

# MGNREGA ACROSS SOCIAL GROUPS, RELIGION AND GENDER: A CRITICAL STUDY OF JHARKHAND

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*The paper endeavours to study the pattern, trend and distribution of MGNREGA program in India, with special focus on Jharkhand. With the use of data gathered from NSSO 66th and 68th round and updated data upto 2014-15 financial year from government website, an analysis is attempted of the inter-state and intra-Jharkhand variation of performance of MGNREGA. Enrollment, ownership of job-cards and participation in NREGA works across socio-religious groups depicts a decline in share for the economically deprived SCs and STs temporarily. While, the OBCs are found to have higher share in seeking work but not getting work category. The deplorable condition of the women in Jharkhand is clear with a poor registration and participation, especially of the SCs concentrated in the northern districts. Age cohorts, women to men ratio, landholding size classes, household sizes and many other computed indicators are used in the paper to bring out the better performing and lagging behind areas and men-women differentiation longitudinally. Southern districts of Jharkhand are found to have balanced gender representations than the north. The data reveals that households with greater sizes, with smaller land holdings and illiterate population are more dependent on NREGA for livelihood. But administrative machinery which has a vital role in guaranteeing focused implementation of the program, is found to have failed substantially. Overall, Jharkhand has been a poor performer in MGNREGA activities.*

*Keywords : inter-district disparity, job-card, cohort, enrolment, development*

## INTRODUCTION

Since its inception Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has ensured employment generation for the marginalized poor people, along with attaining multiple other objectives such as creation of durable community assets, better organization and skill up-gradation of workers owing to its community participation. Together with targeted holistic rural development and improved harnessing of local resources such as water and land conservation, bio-forestry etc it has brought about larger financial inclusion and empowerment of workers via opening and linkage of bank accounts for direct cash transfers. It has specifically addressed the right to decent and dignified living by provision of minimum 100 days of safe and gainful employment especially for the women folk. Among other mechanisms, the Act has helped in strengthening federal system of sharing financial and governance responsibilities with firm base rooted in *Panchayati Raj* Institutional system for implementation. In agriculturally weaker states, NREGA is found to reduce the incidence of distress migration. With its recent amendment of provisioning 50 additional man-days over and above the mandatory 100 days in the natural calamity hit areas, has definitely hammered another protective tent towards the vulnerable. Like its predecessors, such as *Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY)*, National Rural Employment Program (NREP) etc, MGNREGA was initiated as a poverty alleviation strategy through generation of employment to the rural households. But as many criticize that such a stop-gap approach or an ad-hoc method of solving the vicious cycle of poverty-unemployment is

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unsustainable in the long-run for a developing nation like India; success of MGNREGA has been also found to be weighted down by other weaknesses.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

MGNREGA has been seen as a tool for containing rural unemployment and bringing prosperity among the deprived poor households, but the basic features of the scheme has not been fully exemplified (Bhatia and Dreze, 2006). The mechanism of the scheme has confronted with varied financial, operational, target achievement stumble blocks such as NREGA wage determination across states based on minimum wage or consumer price index, fund allocation between states and the central government, ensuing of job cards and making the job card holders aware about their privileges and benefits. Recent updates in public reports throw light on imbalances in labour budget and employment generation especially in the northern Hindi speaking belt of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Chattisgarh including Jharkhand and Bihar. Since the scheme is demand driven and is universal in India, the poor households and its members are expected to increase demand for jobs, and especially from women due to its well-framed legal conceptualization which would directly accrue participation from women. (Khera and Nayak, 2009) Availability of crèche and other childcare facilities at worksite, spatial nearness of worksite to homes, equal wage for equal work among both sexes and assured reservations of employment vacancies for women is sure to augment more women participation under the programme. Social rigidities of caste and community affiliation at worksite, unfavourable working conditions in other job arenas, illiteracy, limitations to physical migration to cities and sense of disgrace in pleading for work are some barriers that deter women's labour market participation, but MGNREGA has helped turn the tables for rural women. But instances where NREGA participation has assisted women to avoid precarious jobs like timber collection, working in quarries were contextual and having inter-regional and inter-district disparity. As notified by Bhati and Dreze, this mismatch can be justified from the fact that robust state administrative structure is not fully developed in all districts, especially in terms of the active engagement of Gram Sabhas and Panchayats and inculcating informed participation of people and an environment of accountability from the implementing agencies. Jharkhand is plagued with delays in wage payment and incompleteness of NREGA projects and involvement of contractors or middlemen. Notwithstanding, Jharkhand is one of the backward states in MGNREGA implementation, but studies conducted by Ministry of Rural Development, 2012 reveal that the scheme has benefited the socially most disadvantaged households who would have been unable to purchase food-grains, and have helped push up agricultural wage rates primarily the female wage rates after it was operationalized.

## DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The paper is based on National Sample Survey (NSS) 66<sup>th</sup> (2009-10) and 68<sup>th</sup> (2011-12) round. The former round is based on household characteristics while 68<sup>th</sup> round provides both household and individual characteristics giving wider scope of analysis of ground realities. Aspects like mode of payment and number of days worked were not canvassed in 66<sup>th</sup> round. Probing questions on possible reasons for not working by the registered population and why the population who sought job but did not get job in NREGA, would have helped in better comprehension of the situation. Additionally, current data gathered from government NREGA website ([www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)) for the time-span from 2012-13 to 2014-15 financial years, that is post latest NSS Employment and Unemployment Survey (EUS) is incorporated as well. Use of SPSS and MS-Excel for data analysis and ARCGIS for thematic representation is performed.

## STATUS OF MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

Jharkhand being one of the youngest state remains under-developed. Though the state is very rich in mineral and forest resources, agriculturally it is backward. The state is also home to numerous tribal and indigenous groups who are still yet to be integrated entirely in the mainstream economy. As per 2011 Census of India, Khunti (76.3%) and Pashchimi Singhbhum (74.2%) along with southern districts of the state has greater tribal population concentration. Literacy rate in Rural Jharkhand is extremely low, with the range being 37-58%, with highest registered in Dhanbad and Ranchi districts. The poor governance and political instability witnessing formation and toppling of many governmental coalitions, it becomes very difficult in implementation of developmental policies in Jharkhand making it one of the economically lagging states in the country. Consequently, the performance of the state can be regarded pitiable largely because of lack of political will for the betterment of its population. It has been also seen that proportion of enlistment and recruitment in employment in MGNREGA works in the state has declined over the consecutive financial years. 20 districts in Jharkhand are among 200 chosen districts where NREGA was first implemented when the act came into force on February 2, 2006. Impact of the program can be assessed from its social outcomes in form of intra-household and inter-community changes on the vulnerable sections of population, chiefly comprising of women, widows and landless class. Women population in Jharkhand is found to be less involved in NREGA job scenario compared to southern and north-eastern states of India. This has significant connotations when examined on the interconnected mechanisms on standard of living of the household, children's education and over-all health cum well-being of its members. Moreover, being an Empowered Action Group (EAG) state, the demographic profile of Jharkhand has a youth bulge and heavy burden of child population, making the employment situation there all the more critical.

