



Status Report on Convergence Initiatives of MGNREGA in India



M.V. Rao
K. Hanumantha Rao

C. Dheeraja
Saurabh Kumar



April 2010

Centre for Wage Employment and Poverty Alleviation
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500030

Vision

The vision of NIRD is to focus on the policies and programmes that benefit the rural poor, strive to energise the democratic decentralisation processes, improve the operation and efficiency of Rural Development personnel, promote transfer of technology through its social laboratories, technology park, and create environmental awareness.

As a “think-tank” for the Ministry of Rural Development, the NIRD, while acting as a storehouse of information on rural development, would assist the Ministry in policy formulation and choice of options in rural development to usher in change.

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Preface

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act presently re-christened as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aims at provision of livelihood security to the poor and strengthening of natural resource base in the rural areas. The creation of productive and durable assets is expected to ignite the growth prospects in the agriculture sector which is the main lifeline of the rural people. Some of the assets created under MGNREGS are not found to be durable (60:40 wage material ratio has been repeatedly pointed out as one of the key determinants affecting quality and durability of the assets). In order to realise higher rate of return for the investments made through MGNREGS, Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) evolved guidelines for convergence of MGNREGS with the programmes and schemes of other Ministries, namely, Ministry of Agriculture (Indian Council for Agricultural Research – ICAR), Ministry of Forest and Environment and Ministry of Water Resources. It was also envisaged to have convergence among the programmes of the MoRD. These convergence initiatives are aimed at resource pooling, technology transfer and value addition.

On an experimental basis, 168 pilot projects have been undertaken in 115 districts across 22 States during 2009. These pilot projects are expected to yield a wide range of outcomes including restoring ecological balance and acting as a coping mechanism for tiny farmers to overcome the adverse effects of monsoon failure. It is also anticipated that productive technology transfer will take place to enhance the total productivity factor in agriculture and allied activities. In the recent past, several local initiatives for convergence of development programmes have also been taken up by the various development agencies and officials. These need to be systematically studied to map the outcomes and also to learn lessons for wider adoption of some of these good practices.

At the suggestion of MoRD, NIRD has taken up a nation-wide study to assess the status of the convergence pilots and also some of the successful local initiatives. Several teams visited 115 districts during November – December 2009 and collected information based on which State-specific documents have been

prepared. In order to share some of these innovative experiments with wider range of development professionals, NIRD has prepared a status report on convergence initiatives. We hope this will be useful to all the development functionaries at the district and field levels to draw insights and motivate them to experiment with new ideas leading to sustainable development even while strengthening the rural community. It is our hope that in the near future, the Gram Sabha will emerge as the common platform for convergence planning and strengthen the democratic process.

Hyderabad



(Mathew C Kunnumkal)
Director General, NIRD

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We thank all the DPCs and district level officials of NREGS who have provided all information regarding the convergence initiatives in their districts.

The faculty members of NIRD and the students of the Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management visited various parts of the country for collecting information on various convergence pilots at short notice. We sincerely express our thanks to all of them.

Dr. P. Durgaprasad, Professor & Head (CPGS) has provided support throughout the study and has taken the trouble of going through the manuscripts and helped us in enriching the quality of the report through his valuable comments. We would like to place on record our deep gratitude to him.

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Team Members

Teams of Faculty and PGDRDM Students involved in the Study

Sl. No	Name of the State	Name of the Dist.	Name of the Faculty	Name of the PGDRDM Student
1	Andhra Pradesh	Karimnagar Kurnool Nalgonda Chittor Khammam Mahaboobnagar Medak Kadapa	All faculty members involved in the study	All PGDRDM students involved in the study
2	Arunachal Pradesh	Pumpumpare East Siang	Dr PC Sikligar	Arunabh Kumar
3	Assam	Bongaigaon North Lakhimpur Darang NC Hills	Dr Kanak Holai	Gourav Saikia Jonty Chetia
4	Bihar	Vaishali Muzaffarpur Gopalganj Saran Gaya Nawada Jamui Aurangabad	Dr Jacob George Mr Prasanth	Chandra Bhushan Kumar Chandra Prakash Lalan Kumar Singh Mukesh Kumar
5	Chhattisgarh	Surguja Bastar Kabirdham Raj Nandgaon Raipur Dantewada	Dr Satyanarayana Mr Saurabh	Prabhat Kumar Rajeev Ranjan Kumar Rakesh Kumar

6	Gujarat	Dahod Dang Banaskantha Sabarkantha Kutch	Dr Rizwana Dr S N Rao Dr Yadappanavar	Sonam Dalai Selkholun Khongsai Sushil Sharma
7	Himachal Pradesh	Kangra Solan Mandi Sirmaur	Dr Annamalai	Rachit Ahuja Rahul Kumar
8	Jharkhand	East Singhbhum Chatra Koderma Gumla Palamu Deoghar Jamtara	Dr Suresh Babu Ms Dhanyasree Mr V.Vijaykumar	Ashwin Abhishek Kumar Mukesh Ranjan
9	Karnataka	Gulbarga Gadag Hassan Chikmagalur Kolar Shimoga Tumkur	Dr P.Purushotham Narayana Dr Jayalakshmi	Swamy.R.S Charlesharshavardhan Sirivella Srilatha Marri
10	Kerala	Malappuram Palakkad Thiruvanthapuram Wayanad	Ms Leelavathi Ms CH Sreelakshmi	Brijesh Babu T
11	Madhya Pradesh	Mandla Jhabua Betul Sehore Panna Dewas	Dr N.V.Madhuri Ms C.Dheeraja	Somit Pal Vijay Kumar

12	Manipur	Thoubal Churachandpur	Ms Antaripa	Naorem Kirankumar T S Haokip
13	Meghalaya	West Garo Hills Ri-bhoi	Dr Datta	Ninia Julia
14	Maharashtra	Satara Dhule Amaravathi (Durgapura) Nandurbar Akola Pune Nashik	Dr Bidari, Dr K. P. Kumaran Dr B. C. Das	Sumit Chandra Harry Njoka Chipeni Mohammad
15	Orissa	Mayurbhanj Ganjam Bolangir Bargarh Malkangiri	Dr PK Nath D S.R. Moorthy	Alok Kumar Mahapatra Ranjit Mahalik
16	Punjab	Hosiarpur Ropar	Dr R Murugesan	Rajeev Kumar
17	Rajasthan	Ajmer Jalore Dungarpur Hanumangarh Sikar Kota Tonk Jaisalmer Alwar Barmer Bundi Bhilwara Nagaur Udaipur Sawai Madhopur	Dr V. Madhav Rao Dr Solanki Dr Hermon Dr Keshav Rao	Bhagwan Singh Shekhawat Fenisha Sarraf Rakesh Kumar Nagar Satnam Singh Suman Kumari Yadav Vivek Mittal

18	Tamil Nadu	Dindigul Villupuram Kanyakumari Pudukkottai Sivaganga	Dr Chinnadurai Dr Uday Kumar Reddy	Mithilesh Kumar Lala
19	Tripura	Sepahijala	Ms Antaripa	Rezwan Uz Zaman Ahmed
20	Uttar Pradesh	Gonad Chitrakoot Lalitpur Pratapgrah Allahabad Jalaun Jhansi Hardoi Pilibhit Banda Hamirpur Mahoba Orai Auraiya	Dr Venkatadri Dr Vijay Kumar Mr Rohit Joshi	Chandrakanth Manish Chandra Prabal Chatterjee Ranjita Singh Selkholun Khongsai Sushil Sharma
21	Uttarakhand	Champawat Nainital Uttarkashi Pauri	Dr Bhaskar Rao Dr Ramaiah	Sunil Mapwal Rohit Pandey
22	West Bengal	Bankura Burdwan Birbhum Purulia South 24 Paraganas	Dr Satish Chandra Dr Krishna Pd. Mukherjee	Sayantan Sarkar Suman Biswas Sonam Dalai

Status Report on Convergence Initiatives of MGNREGA

Introduction

The Parliament enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005, now rechristened as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to use financial and legal instruments to address the challenges of unemployment and poverty. The Act is an unprecedented initiative in the annals of rural development in the country as it guarantees livelihood security to the rural households. The massive financial allocation for the MGNREGA is of immense significance in the context of the widespread rural distress, pervasive unemployment and persistent poverty in the countryside. The legal entitlements to the workers mark a transition from a supply employment driven programme to a demand driven one and thereby making the development delivery system responsive and accountable. It aims at creation of assets mainly benefiting the agriculture sector even while enhancing the livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country. This is proposed to be achieved by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage-employment in a year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The durable and quality assets generated under MGNREGS are expected to ensure a steady flow of income and employment to the rural people, especially, the poorer sections. Convergence of line departments and agencies with the NREGS would offer wider range of activities to achieve this objective. The convergence framework suggested by the MoRD, GoI offers ample scope for value addition which would also result in greater benefits to the poor. Linkage with activities like Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and National Horticulture Mission (NHM) will broaden the scope of NREGS works.

Why Convergence

The Central and State Governments have been spending huge amounts of billion rupees for the development of rural areas and improving the living conditions of the people. Several programmes have been launched to achieve these objectives.

It is to be noted that many programmes planned and executed by different ministries / departments/agencies have almost similar objectives and targeting the same groups/areas. This duplicity of efforts has been resulting in wastage of resources and failure to achieve synergies. Further, the evaluation studies have been critical of the leakages, inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of the programme designs and implementation of the rural development programmes. Lack of transparency, use of obsolete technologies, lack of coordination among agencies, non-participation of the target groups in planning and execution, lack of qualified personnel in adequate numbers and top-down approaches have been identified as some of the major determinants of the sub-optimal use of the scarce resources. The present levels of poverty, unemployment, food insecurity and environmental degradation are the outcomes of non-convergent and non-participatory planning processes. Other areas of concern are adoption of less productive technologies and limited institutional capacities. This is unacceptable and development planning process should be sensitive to these challenges.

It is to be noted that, in the past, attempts have been made by some departments, officials and institutions to overcome some of the above mentioned constraints. However, these efforts are isolated and sporadic and organised attempts are needed to institutionalise the same. Such initiatives have paved way for the emergence of 'convergence planning' concept and this planning process aims at achieving maximum and sustainable benefits (outcomes) to community and the poor from various development programmes. This is possible by pooling human, capital and technical resources in an organised and participatory manner for convergent action by all the stakeholders.

How Convergence

The convergence planning can achieve multiple goals such as maximisation of returns from the investment, promotion of public private-community partnerships, sustainable development, meeting the unmet needs of the community and emergence of good governance. The instruments include pooling of resources, both human and capital, transfer of productive and eco-friendly and technologies and value addition through provision of backward and forward linkages. The 'how' part is described below.

- a) Goal Congruence among the stakeholders – the achievement of objectives without compromising on essential conditionalities of the converging programmes will form the bottom line of partnership(s). The discussions would facilitate realisation among the stakeholders that convergence approach would help everyone to realise the common goal of poverty reduction and creation of quality and durable assets.
- b) Local needs, problems and other issues – Bottom-up approach has been the hallmark of decentralisation. People's participation in planning and implementation of development programmes would provide more space to the socially and economically disadvantaged in the decision making and assigning priorities. The participatory planning process is expected to identify the local needs and problems and the convergence planning and implementation will ensure that the goals are fulfilled.
- c) Identifying potential areas/activities/schemes for convergence: The existing perspective/annual plans of various schemes in the selected area will be studied and discussed in the district/block level consultations to address the identified needs.
- d) Technical knowhow and administrative guidance – Top-down approach in dissemination of technical knowledge is usually followed in practice but the characteristics of the technology should address the concerns of the functionaries as well as the community.

