OPEN ACCESS

An Empirical Study on the Implementation of MGNREGA at the Grassroots Level in Arunachal Pradesh

Dr. Lige Sora[1]*, Keselo Tayang[1], Mope Potom[1],

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Arunachal Pradesh University, Hill-Top, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh – 791103

*Corresponding author: Dr. Lige Sora

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Arunachal Pradesh University, Hill-Top, Pasighat, Arunachal Pradesh – 791103

Abstract	Original Research Article

A study on implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was conducted in East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh. A total of 360 respondents were included in the study. The primary data were collected from the 20 villages, and from each village, 18 respondents were interviewed with the help of structured schedule. A composite compliance and non-compliance index was constructed on a scale of 0 to 100 by using set of 19 key indicators prescribed under MGNREGA norms. Further, each indicator scored was measured on a binary scale, assigning a score of 1 for compliance and 0 for non-compliance. A benchmark level of 75% compliance was adopted to denote proper implementation and below this level indicates poor implementation. To examine whether the observed level of compliance differed significantly from the benchmark, a One-Sample t-Test was used. The study found that the MGNREGA is partially implementing in the study area.

Keywords: Women empowerment, Compliance, Gram Panchayat, Unemployment Allowance, Safety Tools.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2005, a landmark livelihood security welfare programme was introduced in India which is prominently known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The programme envisaged to provide 100 days of wage employment every financial year to rural households in India. Henceforth, MGNREGA plays vital role in employment generation particularly in rural areas where majority of the population lives (Banik *et al*., 2021). The programme has also contributed significantly to increase the household income levels (Singh, 2018; Kaur 2022) which directly strengthen expenditure power (Verman & Kumar, 2025) and enhanced standard of living (Farooqi & Saleem, 2015; Jayanta *et al*., 2012).

Apart from aforementioned benefits, women empowerment is one of the distinguished features of MGNREGA. The scheme provides rural women an opportunity to earn. It has given them the authority on the decision about the utilisation of money received through the scheme, thereby improving the social and economic empowerment of women in rural areas (Rajalakshmi & Selvam, 2017). Likewise, the positive impact of this programme can be seen in the agricultural production, livestock, fisheries, flood management and many more. Furthermore, the migration has reduced to some extent due to alternative employment opportunities (Singh, 2016).

However, several studies found inefficiencies in its implementation. The lower wage and employment less than 100 days are common contention found in many studies which shows clear violation of guidelines as enacted under MGNREGA programme (Parul, 2025). Some researcher also found unproductive work being taken up under this programme and its distribution, poor planning, inefficient implementation, lack of coordination, and inadequate human resources (Kumar, 2019). Such drawbacks act as an impediment to the full potential implementation of MGNREGA.

Similar drawbacks are commonly found in the North-Eastern states of India (Bose & Bhowmik, 2019; Lalthanmawaii, 2018; Kumar & Shobana, 2025; Pongen, 2021; Zirliankimi *et al*., 2024; Dkhar *et al*., 2017; Diengdoh, 2024; Lali, 2021; Ramya, 2018; Kalita, 2017; Roy *et al*., 2012). In the case of Arunachal Pradesh, implementation is poor because of inefficient governance and political will (Bose & Bhowmik, 2019). The majority of the beneficiaries are unaware about how MGNREGA functions and this leads to further

misappropriation of system (Lali, 2021). Even some studies found that there is no significant difference in socio-economic attributes of the beneficiaries before and after being employed in MGNREGA. The income pattern and expenditure remained almost same as the days of employment is very less than what MGNREGA recommends (Koyu, 2018).

Although MGNREGA has a strong institutional and legal framework, however, how well laid down norms are being implemented at the grassroots level determined the success of this programme. The programme is said to be effectively executing in the grass roots level if it ensure timely job card issuance, non-charging of fees, employment within the allotted time, 100 days of work and timely disbursement of salary. Any departure from these entitlements not only compromises the goals but also damages the reputation as a rights-based employment initiative of MGNREGA. Therefore, this study will inspect the implementation of MGNREGA at the grassroots level in Arunachal Pradesh with reference to the East Siang District.

East Siang district is one of the most significant districts in Arunachal Pradesh and often regarded as the "gateway to the state" due to its location along the Assam border. As per the 2011 Census, East Siang had a population of 99,214, out of which 71,579 persons lived in rural areas and 26,635 persons in urban areas. The district has a mix of plain areas suitable for wet rice cultivation and hilly terrain where shifting cultivation is still practiced. Agriculture is the principal occupation, though wage labour, petty trade and government service are alternative sources of household income. The subsistence agriculture, concentration of maximum population in rural areas and geographical remoteness are the socio-economic features of East Siang district. Thus, the present topic has immense relevance in the study area. Instance, while demand for work under MGNREGA has declined in many parts of India since pandemic years, however, East Siang district in particular and Arunachal Pradesh as whole has shown a continuous upward trend in work demand and employment generation under the scheme. In 2020-21, 2.79 lakh households demanded jobs compared to 2.34 lakh households in the last financial year (Hindustan Times, 2024). This increase suggests a growing reliance on the scheme for livelihood security in the absence of sufficient private or agricultural employment opportunities.