The present study attempts to analyze the spatio-temporal variation in MGNREGA program in India and in Jharkhand. The second objective is to ascertain the intensity of participation among the socio-religious groups and between men and women sub-groups in terms of enrollment and active engagement in employment. Thereafter the study focuses on to examine the social-demographic-economic background of NREGA workers in Jharkhand and also on the inter-district disparity within the state in the coverage and effectiveness of the employment program.

## DISCUSSION

In the paper an attempt has been made to analyse the extent of coverage of MGNREGA and in consequence the participation of the targeted rural population in the employment scheme that is guaranteed under the aforesaid Act. At the Pan-India level, NREGA works programme is found to be non-uniform in its implementation. The database consulted for this paper, points to the fact that, there is profound spatial variation and disparity among the social groups in terms of proportion of rural households being brought under the ambit of the programme. Therein lies the major shortcoming of the scheme, which is supposed to provide minimum of 100 days' employment to the rural households whose adult members are registered and are willing to provide their manual labour for unskilled work.

Central and northern states like Chattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and north-eastern states of Tripura, Nagaland and Mizoram show relatively higher figures in terms of rural population registered with MGNREGA job card (**Table 1**), whereas, the gender difference in registration with the employment exchange shows a remarkable picture. The north-eastern states along with southern Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Goa have a women oriented pattern, where more than 50% of registrations are done by women.

**Table 1 Gender Wise Distribution having Registered in MGNREGA job card, India, (2011-12)**

STATES	Male	Female	Total	STATES	Male	Female	Total
JAMMU & KASHMIR	84.1%	15.9%	100	WEST BENGAL	71.2%	28.8%	100
HIMACHAL PRADESH	48.5%	51.5%	100	<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>72.5%</b>	<b>27.5%</b>	<b>100</b>
PUNJAB	56.8%	43.2%	100	ORISSA	76.5%	23.5%	100
CHANDIGARH	.0%	.0%	100	CHATTISGARH	55.8%	44.2%	100
UTTARANCHAL	59.8%	40.2%	100	MADHYA PRADESH	55.3%	44.7%	100
HARYANA	61.8%	38.2%	100	GUJARAT	56.3%	43.7%	100
DELHI	.0%	.0%	100	DAMAN & DIU	.0%	.0%	100
RAJASTHAN	50.8%	49.2%	100	D & N HAVELI	22.2%	77.8%	100
UTTAR PRADESH	82.7%	17.3%	100	MAHARASTRA	54.6%	45.4%	100
BIHAR	82.4%	17.6%	100	ANDHRA PRADESH	49.1%	50.9%	100
SIKKIM	45.0%	55.0%	100	KARNATAKA	61.6%	38.4%	100
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	55.9%	44.1%	100	GOA	22.2%	77.8%	100
NAGALAND	52.9%	47.1%	100	LAKSHADWEEP	61.0%	39.0%	100
MANIPUR	25.9%	74.1%	100	KERALA	23.4%	76.6%	100
MIZORAM	50.5%	49.5%	100	TAMIL NADU	30.3%	69.7%	100
TRIPURA	60.6%	39.4%	100	PONDICHERY	33.8%	66.2%	100
MEGHALAYA	61.2%	38.8%	100	A & N ISLANDS	54.8%	45.2%	100
ASSAM	85.8%	14.2%	100				

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

This can be attributed to the rural out-migration of the male working population for search of better-paying jobs, which compels the women folk to find manual work in NREGA. Moreover, the southern states are integrated in a matriarchal and women-headship societal structure, generally with less restricted entry of the tribal women in labour market. This is in contrast to the northerly and easterly lying states of West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh where men outnumber women by greater proportions in terms of having registered with MGNREGA. Barring Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Tripura, almost rest of states have 50 to 75% male ruralites having names on the employment rolls. But in case of females, enrolment in job-card list is very deplorable for the northern and eastern states including Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Orissa. This clearly points out that labour market is still restricted to women participation owing to stringent social norms nevertheless, the constitutional reforms since 2005 in the shape of MGNREGA, which aimed to improve the scope of opportunities for enhancing women empowerment via their active engagement in gainful employment (**Table 2**).

The NSS rounds of employment and unemployment survey provides a temporal trend of the efficiency of MGNREGA in reaching out to the households that need it the most. Even though the job assistance scheme was rolled out in phase wise manner since 2005, but yet there is a decline in the share of households with registration in job cards across socio-religious demographic groups. Except Nagaland and Mizoram where the ST households has been almost fully registered against voluntary demand, rest of the country shows considerable decrease in registration of SC and ST households, while the share of OBC and non-scheduled households have simultaneously risen. (**Table 3**) In Jharkhand, job card registration for the ST and SC families decreased from 43.2% and 17% to 30.2% and 15.5% from 2009-10 to 2011-12 respectively, while simultaneously share of OBC households rose from 33% to 46.1% and other non-scheduled households increased from 6.2% to 8.2%.

**Table 2 : Distribution of Male-Female Population by MGNREGA  
Job-card Registration Status, India, (2011-12)**

STATES	% MALE		Total	% FEMALE		Total
	Registered	Not-Registered		Registered	Not-Registered	
JAMMU & KASHMIR	63.1	36.9	100	14.4	85.6	100
HIMACHAL PRADESH	61.0	39.0	100	58.6	41.4	100
PUNJAB	56.0	44.0	100	45.6	54.4	100
CHANDIGARH	0.0	100.0	100	0.0	100.0	100
UTTARANCHAL	61.0	39.0	100	35.5	64.5	100
HARYANA	59.1	40.9	100	40.3	59.7	100
DELHI	0.0	100.0	100	0.0	100.0	100
RAJASTHAN	75.6	24.4	100	73.0	27.0	100
UTTAR PRADESH	68.0	32.0	100	15.2	84.8	100
BIHAR	73.6	26.4	100	17.9	82.1	100
SIKKIM	50.3	49.7	100	61.4	38.6	100
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	69.9	30.1	100	55.9	44.1	100
NAGALAND	68.4	31.6	100	60.2	39.8	100
MANIPUR	17.4	82.6	100	48.9	51.1	100
MIZORAM	92.8	7.2	100	94.3	5.7	100
TRIPURA	69.1	30.9	100	45.4	54.6	100
MEGHALAYA	48.2	51.8	100	30.6	69.4	100
ASSAM	62.3	37.7	100	11.8	88.2	100
WEST BENGAL	71.5	28.5	100	30.3	69.7	100
<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>74.3</b>	<b>25.7</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>28.0</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>100</b>
ORISSA	70.1	29.9	100	22.6	77.4	100
CHATTISGARH	71.8	28.2	100	58.9	41.1	100
MADHYA PRADESH	90.9	9.1	100	78.6	21.4	100
GUJARAT	68.5	31.5	100	53.3	46.7	100
DAMAN & DIU	0.0	100.0	100	0.0	100.0	100
D & N HAVELI	20.0	80.0	100	63.6	36.4	100
MAHARASTRA	72.6	27.4	100	61.1	38.9	100
ANDHRA PRADESH	74.4	25.6	100	73.8	26.2	100
KARNATAKA	61.5	38.5	100	40.3	59.7	100
GOA	20.0	80.0	100	58.3	41.7	100
LAKSHADWEEP	51.0	49.0	100	30.8	69.2	100
KERALA	19.7	80.3	100	57.0	43.0	100
TAMIL NADU	32.2	67.8	100	69.7	30.3	100
PONDICHERRY	41.4	58.6	100	68.1	31.9	100
A & N ISLANDS	36.9	63.1	100	33.5	66.5	100
<b>India</b>	<b>64.5</b>	<b>35.5</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>50.5</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