Since technical upgradation or introduction of appropriate technologies is envisaged as an integral part of the convergence planning, the characteristics and consequences including risks, if any have to be shared with all the partners. The convergence process is an opportunity to the technical institutes to reorient their R&D activities so as to make them relevant to field problems.

- e) Activity – Time chart (Gnatt chart) for programmes/schemes converging and re-alignment: knowledge of the activities which will be taken up during the project time-frame under the programmes considered for convergence is a pre-requisite for all partner agencies. The Gnatt charts can be super imposed with special reference to the activities identified for convergence and also

those which need advanced technical input(s). The discussions on the timing, duration, fund and manpower requirements to execute the tasks and processes to be adopted and also the (specific) functionaries to be associated will help in working out the action plan.

- f) Role clarity among stakeholders - The above exercise has twin advantages of bringing greater role clarity among the functionaries and also appreciation of the relevance of others' role. Such participatory processes will enhance respect for others while ensuring better coordination among the departments. This also provides an opportunity to resolve the problems / irritants among the stakeholders.
- g) Funds flow consistent with activity – time-frame: Since timely flow of adequate funds has been identified as one of the constraints in execution of projects without time and cost overruns, there is need to have some convergence fund at the district level to advance money in case of delays in release of funds. The quantum of this fund need to be assessed by the district resource group and the Centre and State Governments need to support this.
- h) Consultations with the stakeholder at various levels: The district level proceedings will be shared with the stakeholders of the (pilot) block in the consultative workshop to be held at the block level. If there are specific comments / suggestions, these will be sent to the district resource group chaired by the district collector for consideration. The exercise has to be repeated at GP /Village level. This iterative process will streamline the preparation of action plan for convergence.
- i) New Activity Mapping as per convergence plan – Gantt chart - The consultative workshops should enable the related agencies / departments to prepare the (new) activity mapping and time-frame for collective action as per the outcomes / suggestions emerged in the workshop. This convergence plan should be prepared at the unit of planning which should be the reference point for all the stakeholders associated with implementation of the programmes / schemes.

- j) **Capacity Building:** Since the new working arrangements under convergence demand a new work culture and also different roles for various stakeholders at different levels, the capacities of these functionaries and also community have to be built so that the action plan will be effectively and efficiently implemented. As far as imparting of knowledge inputs including technology is concerned, the functionaries need to be educated on the benefits, costs and risks associated with the new technologies vis-à-vis the technologies in vogue; while the elected members and community need to be informed in a jargon free manner.

Convergence with MGNREGS

In this backdrop, the Ministries of Rural Development (MoRD), Water Resources (MoWR), Agriculture (MoAg) and Environment and Forests (MoEF) have taken initiative and evolved guidelines for convergence of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) with the programmes of the other partner Ministries (see the section on 'General Framework for Convergence').

Creation of durable and quality (community and individual) assets and livelihood security to the rural people are critical issues in rural development. Involvement of community and other stakeholders (including programme implementers) in planning process should be the foci of initiatives of the government.

Convergence through works may be effected in some of the following ways:

- Gap filling through MGNREGS for similar work under the schemes of the department with which convergence is being considered;
- Strengthening of different forms of capital;
- Area Approach;
- Value addition to MGNREGA works;
- Technical support for ensuring quality in planning, selection and execution of MGNREGA works;
- Strengthening of democratic processes

Challenges for Convergence

- The concept of convergence planning lays heavy emphasis on 'bottom-up' approach and convergence should address the basic needs of the primary stakeholder (more so, vulnerable groups). The articulation of their needs by themselves warrants 'facilitation' and 'enablement'. Lack of institutional capacities and pro-poor state policies may hinder the entire participatory process.
- Absence of multi-stakeholder platform for operationalising the concept of 'convergence' is one of the major challenges. The participation of stakeholders and concurrence on the process, roles and responsibilities and (collective) action plan are essential. The participation should lead to identification of common concerns and also help resolving the conflicting interests amicably. Such institutional platform (e.g. Gram Sabha, Office of District Collector) should provide adequate spaces to all stakeholders and ensure that the development process is 'primary stakeholder' centric.
- The compartmental approach of the line departments and 'silo' attitudes of the functionaries are barriers to inter-departmental / agency cooperation and collaboration. The issues of 'control over resources' and 'accountability' become the contesting problems in our existing hierarchical delivery systems. The development functionaries should be sensitised about the new working relations and the work culture. The 'mindset' has to be changed. Lack of role clarity among the stakeholders compounds the problems of coordination.

Pilot Projects

The process of convergence was initiated in 123 districts spread over 22 states. These 168 pilot projects were started with the Departments of Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoE&F) and Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) during 2009 on a pilot basis. The status of these pilots has been studied by NIRD in January, 2010 and the study report has since been published. The report would help the States and MoRD to take necessary action for strengthening the process of convergence. The report documents the details of the pilot projects in the States together with the State initiatives and highlights the

innovative experiments which can be considered for replication, elsewhere. It also shows the lessons learnt in the light of the interactions with the stakeholders. Finally, it offers a suggested roadmap for convergence under MGNREGS. Strengthening of PRIs as well as CBOs have been considered critical to fulfilling the objectives of MGNREGA. The roadmap is expected to address the first generation problems of MGNREGS among others.

Key issues considered in the status study included:

- 1) What type of convergence (financial, institutional, technical, human, material, social, natural and programmatic) has been attempted? How can simultaneous convergence of all these dimensions be achieved?
- 2) How participatory was the process adopted? Whether PRIs or local bodies in particular, have been involved in the planning and implementation of the convergence initiatives?
- 3) What is the scope for achieving multi-sectoral collaboration, given the regional diversity for making a significant contribution to project sustainability and maximisation of benefits?
- 4) What institutional arrangement would ensure identification and selection of convergence projects by the community for wider participation and ownership?
- 5) Why are the successful/innovative projects not being replicated / cannot be replicated? How can convergence planning and action be institutionalised for achieving synergy and optimal use of resources?

Framework for Convergence of MGNREGS with other Development Programmes

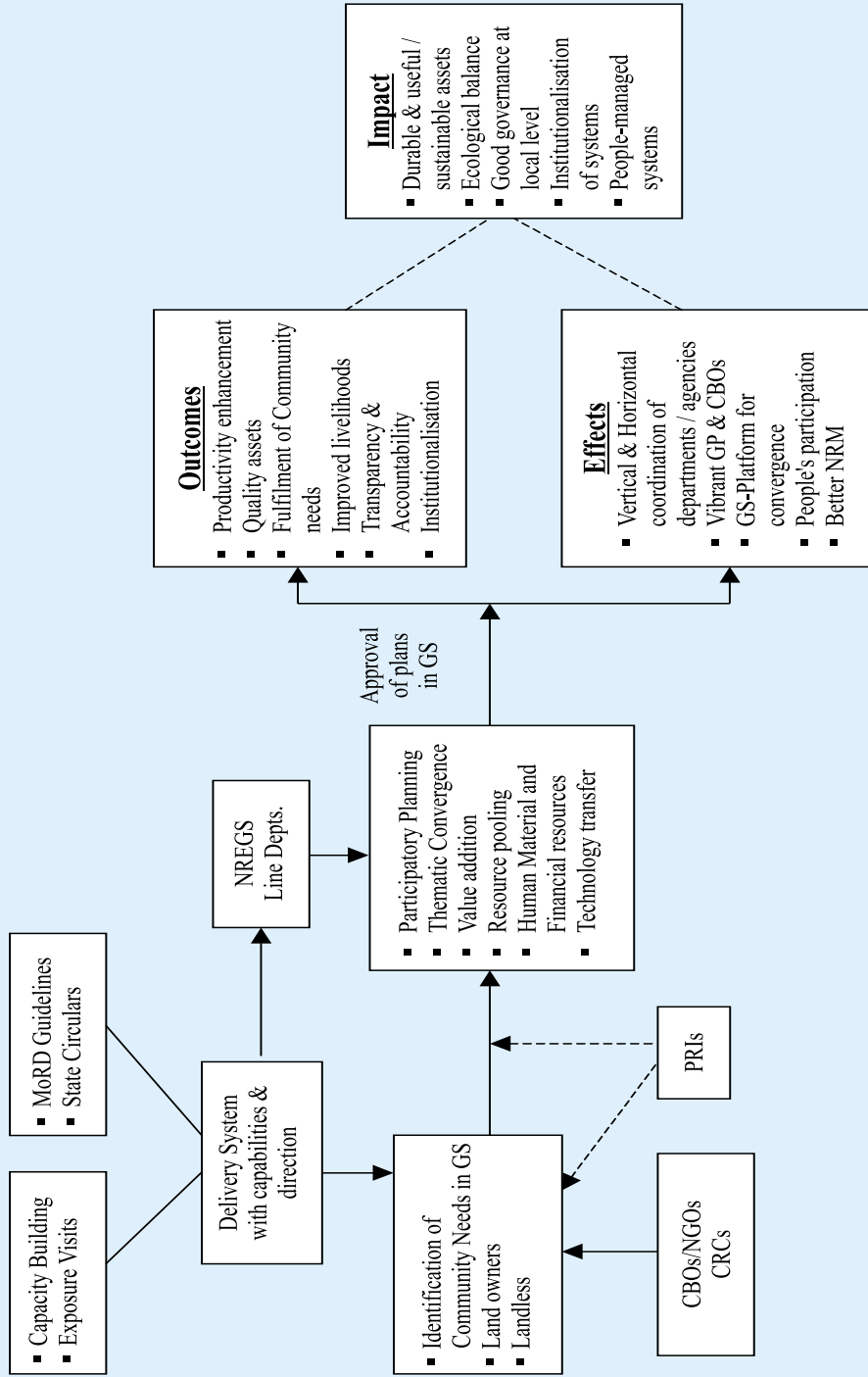
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has been launched to provide 100 days of guaranteed employment at minimum wages (of unskilled agriculture workers) to ensure livelihood security to the poor in rural areas. To ensure the same, eight categories of works dealing with land, water and forest resources besides rural (road) connectivity have been recommended to generate wage employment on demand. In the process, it was

expected that agriculture and allied activities would become more productive and the farmers would be able to cope with the challenges posed by the nature. The convergence of related sectoral and line departments with the MGNREGS can be construed as an opportunity to achieve the avowed objectives of MGNREGA besides overcoming the livelihood challenges.

The 'rights' based programme, the first of its kind in the country, comprises mandatory features like payment within 15 days and non-negotiables such as no contractors, no use of labour displacing machinery, social audit, wage employment guarantee, unemployment allowance. Furthermore, the people-centric and participatory intervention demands that at least 50 per cent of the works should be planned and executed by the Gram Panchayats (GPs) and Panchayati Raj Institutions. Thus, most of the convergence schemes are required to be planned in consultation with GP and local community and the proposals should be presented and discussed in the Gram Sabha for approval. In the case of works initiated by the departments with intermediate and Zilla Panchayats, the approval and sanction of the District Programme Coordinator is a pre-requisite. Thus, MGNREGS is expected to strengthen PRIs as vibrant units of local governance. The participatory element and demand driven MGNREGS implicitly underscores the importance of community based organisations (CBOs) to facilitate the empowerment of the poor. The Gram Sabha along with GP and CBOs are envisaged as institutional platforms for convergence.

The convergence of line departments or agencies with MGNREGS should ensure that there is no substitution of MGNREGS funds for departmental works and supplementation of funds is desirable. The guidelines jointly evolved by the Central Ministries such as the MoRD, Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR), Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) and Ministry of Agriculture (MoAg.), have provided a broad framework for convergence. The States and districts, in the light of the past experiences of collaborative initiatives with MGNREGS, are encouraged to suggest and modify guidelines to make the convergence projects functional and sustainable across the development sectors and regions.

