREGA projects approved for the eight consecutive years from 2008-09 to 2015-16 for the two sample Development Blocks (D.Bs) of Dhemaji district as is available from the concerned Development Blocks (D.Bs).

Table 6.02 presents a dismal picture of the status of works done at the Dhemaji district. It is conspicuous to see from the table that only 60.71 per cent of the works approved in 2009-10, 56.40 per cent of those approved in 2012-13 and 33.33 per cent of those approved in 2013-14 could be completed as on 31st March 2016; when the field investigation of the present study was in progress. It is still grim to find from the table that on an average, only 23.01 per cent of the total projects approved for the two sample Development Blocks of the Dhemaji district was average, only 23.01 per cent of the total projects approved for the two sample Development Blocks of the Dhemaji district was completed till 31st March 2016.

Table-6.02

Year and sample Development Block wise breakup of the status of the MG-NREGA projects of Dhemaji District as on 31 March 2016.

Year of approval	Murkongselek Dev. Block (No.)			Sissiborgaon Dev. Block (No.)			Total (No.)		
	Approved	Completed	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	Ongoing
2008-09	18 (100.0)	12 (66.67)	06 (33.33)	15 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	-	33 (100.0)	27 (81.82)	06 (18.18)
2009-10	21 (100.0)	10 (47.62)	11 (52.38)	07 (100.0)	07 (100.0)	-	28 (100.0)	17 (60.71)	11 (39.29)
2010-11	45 (100.0)	19 (42.22)	26 (57.78)	31 (100.0)	31 (100.0)	-	76 (100.0)	50 (65.79)	26 (34.21)
2011-12	07 (100.0)	03 (42.86)	04 (57.14)	15 (100.0)	15 (100.0)	-	22 (100.0)	18 (81.82)	04 (18.18)
2012-13	24 (100.0)	09 (37.50)	15 (62.50)	15 (100.0)	13 (86.67)	02 (13.33)	39 (100.0)	22 (56.40)	17 (43.60)
2013-14	03 (100.0)	Nil	03 (100.0)	03 (100.0)	02 (66.67)	01 (33.33)	06 (100.0)	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)
2014-15	Nil	-	-	02 (100.0)	Nil	02 (100.0)	02 (100.0)	Nil	02 (100.00)
2015-16	174 (100.0)	Nil	174 (100.0)	211 (100.0)	Nil	211 (100.0)	385 (100.0)	Nil	385 (100.0)
Total	292 (100.0)	53 (18.15)	239 (81.85)	299 (100.0)	83 (27.76)	216 (72.24)	591 (100.0)	136 (23.01)	455 (76.99)

Source: Concerned Development Block offices.

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of approved number of projects during the concerned year.

The sample Development Block wise breakup of the works shows that in Sissiborgaon Development Block 100.00 per cent of the works approved in the four consecutive years from 2008-09 to 2011-12 was duly completed; while 86.67 per cent of those approved in 2012-13 and 66.67 per cent of those in 2013-14 were completed as on 31st March 2016. Contrary to this, the situation in Murkongselek Development Block is not that rosy with the result that only 66.67 per cent of the projects started in 2008-09, 47.62 per cent of those started in 2009-10, 42.22 per cent of those started in 2010-11, 42.86 per cent of those in 2011-12 and 37.50 per cent of those approved in 2012-13 reported to have been completed as on 31st March 2016. The average rate of completion of the projects all through the eight years under reference was poor 18.15 per cent in Murkongselek Development Block. If even those projects approved in 2014-15 and 2015-16 are not counted, then the total approved projects comes to 118 and the total projects completed comes to 53 making the rate of progress in completion of the projects at 44.92 per cent. This means that even 50.00 per cent of the projects taken up were not completed till 31st March 2016. On the contrary, in Sissiborgaon Development Block, up to the year 2013-14 in all 88 projects were approved, out of which 83 projects reported to have been completed as on 31st March 2016 thus making the rate of progress in completion of the projects at 94.32 per cent.

When the concerned official at the Murkongselek Development Block was asked about the reason behind such slow progress of the approved projects, he attributed the incessant floods which create great havoc in that area every summer and even thereafter making it difficult to continue with the works most of the times. He also reports that in most of the days after the workers are engaged, there are heavy downpours resulting interruption of works for hours together. Such untoward situations eventually raise the cost of the projects and also affect quality of works unless such costs and also the additional costs due to price escalation are not compensated by the Government.