This is seen in most states, like Karnataka, Bihar, Haryana, Kerala among others, where OBC and non-scheduled households show a marked rise in possessing job-cards. When looking across the religious groups, Muslims in Jharkhand are seen to fare well over the 66<sup>th</sup> to 68<sup>th</sup> round. On the other hand, West Bengal shows a 2.5% decline for the registration of Muslim households during

the same temporal span. Hindu households in most states such as Bihar, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, are better covered with job-card and they record increased share over the two rounds. Muslims households in Assam and Jammu and Kashmir have significant possession rates, while Maharashtra and Karnataka households show a marginal increase in the same for the Muslims. State-wise discrepancy in subscription of needy rural households in government assisted job program can be attributed to a combination of factors ranging from laxity in the governance and implementation of priority policies and religious- political affiliations, bureaucratic red-tapism.

**Table 3 : Percentage Share of Households having Job Cards according to Household Types, INDIA, (2009-10)**

States	Self-employed in Non-agriculture	Agricultural Labour	Other Labour	Self - employed in agriculture	Others	Total
JAMMU & KASHMIR	23.8	5.9	23.6	32.0	14.7	100
PUNJAB	11.6	29.1	51.0	7.2	1.1	100
HARYANA	12.3	22.8	48.4	8.4	8.1	100
RAJASTHAN	17.6	3.4	29.3	43.3	6.4	100
UTTAR PRADESH	19.1	12.1	39.7	25.4	3.7	100
BIHAR	26.4	30.6	26.1	8.7	8.1	100
MANIPUR	30.4	1.8	3.1	41.8	22.9	100
ASSAM	28.0	8.7	14.9	40.9	7.5	100
WEST BENGAL	33.2	29.7	17.1	15.8	4.2	100
<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>18.4</b>	<b>4.2</b>	<b>41.3</b>	<b>30.7</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>100</b>
ORISSA	24.1	18.3	24.2	27.9	5.5	100
CHATTISGARH	22.5	31.0	7.2	34.0	5.4	100
MADHYA PRADESH	19.8	19.3	11.9	41.8	7.1	100
GUJARAT	18.5	22.6	22.7	30.8	5.4	100
MAHARASTRA	25.2	24.4	21.4	23.3	5.8	100
ANDHRA PRADESH	22.8	28.1	20.9	24.5	3.7	100
KARNATAKA	24.9	29.8	18.0	23.7	3.6	100
TAMIL NADU	13.4	27.7	35.1	16.3	7.4	100

Source: Generated from NSSO 66<sup>th</sup> Round

MGNREGA has so far played a crucial role in diverting over-concentrated human resources from agriculture to alternative sectors of rural economy in India. The targeted population of agricultural labours, casual workers and small landowners and self-employed in agricultural and non-agricultural households are provided with work participation opportunity in non-farm activities. This helps in reducing their dependence on agriculture which is already weaker in the state and allowing them an assured income security through direct involvement in community asset creation and rural development. Jharkhand, carved out of the industrial region of erstwhile undivided Bihar has poor agricultural prospects owing to its plateau terrain, infertile wasteland nature of soil and thick tropical forests and thereby requires a strong base for MGNREGA like job assistance. Database computed from NSS rounds indicate that MGNREGA enlistment of casual agricultural labour in the



state has marginally increased from 4% to 6% between two rounds, but there is yet a major scope of improvement (**Table. 4**), whereas, in agriculturally developed Punjab, Haryana, West Bengal, Bihar among others where farm hands in form of casual labour have better figures of enrolment in NREGA. Households with self-employed in agriculture are mainly the small and marginal farmers in agriculturally poor Rajasthan, Manipur, Chattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh which account for 40% share among other household types, who periodically work in NREGA program. 68<sup>th</sup> NSS round data shows an escalation in proportions of job-card enrolment of the self-employed households in agriculture in these states.

**Table 4 : Percentage Share of Households having Job Cards by Household Types, INDIA, (2011-12)**

	Self Employed in			Casual labour In			
STATES	Agriculture	Non-agriculture	Regular Wage/Salary Earning	Agriculture	Non-Agriculture	Others	Total
PUNJAB	4.18	19.45	12.47	31.96	31.53	0.41	100
UTTARANCHAL	48.40	15.27	3.58	5.75	26.21	0.78	100
HARYANA	10.03	6.19	9.94	32.25	40.91	0.69	100
RAJASTHAN	47.34	13.42	6.75	3.58	27.54	1.38	100
UTTAR PRADESH	34.99	13.05	2.96	19.42	28.95	0.63	100
BIHAR	18.06	13.25	1.13	51.18	13.51	2.87	100
ASSAM	57.70	18.90	4.07	8.95	9.88	0.50	100
WEST BENGAL	19.32	18.02	4.75	43.91	13.41	0.58	100
<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>48.26</b>	<b>12.26</b>	<b>1.83</b>	<b>6.01</b>	<b>30.52</b>	<b>1.12</b>	<b>100</b>
ORISSA	40.38	17.61	3.53	20.76	16.77	0.95	100
CHATTISGARH	49.12	4.28	2.57	39.14	4.48	0.40	100
MADHYA PRADESH	48.24	9.60	3.32	22.48	15.66	0.70	100
GUJARAT	53.66	4.07	3.62	34.82	3.82	0.00	100
MAHARASTRA	39.83	7.10	3.16	43.95	5.75	0.20	100
ANDHRA PRADESH	33.06	9.73	6.01	42.17	8.15	0.88	100
KARNATAKA	34.87	9.88	9.63	38.60	6.24	0.78	100
KERALA	9.97	17.15	11.26	18.81	39.55	3.27	100
TAMIL NADU	16.11	10.13	10.20	46.67	16.55	0.34	100

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

Rural households with large family sizes on an average with 6 members, in India seem more likely to own a job-card while the southern states have a mean size of 4 persons. (**Table 5**) In 68<sup>th</sup> Round, Haryana, Gujarat and Andaman and Nicobar Islands reported to have 7 member households with job-card. As per Census of India 2011, rural households in the northern districts of Jharkhand such as Giridih, Palamau, Kodarma have an average of more than 6 household members. Likewise, these districts are found to perform better with job-card ownership figures, than the southern districts.