All the convergence initiatives have to adopt the above framework for achieving multiple goals. Therefore, it is imperative that construction of a convergence scoring or index using key indicators to assess the strengths of each experiment enveloping foregoing features would set a direction to all the stakeholders. This index is not only expected to be used as reference material for convergence planning but also help rank the successful initiatives for consideration of awards of excellence for the NREGS performance.



Area or Unit of Action	Indicator	Score (Tentative)*
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive GP plan with focus on convergence 4 CBOs & GPs as active partners in convergence planning 3 Involvement of GPs in planning 2 Approval of DPC when projects are not presented in Gram Sabha 1 	
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-sectoral planning (with focus on value addition) 3 Long range planning for sustainability 2 Systematic planning (activity-wise, time, resources, and agencies) 1 Type: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund pooling 2 Technical input 1 Social mobilisation 1 Qualitative and durable assets 2 	
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formation of District Resource Groups / Block Resource Group 2 Standing Committees 1 Coordination by MGNREGS related line or sectoral department 1 Use of Muster Rolls and Job Card Holders 1 	
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint Monitoring 2 Monitoring by MGNREGS officials 1 Monitoring by line departments 0 	
Financial Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wage payments through banks/ post offices / CBOs / PRIs 1 Wage payment by cash 0 Payment within 15 days 2 Payment of un-employment allowance 2 	

Social Audit (T&A)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Convergence in departmental participation in Gram Sabha for Social Audit 2 ▪ NREGS officials' participation 1 ▪ People's control over the process 3
Thrust of convergence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Benefits to most vulnerable and deprived people / groups (e.g. primitive tribes) 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Savings and investments 2 o Value addition 2 o Sustainable development 3 ▪ Sustainable development including natural resource regeneration 2 ▪ Social capital 2 ▪ Benefits to SC & ST and other poor 1
Score Range 0 – 19	

*Policies and plans region-wise and sector-wise in terms of priority actions will also be taken into account.

State-wise Status Report on Convergence Initiatives

CHHATTISGARH

Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Kabirdham, Surguja, Dantewada and Bastar districts of the State of Chhattisgarh have been selected for convergence pilots with different departments, working for rural development. The convergence of MoWR schemes with NREGS is envisaged in five districts of Raipur, Rajnandgaon, Kabirdham, Surguja and Bastar. The convergence of the ICAR schemes is expected in Surguja and Bastar districts. Dantewada is selected for convergence with MoE&F schemes.

A few meetings in this context were held by the state level officials for formulating necessary instructions for adherence at district and field level. Our interaction with the officials revealed that the planning process is underway for convergence projects based on the guidelines issued by the GoI. Works in convergence mode with other line departments and schemes have been in place at the state level since 2006. Mainly, the converging departments included Water Resources Department / Irrigation, Forests, Agriculture, Horticulture, Sericulture and Rural Engineering Services. The works in the convergence mode are proposed by the Gram Panchayats and consolidated at the block (Janpad Panchayat) by the CEO and submitted to the Zilla Panchayat for approval.

A few successful and innovative projects, which have been analysed by the NIRD, are presented below as these have potential for wider replication.

Self-reliance of Baiga Tribes through Sericulture

The State and district administration have taken some proactive and innovative steps under the convergence mode. The project is located in the region inhabited by *Baigas*, a Primitive Tribal Group (PTG) and the vision of the project is to make them self-reliant. As a part of the strategy, 10,000 tribals have been imparted training in livelihood security. For instance, in Jhalmala GP of Kabirdham district, a sericulture unit has come up using the funds of NREGS, Sericulture Department and BRGF. An approach road worth Rs.10.97 lakh has been laid with the NREGS funds; land leveling

is also done with NREGS funds. The building for sericulture unit was constructed using BRG funds costing Rs. 17.63 lakh. The sericulture department has posted a Junior Engineer to look after the activities and maintenance of the unit. There is a Stop Dam (Rs.10.80 lakh) constructed nearby, which meets the water requirements of the plantation under NREGS.



Baiga Women with Silk Cocoons



Silk Worm Rearing

Plant Nursery – Vermi-compost Project

In the same district, a plant nursery has been raised and is maintained, utilising the resources of NREGS, Forest Department and SGSY. The cost of Water Bound Macadam (WBM) approach road, land leveling and plantation was borne by the NREGS. The Forest Department helped in raising a nursery worth of Rs. 31.20 lakh. It maintains the nursery and grows plant saplings to be distributed free for plantation. Vermi-compost pits were also constructed, which used the waste material generated by the nursery. This became the source for organic manure for the nursery. The vermi-compost pits came up through the NREGS funds. The pits are now handed over to one SHG (*Jai Narmade Swayam Sahayata Samooh*) of local community. Till date, five lakh plants, one lakh *Sagaun*, two lakh bamboo and two lakh mixed variety have been distributed. Each vermi-compost pit produces 400 Qtl. of compost and is sold at Rs.500/Qtl, resulting in two lakh rupees profit to the SHG per year. This experience has been replicated in nearby GPs also.



Plant Nursery



SHG Members Working in Vermi-compost Pit

Bastar Haat (Eco-tourism)

In Bastar, wasteland has been transformed into a tourist spot called the 'Bastar Haat', using the funds of NREGS, RSVY, SGSY and the 12th Finance Commission. The regional KVK provided the technical expertise.

Agro-Silvi-Horticulture and Soil Conservation Model

A model for uplands and *badies* has been developed in Bastar. This is based on agro-horti-silviculture with soil-water conservation model and inter-cropping. The steps followed in taking up the project included:

1. Soil and Water Conservation – Continuous Contour Trench (SWC-CCT) and Bunding to divide the fields into small pieces (10m width) and for collection of water in the percolation well at the field bottom;
2. Planting of fruit trees (mango, cashew, amla, lemon, litchi, guava);
3. Adoption of indigenous micro-irrigation technique for fruit plants;
4. Planting of multipurpose trees on farm boundary for vegetative fencing, fodder, fuel and green manuring;
5. Inter-cropping of maize, cowpea and vegetables.

This model has evidently helped conserve 6.4t of soil/ha, whereas, 8t of soil / ha loss was recorded from untreated land, as per the district level soil data.

Vegetable Cultivation in Lowland and Utilisation of Harvested Water through the Paddle Operated Pump

A pond of 30 * 30*2.1 mts size was dug for storing the harvested water. A paddle operated low lift pump was provided to the beneficiaries with a capacity to lift 3000-4000 litres/hr from a depth of 10-12 ft. These pumps are user-friendly. Woman or even a child of above 14 yrs of age can operate the pump for



more than 2 ½ hrs/day. The outcome of the intervention can be seen by the fact that vegetable cultivation of cauliflower and cabbage was introduced after planting paddy.

Dryland Cashew Orchards: An Option for Income Generation and Development of Fallow lands in Bastar - A Success Story of DPAP and NREGS

This project was taken up in the financial year 2009-10. Cashew plantation was done on 40 ha. land using the DPAP funds. The maintenance of trees pruning was done with the NREGS funds, for which Rs. four lakh was spent creating 1313 persondays of employment.



Pastureland Development under NAIP and NREGS in Vill.- Bhataguda, Jagdalpur

In this project, NREGS is providing essential inputs like Cattle Protection Trenches (CPT) and Continuous Contour Trenches resulting in creation of 1035 persondays of wage employment.

At the same region, milch animals have been financed to one SHG of local women. It is rearing these cattle using this pastureland for producing milk and other dairy products and selling them in the nearby Jagdalpur market.



MADHYA PRADESH

Six districts, namely, Mandla, Panna, Dewas, Jhabua, Sehore and Betul were identified for convergence with Departments of Water Resources, Forests and Agriculture.

MoWR

Mandla, Panna, Dewas, Jhabua and Betul districts are identified as pilot projects under convergence of NREGS with Water Resources Department (WRD). MP has been a front runner in convergence by formulating sub-schemes like – Sahastradhara, Kapildhara & Bhoomishilp, Shail-Parna, Repair of Minor Tanks, Bunds & Minor Canals. Areas of convergence of WRD and NREGS are :

- Command Area Development & Water Management
- Repair Renovation & Restoration of Water Bodies
- Dug Well Recharge Scheme
- Ground Water Management & Regulation Scheme
- Flood Control & River Management Works

- Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programmes
- Farmers' Participation Action Research Programmes

The State has formulated "SAHASTRADHARA" sub-scheme for the construction of water courses and field channels to carry water from the outlets (to irrigate 40 hectares of land) of the minor canals up to the field.

In Mandla and Panna, convergence with WR is under planning process and in the rest of the districts, it is under implementation. Initially, state level meetings were organised with the converging department of water resources. The process of convergence started in the month of May 2009. At the district level meetings organised by DPC and Addl. DPC, the areas of works that can be taken up under convergence were identified keeping in view different sources of irrigation and potential for irrigation and shortfalls for not providing the optimum irrigation in the district etc. Then as per the identified areas, WRD has been asked to prepare the proposals under the convergence, where the entire funding has been provided from NREGS funds. The implementation is done through WRD with the help of Water Users Associations (WUAs). The musters are maintained by water users associations and proper training is given to them. Preparing the estimates, providing technical support, implementing the project, monitoring of the works and payment of wages are attended by Water Resources Department. Monitoring of the projects and data feeding by online MIS is done by NREGS wing of the rural development department at block level.

MoEF

Only Sehore district is identified as pilot project for convergence with MoEF and the projects in Sehore are in implementing stage. But in Madhya Pradesh there is convergence with MoEF in almost all the districts, where forest land exists. The convergence took place at state level itself where, the fund of NREGS is transferred to Forest Department at the state level, for the works like plantation, protection, fencing and other water conservation works in the forest. Proposals are sent by the district level forest authorities to their state office for the approvals and sanctions. The work is taken up by providing employment to the NREGS workers. So planning,

implementation and monitoring of the work is done by the forest department itself with the funds of NREGS.

ICAR

Mandla and Jhabua districts are identified for pilot convergence with ICAR. Only in Mandla few projects are under implementation and in Jhabua, it is only in the planning stage. Convergence process started from 31 July 2009. The projects under this convergence are proposed, implemented and monitored by KVKs and funds are from NREGS. More focus is on technical inputs given by KVKs. The expected outcomes are increased number of works, as well as type of works and its quality and increased productivity. After convergence, KVK has many opportunities to make successful projects, like release of new variety of seeds.

Convergence with Other Departments

Convergence with PMGSY, PWD, Sericulture and SGSY is also taking place. In PMGSY and PWD the material component is shared by the concerned department and wage component is met under NREGS. Convergence with Sericulture involving SHGs and SGSY funds is a good innovative example in Mandla district.

In Mandla, a convergence project in which the NREGS has collaborated with Sericulture Department, started in May 2008. The tenure of this project is four years (2008 to 2012). The partnering schemes included, SGSY, Utperan Vikas Yojana (state sub-scheme) and SHGs.

Initially, the project has started on government land which has been extended to private lands also. NREGS funds are used for field preparation, planting, weeding, application of fertiliser and pesticide and nursery management while sericulture department provides technical assistance, training and marketing assistance. Drip irrigation is



provided by Central government and sericulture department on 50-50 per cent sharing basis.