II. HYPOTHESIS
H₀: *MGNREGA is not properly implemented at the grassroots level in the study area*
H₁: *MGNREGA is properly implementing at the grassroots level in the study area*

III. METHODOLOGY

The present study is based on the primary data. Cochran's sample size formula was used to determine the sample size. As per the formula, 384 samples were supposed to include in this study but due to lack of reliability and accuracy, the final sample size were restricted to 360 respondents. The primary data were collected from twenty (20) villages, and from each village 18 sample population were surveyed. Further, with the help of statistic tools, a composite compliance index was constructed based on the prescribed norms under MGNREGA. In order to examine the compliance and non-compliance of legally enacted norms under this programme, nineteen (19) key indicators were purposefully examined to quantitatively measure the level of implementation at the grass roots level in the study area.

The composite index of compliance and non-compliance of an individual was constructed by applying the formula given as;

$$Individual\ Mean\ Compliance\ Index_i = \frac{1}{k}\sum_{j=1}^{k} C_{ij}$$

Where,
C_{ij} = compliance with norm j by household i
k = number of MGNREGA norms

This approach offers a percentage based assessment of compliance and non-compliance. With a Compliance Index of 100% signifying full adherence and Non-Compliance Index of 100% indicating complete non-compliance.

Similarly, the Mean Compliance Index is calculated as;

$$Mean\ Compliance\ Index_i = \frac{1}{n}\sum_{j=1}^{n} C_{ij}$$

Where, $n = 360$

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows a composite assessment of compliance and non-compliance with legitimate norms prescribed under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). It shows a mixed pattern of compliance, that is, some administrative procedures have quite strong adherence, while the majority of beneficiary oriented entitlements have very high levels of non-compliance.

It also reveals that the compliance levels are very high in the case of planning and approval of works by Gram Sabha (100%), mode of wage payment through bank/post office accounts (99.4%), maintenance of muster rolls at worksites (99.2%), worksite inspection by supervisors (97.2%), authority responsible for job card issued (81.7%), free for issuance of job cards (94.4%),

and worksite radius within 5 km (95.6%). These findings suggest that formal and documentation based requirements of MGNREGA are largely followed in the study area which indicates procedural compliance at the institutional level.

In contrast, the vital indicators which directly affect the workers' livelihood security show higher levels of non-compliance. Instances, job card issuance within 7 days (89.4%), provision of employment within 15 days (90.3%), provision of unemployment allowance (99.7%), availability of crèche facilities (100%), first-aid facilities at worksites (99.2%), availability of shade (98.1%), safety tools and materials (95.8%), drinking water facilities (84.4%), total working days (74.7%),

wage payment within 15 days (69.1%), and grievance redressal mechanism (69.1%). The aforementioned indicate systemic failure in service delivering mechanism, especially related to timely employment, worker welfare, and social security provisions.

Further, it also reveals that the mean compliance level is 42% and the non-compliance level is 58%. This clearly indicates that more than half of the prescribed MGNREGA norms are being violated on average in the study area. Furthermore, if we compare the mean values then the dominance of non-compliance provides strong empirical evidence that MGNREGA is not being properly implemented at the grassroots level.

Table 1: Composite Index of Compliance and Non-compliance

Sl. No.	Description	Laid down norms under MGNREGA	Level Compliance	Level of Non-Compliance
1	Authority responsible for allotment of Job Card	Gram Panchayat	81.7	18.3
2	Fee for obtaining job card	Free of cost	94.4	5.6
3	Time taken to obtain Job Card after the submission of an application	Within 7 Days	10.6	89.4
4	Total Working Days	100	25.3	74.7
5	Time taken to provide Job after the submission of an application	Within 15 Days	9.7	90.3
6	Provision of unemployment allowance in case of failure to provide work	Yes	0.3	99.7
7	Radius of Working site	Within 5 Km	95.6	4.4
8	Planning and Approval of Works Under MGNREGA	Gram Shaba	100	0
9	Safety tools and materials at work site	Implementing agency	4.2	95.8
10	Maintenance of Muster Roll at worksite	Maintain	99.2	0.8
11	Provision of drinking water at worksite	Provided	15.6	84.4
12	Availability of shade at worksite	Provided	1.9	98.1
13	Availability of first-aid facilities	Provided	0.8	99.2
14	Provision Crèche facility at the work site	Provided	0	100
15	Provision of caretakers who have 5 or more children at the Worksite	Provided	0.3	99.7
16	Wage Payment Basis	within 15 days	31.9	69.1
17	Mode of wage payment	bank/post office account	99.4	0.6
18	Grievance Redressal System for MGNREGA Workers	Yes	31.9	69.1
19	Worksite Inspection by Supervisors	Regular	97.2	2.8
Mean Value (μ)			42	58

Source: field survey (August-October 2025)

V. Hypothesis Testing

A null hypothesis was formulated that the *MGNREGA is not properly implemented at the grassroots level in the study area* to examines the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) at the grassroots level in the study area.