**Table 5 : Average Household Size of Households having MGNREGA Job-Cards, India,(2009-10)**

States	Average Household Size of MGNREGA Households	States	Average Household Size of MGNREGA Households	States	Average Household Size of MGNREGA Households
JAMMU & KASHMIR	7	NAGALAND	5	DAMAN & DIU	.
HIMACHAL PRADESH	6	MANIPUR	6	D & N HAVELI	5
PUNJAB	5	MIZORAM	5	MAHARASTRA	6
CHANDIGARH	.	TRIPURA	5	ANDHRA PRADESH	5
UTTARANCHAL	6	MEGHALAYA	6	KARNATAKA	7
HARYANA	6	ASSAM	6	GOA	6
DELHI	.	WEST BENGAL	5	LAKSHADWEEP	8
RAJASTHAN	6	<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>6</b>	KERALA	5
UTTAR PRADESH	7	ORISSA	5	TAMIL NADU	5
BIHAR	6	CHATTISGARH	6	PONDICHERRY	5
SIKKIM	5	MADHYA PRADESH	6	A & N ISLANDS	5
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	7	GUJARAT	6		

Source: Generated from NSSO 66<sup>th</sup> Round

It is mostly the marginal and small landowning families with less than 1 hectare of land ownership that are beneficiaries under the scheme. Insufficient income from their meagre land-holdings and erratic nature of the monsoon dependant agriculture compel these households to heavily depend on income drawn from NREGA works. The Indian average for such households in 2011-12 is around 78% while its 83% for Jharkhand (**Table 6**). On the other hand, the households owning land-holdings more than 1 hectare in size in the hilly terrain, agriculturally bleak regions and sparsely populated states of north-east India, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand etc also register themselves with NREGA for sustenance. In some states like Punjab, West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, percentage share of households possessing more than 1 hectare of land is found to have declined significantly in between 66<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> NSS round. Thus, in this situation of heightened economic poverty in terms of decline of land-wealth security, more and more of the marginal landholding families get themselves registered with MGNREGA job-cards.

The head of the household and immediate family consisting of wife and children are more likely to be registered than the older generation existing before them (**Table 7**). The age structure of the persons registered with a job-card in India has even pattern, with youth population (18-35 years) and middle aged working population (36-59 years) both registered equally (**Table 8**). But the focus should be given to the aged population (60 years and above, including 80 plus old-aged) in India (10%) who get themselves enrolled in this type of back-breaking manual exerting casual labour. Planners must attend to the issue of inadequacy and gaps in deliverance of social security in form of old-age allowance, health and monetary assistance for sustenance of the aged. The government web portal would ensure greater transparency and comprehension among the researchers and policy makers in understanding the underlying causes behind the elderly population and the disabled



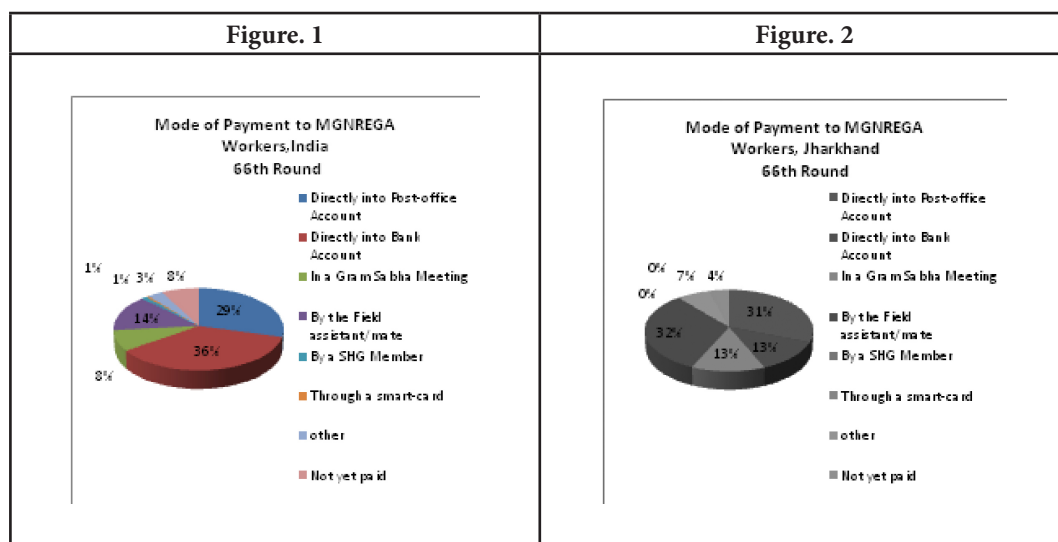
population seeking such strenuous manual work, if data regarding age-wise break-up of the type of NREGA works participation is made publicly available.

**Table 6 : Percentage Share of Households having MGNREGA Job card according to Land Owned in Hectares, INDIA,(2011-12)**

States	less than 1	1.01-3	3.01-5	5.01-10	10.01-15	Above 15.01	Total
JAMMU & KASHMIR	84.86	13.86	1.11	0.00	0.17	0.00	100
HIMACHAL PRADESH	87.66	10.81	0.85	0.68	0.00	0.00	100
PUNJAB	96.34	3.24	0.05	0.37	0.00	0.00	100
UTTARANCHAL	93.02	6.43	0.56	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
HARYANA	94.85	4.46	0.69	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
RAJASTHAN	54.89	26.76	11.14	6.15	0.81	0.24	100
UTTAR PRADESH	92.42	6.66	0.65	0.28	0.00	0.00	100
BIHAR	94.71	5.29	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
SIKKIM	73.23	24.69	2.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	22.91	42.11	21.60	12.80	0.42	0.16	100
NAGALAND	25.92	45.25	21.48	7.35	0.00	0.00	100
MANIPUR	77.73	18.96	2.24	0.79	0.29	0.00	100
MIZORAM	85.64	14.04	0.22	0.09	0.00	0.00	100
TRIPURA	94.81	5.14	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
MEGHALAYA	77.00	21.86	0.92	0.12	0.09	0.00	100
ASSAM	71.42	25.73	2.24	0.55	0.07	0.00	100
WEST BENGAL	96.07	3.82	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>82.84</b>	<b>15.67</b>	<b>1.36</b>	<b>0.13</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>100</b>
ORISSA	81.58	17.21	0.81	0.29	0.10	0.00	100
CHATTISGARH	58.84	38.00	1.86	1.11	0.13	0.06	100
MADHYA PRADESH	58.29	31.32	5.65	3.51	1.05	0.18	100
GUJARAT	66.56	30.28	0.27	1.91	0.84	0.15	100
MAHARASTRA	69.94	26.77	2.52	0.58	0.18	0.00	100
ANDHRA PRADESH	74.53	22.26	2.34	0.54	0.33	0.00	100
KARNATAKA	64.70	25.87	6.06	2.23	1.05	0.09	100
KERALA	97.60	2.40	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
TAMIL NADU	90.49	8.26	0.54	0.70	0.00	0.00	100
A & N ISLANDS	89.13	10.29	0.58	0.00	0.00	0.00	100
<b>INDIA</b>	<b>78.26</b>	<b>17.29</b>	<b>2.70</b>	<b>1.40</b>	<b>0.30</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