For the worm rearing house, the state government gives 25 per cent share under '**Utpreran Vikas Scheme**, **SGSY** gives 25 per cent share and the rest (50 per cent) is shared by the farmers in case of private cultivators. In Mandla district, 12 Mulberry centres and 6 Tasar centers and some private cultivators (e.g., 22 farmers of Rambag village) have come together. This convergence is going on as planned due to good coordination between the departments. Farmers, who adopted sericulture, are in a better position due to higher income from the same piece of land. SHGs are involved in the processing of cocoon to the final product. Two SHGs (all women) are working in sericulture processing unit under the guidance of a sericulture expert.

Value Chain of Silk

Pre Production (NREGS + Sericulture Dept.)	Inputs (NREGS + Sericulture)	Production / Operation (Sericulture Dept. + UVY+ Community)	Value Addition (SGSY SHGs)	Marketing (Sericulture Dept.)
Field preparation	Ranting & Weeding	Nursery Management	Processing	Buy Back arrangement
Project Proposal (Seri)	Labour and Equipments	Technical Knowhow	Reeling	
	Pesticides Fertilisers & Equipments	Rearing house (Sericulture Dept. + UVY+ Community)		
	Drip Irrigation (Seri + NREGS)			

KERALA

The issue of convergence of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS with other programmes is a State driven intervention in Kerala State. Almost 78 per cent of the total land area of the State is under agriculture and human dwellings, and the remaining 22 per cent of the land is under forests and forest plantations. The unemployment rate of the state is also high. However, provision of employment under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS like in other states is a challenge to the administration. Hence, the state administration has taken a decision to identify the manual works of other line departments that fall under eight categories of MGNREGA. As the State has major irrigation projects and forest fringes, initially these two departmental works were taken into consideration to execute the works under MGNREGS. These two departments identified the manual works viz., desilting of canals, digging of elephant trenches, water / fishery ponds, creation of fire lines, development road (connectivity) etc., which are generally taken up by the contractors in the department. To create employment to MGNREGS workers, the State government held a number of discussions with the district collectors and departmental heads and finally decided to engage the MGNREGS workers to take up these works under the supervision of the officials of concerned department and district poverty alleviation unit.

The other important issues in Kerala are agriculture productivity and eco-restoration. Hence, agriculture department has also been taken into consideration to take up works like soil–water conservation, land development, horticulture, skill development, and farm machinery usage (through KVKs) under MGNREGS. The State also created some fund towards eco-restoration of river banks. MGNREGS workers have been engaged in these works to provide employment.

The line departments will identify the works to be taken under MGNREGS and put before the Ward Sabhas for discussion and incorporation in the GP NREGS plan. Based on Gram Sabha recommendation the GP will approve the works. Generally, GP is having all departmental officials who will prepare the technical estimations. For forest works the department of forest will prepare the technical estimations and submit to GP for getting necessary administrative sanctions from the DPC. The line departments have restricted their regular tender procedures and involvement

of contractors only to material oriented works. All works that can be taken up manually are being proposed under MGNREGS.

When the demand from NREGS workers arise, the GP will give the work order to the concerned line department to execute the work and direct the workers to participate in it. The workers will do the work under the supervision of line department officials and GP overseer. The line department officials will submit a certificate for the work completed along with muster rolls for each fortnight. The NREGS functionary at GP level will verify the same and place them before the GP for necessary approval. After GP's approval, the wage amount will be deposited in the individual worker's SB A/c. In the entire process of work execution, GP is playing a major role. Funds were not transferred to any line department for execution of works or towards administrative expenses. The line departments' role is mainly confined to preparation of technical estimations, supervision of works during execution, issue of certification of work done by the workers.

The major achievement in the State is the selection of Mates. About 60,000 Mates were selected from among the members of Area Development Societies (ADS) and were trained under MGNREGS. For all works executed under MGNREGS, the Mates shall be selected from the trained group to manage worksite during work execution. Mate is responsible for maintenance of muster rolls along with worksite dairy at worksite.

As two cases of MGNREGS workers' death was reported due to dengue / chikengunia, the Health Department, is supplying preventive medicines to the workers before initiation of work as a part of convergence with the health department.

The entire convergence approaches in the State have facilitated protection of the rights and entitlements of MGNREGS workers, during creation of durable assets and conservation of Natural Resources.

In Kerala, Palakkad, Mallapuram and Trivandrum districts were selected to take up convergence pilots with the MoWR. Mallapuram was identified for ICAR convergence. Wayanad is expected to take up pilot projects in collaboration with MoE&F.

The process of convergence has taken off in Kerala well before the central level guidelines were issued. State level convergence meetings were conducted with the Heads of Departments, for discussing the possibilities and need for convergence of Water Resources Schemes, Forest works, and Agriculture schemes with NREGS. The State Government has issued a framework for convergence of Water Resources Projects, Forest works and Agriculture Development Projects with NREGS in the form of guidelines. The guidelines clearly spell out the roles and responsibilities of various functionaries of NREGS and other departments.

Coordination meetings have been organised by the District Programme Coordinators at District, Block and Village levels between Local Self-Government, Water Resources Department, Agriculture department and NREGS functionaries for taking up the works under NREGS.

The process of planning, implementation and monitoring is quite decentralised in Kerala. Identification of works is generally done by the local committees along with ward members and officials of the concerned departments and put before the Gram Sabha (GS) for approval. Once the GS and GP have approved the works, estimations were prepared either by the Asst. Engineer/Overseer of GP or by the department concerned. Implementation of works related to other departments was done by the Area Development Societies / VSS / Farmers Unions (Community Based Organisations). These Community Based Organizations are only responsible for maintenance of muster rolls, site diary, and other documents. After completion of work, the technical persons from the concerned departments took the measurements and prepared the payment vouchers. After scrutiny of muster rolls and measurements, the GP made the payments through the SB accounts of workers. All the officials were given the responsibility of monitoring of works during implementation. The State Government has fixed the responsibility on various state level officers to monitor NREGS works in different districts.

To make the process of planning, implementation and monitoring more effective, Kerala government has gone for formation of:

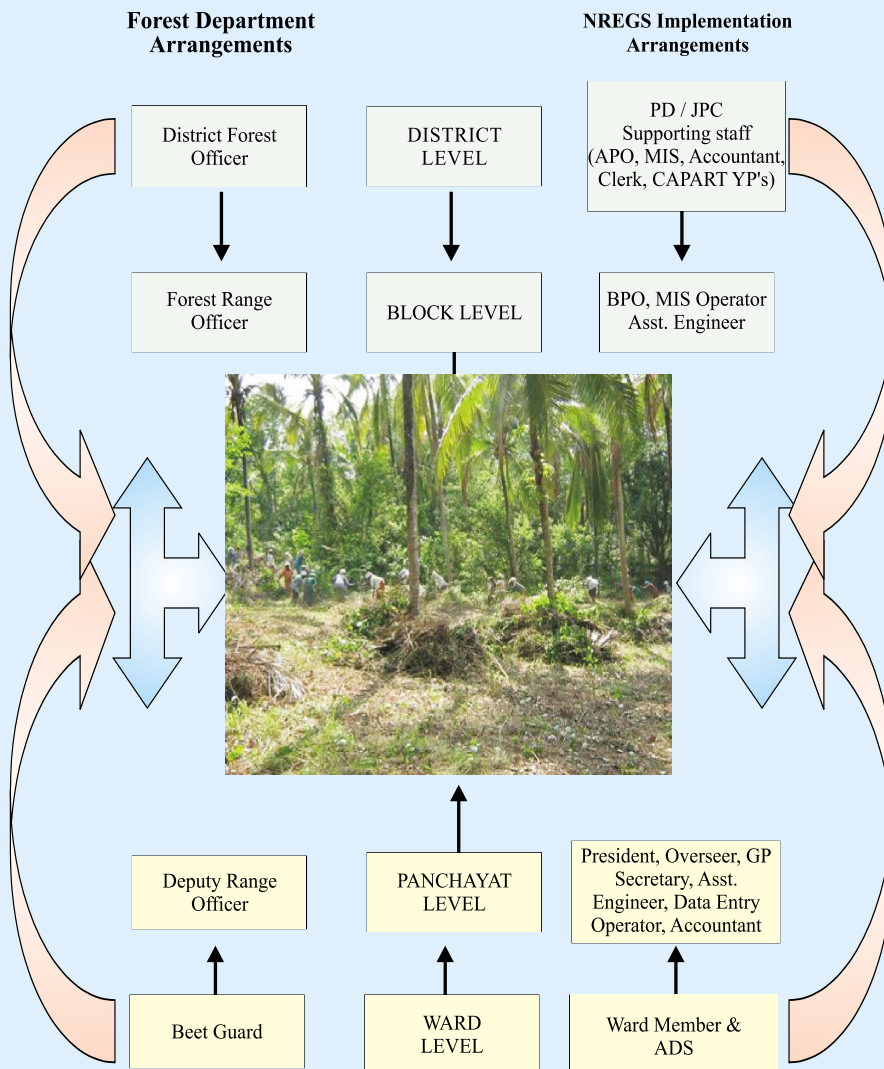
District Level Technical Committee (DLTC): It has been formed at the district level for monitoring of water resource schemes taken up under NREGS and to

provide training at the district level. The State government has nominated the Chairperson of Technical Committee and four experts for each district. The convener for the group is the Joint Coordinator of Poverty Alleviation Units and this office is the Secretariat for District Level Technical Committee. The members of the District Level Technical Committee are Principal Agricultural Officer, District Planning Officer, Executive Engineer (Minor Irrigation) and the Executive Engineer (Kerala Water Authority) etc.

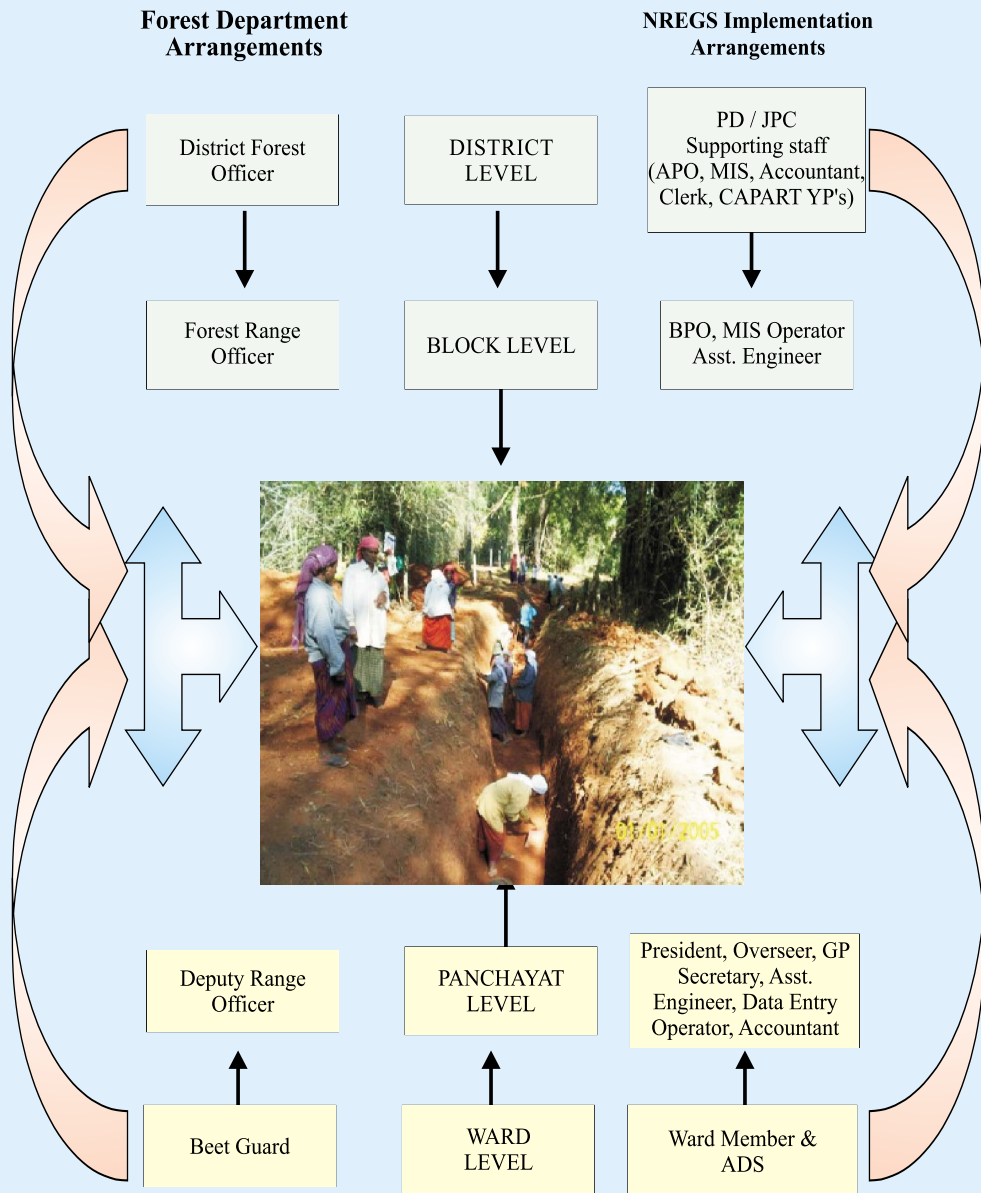
Block Level Technical Advisory Group (BLTAG) has been formed to provide technical assistance at the block level. Overseer (soil conservation), Block Panchayat Assistant Executive Engineer and other experts are the members of the committee.

