



Checking migration to urban areas under MGNREGA scheme of Assam'-A study of Dhemaji and Sivasagar districts

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Abstract

Dearth of off-farm activities in rural areas is a stumbling-block for our villagers who mostly depend on agriculture. Moreover, in the absence of any developmental activities, our rural areas mostly remain under-developed with no scope for income generation from such areas. As such, most of the labourers migrate to the urban areas in search of jobs. This further deteriorates the problem of over-crowded urban areas, leaving no scope for development of rural areas. The MGNREGA is intended to address the problem of rural-urban migration of workforce by giving gainful employment to the rural workers. Under this backdrop, the present chapter endeavours to examine as to how far the MGNREGA is successful in checking the problem of rural-urban migration of labourers in the districts under study.

Keywords: migration, employment, worker's mobility

Introduction

Dearth of off-farm activities in rural areas is a stumbling-block for our villagers who mostly depend on agriculture. Moreover, in the absence of any developmental activities, our rural areas mostly remain under-developed with no scope for income generation from such areas. As such, most of the labourers migrate to the urban areas in search of jobs. This further deteriorates the problem of over-crowded urban areas, leaving no scope for development of rural areas. The MGNREGA is intended to address the problem of rural-urban migration of workforce by giving gainful employment to the rural workers. Under this backdrop, the present chapter endeavours to examine as to how far the MGNREGA is successful in checking the problem of rural-urban migration of labourers in the districts under study.

Workers' Mobility before joining MGNREGA

The rural unskilled labourers generally find themselves of no use during the agricultural slack season thus virtually making them seasonally unemployed unless they move to the urban areas in search for work. The poor villagers are left with no

option to support their families' basic needs. Many of the households even fail to manage their two end meals a day due to lack of adequate disposable incomes in their hands. Our villages in general lack developmental activities to absorb such growing labour forces with gainful employment avenues. Such a situation compels the poor villagers to migrate to the nearby urban areas in search of jobs to sustain their livelihood. With a view to examining the magnitude of the migration of the sample rural workers of the two districts under study to the urban areas, before they joined MGNREGA, Tables – 1 and 2 are compiled and presented here.

Table 1 shows that as high as 52.00 per cent of the sample workers of Sivasagar district mostly migrated to the urban areas in search of work; while 25.50 per cent used to sit idle at home with no work to do as against only 22.50 per cent mostly worked in the rural areas. This means that as high as 77.00 per cent of the rural workers of Sivasagar district were at most disadvantageous position and as such they either had to move to the urban areas or sit idle at home with no work, more particularly during the agricultural slack season.

Table 1: Break-up of the sample workers of Sivasagar district according to their mobility for work during agriculture off season before joining MGNREGA.

Workers' Statement	Gaurisagar Development Block (No.)		Total (No.)	Amguri Development Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District total (No.)
	Baruah Pukhuri G.P.	Charing G.P.		Amguri G.P.	Baruah Ali G.P.		
Mostly migrated to urban areas	28(56.00)	25(50.00)	53(53.00)	30(60.00)	21(42.00)	51(51.00)	104(52.00)
Mostly worked in rural areas	12(24.00)	13(26.00)	25(25.00)	9(18.00)	11(22.00)	20(20.00)	45(22.50)
Mostly sat idle at home	10(20.00)	12(24.00)	22(22.00)	11(22.00)	18(36.00)	29(29.00)	51(25.50)
Total	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	200(100.00)

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

The Development Block (D. B.) wise scenario reveals that 53.00 per cent of the sample cardholders of Gaurisagar Development Block mostly migrated to urban areas while 25.00 per cent mostly worked within the rural areas and 22.00

per cent stayed back idle at home. Similarly, in Amguri Development Block, 51.00 per cent mostly migrated to urban areas for work, 20.00 per cent mostly managed to work within the rural area as against 29.00 per cent had to remain confined

to home with no work to do.

A comparative study between the two samples Development Blocks as reflected in Table 1 denotes that although the incidence of migration of rural workers to urban areas in Amguri Development Block (51.00%) is less than that of Gaurisagar D.B (53.00%), 29.00 per cent of the sample workers from Amguri D. B. sit idle at home with nothing else to do as against 22.00 per cent of the sample workers from Gaurisagar D. B.

The Gaon Panchayat (G.P.) level data denotes that the incidence of rural-urban migration is the highest (60.00%) in the Amguri G.P. under the Amguri Development Block followed by Baruah Pukhuri G.P. (56.00%) under the Gaurisagar DEVELOPMENT BLOCK The lowest rate

(42.00%) of migration of rural workers to urban areas is recorded by the Baruah Ali G.P. under the Amguri DEVELOPMENT BLOCK However, despite the lowest rate of migration, the situation of the sample workers of Baruah Ali G.P is not very rosy with as high as 36.00 per cent of the sample workers remain idle at home.