When one looks into the work status of the households registered across the social and religious sub-groups the demographical composition shows that Hindus have a substantial 64 %share among households worked in the last 365 days prior to survey, followed by 11.3% of Muslims during 2009-10. While the share for Muslims; who are generalized as economically poorer, is 29% and 36% in West Bengal and Assam respectively. Jharkhand being home for many scheduled tribes like Orao, Munda, and they being economically weaker depend much on this manual work provided under NREGA for earning their livelihood. The workers are paid through cash transfers into their post office account. But as per the 66<sup>th</sup> round, (**Figure 1 and 2**) coverage of bank accounts in Jharkhand was much low than Indian average, with merely 13% payment made directly into bank accounts in the former. The recent launch of *Jan Dhan Yojana* in 2014 has enabled enhanced transparency to the beneficiaries.



Source: Generated from NSSO 66<sup>th</sup> Round

**Table 7 : Persons Registered in MGNREGA, Jharkhand, (2011-12)**

Relation to the Head	Persons Registered (%)	Persons Not-registered (%)	Total(%)
Self	35.2	64.8	100
Spouse of Head	36.8	63.2	100
Married Child	33.5	66.5	100
Spouse of married Child	36.6	63.4	100
Unmarried Child	40.2	59.8	100
Grandchild	37.1	62.9	100
Father/mother/father-inlaw/Mother-inlaw	29.8	70.2	100
Brother/sister/brother inlaw/sister inlaw/other relatives	32.9	67.1	100
Servants/employees/other non-relatives	12.8	87.2	100

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

While the OBC households (45.6%) in the state accounts for double that of STs (24.1%) who sought work but did not find one. Similar situations are seen to exist in other states such as Orissa (36%), Chattisgarh (39.7%), Madhya Pradesh (41.7%), Gujarat (34.7%) and the southern India states (more than 60%) of where invariably the share of OBC households who have sought work but did not get to participate in work is on a much higher side than other social groups. So the government must attend to these population groups on a priority basis when taking up auditing, monitoring the achievements and rectifying the gaps in execution. During 2009-10, Jharkhand performed poorly in providing 100 days work to households, as all registered households irrespective of their social and religious background, worked for less than 100 days in the state. Thus one may correctly say that there is a high level of negligence in conforming to the NREGA Act in the state machinery. The scenario for the same in the other states, excluding the north-eastern ones are better, where number of days worked touches 100 though with inter-group differences. States such as Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Orissa, Karnataka, Punjab and Jharkhand (23.3%) has about 30 to 40% population seeking work in NREGA but were not provided work during 2011-12.

**Table 8 : Percentage Share of Age-wise Population Registered in MGNREGA, INDIA, (2011-12)**

States	18-35	36-59	Above 60	Total
JAMMU & KASHMIR	40.87	50.94	8.19	100
HIMACHAL PRADESH	40.15	48.19	11.66	100
PUNJAB	45.79	40.73	13.48	100
UTTARANCHAL	27.27	64.70	8.03	100
HARYANA	54.61	40.38	5.01	100
RAJASTHAN	46.31	41.85	11.84	100
UTTAR PRADESH	42.26	48.85	8.88	100
BIHAR	43.39	50.25	6.36	100
SIKKIM	48.69	45.39	5.92	100
ARUNACHAL PRADESH	43.07	50.27	6.66	100
NAGALAND	44.11	47.62	8.27	100
MANIPUR	42.69	54.17	3.14	100
MIZORAM	54.81	36.95	8.24	100
TRIPURA	39.13	52.32	8.55	100
MEGHALAYA	43.02	56.17	0.81	100
ASSAM	48.30	48.89	2.81	100
WEST BENGAL	40.92	52.64	6.44	100
<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>44.70</b>	<b>50.59</b>	<b>4.71</b>	<b>100</b>
ORISSA	31.18	56.41	12.41	100
CHATTISGARH	44.86	49.99	5.15	100
MADHYA PRADESH	48.65	40.66	10.69	100
GUJARAT	42.93	49.44	7.62	100
D & N HAVELI	49.76	50.24	0.00	100
MAHARASTRA	39.71	47.88	12.41	100
ANDHRA PRADESH	44.25	43.38	12.37	100
KARNATAKA	36.54	55.38	8.08	100
GOA	36.40	63.60	0.00	100
LAKSHADWEEP	75.86	23.10	1.04	100
KERALA	18.60	65.85	15.55	100
TAMIL NADU	31.55	56.84	11.61	100
PONDICHERRY	26.52	59.75	13.73	100
A & N ISLANDS	43.91	39.71	16.39	100
<b>INDIA</b>	<b>42.23</b>	<b>48.03</b>	<b>9.73</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

This is shortcoming of the administrative machinery and manifests their incapacity that it carries the burden of unemployment allowance to the state treasury in return of no productive activity. NREGA workers are also classified by their marital status. In Jharkhand 58.4% of the currently married and 43.2% of widow population are engaged in work which is lower than India average (Table 9).