Gram Panchayat level Technical Advisory Group: In each Gram Panchayat, an advisory group with 10-16 members has been formed. The Chairman of the group is Gram Panchayat President and the convener is Krishi Officer. The Village Extension Officer, Asst. Engineer/Overseer of Gram Panchayat, NREGS Asst. Engineer/Overseer etc., are the other members.

PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOREST WORKS



PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS FOR FOREST WORKS



PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS



GUJARAT

Five districts of Gujarat have been identified for convergence pilot projects. Dahod, Dangs, Banaskanta and Sabarkanta were selected for MoWR convergence projects. Dahod and Dangs have been asked to take up convergence projects with ICAR and MoE&F. A convergence project has come up in Kutch district.

The planning process for convergence is in progress. The State has received guidelines in the month of May 2009. The guidelines were circulated to all the concerned converging departments and were translated in Gujarati also.

The State government has taken up works in the convergence mode prior to the guidelines issued by the Central Government. This is reinforced by the Gol directives and guidelines that were sent in May 2009.

NREGS & MoEF (NAP)



The '**SWARNAM SOCIETY**' scheme is taken up by the State government, which is an initiative to create a decent habitation for the BPL population of all the communities. This is a holistic development effort made possible by the convergence of six different sources of funds. Drainage lines, Fencing and Plantation, Internal roads were taken up by NREGS. Housing was carried on by IAY/SAY (Sardar Awaas Yojana), Site clearance was funded by Gram Panchayat. Basic infrastructure like drinking water pipeline and electrification came from the 12th Finance Commission grants. The cost of CC roads and Community Hall was borne by MP/ MLA LAD scheme. A children's park has also been raised by utilising 'Panchvati', a state government scheme. This concept is very interesting and highly appreciable.

But habitation is closely related to the lifestyle of the people. Therefore, before taking up any such project, the socio-cultural milieu of the region must be studied in depth.

Conceptually the convergence projects such as 'Swarnam Society', 'Sparsh' and 'Suzlam Suflam' are very good and these need to be studied after their completion for replicability. In addition, there are two schemes in which waste water is being recycled through a simple mechanism to be used for vegetable cultivation in Meta Gram Panchayat (Indiranagar area) in Vadgam taluq in Banaskantha district. The scheme is named as 'Waste Water Harvesting Structure Scheme'.

Another innovative step which has been taken up by some districts is the **application of GIS technology** in comprehensive planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. With the use of GIS, classification of the state projects into different watersheds is done. A survey has been undertaken to assess the problems and potential of the land survey number and identification of works in convergence. The following steps were carried out in this context:

1. 'Using GIS Technology, the condition, limitation and potential of the land parcel is derived.
2. Draft Action Plan is prepared on the basis of findings and prescriptions of Experts/Agricultural Universities/Research Institutes.
3. Ridge to valley approach is adopted.
4. Final Action Plan is prepared based on PRA exercises at the village level.

In a village called **Vajeriya**, participatory implementation of the convergence scheme under NREGS was done and it has helped to achieve the following :

1. Encouragement of local people to participate in the adoption of improved technology.
2. Increased green cover.
3. Active participation of people in participatory planning and implementation of the project.
4. People's commitment to convert unproductive / fallow land into productive resource to supplement the family income.

Thus, a single project of NREGS implemented in a participatory mode has opened up new vistas in the livelihood pattern of the village community in Narmada district.



Condition of the village before the project in Narmada district



Changes after the project in Narmada district

Yet another innovative practice is the **Solid-Liquid Waste Management** which is carried out by the villagers themselves and owned by the PRIs in Junagadh district in convergence with NREGS and other schemes.

Solid waste - collection, transportation and disposal

- a. Door to door collection
- b. Cleaning of streets
- c. Interim storage and final disposal of the waste at the outskirts of the village

(Equipments needed - Tricycle; wheel barrow; containers; litter bins; broom; etc.)

JHARKHAND

Seven districts of Jharkhand, viz., East Singhbhum, Chatra, Koderma, Gumla, Palamu, Deoghar and Jamtara were chosen for pilot projects under convergence with NREGS and the schemes of the MoWR.

Under convergence the line departments have taken the initiative in identifying and taking technical approval of the projects by the concerned department. Such proposals are directly submitted to the DPC for administrative sanction. The Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC) is expected to issue the sanction order for all the approved shelf of projects including those submitted by the line departments.

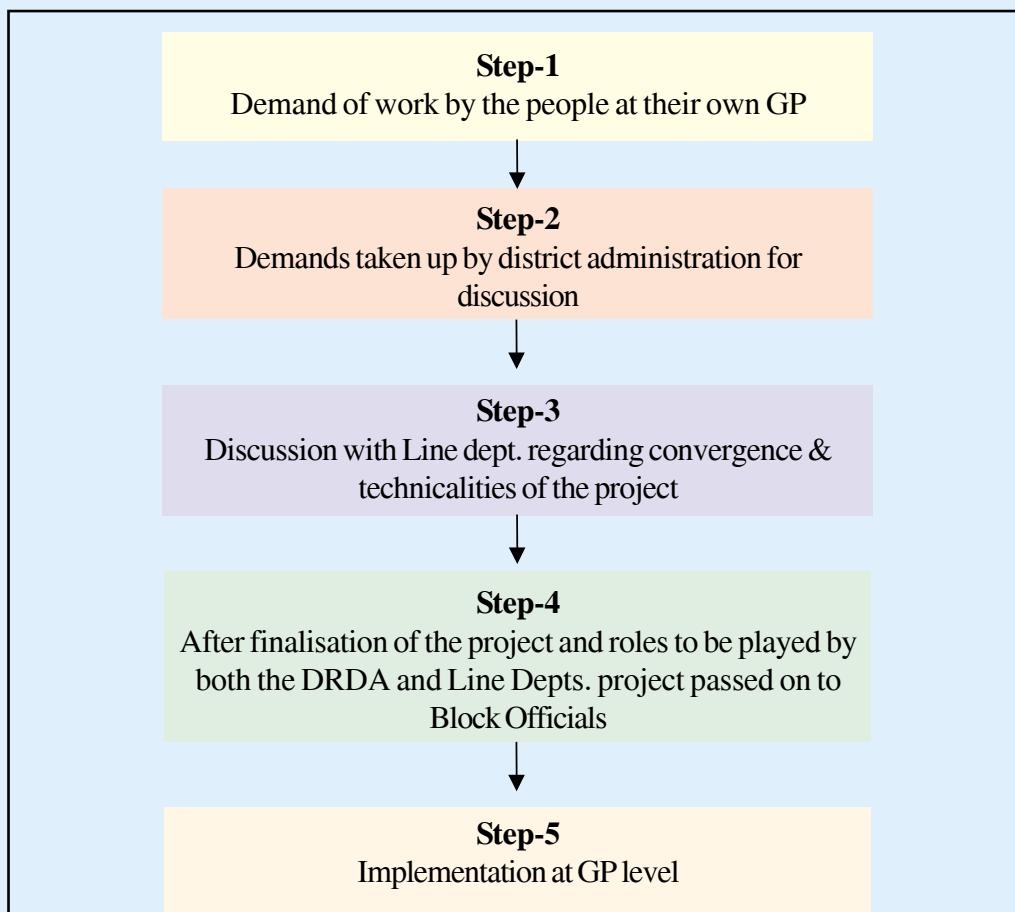
East Singhbhum: The Daalbhumi Forest Division was instrumental for successful implementation of a convergence project on eco-restoration. This resulted in saving about 70ha of land located in Ghoda Banda, which is adjacent to Jamshedpur city, by covering the area under eco-restoration project during 2007. The project has helped in development of highly degraded large tract of scrub forest into a green theme bio-diversity (more than 100 species) park by converging several schemes with NREGS. The park is connected by rural roads and three check dams, which were executed under NREGS. Development of highly degraded large tracts of forest land into a green theme park by converging schemes of State Government as well as NREGS, is a good instance of how resources from different sources can be converged with a common goal of regional development.

The success of NREGS convergence is visible in the form of convergence of the National Afforestation Programme, National Bamboo Mission, Forest Development Agency of National Afforestation and Eco-Development Board, Eco-Restoration Programmes, World Food Programme, the State Plan, and other Centrally sponsored programmes.

In Gumla, the capacity building programme for the economically backward tribes was done by the KVK, Bishnupur for cultivation of vegetables, niger, mushrooms and vermi-composting through SHGs. It has created awareness among the community. Small and marginal farmers have taken up cultivation of vegetables which has facilitated in changing their cropping systems and cropping pattern in *Salam Nava toli* village, Banari Gram Panchayat. They have also learnt to adopt the line sowing practice of broadcasting and have shifted from mono-cropping to multiple cropping systems. Also, some farmers have shifted from paddy cultivation to vegetable cultivation.

ASSAM

Four districts of Assam namely Bongaigaon, Darrang, Lakhimpur and North Cachar Hills have been considered for convergence pilot projects. The pilot projects are yet to be grounded but schematic convergence at the instance of State and district administration can be seen. All the projects where convergence can be seen were initiated by the district administration on the demand of the people. The villagers would suggest and demand works which can be carried out in their village to the officials. The concerned district officials would discuss the technicalities of the suggested work with the line departments and then finalise the project and pass it on to the block officials to administer the implementation at the concerned GP.

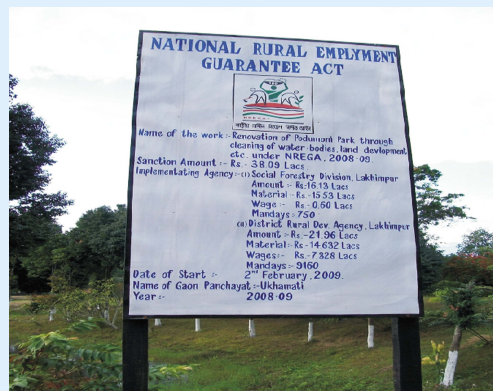


“Orange cultivation intercropped with Turmeric” at Rajgarh G.P of Narayanpur block in Lakhimpur is funded by NREGS with technical inputs by the Citrus Research Institute of ICAR. Water harvesting work is presently in progress.