Table 2 depicts a picture relating to the incidence of rural-urban migration of the sample workers from the Dhemaji district before they joined MGNREGA. The table exhibits that as high as 62.00 per cent of the sample workers report that they mostly migrated to the urban areas in search of work before they joined MGNREGA. Only 22.50 per cent of the workers worked within the village areas thereby making 15.50 per cent of the sample workers sit idle at home.

Table 2 Break-up of the sample workers of Dhemaji district according to their mobility for work during agriculture off season before joining MG-NREGA.

Workers' Statement	Murkongselek Development Block (No.)		Total (No.)	Sissiborgaon Development Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District total (No.)
	Dekapam G.P	Junai G.P.		Silapathar G.P.	Betanipam G.P.		
Mostly migrated to urban areas	32(64.00)	30(60.00)	62(62.00)	29(58.00)	33(66.00)	62(62.00)	124(62.00)
Mostly worked in rural areas	12(24.00)	10(20.00)	22(22.00)	14(28.00)	09(18.00)	23(23.00)	45(22.5)
Mostly sat idle at home	06(12.00)	10(20.00)	16(16.00)	07(14.00)	08(16.00)	15(15.00)	31(15.5)
Total	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	200(100.00)

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

Table 2 further shows that both the sample D. Bs. of Murkongselek and Sissiborgaon experience the same rate (62.00%) of workers' migration to the urban vicinity in search of work. The proportion of workers sit idle at home and those mostly work in the rural areas is also almost the same in both the sample D. Bs. under reference.

So far as the picture at Gaon Panchayat (G. P.) level is concerned, the Betanipam G.P. under Sissiborgaon G.P. experiences the highest (66.00%) rate of migration of rural workers to the urban areas in search of work during the agricultural off season followed by Dekapam G. P. (64.00%)

under the Murkongselek D. B. The lowest rate of migration (58.00%) is to be found in Silapathar G.P.

Table 3 presents a combined picture of the mobility of the sample workers of the two districts under study during agriculture slack season before they joined MGNREGA.

Table 3 shows that in the entire study area covering the two sample districts of Sibsagar and Dhemaji, the incidence of workers' migration from rural to urban areas during the agricultural off season is 57.00 per cent; while 20.50 per cent of the workers remain idle at home for want of any work as 22.50 per cent of the labourers work in the rural areas.

Table 3: Break-up of the sample workers of Sibsagar and Dhemaji districts according to their mobility for work during agriculture off season before joining MG-NREGA.

Workers' Statement	Sibsagar District (No.)			Dhemaji District (No.)			Overall Total (No.)
	Gaurisagar Dev. Block	Amguri Dev. Block	Total	Murkongselek Dev. Block	Sissiborgaon Dev. Block	Total	
Mostly migrated to urban areas	53(53.00)	51(51.00)	104(52.00)	62(62.00)	62(62.00)	124(62.00)	228(57.00)
Mostly worked in rural areas	25(25.00)	20(20.00)	45(22.50)	22(22.00)	23(23.00)	45(22.50)	90(22.50)
Mostly sat idle at home	22(22.00)	29(29.00)	51(25.50)	16(16.00)	15(15.00)	31(15.50)	82(20.50)
Total	100(100.0)	100(100.0)	200(100.0)	100(100.0)	100(100.0)	200(100.0)	400(100.0)

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

The table further shows that between the two sample districts, incidence of workers' migration to urban vicinity is higher in Dhemaji district with 62.00 per cent as against 52.00 per cent of Sibsagar district.

One interesting finding of Table 3 is that the difference (10.00%) in the rate of migration of workers of the two sample districts is reflected in the fact that the same difference of 10.00 per cent exists between the two sample districts in the numbers of workers who sit idle at home without any work; which count as 25.50 per cent for Sibsagar district as against 15.50 per cent in case of Dhemaji district. This means that unless the workers migrate to urban areas, they have the only option of sitting idle at home. Thus, migration for work from

rural to urban areas becomes a matter of compulsion for the active and diligent workers who are serious about their family needs.

Another interesting finding from table 3 is that the same proportion (22.50%) of workers in both the sample districts report of mostly working in the rural areas during the slack season. This means that our rural areas virtually have the capacity to absorb only 22.50 per cent of the rural work force during the slack season.

From analysis of tables 1 to 3 we arrive at the following inferences:

1. Migration of rural workers to urban areas is a serious problem for both the districts under study with more than

- 50.00 per cent of the workers in both the districts migrates in search of work.
- The magnitude of migration of workers from rural to urban areas is more pronounced in Dhemaji district (62.00%) as against that of Sibsagar district (52.00%).
 - Our rural areas have the capacity to absorb only 22.50 per cent of the rural work force during the agricultural slack season.
 - As high as 77.50 per cent of the rural work force has the only option to sit idle at home unless they migrate to urban areas for work during the agricultural slack season.