It is important to mention here that the entire district of Dhemaji is a flood prone area of Assam. As such, most of the development works are greatly hampered in many areas of the district. More particularly the Junai subdivision (there are two subdivisions in the district viz. Dhemaji Sadar and Junai) which is served by the lone Development Block of Murkongselek is bounded by quite a good number of rivers like Brahmaputra, Lali, Sipiya, and Simen. As a result, flood is a most common feature for the entire subdivision of Junai during the rainy season. It is therefore obvious that the works of the MGNREGA projects of Murkongselek Development Block are adversely affected by flood.

Table 6.03 depicts a comparative picture of the status of the MGNREGA works done during the eight year period from 2008-09 to 2015-16 in the sample Development Blocks of Sibsagar and Dhemaji districts. It can be seen from the table 6.03 that during the eight year period ranging from 2008-09 to 2015-16, in all 348 MGNREGA projects were approved in the two sample Development Blocks of Sibsagar district as against this, the two sample Development Blocks of Dhemaji district got approval of 591 projects in the same period. So far as the completion status of the projects are concerned, the table exhibits that while in Sibsagar district 273 number of projects constituting 78.45 per cent of the total projects approved in the two sample Development Blocks were completed, in Dhemaji district only 136 number of projects forming 23.01 per cent of the total projects approved in the two sample Development Blocks during the same period could be completed. In this context one may argue that in the year 2015-16, the two sample Development Blocks of Dhemaji district got approval of 385 new projects as against only 29 in case of Sibsagar district. These projects require minimum gestation period according to the nature of work. Therefore it is unwise to include such newly approved projects in counting the completion status of the projects. Now in acceptance of this contention, if we give a minimum of two year gestation period to the projects and count the

completion status of various projects approved to the two districts under study during the period 2008-09 to 2013-14 instead, it would be seen that in Sibsagar district 100.00 per cent of the projects approved for the two sample Development Blocks up to 2012-13 were duly completed and all those approved in 2013-14 are at the verge of completion with 97.80 per cent already been completed as on 31st March 2016.

Table 6.03

Year wise breakup of the status of the MG-NREGA projects in Sibsagar and Dhemaji Districts as on 31 March 2016

Source: Concerned Development Block offices.

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of approved projects.

On the contrary, the Dhemaji district depicts a dismal picture. It is disheartening to find from the Table 6.03 that in the six year period from 2008-09 to 2013-14 not a single year exhibits 100.00 per cent completion of

Year of approval	Sibsagar District			Dhemaji District		
	Total (No.)			Total (No.)		
	Approved	Completed	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	Ongoing
2008-09	17(100.0)	17(100.00)	-	33 (100.0)	27 (81.82)	06 (18.18)
2009-10	09(100.0)	09(100.00)	-	28 (100.0)	17 (60.71)	11 (39.29)
2010-11	10(100.0)	10(100.00)	-	76 (100.0)	50 (65.79)	26 (34.21)
2011-12	25(100.0)	25(100.00)	-	22 (100.0)	18 (81.82)	04 (18.18)
2012-13	55(100.0)	55(100.00)	-	39 (100.0)	22 (56.40)	17 (43.60)
2013-14	91(100.0)	89(97.80)	02(2.30)	06 (100.0)	02 (33.33)	04 (66.67)
2014-15	112(100.0)	68(60.71)	44(39.29)	02 (100.0)	Nil	02 (100.00)
2015-16	29(100.0)	Nil	29(100.0)	385 (100.0)	Nil	385 (100.0)
Total	348(100.0)	273(78.45)	75(21.55)	591 (100.0)	136 (23.01)	455 (76.99)

the approved projects in the two sample Development Blocks of Dhemaji district. The highest achievement of 81.82 per cent completion rate of the projects approved in each of the years 2008-09 and 2011-12 can be noticed from the table. This is followed by 65.79 per cent of the projects approved in 210-11 and 60.71 per cent of those approved in 2009-10. Thus, so far as the completion status of the projects in the sample Development Blocks of Dhemaji district is concerned, the progress is very sluggish.