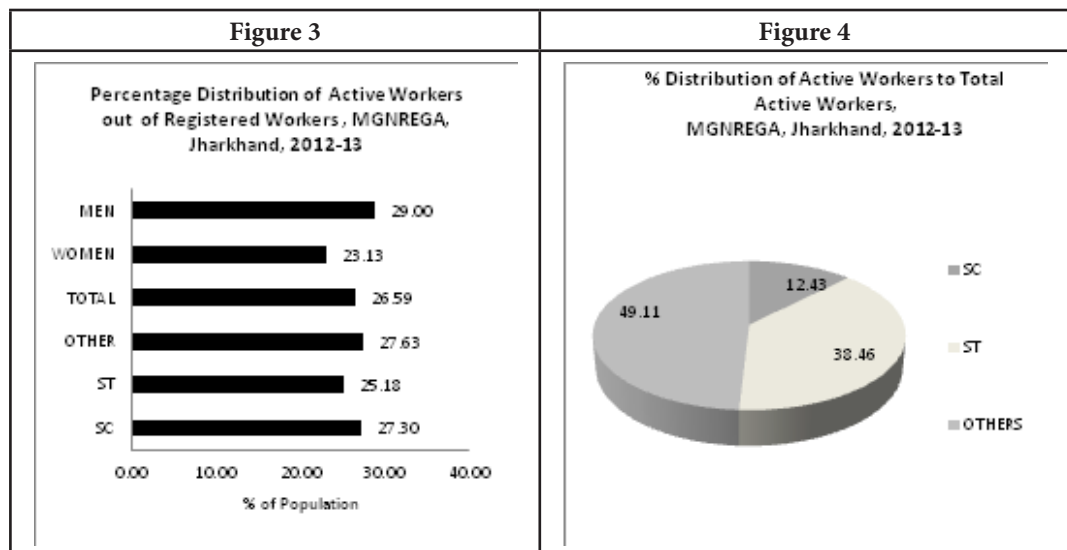
Work is sought by mostly illiterate population (38.29%) followed by primary (29.05%) and secondary (26.58%) level educated persons in the Jharkhand. It is mainly the EAG states that account for higher share of illiterate population averaging more than 50% of the population engaged in NREGA works. For the national average illiterates account for 36.5%, upto primary schooling (29%) and up to secondary level of schooling (26.9%) during 2011-12. It is also a worrying factor when 2.51% of the graduate and above population works in NREGA, inspite of attaining higher education qualifications. In Kerala as well, the most literate state, around 11% of illiterates earn wage income from NREGA participation, while it is 1.23% for the graduate and above. Active workers; who work at-least once in three consecutive consist primarily of men folk.

**Table 9 : Percentage Population Worked in MGNREGA By Marital Status, India, (2011-12)**

States	Never married	Currently Married	Widowed	Divorced/Separated
JAMMU & KASHMIR	70.89	71.55	74.39	100.00
HIMACHAL PRADESH	40.78	52.11	51.44	55.59
UTTARANCHAL	52.39	69.77	58.75	12.60
HARYANA	75.26	78.80	76.76	0.00
RAJASTHAN	29.76	42.27	45.51	27.50
UTTAR PRADESH	63.86	68.24	79.14	73.16
BIHAR	63.84	43.56	64.79	0.00
ASSAM	57.61	62.52	38.14	59.20
WEST BENGAL	67.59	57.48	38.44	30.40
<b>JHARKHAND</b>	<b>41.23</b>	<b>58.41</b>	<b>43.28</b>	<b>100.00</b>
ORISSA	48.74	49.15	35.09	97.94
CHATTISGARH	85.12	71.17	66.71	65.69
GUJARAT	40.37	31.06	22.86	40.71
ANDHRA PRADESH	47.94	58.85	64.58	85.40
KARNATAKA	42.93	42.65	51.87	71.11
KERALA	33.07	60.01	58.51	46.92
TAMIL NADU	67.16	75.27	76.75	68.84
<b>INDIA</b>	<b>47.49</b>	<b>62.71</b>	<b>51.87</b>	<b>59.90</b>

Source: Generated from NSSO 68<sup>th</sup> Round

Ironically the more needy and deprived ST and women groups, who ought to be benefiting more from this fruitful intervention, lag behind. Around 50% of the active workers in 2012-13 in Jharkhand are constituted of non-scheduled population (**Figure 3 and 4**).



Source: Generated from NREGA website

**Table 10 : Level of Employment Among Households and Population Groups, Jharkhand,(2012-13)**

Districts	Level of Employment (in %)				
	Working Age (18-60 years)	Aged Population (Above 60 years)	SC households employed for 100 days	St households employed for 100 days	Average number of women employed/ household
BOKARO	17.16	12.06	16.39	26.04	2.68
CHATRA	25.85	20.03	48.30	6.42	1.50
DEOGHAR	30.59	25.94	13.00	19.80	2.55
DHANBAD	30.13	19.90	18.03	28.53	2.69
DUMKA	28.37	25.25	5.19	54.55	1.46
PURBI SINGHBHUM	23.15	13.68	3.84	66.95	1.39
GARHWA	22.37	22.19	29.60	16.67	1.73
GIRIDIH	30.65	21.92	11.90	15.11	1.75
GODDA	24.54	18.48	7.65	28.60	2.01
GUMLA	19.38	14.61	3.21	79.02	2.41
HAZARIBAGH	20.94	15.55	27.32	8.68	1.42
JAMTARA	28.09	20.35	11.37	51.39	3.14
KHUNTI	24.85	18.99	7.76	69.64	1.83
KODERMA	26.53	20.80	14.33	0.98	1.78
LATEHAR	35.00	24.95	20.02	37.59	1.04
LOHARDAGA	28.21	19.94	5.09	72.30	1.14
PAKUR	27.75	24.88	1.81	66.10	1.89
PALAMU	18.64	14.69	39.66	16.86	2.03
RAMGARH	30.31	23.00	9.49	36.31	1.50
RANCHI	19.46	15.00	7.23	70.89	1.71
SAHEBGANJ	36.76	30.27	4.18	51.80	2.85
SARAIKELA KHARSAWAN	25.45	18.54	6.23	52.83	1.49
SIMDEGA	29.26	20.22	11.89	69.26	1.39
PASCHIMI SINGHBHUM	23.54	18.12	1.45	73.47	1.51

Source: Generated from data in [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in). (2012-13)

The inter-district comparison on the accomplishments of MGNREGA in Jharkhand clearly portrays an existing north-south disparity in proportion of workers employed and that of active workers. Northern, north-eastern districts such as Jamtara, Dumka, Pakur, Chatra, Sahibganj and the centrally located Latehar and Ramgarh fare better in almost all indicators. Latehar, Sahibganj and Deoghar shelter higher proportions of active job-card holders who participate regularly in public works. (**Table 10 and 11**)

Distribution of youth and aged workers show that these northern districts especially Sahibganj ranks first. Agriculture cannot support the employment demand that is here and NREGA is better covered in these districts than the southern ones of Ranchi, Lohardaga, Khunti. The Chota-Nagpur plateau region covering Purbi and Paschim Singhbhum shows poor performance of NREGA. In terms of population registration, ownership of job-card by a household, and number of days worked by a household southern Jharkhand is marked off poorly in NREGA activities.