Mobility after joining MGNREGA

The sample workers were asked whether they still migrate to

the urban areas in search of work after their joining MGNREGA. The replies received are presented in table 4 and 5.

Table 4 shows the Sibsagar district’s sample workers’ rate of migration after their joining MGNREGA. It is clear from the table that 29.00 per cent sample workers of Sibsagar district still migrate (often) to urban areas in search of work. This means that out of the 52.00 per cent of the sample workers of Sibsagar district who most often used to migrate to the urban areas before their joining MGNREGA (Vide Table 1), 23.00 per cent stopped migrating and the remaining 29.00 per cent often migrate in search of work to the urban areas.

Table 4: Break – up of the sample workers of Sibsagar district according to their going or otherwise to the urban areas for work after they got Job Card under the MGNREGA.

Workers’ Statement	Gaurisagar Dev. Block (No.)		Total	Amguri Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District Total (No.)
	Baruah Pukhuri	Charing		Amguri	Baruah ali		
Often migrate to urban area	12(24.00)	14(28.00)	26(26.00)	15(30.00)	17(34.00)	32(32.00)	58(29.00)
Not at all migrate to urban area	38(76.00)	36(72.00)	74(74.00)	35(70.00)	33(66.00)	68(68.00)	142(71.00)
Total	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	200(100.00)

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

It can be seen from the table 4 that in Amguri Development Block, 32.00 per cent of the sample workers still migrate often to urban areas for work even after getting MGNREGA Job Cards. In Gaurisagar D. B. incidence of migration of workers to urban areas is lower (26.00%) as compared to the workers

of Amguri D. B.

In order to make a comparative study about the rate of migration of workers of Sibsagar district before and after their joining MGNREGA, Table 5 is compiled and presented here.

Table 5: A comparative picture of incidence of migration of the sample workers of Sibsagar district before and after their joining MGNREGA.

Before Joining MGNREGA (No.)				After Joining MGNREGA (No.)			
Workers’ Stayhtement	Gaurisagar Development Block	Amguri Development Block	Total	Workers’ Statement	Gaurisagar Development Block	Amguri Development Block	Total
Mostly migrated to urban areas	53(53.00)	51(51.00)	104 (52.00)	Often migrate to urban area	26(26.00)	32(32.00)	58 (29.00)
Mostly worked in rural areas	25(25.00)	20(20.00)	45 (22.50)	Not at all migrate to urban area	74(74.00)	68(68.00)	142 (71.00)
Mostly sat idle at home	22(22.0)	29(29.0)	51 (25.5)	Total	100(100.0)	100(100.0)	200 (100.0)
Total	100(100.0)	100(100.0)	200(100.0)				

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

Table 5 shows that even after joining MGNREGA, 29.00 per cent of the sample workers of Sibsagar district still often go to the urban areas in search of works as against 52.00 per cent before joining MGNREGA. This clearly indicates that the programme MGNREGA is able to check rural-urban migration of workers up to 23.00 per cent in Sibsagar district. Therefore, the rate of success of MGNREGA in checking rural-urban migration in Sibsagar district is 44.23.00 per cent (23/52X100).

Among the two D. Bs, as the table indicates, 32.00 per cent of the Amguri D. B workers report that they still often migrate to urban areas in search of work; while 51.00 per cent of them did so before their joining MGNREGA. Thus, only 19.00 per cent of the workers stopped migrating to the urban areas after joining MGNREGA. The Gaurisagar D.B however makes an interesting study, it can be seen from the table 5 that while 53.00 per cent of the sample workers used to migrate to the urban areas before their joining MGNREGA, only 26, 00 per cent of them do so after their joining MGNREGA, thereby

making 27.00 per cent of the workers stop migrating to urban areas totally. However, as fallout of MGNREGA, 71.00 per cent of the workers stay back in rural areas as against 48.00 per cent (including 25.50% who sat idle at home) prior to their joining MGNREGA.

The incidence of migration of rural workers of Dhemaji district to urban areas in search of works as presented in Table 6 shows that 24.50 per cent of the sample workers still go to urban areas even after joining MGNREGA. This means that out of the 62.00 per cent of the sample workers of Dhemaji district who most often used to migrate to the urban areas before their joining MGNREGA (Vide Table 2), 37.50 per cent stopped migrating and the remaining 24.50 per cent often migrate in search of work to the urban vicinity.