6.2. Work Category wise breakup of progress

In order to get a more vivid picture of the progress in the various projects undertaken at the two sample districts of Sibsagar and Dhemaji, work category wise study becomes imperative. With this end in view, Tables 6.04 and 6.05 are presented here.

Table 6.04 shows that in Sibsagar district largest number of MGNREGA projects approved during the eight year period of 2008-09 to 2015-16 relate to Draught Proofing (54.02%) followed by Rural Connectivity

(31.61%). Thus, as high as 85.63 per cent of the total projects approved during the period under reference were related to Draught Proofing and Rural connectivity. As regards completion of the projects, the table denotes that 56.04 per cent of the total projects completed relate to Draught Proofing; while 32.97 per cent is of Connectivity thereby both together forming as high as 89.01 per cent of the total works completed during the period under reference.

Project category wise completion status of the works undertaken during all through the eight financial year's shows that the largest number of the projects relates to Fisheries constituting 100.00 per cent of the total works under this category was completed during the years under reference. This is followed by Water Conservation and Water Harvesting (94.44%), Rural Connectivity (81.81%), Draught Proofing (81.38 %), Land Development (63.64%) and Flood Control & Protection (50.00%). In all other type of projects progress is less than 40.00 per cent. The poorest performance is exhibited in case of the works relating to Cleaning & Preservation Works on Individual's land (33.33%).

Table-6.04**Work category and sample Development Block wise breakup of the status of the MG-NREGA projects of Sibsagar District from 1st April 2008 to 31 March 2016**

Work Category	Gaurisagar Dev. Block				Amguri Dev. Block				Total			
	Appro ved	Compl eted	%*	Ongoi ng	Appro ved	Comple t	%*	Ongoi ng	Appro ved	Comple t	%*	Ongoi ng
Rural connectivity	56 (36.36)	49 (37.98)	87.5 0	07 (29.17)	54 (27.84)	41 (28.47)	75.93	13 (26.00)	110 (31.61)	90 (32.97)	81.81	20 (27.03)
Drought proofing	63 (40.90)	54 (41.86)	85.7 1	09 (37.50)	125 (64.43)	99 (68.75)	79.20	26 (52.00)	188 (54.02)	153 (56.04)	81.38	35 (47.30)
Micro Irrigation Works	04 (2.60)	01 (0.78)	25.0 0	03 (12.50)	04 (2.06)	02 (1.39)	50.00	02 (4.00)	08 (2.30)	03 (1.10)	37.50	05 (6.76)
Land Development	10 (6.49)	06 (4.65)	60.0 0	04 (16.67)	01 (0.52)	01 (0.69)	100.0 0	-	11 (3.16)	07 (2.56)	63.64	04 (5.41)
Renovation of traditional water bodies	-	-	-	-	07 (3.61)	-	-	07 (14.00)	07 (2.01)	-	-	07 (9.46)
Flood control & protection	-	-	-	-	02 (1.03)	01 (0.69)	50.00	01 (2.00)	02 (0.57)	01 (0.37)	50.00	01 (1.35)
Other works(cleaning & preservation works on individual's land)	02 (1.30)	01 (0.78)	50.0 0	-	01 (0.52)	-	-	01 (2.00)	03 (0.86)	01 (0.37)	33.33	01 (1.35)
Fishery	01 (0.65)	01 (0.78)	100. 00	-	-	-	-	-	01 (0.29)	01 (0.37)	100.00	-
Water Conservation & Water Harvesting	18 (11.69)	17 (13.18)	94.4 4	01 (4.17)	-	-	-	-	18 (5.17)	17 (6.23)	94.44	01 (1.35)
Total	154 (100.0)	129 (100.0)	83.7 7	24 (100.0)	194 (100.0)	144 (100.0)	74.23	50 (100.0)	348 (100.0)	273 (100.0)	78.45	74 (100.0)

Source: Concerned Development Block offices.

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of the column totals.

* Percentage of projects completed out of the total approved projects under the concerned Work Category.

Sample Development Block wise number of projects approved under each category of works shows that in both the sample Development Blocks, Draught Proofing constitutes the largest segment of the works approved under different categories with 40.90 per cent in Gaurisagar and 64.43 per cent in Amguri Development Block This is followed by Rural Connectivity being 36.36 per cent in Gaurisagar and 27.84 per cent in Amguri Development Block. Thus, as expected, the largest number of MGNREGA projects in the two sample Development Blocks of Gaurisagar and Amguri constitute Draught Proofing and Rural Connectivity.