The Podumani Park in Lakhimpur is being developed jointly by the Social Forestry Division and DRDA. Here, the activity, viz., plantation, was done by the Social Forestry Division and land development was undertaken by DRDA under NREGS.

Tariyani Barbeel

Development and beautification of Tariyani Barbeel Scheme was taken up with Soil Conservation Department, basically for creation of permanent assets through the Job Cardholders. The project area covers 18 hectares. There are seven villages in the project area. This scheme was initiated on demand by the villagers dwelling near the large water bodies, which possess a huge potential as a tourist or picnic spot. The local people are expected to benefit by the execution of the project and local skill labour also will get some works. The work to be undertaken under this scheme is basically excavation of pond, landscaping, floriculture, beautification, goat proof fencing, provision for Timber Bridge, provision for footpath and boating.



Podumani Park



Development and Beautification of Tariyani Barbeel in Progress

In **Bongaigaon**, an artificial regeneration project was taken up in 100 hectares, cashew plantation in 50 hectares and afforestation in 250 hectares of land. These projects were completely funded by NREGS and implemented by the Social Forestry Division (SFD). The project was first initiated by DRDA, Bongaigaon with technical support from SFD of the divisional forest office. The project estimates were prepared by SFD while NREGS provided labour component and fund. The DRDA monitors the job assignment to job cardholders and maintains the muster roll of the workers.



Cashew Seedling in a Nursery



Nursery for Artificial Regeneration



Job Cardholders Engaged in Nursery

MAHARASHTRA

Satara, Nashik, Pune, Amaravathi, Akola, Nandurbar and Dhule are the districts in Maharashtra selected for convergence of NREGS with various line departments. The progress of convergence pilots is in various stages. However, there are a few examples of convergence which are worth mentioning here.

Under NREGS in village Circle Wadi, 10 hectares land was identified and selected for development. For assured irrigation for the summer crops, a tank was constructed under NREGS with the help of NHM and NHB, where 25 per cent subsidy was provided from NHM and 20 per cent from NHB funds. A tank was constructed measuring 44 X 44 meters with a capacity of 1 crore liters of water with irrigation potential of 10,000 hectares. A polythene sheet was laid at the bottom of tank to avoid seepage of water.



Water tank with polythene sheet in the bottom

As an innovative idea, the project farmers grow capsicum, strawberry, potato, tomato, papaya, pomegranate, grapes and beans. The entire area is irrigated through drip irrigation.

In Nandurbar the ICAR has declared Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK), Nandurbar as the resource institution for convergence. The KVK has identified three major activities: 1) Rain Water Harvesting 2) Seed Production and 3) Vermi-compost in three clusters of the district, and submitted proposals through GPs to converge the activities of KVK with NREGS. The KVK has submitted an integration proposal of all these programmes with NREGS. The KVK is facilitating the activities of four farmers' clubs in the district which are sponsored by NABARD and Local Banks.

The works in Mohugaon village under Sakri taluka of Dhule district is a live example of involvement of four departments like MI, KVK, Agriculture and Forestry under convergence with NREGS. The village is surrounded by hills and forest, and most of the inhabitants are Konkan tribals. The Village Development Committee

(VDC) promoted by NABARD and ITC is working in close coordination with various departments. Under VDC, 15 Water User Groups are working for the watershed development in the village. The forest department with the help of MI group and the local sector engineer has developed three Village Tanks with the help of NREGS wage component. The KVK, Dhule has been working with the people of the village for fish cultivation. It has formed a (21 member) fishermen group in the village and started motivating the groups to go for fish farming and maintenance of tank along with forest and MI departments. The KVK organised various training programmes on fish production from its own resources for the tribal community. This year, the villagers have used 50,000 fingerlings of Rahu, Katla, Prawns and Jinga and are expected to earn more than Rs.1,00,000 from the community tank. The fishermen group has also involved the GP in this programme and they have planned to pay 10 per cent of their profit to GP as this tank is a common property of the community. They are also planning to involve all the villagers in this activity.

In the lower area of the tank where the moisture level is high, the KVK has helped the farmers to go for improved bengalgram cultivation. It has planned to collect the seeds from bengalgram growers of the village to propagate the same in neighbouring villages. Looking at the potential of the village, the KVK has declared it as their adopted village. This could be viewed as a bright example of convergence of NREGS works with other department works to provide additional benefit to the community besides providing employment. The efforts of the five institutions– Forest, Minor Irrigation, KVK (ICAR), NREGS and PRI may be documented in greater detail and could be a model convergence project for others. The KVK has taken a very pro-active role in the convergence process.



Plantation with the inputs from KVK

ANDHRA PRADESH

The District Water Resources Management Agency (DWMA) is designated as the implementing agency for NREGS. The pilot projects initially were envisaged for convergence with MoWR, ICAR and MoE&F. Convergence was envisaged in eight districts (Karimnagar, Kurnool, Nalgonda, Chittoor, Khammam, Mahaboobnagar, Medak and Kadapa) of Andhra Pradesh. However, the district administration has gone beyond these departments and explored the scope to build convergence with several other line departments such as Forestry, Irrigation Department, Horticulture Mission, ST Corporation etc.

State Initiatives

A detailed and well-designed process is followed in the identification and design of convergence activities in the district. Activities to be covered by NREGS and line departments / agencies are discussed at the district level under the direction of the Project Director (DWMA) and communicated down the line up to the Mandal level. With regard to the funding arrangements, the NREGS has been the principal contributor and the line departments join with their technical inputs (knowledge and expertise) and funds in a small way. Training programmes and video-conferences are organised and meetings are held to make the officials more clear about the concept of convergence. The process of convergence with other departments is summarised below.

Comprehensive Land Development Programmes (CLDP) in (NREGS) works, activities like bush clearance, removal of boulders, land leveling, creation of irrigation facilities i.e., drilling of borewells and erection of pumpsets including energisation etc. are taken up with convergence of CLDP. Use of machinery was significant in this context.

State Horticulture Mission: Technical knowledge and subsidised inputs including supply of saplings are provided by the State Horticulture Mission (SHM) for use by the small and marginal farmers under NREGS.

Andhra Pradesh Minor Irrigation Project (APMIP): Convergence with NREGS is worked out to provide subsidised drip irrigation facility to the small farmers on 30:70 ratio from NREGS and the APMIP funds.

ST Corporation: ST Corporation takes up lands belonging to tribals and executes works with its own funds and seeks support of CLDP for gap filling. The Mandals are tied up with NREGS for land development and horticulture and APMIP for drip irrigation.

Watershed: Horticulture Plantation is taken up with Watershed Development Programme under NREGS. It's maintenance cost is also absorbed by NREGS.

Irrigation Dept.- Comprehensive Restoration of Tank works at the rate of one per each GP was taken up under NREGS. Hard works such as bush clearance, stumps removal etc., which require machinery is done with regular departmental funds. The works requiring manual labour and material components are met from NREGS funds. The technical support is extended by the Irrigation, Panchayati Raj and Rural Water Supply departments.

Panchayati Raj: Construction of rural roads is taken up under convergence. The Superintendent Engineer monitors the execution of works involving all the Mandal Engineers, DEEs and EEs. The funds are provided by the Government directly to the PR Department. The software (technical support) required by them is extended by PD, DWMA.

Forest- Forest Nurseries are taken up under convergence. The DFOs take up works in the forest area for which software support is extended by Project Director, DWMA. Funds are provided by the Government directly to the DFOs.

Indira Kranthi Patham: The DWMA has utilised the SHGs and their networks in the process of publicity of NREGS. Creation of awareness among wage employment seekers through Village Organisations in providing 100 days of guaranteed employment is being done. In this process, the SHG members could get to know more about the government schemes, and therefore, it acts as a platform for capacity building for them. At the same time, it provides a broader citizen base for NREGS. Either the spouse of the SHG member or the member herself is a NREGS wage employment seeker.

ATMA - Training is provided to all the Horticulture beneficiaries with Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA) funded through JD (Agriculture).

Coffee Board and Rubber Board: Under NREGS, large scale rubber and coffee plantation work has been taken up. This is an effort in the direction of changing the face of rural economy of the concerned region. The wage and material component is met through NREGS, whereas the Rubber Board and Coffee Board are providing technical inputs. These projects are mainly taken up in the tribal areas of Paderu, Visakhapatnam (Coffee) and Rampachodavaram, East Godavari (Rubber).

Chenchu Development Project (ITDA): This is an innovative initiative taken up by the State government to reach out to the most marginalised people. Before launching this project under NREGS, the coverage of Chenchus (A Primitive Tribe Group) was merely two per cent, but after the intervention, 80 per cent of the Chenchus are covered under NREGS.

Under this arrangement, there is a guarantee of 10 days of work under NREGS for both husband and wife. A Village Organisation under Indira Kranthi Patham (IKP) provides advance to the wage employment seeker which is adjustable against the work done by the wage employment seeker. This is done to counter the problem of non-availability of financial delivery infrastructure in the form of Bank/ Post Office and, more importantly, to meet the consumption needs (Food Security) of Chenchus.



NREGS-VO Convergence: A PTG laborer demonstrating the measurement of work in - Achampet Mandal, Achampet Village

Convergence between Minor Irrigation and NREGS and Horticulture Department

Small and marginal farmers have taken up Horticulture for their livelihoods. Under the convergence programme, 4-5 farmers are constituted into a group. Each farmer contributed two acres of land. The group is called the Common Interest Group (CIG). The farmers are given training to cultivate the horticulture crops

(mango, sweet lime) by the horticulture department. Convergence is between the A.P Micro Irrigation department, the Horticulture department and NREGS. Drip irrigation is provided by the Kisan group of APMIP (Micro-irrigation project), which has provided the irrigation technology to the farm by laying the water pipes across the field. APMIP has also developed a small farm pond for the CIG group. The programme is subsidy driven. The contribution of the Irrigation department is 70 per cent while the contribution of the Horticulture department is (APMIP) 30 per cent. The wage component in the project works is covered under the NREGS which includes digging pits, clearing the land etc. The farmers are also given Rs.900 per acre towards inter-cropping. Also, they are given the plant material by the horticulture department. This initiative can be seen in other districts also.



MANGO AND SWEET ORANGE PLANTATIONS IN DHONE MANDAL



UTTAR PRADESH

Thirteen districts were selected from Uttar Pradesh (UP) for implementing the convergence programme under the NREGS namely, **Banda, Chitrakoot, Hamirpur, Hardoi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Mahoba, Pratapgarh, Gonda, Jhansi, Allahabad, Auraiya and Pilibhit**. Some fruitful projects are highlighted below which have unleashed a stream of benefits to the poor.

Sericulture- A demonstration farm of 15 acres has been taken up under sericulture through NREGS and about 35 acres is being developed by funds from the sericulture department itself. The project objective is to develop interest among the farmers in sericulture as a livelihood activity, which is remunerative too.

The sericulture project farm has been developed on undulated and rocky soil on land which was abandoned by the Irrigation department. However, a major effort was made for leveling and making it fit for farming through NREGS work. Vermicompost was used as manure which again was bought from the farmer who was trained in KVK.