Table 6 further reflects that in Murkongselek D. B, 25.00 per cent of the sample workers reveal that even after joining MGNREGA they still often migrate to urban areas for work. Similarly, 25.00 per cent sample workers of Sissiborgaon D.B often go to urban areas for work.

Table 6: Break – up of the sample workers of Dhemaji district according to their going or otherwise to the urban areas for work after they got Job Card under the MGNREGA.

Workers' Statement	Murkongselek Dev. Block (No.)		Total	Sissiborgaon Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District Total (No.)
	Dekapam G. P	Junai G. P.		Silapathar G.P.	Betanipam G.P.		
Often migrate to urban area	10(20.00)	15(30.00)	25(25.00)	13(26.00)	11(22.00)	24(24.00)	49(24.5)
Not at all migrate to urban area	40(80.00)	35(70.00)	75(75.00)	37(74.00)	39(66.00)	76(76.00)	151(75.5)
Total	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	50(100.00)	50(100.00)	100(100.00)	200(100.00)

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

Now it becomes imperative to make a comparative study about the rate of migration of workers of Dhemaji district before and after their joining MGNREGA. With this end in view, Table 7 is compiled and presented here.

Table 7 denotes that before joining MGNREGA as high as 62.00 per cent of the sample workers used to migrate to the urban areas in search of works; while 24.50 per cent of the

workers report that they often migrate even after they joined the programme. This clearly indicates that in Dhemaji district 37.50 per cent of the sample workers stopped to migrate to urban vicinity after they joined the programme.

However, on the basis of above data, in checking rural-urban migration in Dhemaji district, the apparent success rate of the MGNREGA is 60.48 per cent (37.5/62X100).

Table 7: A comparative picture of incidence of migration of the sample workers of Dhemaji district before and after their joining MGNREGA.

Before Joining MGNREGA (No.)				After Joining MGNREGA (No.)			
Workers' Statement	Murkongselek Dev. Block	Sissiborgaon Dev. Block	Total	Workers' Statement	Murkongselek Dev. Block	Sissiborgaon Dev. Block	Total
Mostly migrated to urban areas	62 (62.00)	62 (62.00)	124 (62.00)	Often migrate to urban area	25 (25.00)	24 (24.00)	49 (24.5)
Mostly worked in rural areas	22 (22.00)	23 (23.00)	45 (22.50)	Not at all migrate to urban area	75 (75.00)	76 (76.00)	151 (75.5)
Mostly sat idle at home	16 (16.00)	15 (15.00)	31 (15.50)	Total	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	200 (100.0)
Total	100 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	200 (100.0)				

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

The two D. Bs. of Murkongselek and Sissiborgaon experienced the same rate of migration (62.00%) of the sample Job Cardholders before MGNREGA became operative. However, after joining the MGNREGA, there has been marginal fall in the incidence of migration among the sample workers, as 25.00 per cent respondents of Murkongselek D. B. and 24.00 per cent of those from

Sissiborgaon D. B. report that they still often migrate to the urban areas even after joining MGNREGA.

On the whole, the table 7 shows 75.50 per cent of the sample workers of Dhemaji district remained concentrated to the rural areas with work including 15.50 per cent of the sample workers who mostly sat idle at home with no work.

Table 8: A comparative picture of incidence of migration of the sample workers of Sibsagar and Dhemaji districts before and after their joining MGNREGA.

Sibsagar District				Dhemaji District			
Before Joining Mgnrega (No.)		After Joining Mgnrega (No.)		Before Joining Mgnrega (No.)		After Joining Mgnrega (No.)	
Workers' Statement	No. of Workers	Workers' Statement	No. of Workers	Workers' Statement	No. of Workers	Workers' Statement	No. of Workers
Mostly migrated to urban areas	104(52.00)	Often migrate to urban area	58(29.00)	Mostly migrated to urban areas	124(62.00)	Often migrate to urban area	49(24.5)
Mostly worked in rural areas	45(22.50)	Not at all migrate to urban area	142(71.00)	Mostly worked in rural areas	45(22.50)	Not at all Migrate to urban area	151(75.5)
Mostly sat idle at home	51(25.50)	Total	200(100.00)	Mostly sat idle at home	31(15.50)	Total	200(100.0)
Total	200(100.00)			Total	200(100.0)		

Source: Field Survey inputs.

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

In order to make a comparative study of the incidence of rural-urban migration in the two sample districts of Sibsagar and Dhemaji, Table- 8 is compiled and presented here.

Table 8 shows that in Sibsagar district 52.00 per cent of the sample workers used to migrate to urban areas before their joining MGNREGA as against 62.00 per cent of the Dhemaji district. This means that the incidence of migration among sample workers was higher in Dhemaji district in comparison to Sibsagar district prior to introduction of MGNREGA.