Out of the total projects completed during the period under reference, the Amguri Development Block leads by completion of 68.75 per cent project relating Draught Proofing followed by completion of 41.86 per cent similar projects in Gaurisagar Development Block Next in order is Rural Connectivity which constitutes 37.9 per cent of the total projects completed in Gaurisagar Development Block as against 28.47 per cent of those in Amguri Development Block

Table 6.04 further shows that the lone project one each under the Gaurisagar Development Block (Fishery) and Amguri Development Block (Land Development) are duly completed making 100.00 per cent level of achievement in completion of the projects approved under the said two categories. Among the other projects, notable progresses are made on the projects allotted under Water Conservation & Harvesting (94.44%), Rural connectivity (87.50%) and Drought proofing (85.71%) in Gaurisagar Development Block Among the other projects in Amguri Development Block, Draught Proofing takes the lead by completion of 79.20 per cent of the total approved projects under this category followed by Rural Connectivity (75.93%). Notably, only 50.00 per cent of the projects approved under Micro Irrigation Works and Flood control & protection in Amguri Development Block are completed till 31st March 2016. The table denotes that between the two sample Development Blocks, progress in completion of the approved projects is better in Gaurisagar Development Block.

On the whole, in Sibsagar district Draught Proofing and Rural Connectivity are the most popular projects and are taking lead in their completion status out of the total projects approved during the eight years under review as presented in Table 6.04.

The situation in Dhemaji district is presented in Table 6.05. The table shows that in Dhemaji district Rural Connectivity accounts for largest number of the total projects approved during the period of eight years under reference forming 35.87 per cent of the total project approved during the period under reference. This is followed by “Other Works” category; which relate to Cleaning & Preservation Works on individuals land (26.40%), Land Development (13.37%), Flood control & protection (9.14%) and Draught Proofing (6.09%). The lowest preferred project being Renovation of traditional water bodies (0.51%).

Sample Development Block wise approval of projects indicate that in Murkongselek Development Block , “Other works” category relating to cleaning & preservation works on individuals land accounts for largest proportion (51.37%) of the total projects approved under various categories during the period of eight years. This is followed by Rural Connectivity (31.16%) and Land Development (9.25%). The least preferred project being Renovation of traditional water bodies (0.34%).

In the Sissiborgaon Development Block, Rural Connectivity has most of the approvals (40.47%) followed by Land Development (17.39%), Flood Control & Protection (14.46%), Draught Proofing (11.37%) and Fisheries (10.37%). The least preferred projects being Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies (0.67%).

Table-6.05**Work category and sample Development Block wise breakup of the status of the MG-NREGA projects of Dhemaji District from 1st April 2008 to 31 March 2016.**

Work Category	Murkongselek Dev. Block				Sissiborgaon Dev. Block				Total			
	Approved	Completed	%*	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	%*	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	%*	Ongoing
Rural connectivity	91 (31.16)	26 (49.06)	28.57	73 (28.74)	121 (40.47)	42 (50.60)	34.71	79 (36.91)	212 (35.87)	68 (50.00)	32.08	144 (31.65)
Drought proofing	02 (0.68)	-	-	2 (0.77)	34 (11.37)	10 (12.05)	29.41	24 (10.86)	36 (6.09)	10 (7.35)	27.78	26 (5.71)
Micro Irrigation Works	04 (1.37)	01 (3.23)	25.00	03 (1.15)	03 (1.00)	02 (2.41)	66.67	01 (0.45)	07 (1.18)	03 (2.21)	42.86	04 (0.88)
Land Development	27 (9.25)	18 (33.96)	66.67	14 (5.36)	52 (17.39)	12 (14.46)	23.08	40 (18.10)	79 (13.37)	30 (22.05)	37.97	49 (10.77)
Renovation of traditional water bodies	01 (0.34)	-	-	01 (0.38)	02 (0.67)	01 (1.20)	50.00	01 (0.45)	03 (0.51)	01 (0.74)	33.33	02 (0.44)
Flood control & protection	10 (3.42)	04 (7.55)	40.00	08 (3.07)	44 (14.72)	12 (14.46)	36.67	30 (13.57)	54 (9.14)	16 (11.76)	29.63	38 (8.35)
Other works (cleaning & preservation works on individuals land)	150 (51.37)	-	-	150 (57.47)	06 (2.00)	01 (1.20)	16.67	05 (2.26)	156 (26.40)	01 (0.74)	0.64	155 (34.07)
Fisheries	-	-	-	-	31 (10.37)	-	-	31 (14.03)	31 (5.25)	-	-	31 (6.81)
Water Conservation and Water Harvesting	07 (2.40)	04 (12.90)	57.14	03 (1.15)	06 (2.00)	03 (3.61)	50.00	03 (1.36)	13 (2.20)	07 (5.15)	53.85	06 (1.32)
Total	292 (100.0)	53 (100.0)	18.15	254 (100.0)	299 (100)	83 (100.0)	27.76	214 (100.0)	591 (100.0)	136 (100.0)	23.01	455 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey inputs.