Buildings and residential quarters unused by Irrigation department have been renovated through NREGS funds and are being used as storage-cum-processing unit. Seeing the progress of the project and upcoming projects in mind, a nursery of Arjun plant has also been set up, through which it is aimed to provide better quality plants at low rates to farmers willing to take up the activity.

This project has completed its first phase, i.e., growth of plants and development of cocoons (amazingly this all has been achieved within a year, which was outrightly rejected and quoted as “impossible” by the forestry department). The second phase will soon begin with major focus on economic activities. Involvement of SHGs has also been envisaged.



Sericulture Project at Sahzad Dam, Lalitpur



Cocoons of silk being stored and selected for further processing



Pitting for Plantation of Arjun Plants (through NREGS)

Ambedkar Gram Vikas Yojana

This mega scheme has been grounded in UP from June 2007-08. Villages which have SC/ST population in majority are taken up for development. Better roads and closed drainage system forms an important part in development plans of Ambedkar Grams. Manual work like leveling (for road) and digging, KC drains, (for drainage system) are made through NREGS funds and further work like laying concrete is done through and with PWD funds.



CC Road Constructed through NREGS Fund: Block-Bar, District-Lalitpur

Forestry Project- As it is widely known that Bundelkhand region is a drought-prone area, and Lalitpur is one among the six districts falling in this region afforestation has been taken up on a large scale in the region of Bundelkhand. Many barren areas bear the fruits of hard work put in by the NREGS workers. Resources for the project are pooled in from three different sources, i.e., Departmental budget, State budget and NREGS.

BREL (Bharat Renewable Energy Limited)

Another interesting convergence activity that has been taken up in Uttar Pradesh is of Jatropha plantation, which seeks to revitalise as well as utilise the barren land so that some benefits can be derived from it. The barren land is identified by a committee constituted by the GP, called Land Management Committee, after whose approval and identification work starts. The Land Management Committee acts as monitor as well as evaluator of the project. Technical support is provided by BREL and financial part is taken care through the NREGS funds.

WEST BENGAL

In the West Bengal, five districts, namely, Burdwan, Bankura, Purulia, Birbhum and the South 24 Paraganas were selected for the convergence pilots.

The convergence pilot in Burdwan district was formally initiated. Till October 2009, five programmes were proposed with MoWR, amounting to Rs.20.63 crore, eight works of MoE&F with an outlay of Rs.42.45 crore, and six activities in collaboration with KVK with an estimated cost of Rs.3.03 crore had been taken up as convergence pilot projects in the district. In Bankura, convergence with KVK is in the planning process. Purulia district is also at the stage of planning with respect to convergence. In Birbhum, identification of works to be taken up under NREGS is going on. In the South 24 Paraganas, the works under convergence have been identified.

There are some State level initiatives in convergence mode which are worth mentioning. In Kanksa block of Burdwan district, a 46 - acre orchard has been developed pooling together the funds and expertise of NREGS, SGSY, NABARD, State Agriculture University (BCKV), local lab and the Agriculture Department. In the same district, a poultry training-cum-chick production unit under SGSY swarojgaris scheme has been developed at Natungram village in Raina I block. The synergy of NREGS, SGSY, MLA-LAD, 12th Finance Commission fund, Animal Resources Department and a local NGO (Shyamsunder Sister Nivedita Sangh) has been successful in making a visible impact on the lives of the poor.



Poultry training-cum-chick production unit for SGSY Swarojgaries at Village Natungram, GP – Shyamsundar, Block – Raina I

Bankura district has a tie-up with other departments even before the Ministry's guidelines were issued. In Gopalpur Gram Panchayat of Hirbundh Block, a mango orchard was raised with the help of the National Horticulture Mission (NHM), Bidhan Chandra Krishi Vishwavidyalaya (BCKV) and PRADHAN. The total area of the orchard is 19.5 Ha. The NHM has devised drip irrigation facility, whereas the BCKV had supplied mango saplings and PRADHAN has given technical support for land development and trench digging and bunding. The GP has arranged a borewell with the Backward Region Grant Funds (BRGF).

The following Table depicts agency -wise particulars:

S.No.	Agency	Responsibility	Funds (in Rs.)
1.	NREGS	Implementation and Monitoring	247625.00 (in 4 Phases)
2.	NHM	Drip Irrigation	245925.00
3.	BCKV	Saplings	-
4.	PRADHAN	Technical Assistance	-
5.	BRGF	Bore well Electricity (Planning Stage)	282504.00 125000.00
6.	SHG	Monitoring and Maintenance	-

An important resolution of the Gram Unnayan Samiti dated 26-5-08, has resulted in the project commencement. The GP has also raised another mango orchard through NABARD, PRADHAN and BCKV collaboration. Based on its success, many other blocks in Bankura are using this model.

The line departments except for the Forest Department have expressed their inability to handle the funds of NREGS because they have not received necessary orders/circulars in this regard. The implementation of NREGS is facing the problem of inadequate staff. The existing implementers felt the need of training for carrying out the convergence projects.

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Kangra, Solan, Mandi and Sirmaur districts of the State were selected for the convergence pilots.

The secretary of RD, H.P, has issued a letter to the Project Officers of DRDAs on the subject of convergence between NREGS and MoE&F and ICAR and MoWR, to lay down the modalities of convergence. At the district level, convergence matters and processes are handled by the Deputy Commissioner or DPC, assisted by the Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Project Officers (PO), DRDA and other district level officers and below. At the block level, the BDO is responsible for implementation of convergence projects. The DPC, NREGS has constituted a district resource group with representatives from the Water Resources Department and Panchayati Raj. Similar resource groups at the block level are also constituted. This group facilitates knowledge sharing, planning, communication, training, technical support and resource pooling. The district level coordination committee meeting has already been held and a proposal for NREGS has been received from the PWD, Forest and Soil Conservation Departments.

The process of convergence started in Kangra district even before launching of the pilot projects on convergence. These efforts are resulting in positive outcomes. During 2008-09, the following departments have converged their programmes with NREGS in the District: Department of Sericulture, Forest Department and Watershed Development Programme. Efforts are also being made to ensure convergence of departments like PWD, IPH Agriculture and Horticulture. The State

level convergence started in almost all the districts of Himachal Pradesh including Kangra and other pilot districts. The concerned officials have expressed satisfaction about convergence of other line departments with NREGS.



**Rural Road laid under NREGS in
Icchikas GP, Kangra Block**



**Regeneration of wastelands under the
river bed- Thameolicchi, Kangra Block**

ORISSA

In Orissa, Bargarh, Mayurbhanj, Balangir and Ganjam districts have been identified for the convergence pilot projects. Mayurbhanj and Ganjam were identified for tie up with MoWR and ICAR; Bargarh with MoWR and MoE&F, and Balangir with MoWR schemes.

The Panchayati Raj Department is the nodal agency for planning, implementing and monitoring of NREGS in Orissa. So far, two workshops have been organised by the SIRD concerning convergence of line departments with NREGS. However, no specific guidelines have been evolved for implementation and monitoring at the State level to look into the issue of convergence in NREGS.

PUNJAB

Rupnagar (Ropar) and Hoshiarpur districts of Punjab are in the list of identified districts for convergence pilot projects.

The concept of convergence has just seeped into the minds of implementing and coordinating agencies. However, the district administration is yet to convene meetings with other various departments for the purpose of convergence.

MEGHALAYA

Two districts of Meghalaya, namely, West Garo Hills and Ri-Bhoi were selected for the convergence pilots. The pilot projects are at planning stage in both the districts. A State level meeting has been held on the subject of convergence and a District Resource Group has been formed in both the districts. In West Garo Hills, a district level meeting was held on 16-11-2009. The resultant projects are expected to be initiated soon. In West Garo Hills, schematic convergence between NREGS and PWD took place for repair of roads connecting to a village.

TRIPURA

West Tripura district of Tripura was selected as a convergence pilot with MoE&F in the State. It is expected to be implemented from 15 December 2009 and the expected date of completion is 1 February 2010. This project will be taken up at Sepahijala Wildlife Sanctuary located at Bishalgarh Block which comes under the West Tripura district of Tripura. The NREGS workers here have organised themselves into a SHG and have taken up work of land development and converged with Agriculture/Horticulture department with the help of GP by way of starting a nursery. The DM is in the process of proposing the convergence of PMGSY with NREGS. There is also an ongoing project of convergence of NREGS with the Rubber Board and the Fisheries Department in the State.



Agricultural fields adjacent to Sipahijhala Wildlife Sanctuary where a convergence project is to take place between NREGS and MoEF

MANIPUR

Thobal district of Manipur was identified for convergence with CADA (MoWR) and KVK (ICAR), while the MoWR convergence projects are to be taken up in the Churachandpur district. In both the districts, the process of convergence with MoWR is in the planning stage. But, the convergence of NREGS with ICAR has not yet started in the district of Churachandpur. There have been State level discussions about the convergence guidelines and a meeting was held at the district level, which was attended by the NREGS and CADA (MoWR) officials. Projects identified in this meeting are expected to be operational soon.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Papumpare and East Siang of Arunachal Pradesh were selected for the convergence pilots. The KVK (ICAR), Papumpare had approached DRDA for examining the possibilities of convergence of work. However, due to lack of funds for the NREGS projects, the process of convergence has been temporarily stalled. There formal discussion with the Water Resources Department is yet to take place.

The functionaries of NREGS and the line departments have been identified by the DPC to be the right agents to bring the concerned departments under one umbrella. The meeting of the District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) is not taking place and therefore, the line departments are unable to integrate this with the nodal agency. The implementers have felt the need for training in convergence.

TAMIL NADU

Dindigul, Villupuram, Kanyakumari, Pudukkottai and Sivaganga districts were identified for the convergence pilot projects in Tamil Nadu.

The district officials have informed that they are yet to receive any communication regarding convergence from the State government to spend at least 25 per cent of the Rural Infrastructure Scheme (RIS) for upgrading or gap filling the structures created by NREGS previously.

RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan has seventeen districts identified for convergence pilot projects with various departments. Ajmer, Jalore, Dungarpur, Sikar, Kota, Tonk and Hanumangarh were selected for MoWR convergence projects. Ajmer, Jalore, Dungarpur and Hanumangarh have been chosen for convergence with the ICAR schemes. The officials have identified the projects that can be implemented in the convergence mode from the next financial year.

The National Afforestation Programme (NAP) is implemented in some measure of convergence with NREGS in a few districts of the State. Here, the fencing part is done by the NREGS workers. Joint projects are yet to be designed or implemented with the forest department.

Harit Rajasthan

Harit Rajasthan is a novel initiative started by the Honourable Chief Minister of Rajasthan in June, 2009. Harit Rajasthan is basically initiated to cope with the drought conditions of Rajasthan, in collaboration with the departments like Forest, PWD, Education, Health, Industries, Transport, Defence and Paramilitary, NGOs etc. It is implemented in all the 33 districts including both the urban and rural areas.

In this programme, plantation work is being taken up in the premises of various departments stated above and in the areas where possibility of plantation exist as



Women carrying the plants to be planted under Harit Rajasthan in Sikar district

per the jurisdiction of the respective departments. Though not an additional activity under NREGS, it seeks to fulfill the possibilities of plantation works in various departments, which is permissible under the NREGS. The Project Implementation and work monitoring is being done by the respective departments as per the NREGS guidelines and all the budgetary resources are being provided by the NREGS. The works are being sanctioned by the DPC after inclusion in the annual action plan. The overall monitoring of the programme is being done by the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj at the State level. Till 2/01/2010, 274.88 lakh plants have been planted.