Incidentally, in both the districts under study, 22.50 per cent of the sample workers used to work in the rural areas before their joining MGNREGA thereby indicating that our rural

areas have the absorption capacity of only 22.50 per cent of the rural workforce during the agricultural slack season.

The table also denotes that while in Sibsagar district 25.50 per cent of the sample workers used to sit idle at home during agricultural off season, in Dhemaji district it is as low as 15.50 per cent. The same difference between the two districts is reflected in their rate of migration of rural workers to urban areas thereby indicating that migration to urban areas is the only option to our rural workers if they do not want sit idle at home during the agricultural slack season.

It can further be seen from table 8 that in Sibsagar district 29.00 per cent of the sample workers often go to urban areas

even after joining MGNREGA as against only 24.50 per cent in Dhemaji district. One important finding in this table is that the rate of migration among the sample workers has fallen down drastically in Dhemaji district (37.50 %) as against that of Sibsagar District (23.00%). Thus, apparently the rate of success of Dhemaji district in checking rural-urban migration is 60.48 per cent as against 44.23 per cent of Sibsagar district. From Table 8 we can draw the following inferences:

1. Prior to the introduction of MGNREGA, the incidence of rural-urban migration was higher in Dhemaji district (62.00%) as compared to that of Sibsagar district (52.00%).
2. After introduction of MGNREGA the incidence of rural-urban migration of workers in Dhemaji district drastically came down to 24.50 per cent with effective change of as high as 37.50 per cent as against the effective change of 23.00 per cent in the Sibsagar district.
3. Due to the fall in incidence of migration of the sample workers, the rate of success of Dhemaji district in checking rural-urban migration is apparently 60.48 per cent as against 44.23 per cent of Sibsagar district.

Average Workable Members per Sample Family and Migration issue

Since MGNREGA wants to ensure 100 days wage employment per annum to adult members of the rural families who wish to do unskilled labour, the matter of rural-urban migration is highly related to number of workable members of a rural family. Although the sample respondents have reported about their own cases of migration, this does not reflect the true picture of out-migration of rural workers as there are other workable members of their families. In view of this, it becomes pertinent to examine the average number of workable members of the sample families of the two districts under study. For this purpose, Tables 9 and 10 are constructed and presented here.

Table 9 clearly shows that in Sibsagar district there are more than two members per sample family on an average. So is the case with the two sample Development Blocks.

Table 9: Development Block wise Break – up of the sample Households of Sibsagar district according to the number of workable members.

Development Block	No. of Households	Total Workable Members (No.)	Average No. of workable members per Household
Gaurisagar	100	235	2.35
Amguri	100	254	2.54
Total/Average	200	489	2.45

Source: Field Survey inputs.

Table 10 depicts the number of workable members of sample families of Dhemaji district.

Table 11: Development Block and Gaon Panchayat wise Breakup of the number of workable members of sample households in Sibsagar district according to their going to the urban areas for work before and after getting job card.

Before/ After Getting Job Card	Gaurisagar Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	Amguri Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District Total (No.)	Migration per HH. (No./person)	Rate of Migration (%)
	Baruah Pukhuri G.P	Charing G.P		Amguri G.P	Baruah ali G.P				
Before getting job card	75	82	157	85	79	164	321	321/200 = 1.61	321/489* =65.64
After getting job card	49	56	105	50	51	101	206	206/200 = 1.03	206/489* = 42.13

Source: Field Survey inputs.

* Total no. of workable members in all the 200 sample families of the district. (Vide Table 9)

Table 10: Development Block wise Break – up of the sample Households of Dhemaji district according to the number of workable members.

Development Block	No. of House holds	Total Workable Members (No.)	Average No. of workable members per Household
Murkongselek	100	233	2.33
Sissiborgaon	100	262	2.62
District Total/Average	200	495	2.48

Source: Field Survey inputs.

Table 10 reveals that as in case of Sibsagar district, the average workable member per sample family of Dhemaji district is more than two persons and the two Development Blocks also have the same.

From what have been depicted in Tables 9 and 10, it is clear that each family in both the districts under study has average family members of 2-3 members. It can be seen from table 13 under chapter III of the present study that at the sample level the average person days per family in Sibsagar district is 54.58 as against 51.46 of the Dhemaji district. Thus, for a family of 2-3 workable members 18- 26 days per member is not at all sufficient to sustain livelihood. Under such situation generally old and women members of the families are given to work under MGNREGA and younger ones go for work elsewhere.

Therefore, the apparent success rate of two sample districts of Sibsagar (44.23 %) and Dhemaji (60.48%) in checking out migration of rural workers as revealed under Table 8 here above is not tenable as those findings were on the basis of the cases of the respondent workers only. There are other workable adult members of the families who do not have other option but to migrate to urban areas if they want to maintain their families. In view of this situation, MGNREGA cannot be said to be successful in checking out migration the sense in which it is expected.