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of the column totals.

** Percentage of projects completed out of the total approved projects under the concerned Work Category.*

Work category wise completion status of the projects reveals that the largest number of projects in Dhemaji district were completed under the work category of Water Conservation & Water Harvesting (53.85%) followed by Micro Irrigation Works (42.86%), Land Development(37.97 %), Renovation of traditional water bodies (33.33%), Rural connectivity (32.08%) and Flood control & protection(29.63). The least performance was recorded by “Other works” category which relates to cleaning & preservation works on individual’s land (0.64%).

The sample Development Block wise completion status of various projects as presented in Table 6.05 indicates that Land Development projects lead the completion status in the Murkongselek Development

Blocks forming 66.67 per cent of the total projects approved under this category; while in Sissiborgaon Development Block, Micro Irrigation Works lead the scene with completion of 66.67 per cent of the total such projects approved. Further, Water Conservation & Water Harvesting projects occupy second position in Murkongselek Development Block by completion of 57.14 per cent of such projects approved; whereas in Sissiborgaon Development Block, Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies and Water Conservation & Water Harvesting projects come second in order by completion of 50.00 per cent of such projects approved. The table further reflects that in none of the two sample Development Blocks of Dhemaji district completion status of the projects is encouraging. The situation is worst in Murkongselek Development Block.

Table 6.06

Work Category	Sibsagar District				Dhemaji District			
	Total (No.)				Total (No.)			
	Approved	Completed	%*	Ongoing	Approved	Completed	%*	Ongoing
Rural connectivity	110 (31.61)	90 (32.97)	81.81	20 (27.03)	212 (35.87)	68 (50.00)	32.08	144 (31.65)
Drought proofing	188 (54.02)	153 (56.04)	81.38	35 (47.30)	36 (6.09)	10 (7.35)	27.78	26 (5.71)
Micro Irrigation Works	08 (2.30)	03 (1.10)	37.50	05 (6.76)	07 (1.18)	03 (2.21)	42.86	04 (0.88)
Land Development	11 (3.16)	07 (2.56)	63.64	04 (5.41)	79 (13.37)	30 (22.05)	37.97	49 (10.77)
Renovation of traditional water bodies	07 (2.01)	-	-	07 (9.46)	03 (0.51)	01 (0.74)	33.33	02 (0.44)
Flood control & protection	02 (0.57)	01 (0.37)	50.00	01 (1.35)	54 (9.14)	16 (11.76)	29.63	38 (8.35)
Other works (cleaning & preservation works on individual's land)	03 (0.86)	01 (0.37)	33.33	01 (1.35)	156 (26.40)	01 (0.74)	0.64	155 (34.07)
Fisheries	01 (0.29)	01 (0.37)	100.00	-	31 (5.25)	-	-	31 (6.81)
Water Conservation and Water Harvesting	18 (5.17)	17 (6.23)	94.44	01 (1.35)	13 (2.20)	07 (5.15)	53.85	06 (1.32)
Total	348 (100.0)	273 (100.0)	78.45	74 (100.0)	591 (100.0)	136 (100.0)	23.01	455 (100.0)

Source: Concerned Development Block offices.

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of approved projects.