A composite compliance score was constructed on a scale of 0 to 100 by taking set of 19 key indicators laid down under MGNREGA. The key indicators covering job card issuance, job card issuance from the date of an application, 100 days employment, days taken to provide job from the date of an application, fees for job card, unemployment allowance, wage payment, distance of worksite from the beneficiaries residence,

approval of work, availability of safety tools, maintenance of muster roll at worksite, provision of drinking water at worksite, provision of shade at worksite, provision of first aids at worksite, provision of creche at worksite, provision of caretaker at worksite, basis of payment, mode of payment, grievances, and worksite inspection. Further, each indicator was scored on a binary scale that is 1 for compliance and 0 for non-compliance.

A benchmark of 75% compliance was adopted which denotes proper implementation and below this level indicates poor implementation. Further, to examine whether the observed level of compliance differs significantly from the benchmark, a One-Sample t-Test was used.

Table 1 reveals that the compliance levels are very high in the case of planning and approval of works by Gram Sabha (100%), mode of wage payment through bank/post office accounts (99.4%), maintenance of muster rolls at worksites (99.2%), worksite inspection by supervisors (97.2%), authority responsible for job card issued (81.7%), free for issuance of job cards (94.4%), and worksite radius within 5 km (95.6%). These findings suggest that formal and documentation based requirements of MGNREGA are largely followed in the

study area which indicates procedural compliance at the institutional level.

In contrast, the vital indicators which directly affect the workers' livelihood security show higher levels of non-compliance. Instances, job card issuance within 7 days (89.4%), provision of employment within 15 days (90.3%), provision of unemployment allowance (99.7%), availability of crèche facilities (100%), first-aid facilities at worksites (99.2%), availability of shade (98.1%), safety tools and materials (95.8%), drinking water facilities (84.4%), total working days (74.7%), wage payment within 15 days (69.1%), and grievance redressal mechanism (69.1%). The aforementioned indicate systemic failure in service delivering mechanism, especially related to timely employment, worker welfare, and social security provisions.

Table 1 also reveals that the mean compliance level is 42% and the non-compliance level is 58%. This clearly indicates that more than half of the prescribed MGNREGA norms are being violated on average in the study area. Furthermore, if we compare the mean values then the dominance of non-compliance provides strong empirical evidence that MGNREGA is not being properly implemented at the grassroots level.

Table 2: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Compliance Score	360	42.11	7.38	.389

Source: field survey (August-October 2025)

After runned the test in SPSS software, the results indicate that the mean level of compliance with MGNREGA norms in the study area is 42.11%, which is substantially below the acceptable benchmark of 75% (Table 2).

The huge negative t-value and the highly significant p-value ($p < 0.001$) signify a substantial and

statistically strong deviation from the expected level of implementation. The mean difference of -32.89 % points, along with a narrow confidence interval that does not include zero which confirmed that the gap between legal provisions and actual field level implementation is large and consistent across the sample (Table 3).

Table 3: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 75					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Compliance Score	-84.562	359	.000	-32.89474	-33.66	-32.13

Source: field survey (August-October 2025)

Since the observed mean compliance score is significantly lower than the benchmark, the empirical evidence supports the null hypothesis. Therefore, the study fails to reject the null hypothesis. Thus, one-sample t-test results indicate that *MGNREGA is not properly implemented at the grassroots level in the study area*.

VI. CONCLUSION
The MGNREGA guidelines mandate that the job card should be issued within next seven days from the date of received of an application. However, present study found that 89.4% non-compliance level in this regards. Therefore, digitisation, time bound facilitation and accountability of delay should be delegated by the State Government and strictly enforce.

Clear violation of guidelines is also observed in the case of 100 days of employment which is the heart of this welfare programme. It was found 74.7% non-compliance in the study area. In this regards, government must provide adequate fund on time to the implementing agency. The study observed inadequacy of fund is the main bottleneck to the violation of 100 days of employment.

The district and block administrators must ensure their proactive participation to ensure proper implementation of this programme. Rely only on Gram Panchayat will not ensure the proper implementation of this employment programme. Job must be provided within 15 days from the date of received of an application as envisaged under MGNREGA guidelines.

Provision of unemployment allowance under this programme must strictly enforce. The primary data revealed that 74.7% beneficiaries were denied of 100 days of employment. However, only 0.3% got the unemployment allowance.