With a view to examining the rate of migration of workers from the sample households of the two districts under study before and after issue of Job Cards to them, Tables 11 and 12 are compiled and presented here.

Table 11 presents Development Block and Gaon Panchayet wise Breakup of the number of workable members of sample households in Sibsagar district according to their going to the urban areas for work before and after getting job card.

The table highlights that in 200 sample households of Sibsagar district, 321 workable members used to migrate to urban areas for work before they received Job Cards under the MGNREGA thereby making the average rate of migration of 1.61 workers per household. Further, in percentage term, out of the 489 workable members of the 200 sample households in Sibsagar district, the total number of 321 workers used to migrate to urban areas before they received Job Cards thereby making the migration rate of 65.64 per cent.

Contrary to this, the table also reflects that after the sample households received their Job Cards, the average number of members per household migrating to urban areas has come down to 1.03 and as a corollary to this, rate of migration has come down to 42.13 per cent.

Thus, as a result of MGNREGA, out migration is checked to the extent of 0.58 worker per household and 23.51 per cent in Sibsagar district. However, the fact remains that at least one worker each of the sample households, on an average; migrate to the urban areas even after the family obtained Job Card.

Table 12: Development Block and Gaon Panchayat wise Breakup of the number of workable members of sample households in Dhemaji district according to their going to the urban areas for work before and after getting job card.

Before/ After Getting Job Card	Murkongselek Dev. Block (No.)		Total	Sissiborgaon Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District Total (No.)	Migration per HH (No./person)	Rate of Migration (%)
	Dekapam G.P.	Junai G.P.		Silapathar G.P	Betanipam G.P				
Before getting job card	79	84	163	91	86	177	340	340/200 = 1.70	340/495* = 68.69
After getting job card	40	42	82	39	42	81	163	163/200 = 0.82	163/495* = 32.93

Source: Field Survey inputs.

* Total no. of workable members in all the 200 sample families of the district. (Vide Table 9)

Table 12 exhibits that in Dhemaji district migration of rural workers were more profound among the sample households with 68.69 per cent of the total workable adult members used to migrate to urban vicinities for work prior to their getting Job Cards; which counts 1.70 workers per household in average.

However, after receipt of Job Cards the rate of migration has come down considerably (32.93%) and as a result, the average number of workers migrates per household has also come down to 0.82. Thus, after introduction of MGNREGA effective migration of workers of Dhemaji district has come down by 35.76 per cent and on an average, 0.88 workers per household stopped migrating.

Table 12 shows that prior to the introduction of MGNREGA, 340 workers from the 200 sample households of Dhemaji district used to migrate to the urban areas, but after introduction of the programme the number of migration has come down to 163 workers from the same sample households. Thus, (340—163) = 177 workers stopped to migrate after their families obtained Job Cards. Therefore, the success rate of Dhemaji district in checking migration is (177/340X100) = 52.06 per cent.

From what has been discussed here above, we can safely infer that:

1. In Sibsagar district migration of workers from rural to urban areas has come down to 42.13 per cent after introduction of MGNREGA as against 65.64 per cent prior to the introduction of the programme.
2. In Dhemaji district prior to the introduction of MGNREGA 68.69 per cent of the workers used to migrate to the urban areas; while after introduction of the programme, the incidence of migration has slashed down to 32.93 per cent.

From Table 11 it can be seen that prior to getting their Job Cards, 321 workers from the 200 sample households of Sibsagar district used to migrate to the urban areas for work but after they received the Job Cards, the number of family members migrating to urban areas has come down to 206. This means that (321—206) = 115 workers stopped migrating after getting the Job Cards. Thus, the rate of success of MGNREGA in checking out- migration is (115/321X100) = 35.83 per cent in Sibsagar district.

The situation in Dhemaji district is presented in Table 12 here.

3. The success rate of Sibsagar district in checking rural-urban migration is 35.83 per cent as against 52.06 per cent of the Dhemaji district.
4. The incidence of rural-urban migration in Sibsagar prior to the introduction of MGNREGA was 1.61 workers per household as against 1.03 workers per household after introduction of MGNREGA.
5. In Dhemaji district, incidence of rural-urban migration has come down to 0.82 workers per household after introduction of MGNREGA as against 1.70 workers per household prior to the introduction of MGNREGA.
6. Between the two sample districts, Dhemaji is more successful in checking rural-urban migration of workers.
7. Despite all these developments, the fact remains that 42.13 per cent rural workers of Sibsagar district and 32.93 per cent workers of Dhemaji district still migrate to the urban vicinities for work.