** Percentage of projects completed out of the total approved projects under the concerned Work Category*

Table 6.06 presents a comparative picture of the category of MGNREGA projects approved, completed and ongoing in the two sample districts of Sibsagar and Dhemaji for the period from April 2008 to 31 March 2016, based on the performance at the sample Development Blocks of the said two districts under the present study.

Table 6.06 denotes that in Sibsagar district Draught Proofing projects are more popular than any other project type and accounts for 54.02 per cent of all the projects approved during all through the eight years under review. Contrary to this, in the Dhemaji district, Rural Connectivity projects are the most sought for and form 35.87 per cent of the total projects approved during the period under review. Rural Connectivity forming 31.61 per cent of the total approved projects in Sibsagar district comes second in order; while projects under the “Other Works” category constituting Cleaning & Preservation Works on individual’s land with 26.40 per cent comes second in order in Dhemaji district. The least preferred project in Sibsagar district is Fisheries (0.29%) as against Renovation of traditional water bodies (0.51%) in Dhemaji district.

As regards completion status of the projects, the Sibsagar district gets 100.00 per cent achievement tag by completing the lone Fishery project. On the other hand the Dhemaji district garnered the highest achievement level by completing 53.85 per cent of the Water conservation & water harvesting projects.

Table 6.06 further shows that the Sibsagar district achieved second completion status in Water Conservation & Water Harvesting projects by completing as high as 94.44 per cent of the total such projects approved. As against this, the Dhemaji district achieved such a status in Micro Irrigation Works by completion of 42.86 per cent of such projects approved.

Table 6.06 clearly shows that in majority of the work category types the completion status in Sibsagar district is more than 60.00 per cent of the total approved projects; whereas in Dhemaji district not a single work category type could achieve even 60.00 per cent completion status of the total projects approved.

The findings in Table 6.06 unequivocally prove that the progress of work in MGNREGA projects of the sample Development Blocks of Dhemaji district is sluggish as compared to those of the Sibsagar district. And as is evident from the discussion under Table 6.02 here above, severe flood havoc in the Dhemaji district, more particularly in the Junai subdivision deters timely completion of the projects.

It came to light from a recent media report by *nelive*, Guwahati, published online on May 2, 2016, that “although the largest amount of fund for the scheme till date was spent during 2015-16, it was the worst year ever in terms of assets created (2.27 million assets) across the country, a 23% decline from 2014-15. The report further opines that the scheme has failed to make any impact in regenerating the village economy in Assam as no focus was given on creating productive assets. According to a World Bank report, “wage earnings alone are not sufficient to make it more cost-effective at reducing poverty.”

6.3. Overall Status of Performance at the National, State and the sample District levels

In order to get a clear picture regarding performance of the MGNREGA in creation of sustainable properties at the national, state and the sample district levels throughout the years, tables 6.07 to 6.11 are compiled on the basis of data collected from website of the MGNREGA and presented here.

Table 6.07

Year wise breakup of the number of MGNREGA projects started, completed and the rate of completion in India

Figures in lakh

Year	Started (No.)	Completed (No.)	Completion Rate (%)
2013-14 & earlier	205.07	192.29	93.76
2014-15	37.84	30.32	80.13
2015-16	58.97	23.34	39.57
2016-17 (up to 15.10.2016)	35.96	5.81	16.15
Total	337.84	251.76	74.52

Source:

Official Website of MGNREGA (Accessed on 15-10-2016).

Table 6.07 shows that the overall completion rate of all the MGNREGA projects

started from its inception (2006-07) to the financial year 2016-17 is 74.52 per cent. The table further shows that 93.76 per cent of the total number of projects; which were started during the financial year 2013-14 or earlier, could be completed as on 15th October 2016 when the data were collected from the website of the MGNREGA. With regard to the 37.84 lakh projects started in 2014-15, 30.32 lakh were completed as on 15th October, 2016 thereby registering the completion rate of 80.13 per cent. It is however, disappointing to find that only 39.57 per cent of the projects started during 2015-16 were completed as on 15th October 2016. On the whole, the table shows a decreasing trend in the rate of completion status of the MGNREGA projects throughout the country.