Likewise, grievance redressal system play vital role to the successful implementation of this programme. Therefore, it should be made easily accessible to the beneficiaries with time bound redressal.

The agency must impart adequate awareness to the beneficiaries regarding the provisions envisaged under this programme. Lack of awareness among the beneficiaries was observed during the field survey. The said programme would be more effective if the beneficiaries are fully informed about the benefits and entitlement under this welfare programme.

Thus, the study concludes that MGNREGA is partially implementing in the East Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Acknowledgement

REFERENCES
- Angad, A. (2024, December 10). MGNREGS demand declines elsewhere, rises in Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh. *Hindustan times*. Retrieved from https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/mgnregs-demand-declines-elsewhere-rises-in-maharashtra-arunachal-pradesh-101733850200454.html
- Banik, N., Ghosh, B., & Choudhury, R. R. (2021). Impact of MGNREGA on labour wage rate dynamics in India. *Regional Statistics, 11*(1).
- Bose, P., & Bhowmik, I. (2019). MGNREGS in North Eastern States of India: An Efficiency Analysis Using Data Envelopment Analysis. *Social Change and Development, 16*(1), 73-89.
- Diengdoh, C. V. D. (2021). Development Through Participatory Governance: MGNREGA in Meghalaya. *India International Centre Quarterly*, *48*(3/4), 47–61.
- Dkhar, D. S., Tripathi, A. K., Roy, A., Saravanan, R., & Singh, N. U. (2017). MGNREGA: A Paradigm Shift in Employment and Income Generation in Meghalaya. *Indian Journal of Hill Farming, 30*(01), 110-115.
- Farooqi, S. A., & Saleem, I. (2015). Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on the Life of Women Living under Poverty-A Study of District Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. *Pacific business review international, 8*(4), 9-16.
- Grover, P. (2025). *Performance evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): A study of the northern region of India* [Doctoral dissertation, Punjabi University]. Shodhganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/651076
- Jayanta Roy, J. R., Gowda, K. N., Lakshminarayan, M. T., & Anand, T. N. (2012). Impact of MGNREGA on standard of living of beneficiaries in Dhalai District of Tripura State. *Mysore J. Agric. Sci, 46*(3), 634-638.
- Kalita, H. (2017). *Impact of MGNREGA on the living condition of rural poor: A study in Barpeta and Marigaon districts* [Doctoral dissertation, Gauhati University]. Shodhganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/208466
- Kaur, T. (2022). *Employment of rural women through MGNREGA: A case study of Haryana* [Doctoral dissertation, Panjab University]. Shodhganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/501282
- Koyu, B., Sarkar, A., Singh, R., & Singh, R. (2018). Comparative Assessment between Beneficiaries and Non-beneficiaries of MGNREGA in Arunachal Pradesh: A Case of Two Districts. *Advances in Research, 15*(3), 1-8.
- Kumar, J. S., & Shobana, D. (2025). MGNREGA in Nagaland: An Evaluation of Employment Outcomes and Inclusion Gaps. *Journal of Development Economics and Management Research Studies (JDMS), 12*(26), 14-21.
- Kumar, M. (2019). MGNREGA: Issues and Challenges in Implementation in India. *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society, 21*(1).
- Lali, M. (2021). MGNREGA in Arunachal Pradesh: Issues and Challenges. *Quest Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, 9*(4), 62-65.
- Lalthanmawaii. (2018). *Performance of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: A special reference to the tribal people in Serchhip*

district, Mizoram [Doctoral dissertation, The Gandhigram Rural Institute]. Shodhganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/255475

- Pongen, M. (2021). Implementation of MGNREGS in Mokokchung district Nagaland: Issues and challenges. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance, 3*(1), 2-16.
- Rajalakshmi, V., & Selvam, V. (2017). Impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment and their issues and challenges: a review of literature from 2005 to 2015. *The journal of internet banking and commerce, 22*(57), 1-13.
- Ramya, D. T. (2018). MGNREGA Vis-à-Vis tribal livelihoods: A study in Kurung Kumey district of Arunachal Pradesh. *Space and Culture, India, 6*(3), 156-169.
- Singh, K. (2018). *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: A case study of Block Nalagarh, Himachal Pradesh* [Doctoral dissertation, Panjab University]. Shodhganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/539474
- Singh, S. (2016). *Performance of MGNREGA in sustainable livelihood of rural community in District Pauri Garhwal, Uttarakhand* [Doctoral dissertation, Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna Garhwal University]. Shodhganga. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10603/541750
- Zirliankimi, P. P., Lalremruata, R. T. C., & Lalengzama, C. (2024). Impact of MGNREGS: Perception across gender and socio-economic status at Bazar community, Lawngtlai, Mizoram. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation, 5*(1):534-536.