In view of the above inferences, it can safely be contended that the Dhemaji district is moderately successful in checking rural-urban migration of workers; while the Sibsagar district records low success rate.

Reasons behind Rural–Urban Migration after Introduction of MGNREGA

It can be seen from Table 8 that 58 sample workers of Sibsagar district and 49 of Dhemaji district still migrate to urban areas even after their joining MGNREGA. These (58+49) 107 workers were asked to indicate in order of their preferences the reasons which induced them to migrate to the urban areas in search of work even after their joining MGNREGA. The replies received are presented in Table- 13 and ranked them in order of the sample workers’ response.

Table 13: Ranking of the reasons for migration by the sample workers of Sibsagar and Dhemaji districts who continue to often migrate to urban areas for work even after their joining MGNREGA

S. No	Reasons	Sibsagar District Total- 58 workers					Dhemaji District Total- 49 workers						
		No. of workers giving the rank of:			Total weighted score	Rank	Total no. of workers affected by each reason	No. of workers giving the rank of:			Total weighted score	Rank	Total no. of workers affected by each reason
		1	2	3				1	2	3			
1.	Low working days in MGNREGA	53	5	--	169	1	58 (100.00)	39	7		131	1	46 (93.88)
2.	Other family member in use of Card	4	24	6	66	2	34 (58.62)	3	19	2	49	3	24 (48.98)
3.	Higher wages in Urban areas	1	12	3	18	3	16 (27.59)	7	22	2	67	2	31 (63.27)
4.	Anomaly in MGNREGA wage payment	Nil	Nil	Nil	---		----	Nil	Nil	Nil	----	----	----

Source: Field Survey inputs

N.B: 1. Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of total workers who migrate even after joining MGNREGA under each sample district.

2. The Columns are not additive as multiple reasons are indicated by some of the sample workers.

Four probable reasons were indicated to the sample workers and each respondent was asked to pick-out not more than three reasons which prompted him/her to migrate to urban areas even after joining MGNREGA and rank them according to the importance he/she attached to each of the reasons he/she mentioned. After collection of data, it was observed that out of the four reasons indicated, all respondents remained confined to three reasons only and no worker attribute ‘Anomaly in MGNREGA wage payment’ as a reason behind their migration to urban areas.

The weighted scores for the three reasons are calculated according to the ranking given to them by the respondents. The reason ranked first received three points. The reason ranked second and third received two and one points respectively. The points each reason received are totaled to obtain the weighted score for that reason. The three reasons, the number of respondents making the reasons, the weighted scores each of them received and their rankings are shown in Table 13.

Table 13 reveals that among the sample workers of both the districts under study, “Low working days under MGNREGA” ranks as the most prominent reason behind their migration to urban areas even after their joining MGNREGA. This means to say that the number of working days allotted under the MGNREGA is so low that the workers are compelled to migrate to urban areas for work. In Sibsagar district 100.00 per cent of the sample workers as against 93.88 per cent in Dhemaji district attribute this reason behind their migration.

In Sibsagar district, “Other family member in use of Card” ranks second with 58.62 per cent of the workers attribute as one of the reasons behind their migration to urban areas even after joining MGNREGA. However, in Dhemaji district “Higher wages in Urban areas” attract 63.27 per cent of the workers to those areas thereby ranking the reason second in order. The same reason ranks third in order in Sibsagar district affecting 27.59 per cent of the respondents. The table also shows that in Dhemaji district 48.98 per cent of the respondents attribute “Other family member in use of Card” as a reason behind their migration to urban vicinity for work; thereby ranking it at third in order.

Thus the sample workers of the two districts under study, who continue to migrate to urban areas often in search of work even after their joining MGNREGA, cite multiple reasons for doing so. However, the most prominent reason being lower number of working days allotted to them under MGNREGA. In addition to this, higher wage rate that prevail in the urban

areas also attract some of them to those areas; while some others are compelled to move to the urban areas as they find their Job Cards are being used by other members of their families. On interaction with the sample workers it came to light that the families with larger number of workable members or Joint families do not find 100 days work per family per annum as viable to meet their family needs. Under such situation the aged and the female members are given to work under MGNREGA and the younger ones migrate to the urban areas for work. In most families, MGNREGA work is treated as a supplementary source of income as such incomes cannot sustain their family needs and are casual in nature.

The Study conducted on five sample districts by Agro Economic Research Centre for North East India, Assam Agricultural University (2011) finds that most of the sample households had more than one unskilled labour for which they were to migrate to nearby city or town in search of work even after implementation of MGNREGA. The study observes, 43.00 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that their family members migrated out in search of jobs even after implementation of the MGNREGA; while 54 per cent of the respondents reported that only one member migrated out for work to nearby city or town.