Table 6.08

Year wise breakup of the number of MGNREGA projects started, completed and the rate of completion in Assam

Year	Started (No.)	Completed (No.)	Completion Rate (%)
2013-14 & earlier	1,52,475	1,37,787	90.37
2014-15	23,518	9,712	41.30
2015-16	51,437	1,967	3.82
2016-17 (up to 15.10.2016)	16,267	47	0.29
Total	2,43,697	1,49,513	61.35

Source: Official Website of MGNREGA (Accessed on 15-10-2016).

Table 6.08 presents the completion status of the MGNREGA projects in Assam as on 15th October, 2016. It can be seen from the table that out of the 2, 43,697 projects started in Assam since its inception i.e. 2006-07 to the financial year 2016-17; 1, 49,513; projects were completed as on 15-10-2016 thereby registering the overall completion rate of 61.35 per cent. On the whole the table depicts a grim picture of the rate of completion of the MGNREGA projects in Assam. It shows that the rate of completion of the projects started in 2014-15 was pathetically poor with 41.30 per cent and it drastically came down to 3.82 per cent with regard to those started in 2015-16.

Table 6.09

Year wise breakup of the number of MGNREGA projects started, completed and the rate of completion in Sibsagar district of Assam.

Year	Started (No.)	Completed (No.)	Completion Rate (%)
2013-14 & earlier	5,697	5,045	88.56
2014-15	2,032	736	36.22
2015-16	1,478	59	3.99
2016-17 (up to 15.10.2016)	1,574	Nil	----
Total	10,781	5,840	54.17

Source: Official Website of MGNREGA (Accessed on 15-10-2016).

Table 6.09 reflects the completion status of the MGNREGA projects in Sibsagar district of Assam as on 15th October, 2016. The table shows that in all 10,781 projects were started in the Sibsagar district of Assam up to the financial year 216-17 and out of these 5,840 projects were completed as on 15th October , 2016 thereby registering 54.17 per cent completion rate. On the whole the table shows very sluggish rate of growth in the completion status of the projects in the Sibsagar district.

Table 6.10

Year wise breakup of the number of MGNREGA projects started, completed and the completion rate in Dhemaji district of Assam

Year	Started (No.)	Completed (No.)	Completion Rate (%)
2013-14 & earlier	4,994	4,991	99.94
2014-15	65	22	49.23
2015-16	1,742	27	1.55
2016-17 (up to 15.10.2016)	598	05	0.84
Total	7,399	5,055	68.32

Source: Official Website of MGNREGA (Accessed on 15-10-2016).

In Dhemaji district, as reflected in Table 6.10, the rate of progress in completion of the MGNREGA projects is remarkably poor. It is conspicuous to find from the table that during the year 2014-15, only 65 projects were started and out of these, only 22 could be completed as on 15th October, 2016. In the following year (2015-16); 1,742 numbers of projects were started out of which only 27 numbers of projects could be completed as the situation prevails on 15th October, 2016 thereby registering the completion rate of 1.55 per cent. The overall situation is grim.

6.4. A Comparative Picture at the National, State and the Sample Districts levels

In order to draw a comparative picture of the completion rate of the MGNREGA projects at the national, state (Assam) and the sample districts levels, Table 6. 11 is compiled and presented here.

Table 6.11

Comparative picture of the completion rate of the MGNREGA projects at the national, state (Assam) and the sample districts levels as on 15-10-2016

Year	COMPLETION RATE (%)			
	National Level (India)	State Level (Assam)	District Level	
			Sibsagar	Dhemaji
2013-14 & earlier	93.76	90.37	88.56	99.94
2014-15	80.13	41.30	36.22	49.23
2015-16	39.57	3.82	3.99	1.55
2016-17 (up to 15.10.2016)	16.15	0.29	----	0.84
Total	74.52	61.35	54.17	68.32

Source: Official Website of MGNREGA (Accessed on 15-10-2016).

Table 6.11 denotes that at the national level in India the rate of completion of the MGNREGA projects taken up from very inception (2006-07) to 2016-17, as on 15th October 2016, is 74.52 per cent as against 61.35 per cent at the state (Assam) level. Between the two sample districts, the district of Dhemaji experiences higher completion rate of 68.32 per cent as against 54.17 per cent of the Sibsagar district.

Unfortunately, table 6.11 shows a decreasing trend in the rate of completion of the MGNREGA projects taken up throughout the years in all the three administrative levels.