**Table 11 : Distribution of Job-Cards and Active Workers, Jharkhand, (2012-13)**

Districts	% Job-cards across Households			% Active Job-Cards (All Households)	% Active Workers	
	SC	ST	Non-SC-ST		Males	Females
BOKARO	17.28	19.18	63.54	33.76	30.32	69.68
CHATRA	41.50	5.72	52.78	44.33	41.83	58.17
DEOGHAR	13.38	17.43	69.19	61.65	25.61	74.39
DHANBAD	15.30	19.27	65.43	46.47	28.04	71.96
DUMKA	6.60	49.45	43.95	50.59	31.31	68.69
PURBI SINGHBHUM	5.25	52.85	41.90	45.65	42.03	57.97
GARHWA	29.36	19.53	51.11	49.18	37.04	62.96
GIRIDIH	14.02	13.30	72.68	57.45	36.59	63.41
GODDA	6.28	21.45	72.28	50.89	33.31	66.69
GUMLA	4.66	71.64	23.71	45.07	30.32	69.68
HAZARIBAGH	25.18	9.11	65.72	38.62	39.63	60.37
JAMTARA	10.72	39.99	49.29	53.36	26.26	73.74
KHUNTI	4.80	77.78	17.43	50.70	33.06	66.94
KODERMA	17.39	1.50	81.11	45.43	42.12	57.88
LATEHAR	16.93	37.67	45.39	64.88	43.07	56.93
LOHARDAGA	4.31	63.71	31.97	57.24	44.07	55.93
PAKUR	3.41	57.05	39.54	50.75	29.93	70.07
PALAMU	35.34	12.28	52.37	39.63	34.75	65.25
RAMGARH	11.84	29.63	58.53	52.98	38.36	61.64
RANCHI	6.46	51.24	42.29	41.17	38.13	61.87
SAHEBGANJ	6.97	41.66	51.38	63.65	26.38	73.62
SARAIKELA KHARSAWAN	5.98	46.20	47.83	49.49	45.91	54.09
SIMDEGA	10.81	70.28	18.91	60.18	32.64	67.36
PASCHIMI SINGHBHUM	2.91	74.85	22.24	46.78	42.11	57.89

Source: Generated from data in [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in). (2012-13)

This may be attributed to the industrial stronghold of the Ranchi region, better living standards of the rural households here, with lower unemployment rates, which results in lack of effective demand from these districts for muster rolls in MGNREGA works. Moreover, Ranchi being administrative capital, the adjoining southern districts are relatively developed than its northern and central counterparts. Similarly, the level of urbanization in this region along with that of Bokaro, Purbi Singhbhum and Dhanbad is higher due to industrial and mining agglomeration.



Post NSS data from government portal suggests that the pattern of implementation more or less remains uniform since 2012-13 to 2014-15 financial year, with an exception that Chatra comes up prominently along with Latehar and Sahibganj in 2014-15 as one of the better performers.

**Table 12 : Degree of Participation of Women in MGNREGA, Jharkhand, (2012-13) to (2014-15)**

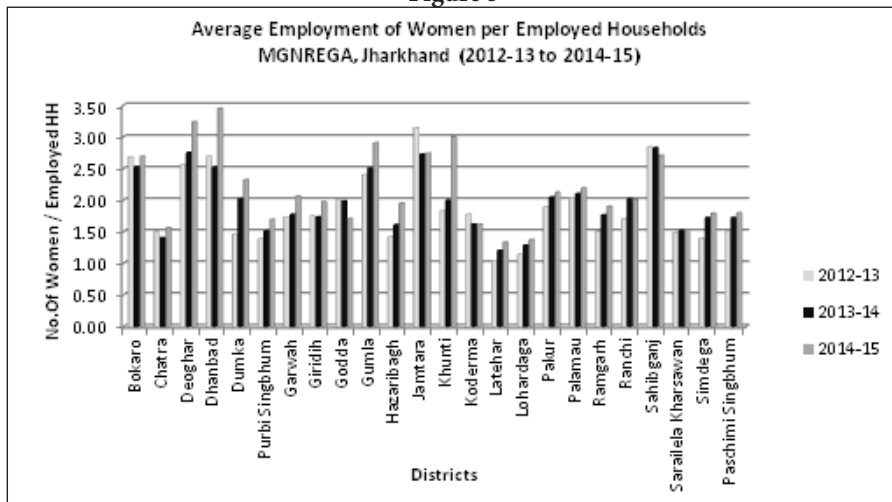
Districts	% Women Employed to total Persons employed			Gender Employment ratio (No of women employed per 100 men employed)		
	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
BOKARO	27.30	27.08	24.84	37.55	37.14	33.05
CHATRA	41.27	40.28	35.27	70.27	67.46	54.49
DEOGHAR	24.93	23.99	20.79	33.22	31.56	26.25
DHANBAD	28.14	28.12	21.08	39.15	39.13	26.71
DUMKA	34.64	28.94	26.21	52.99	40.73	35.53
PURBI SINGHBHUM	42.16	39.61	36.02	72.91	65.60	56.31
GARHWA	36.32	31.43	29.36	57.04	45.84	41.57
GIRIDIH	35.40	33.26	28.49	54.80	49.84	39.85
GODDA	27.33	28.07	30.31	37.61	39.02	43.50
GUMLA	29.08	26.85	22.98	40.99	36.71	29.84
HAZARIBAGH	41.57	36.07	29.78	71.14	56.41	42.42
JAMTARA	22.93	24.58	23.73	29.76	32.59	31.11
KHUNTI	34.98	32.01	24.37	53.80	47.09	32.22
KODERMA	38.30	39.08	37.11	62.07	64.14	59.00
LATEHAR	45.36	41.75	37.52	83.03	71.69	60.05
LOHARDAGA	43.29	40.33	39.55	76.35	67.58	65.42
PAKUR	31.42	29.77	28.03	45.81	42.39	38.95
PALAMU	34.67	29.85	29.43	53.07	42.56	41.70
RAMGARH	37.64	38.21	33.03	60.36	61.84	49.33
RANCHI	38.93	35.21	33.91	63.76	54.36	51.31
SAHEBGANJ	26.72	25.75	26.50	36.45	34.69	36.06
SARAIKELA KHARSAWAN	44.18	43.28	41.18	79.14	76.30	70.00
SIMDEGA	36.31	28.85	27.43	57.02	40.55	37.80
PASCHIMI SINGHBHUM	44.47	40.65	37.24	80.09	68.49	59.33

Source: Generated from data in [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in). (2012-13) – (2014-15)

One striking feature is that ratio of female to males being registered and in work participation is relatively better in the southern districts than in northern-eastern districts where MGNREGA fares well. Except for Latehar, all top ranking districts shows fewer women to be registered or actually worked in the program invariably across all the years. (**Table 12**) Thus this can be concluded that conservative attitude and social constraints limit women participation in labour market, even in dire situations where livelihood of these poor and vulnerable households is at stake. The economic condition of STs being more appalling, they contribute more in work involvement than SCs and other groups in MGNREGA, even in relatively developed south Jharkhand. Degree of registration and active work performed is higher for STs in southern districts, while it is higher for other groups like OBC in the north. This is because proportion of STs is high in south with a higher concentration of women headed households and thus greater work participation of women in NREGA.