BIHAR

Eight districts were selected by the MoRD, Gol for pilot convergence projects in Bihar (Vaishali, Muzaffarpur, Gopalganj, Saran, Gaya, Nawada, Jamui and Aurangabad districts).

The decision to initiate projects under the convergence mode with NREGS was taken in September 2009. The guidelines were issued accordingly. These guidelines from the State mostly relate to different departments implementing projects using NREGS funds and they do not specifically relate to convergence as envisaged by the MoRD in its guidelines.

KARNATAKA

The districts of Kolar, Chikmagalur and Shimoga were identified as NREGS+MoWR pilots, while Gulbarga, Hassan and Gadag have been identified as NREGS+ MoWR+ICAR convergence pilots. Tumkur was chosen for NREGS+MoEF projects.

In Kolar, Gulbarga, Gadag, Hassan, Chikmagalur and Shimoga, convergence is planned to bring in the technical expertise of MoWR and minor Irrigation Department in identifying the water bodies that need immediate attention in terms of recharge of groundwater, dried up borewells, desilting of irrigation tanks and restoration of feeder channels. All the technical inputs for planning such as work identification, preparation of estimates, recording of measurements and quality monitoring are being provided by the line department. In Tumkur, the technical support for planning and management of the work is provided by MoEF. In Gulbarga,

Hassan and Gadag the technical support for planning and management of the work is provided by the ICAR institutions and the Department of Agriculture.

UTTARAKHAND

Champawat, Uttarkashi and Nainital were identified for the MoWR convergence projects. Pauri Garhwal was chosen for convergence project with MoE&F. Champawat was also selected for the ICAR convergence projects.

In most of the districts, the convergence pilots are at planning stage. Meetings have been held and the need for the convergence has been recognised. The projects have also been selected but the grounding is yet to be done. However, efforts in this direction have been made outside the purview of the existing guidelines. One such example can be cited from Uttarkashi district.

For construction of kitchen room of the primary schools, estimated cost was Rs.85,000, out of which education department provided Rs.60,000. The balance amount of Rs.25,000 was provided under NREGS. Total cost of the work towards construction of primary schools and upper primary schools was Rs.22.16 lakh. Out of which, the labour component of Rs.5.72 lakh was met under NREGS and material component of Rs.15.60 lakh was met from education department.

Innovative activity on development of fodder scheme with convergence of schemes of animal and husbandry department has taken place.

Main Lessons Learnt

- The need for convergence among development programmes has not been fully appreciated by officials at district level in many of the pilot districts. Several officials admitted their lack of knowledge and expertise about the approach to be followed for bringing convergence between line departments and DRDA / ZP dealing with NREGS and also involving the local community. The following factors deserve special attention in this context. The attitude of the officials towards convergence was not found to be favourable in many cases. The line departments are reluctant on account of non-negotiables of NREGS, i.e., non-engagement of contractors, no deployment of labour displacing machinery, procedures and also the social audit. The issue of control over resources is also one of the latent factors acting as a deterrent for seeking convergence. All these critical factors have to be addressed thoroughly to make the convergence process smooth. In the light of the emerging demand from some responsible sections of people for bringing all the development projects under the purview of social audit, the resistance of line departments can be addressed by clarifying the wrong impressions about social audit.
- The problem of understaffing in the line departments has been highlighted in most of the States for not getting into the convergence mode with NREGS. How NREGS could help address this issue is the moot question. Whether it can provide the services of the project staff on activity specific basis to line departments where needed, needs critical review by the State nodal department. One can take clue from the State initiatives in which local CBOs have been involved in implementation including maintenance of muster roll to tide over this problem.
- Delayed flow of adequate funds is one of the main factors hindering the smooth execution of the convergence projects and the problem becomes critical when resource starved line departments have to contribute financially. The proposal of AP to create a 'Common Fund Account' which can be accessed online by the DPCs and others has to be examined for its feasibility. Whether creating a

‘convergence fund’ at the district level to overcome the delays in fund flow to line departments and other contingencies also needs to be studied.

- Some of the States have been experiencing problems in maintaining 60:40 wage –material ratio as most of the convergence projects insist on higher material component and the converging department schemes are starved of funds. The DPC should examine the scope for using BRG funds, where applicable. Otherwise, flexibility in the norms in selected cases may have to be considered for the durability and sustainability of assets.
- Some of the States like MP have been transferring funds to the concerned line departments and the latter is responsible for planning, implementation, wage payment and monitoring of the scheme. The RD Department or DRDA is only seeking data on the scheme for posting the same on MIS. This cannot be construed as real convergence. Efforts should be made by all concerned at various levels to view the convergence theme as an opportunity to promote a partnership mode of development. Since all departments share the common goal, i.e., overall development of rural areas and community welfare, convergence of minds is a pre-requisite. Gradually, all the three modes of convergence, i.e., funds, technical expertise and social mobilisation have to be attempted in planning and execution of schemes.
- NREGS envisages empowerment of the community and strengthening of PRIs. Only in a few States (e.g., West Bengal, AP, Kerala and HP) the communities have been consulted in planning and implementation of the convergence projects. The presence of matured and large number of SHGs facilitated this process. SHGs are also encouraged to identify projects under NREGS (e.g., AP). These good practices can be scaled up. For this to happen, capacity building of CBOs has to be taken up on priority. The BRGF fund can also be used for this purpose and for local level planning at GP level. The GPs are more vibrant in a few states (e.g. West Bengal, Kerala and Gujarat). The convergence projects with the initiative of GP and Panchayat Samiti along with the SHGs in West Bengal are not only good examples of sustainable convergence initiatives but also lend

support to the decentralisation of planning process. They can play a crucial role in the preparation of comprehensive GP plans with the community.

- Thematic convergence under NREGS is visible in States like Gujarat. The “Swarnam Society” scheme which is similar to ‘Integrated Habitat Development’ that envisages a variety of tasks to be undertaken by six departments is an illustration in this regard. Several innovative practices observed in Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh need to be documented and disseminated for adoption.
- Initiatives with focus on primitive tribal groups in the convergence planning (e.g. Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh) deserve special attention by all the States to reach out to the unreached.
- In several of the projects visited, the maintenance arrangements are not well defined and this has to be ensured in all relevant cases.

Road Map for Convergence

It is evident from the above discussion that convergence of development programmes with NREGS needs to be pursued with greater vigour. To make these initiatives more effective and act as trend setters, the following suggestions deserve attention of the Gol, State Departments and other stakeholders.

- To streamline the communication process, the MoRD may nominate a senior official as Coordinator of convergence projects. This coordinator should interact with the State nodal department for NREGS and DPCs of the districts identified for convergence on a regular basis. It would be appropriate to appoint senior officials in the converging departments at the State level to ensure smooth coordination and effective convergence.
- To ensure greater clarity about the roles and responsibilities and institutional arrangements under convergence, the States should prepare clear guidelines for adherence by all concerned at the district and below. The project team at the district and below should use management tools such as Gantt Chart to define more aptly the roles of various functionaries involved. Joint monitoring formats have to be prepared immediately for use by the officials concerned.
- To make convergence planning more people-centric, the projects identified by the line department(s) should be discussed in the Gram Sabhas located in the project area.
- In the regions where PRIs are strong, convergence in planning can be made mandatory in the agenda of meeting for the Panchayats at the respective level. In other regions, a standing committee comprising officials and elected representatives can be considered to provide an institutional platform for convergence at the grassroots.
- Many district and block level officials in several States have expressed the need for building their capacities in planning and implementation of

convergence projects. To achieve this, SIRDs and reputed NGOs (which have experimented with convergence) may be entrusted with organisation of short-duration training programmes dealing with concepts, issues, approaches (joint preparation of projects, implementation and monitoring) of convergence under NREGS in a partnership mode. A special module on 'Attitudes and Behavioural Change' is necessary to sensitise the functionaries. Visits to successful convergence project sites can be built into the training modules for exposure. The project coordinators of innovative convergence projects have to be invited as resource persons in these programmes. The State Nodal Departments have to take initiative in documenting some of the successful convergence projects through films for wider sharing with other DPCs and Project Directors to promote replication of innovations.

- A small module on social audit has to be included in all the training programmes as all the convergence projects would be subjected to this audit by all the stakeholders. The district level training programmes should target the officials of line departments and elected representatives as well. It would be desirable to extend the 'social audit' to all development projects, for all projects up to a certain size of fund allocation. All the line departments need to adopt this process.
- Since convergence aims at a consultative process and meeting the local needs, reputed NGOs may be entrusted with the task of capacity building of elected representatives and CBO leaders. This intervention may enable the community to suggest a set of related activities to be taken up in the Gram Sabha which will form the basis for designing of convergence projects with line departments and agencies. The community involvement in the convergence projects in all stages would dilute the resistance, presently noticed among officials of the line departments to converge with NREGS, more so in regard to social audit and sharing of responsibilities.
- The MoRD's earlier suggestion that inclusion of modules on 'Convergence', 'Social Audit' and 'Participatory Planning' are to be made mandatory in all NREGS training programmes organised by SIRDs, ETCs and other institutes need to be enforced effectively. Fund release to SIRDs and ETCs has to be linked to this aspect.

- The present arrangement of recognising the district / state initiatives through Award of Excellence in NREGS Administration would provide the needed incentive framework for the DPCs and others to implement the convergence projects in an innovative and efficient way.
- The Government of India and the State governments, may also institute awards for best performance to the NREGS team (DPC, PD and officials of line departments), which have excelled in the planning and execution of innovative projects in a convergence mode. Special awards and rewards may be given to the best convergent initiatives. Such recognition is also needed for outstanding performance at GP level.
- The 'Integrated District Planning' with community participation would be an appropriate framework for facilitating emergence of convergence initiatives locally. Such an approach would not only provide sector-wise planning but also pave a way for natural integration of schemes across sectors. The line departments have to provide technical support in user-friendly manner to the community. V Ramchandran Committee has underlined the need of preparing a Panchayat plan through participatory approach.
- As has been discussed above, if decentralised planning through community involvement is practised, generation of volunteerism and ownership followed by partnership of community in the process can be expected. This would enhance the essence of convergence from building of assets to sustainability of the process. Field experience exemplifies that community involvement enhances available resource pool, chiefly by means of voluntary labour and contribution of material/financial resources. Moreover, community knowledge and innovations would be useful inputs in designing interventions. GIS applications have been gaining currency in rural development including NREGS. Using satellite data, the NREGS projects including convergence schemes have to be monitored, wherever feasible. Even 'value addition' dimension can be taken into account while planning convergence of technology-centric and skill enhancement orientation schemes with NREGS. These types of convergence interventions would benefit SC/ST farmers and BPL farmers for improving their livelihood support systems on a sustainable basis.

- In the light of the reports on estimation of poverty, there is a dire need to bring convergence among development programmes for mutual benefit and creation of productive assets, even while using available resources efficiently and effectively.
- To mitigate the adverse effects of climatic changes on agriculture and allied sectors, NREGS, line departments and other technical institutions in each district should evolve a common strategy and work together in revitalising the agriculture sector so as to ensure food and livelihood security. The '*Sparsh*' project of Gujarat is conceptually a robust one in this regard.
- Gradually, the entire NREGS planning process need to shift to a convergence mode for optimal use of resources and creation of quality assets.

Mission of NIRD

"To examine and analyse the factors contributing to the improvement of economic and social well-being of people in rural areas on a sustainable basis with focus on the rural poor and the other disadvantaged groups through research, action research, consultancy and documentation efforts".

"To facilitate the rural development efforts with particular emphasis and focus on the rural poor by improving the knowledge, skills and attitudes of rural development officials and non-officials through organising training, workshops and seminars".



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