Table 6.11 further highlights that the state of Assam is lagging far behind the national level completion rate of the projects; while the district of Sibsagar lags behind the state level performance, the district of Dhemaji shows promising performance with higher level of achievement rate in completion of the projects. This finding of the rate of progress between the two sample districts does not corroborate our findings under

Table 6.03 here above; which shows that the rate of completion in the Sibsagar district is far above that of the Dhemaji district. This may be attributed to two reasons:

First, figures in Table 6.03 represent only the sample Development Blocks of the two districts under reference; whereas those in Table 6.11 represent the performance of all the Development Blocks of the districts.

Secondly, and of course more importantly, in Dhemaji district, the MGNREGA was introduced in the first phase (2006-07); while in Sibsagar district it came up only in the third phase (2008-09). As the contents in Table 6.11 includes figures from very inception of the programme, naturally the Dhemaji district's performance at the initial stage of the programme are also included which raised the performance level of Dhemaji district high above that of Sibsagar district. In this context it is important to point out that the completion rate during the period 2013-14 & earlier in Dhemaji district was 99.94 per cent (Table 6.11).

The Study conducted on five sample districts of Assam by Agro Economic Research Centre for North East India, Assam Agricultural University (2011) finds that during 2010-11 in all districts of Assam taken together 50,673 works were started, out of which only 5,797 projects could be successfully completed on time thereby making the rate of success at 11.44 per cent only. The study also finds that in Dhemaji district out of the 2,610 projects taken up; only 363 could be completed in time thereby forming 13.91 per cent of the total projects taken up. Contrary to this, in Kokhrajhar district, which started the national programme in the first phase (2006-07) together with Dhemaji district, could successfully complete 2,898 projects out of the total of 10,728 started thereby registering a success rate of 27.01 per cent. Similarly, in Lakhimpur, another flood prone district (like that of Dhemaji) and started the programme in the first phase (2006-07), only 48 out of the 1591 projects could be completed in time thereby making the success rate of 3.02 per cent.

Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Centre, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore in its Study (2013) on 80 districts spread over in 16 selected states in India finds that up to October 2013, out of the all categories of works, Water Conservation was the leading activity and accounts for 24.00 per cent of the total works taken up during the period. This was followed by Rural Connectivity (17.00%), Provision of Irrigation (14.00 %), Draught Proofing (13.00%), Land Development (10.00%), Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies and Micro Irrigation (6.00 % each) and Flood Control (3.00%). The study also finds that up to December 2012, a total of 1 crore projects were completed and around 2.9 crore ongoing. Thus, out of total 4 crore projects taken up under the MGNREGA throughout the country, around 30.00 per cent were completed and the rest 70.00 per cent were in progress.

Singh (2013) in her study finds that during the year 2011-12 (up to December'12) around 71 lakh works were undertaken in India; of which 60.00 per cent relate to Water Conservation, 12.00 per cent for Provision of Irrigation facility to land owned by SC/ ST/ BPL, IAY beneficiaries, Small farmers or Marginal farmers as defined in Agriculture Debt waiver & Debt Relief schemes or beneficiaries under the ST and other traditional forest dwellers (Recognition of Forests Right) Act. 2006, 17.00 per cent Rural Connectivity and 8.00 per cent for Land Development.

Another study conducted by Shukla & Kumar (2014) in Uttar Pradesh observes that Rural Connectivity has the dominant figure in respects of works and expenditures under MGNREGS in Uttar Pradesh. The study spotted that about 50.00 per cent of the expenditure was concentrated on Rural Connectivity; while the three other important sectors viz. Water Conservation, Land Development and Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies consists about 25.00 per cent in the Financial Year 2011-12 in Uttar Pradesh. The study also brought into light that in Uttar Pradesh every financial year from 2008-09 to 2010-11 more than 80.00 per cent of the

works started were successfully completed; while in the year 2011-12 the rate of completion was 78.19 per cent.

The study conducted by Mishra (2011) in three districts of Madhya Pradesh finds that close to 85.00 per cent of the sample workers agree that creation of assets in individual land are required. The study observes that most of the 1414 respondents were of the opinion that without MGNREGA creation of assets on individual land would have been difficult. On the basis this field investigation the study realized that MGNREGA has helped individuals in creating assets in their own lands; which would have been difficult for them. The study also observes that such assets created on individual lands are very useful to the poor villagers.

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