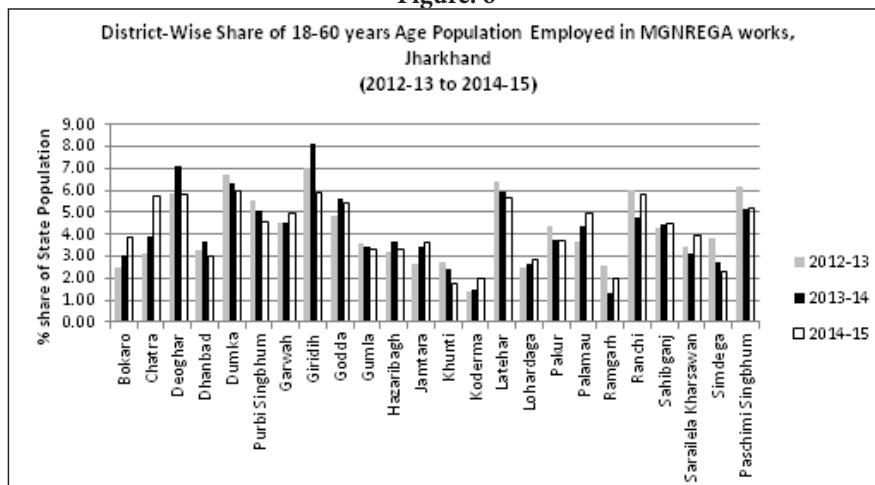
Women employment in MGNREGA sponsored works in the state has increased from 2012-13 to 2014-15, with a marked slump in the year 2013-14. Dhanbad(3.5), Deoghar(3.24) and Khunti(3) are top ranking districts in average number of women per household in MGNREGA. (**Figure 5 and Table 10**) The northern belt of Jharkhand with greater concentration of SC women, merely participate even amidst the poorer economic background. Thus, women participation in labour market outside the boundaries of home and that too in working environment consisting of men and people from other social groups, seems to a restrictive path in the state. In distribution of job-cards across the state, holding a job ensuring identity is much easier and better for non-SC-ST households except in Gumla, Simdenga Lohardaga, and Singhbhum. Among the persons working, the share working-age population increased in Deoghar and Giridih in 2014-15, while for the above 60 cohorts it slightly rose in Palamau, Pakur and even in Bokaro.

Figure 5



Source: Generated from NREGA website

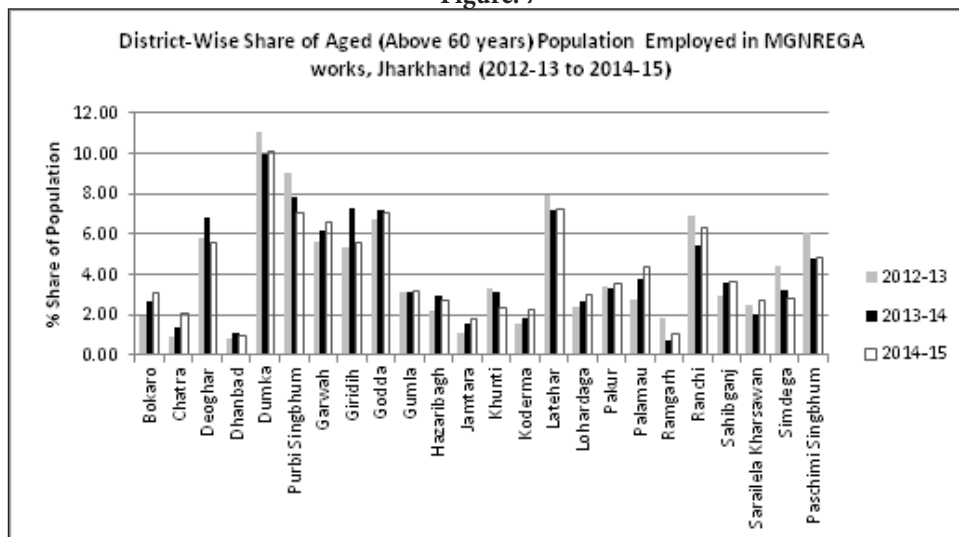
Figure. 6



Source: Generated from NREGA website

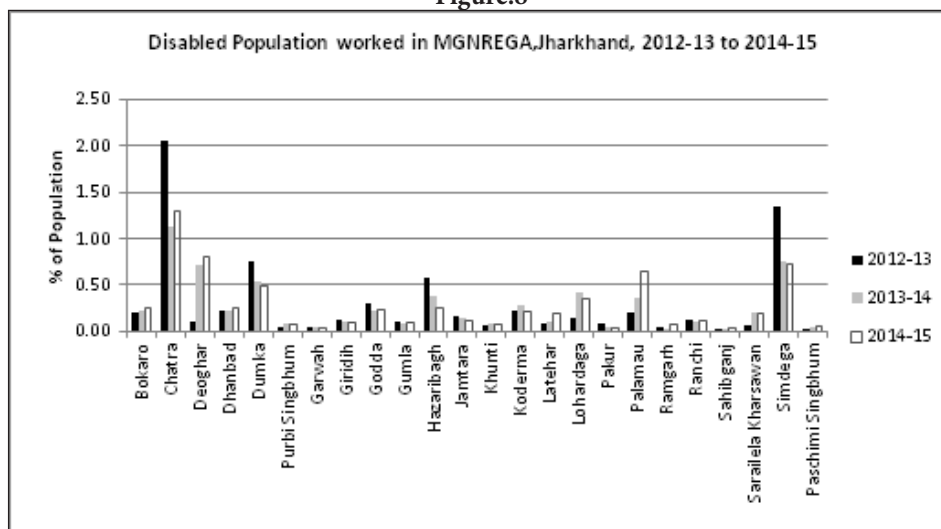
The temporal age-wise break up of aged and population between 18 to 60 years of age shows contrasting picture (**Figure 6 and 7**). In the latter age cohort, the middle year sees a rise in participation and there is a decline in 2014-15. While for the 60 plus population, there occurs mixed work participation with higher participation in northern located Godda, Dumka, Latehar districts with an average of 7 to 11%. **Figure. 8** shows the trend in the distribution of disabled population worked in NREGA across districts. Dependence of the differently-abled on NREGA job guarantee has though declined marginally, but still the disabled of northern districts of Chatra, Palamau, Deoghar, Dumka rely on it more for their livelihood.

Figure. 7



Source: Generated from NREGA website

Figure.8



Source: Generated from NREGA website

## CONCLUSION

MGNREGA has definitely acted as a cushion against unemployment among the poverty stricken households in India. It is merited to being a people-centric approach in enabling financial inclusion and upward social mobility of the people belonging to lower social profile. The programme has been hailed in bringing in democratic empowerment at the grass-root levels via rights based legislation. But on the contrary, in Jharkhand the performance has not been uniform across the districts and also overall the state in general has yet to accomplish what the Constitution has guaranteed through the Act. The disadvantaged groups of STs, women and minorities like OBC and the northern agro-poor districts in Jharkhand largely remain to be benefited from the scheme. Targeted efforts on part of the authorities in the state with ample cooperation of the locals in future would ensure better participation and consequent empowerment of the needy population groups for their sustainable livelihood.

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