A Study (Kareemulla K. et.al, 2009) conducted in Anantapur of Andhra Pradesh observes that the scheme brought down the migration level from 27.00 per cent to 7.00 per cent The Study conducted on five sample districts by Agro Economic Research Centre for North East India, Assam Agricultural University (2011) finds that in the sample villages due to availability of works.

The study conducted by the Agro Economic Research Centre, Sardar Patel University (2011) finds that in Gujarat only 1.09 per cent of rural family members had migrated to different places for not getting work under the MGNREGA. The study finds that out of the total out – migrated members of 169 (January-December 2009) close to 7.00 per cent reported of having migrated for not getting work under MGNREGA and the rest 93.00 per cent was prompted to migrate to other areas by reasons like for getting long period of work and higher wages in those areas. Thus, the study observes that not getting work under MGNREGA was not the key reason for continuation of out-migration.

Agro Economic Research Centre for Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh in a Study (2012) found that MGNREGA is very useful for single families as only 100 days wage employment per family, big or small is given per annum. The study finds

that a large number of Joint Families are split into single families to get work under MGNREGA in Chhattisgarh. Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Centre, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore in its Study (ADRTC-ISEC,2013) on 80 districts spread over in 16 selected states in India finds that the number of family members migrated because of not getting work under MGNREGA averaged at 0.54 in Assam, 0.44 in Rajasthan, 0.31 in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra each, 0.20 in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh each and less than 0.10 members in rest of the selected states.

The Study conducted by the Institute of Applied Manpower Research (2007) on twenty districts throughout the country found that one fourth of the surveyed families agreed to the existence of migration from their respective villages to towns and cities in search of jobs. The study also observes that almost 50.00 per cent of the sample households in the Western

Region of India agreed that migration is prevailing in their villages. In North Lakhimpur district of North Eastern Region every sample worker agreed that there is migration from their villages. A survey conducted by Centre for Science and Environment (2008) on 240 households in the district of Sidhi in Himachal Pradesh confirms that migration had reduced in sample areas by 60.00 per cent due to availability of work.

Das (2014) in her study finds that with implementation of MGNREGA migration from tribal areas in the district of Jashpur in Chhattisgarh has substantially decline.

Sample Workers’ View on Rural- Urban Migration

The sample workers of the two districts under study were asked to give their views in a specified format on impact of MGNREGA on migration of workers from rural to urban areas for work. The answers received are presented in Tables 14 and 15.

Table 14: Views of the sample workers of Sibsagar district on migration of workers from rural to urban areas after introduction of MGNREGA.

Workers’ Statement	Gaurisagar Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	Amguri Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District Total (No.)
	Baruah Pukhuri	Charing		Amguri	Baruah ali		
Considerably reduced	10 (20.00)	13 (26.00)	23 (23.00)	13 (26.00)	12 (24.00)	25 (25.00)	48 (24.00)
Reduced to some extent	25 (50.00)	27 (54.00)	52 (52.00)	23 (46.00)	26 (52.00)	49 (49.00)	101 (50.50)
Not reduced at all	05 (6.00)	03 (4.00)	08 (5.00)	05 (4.00)	04 (4.00)	09 (4.00)	17 (4.50)
Undecided	10 (20.00)	07 (14.00)	17 (17.00)	09 (18.00)	08 (16.00)	17 (17.00)	34 (17.00)
Total	50 (100.0)	50 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	50 (50.0)	50 (50.0)	100 (100.0)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey inputs

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of total workers.

Table 14 shows that majority (50.50%) sample workers are of the opinion that after introduction of MGNREGA incidence migration of workers to urban vicinities for work has reduced to some extent in Sibsagar district. There are others constituting 24.00 per cent of the sample workers of the district who observe that there has been considerable reduction in the incidence of migration of workers from rural to urban areas after introduction of MGNREGA. Thus, as high as 74.50 per cent of the sample MGNREGA workers of Sibsagar district are of the opinion that migration of workers to urban areas has reduced to some extent or other after introduction of the programme. Paradoxically, there are 4.50 per cent of the sample workers who do not observe any positive impact of MGNREGA on checking rural-urban migration; while 17.00 percent of the respondents are undecided about such impact.

However, the general belief is that MGNREGA is “to some extent” successful in checking rural-urban migration of workers in Sibsagar district. Opinion at the Development Block (D.B) level shows that 52.00 per cent sample workers of Gaurisagar DEVELOPMENT BLOCK believe that migration of rural workers has reduced to some extent due to

introduction of MGNREGA; while 49.00 per cent of those from Amguri DEVELOPMENT BLOCK confirm the same opinion. Further, 23.00 per cent and 25.00 per cent sample workers of Gaurisagar and Amguri DEVELOPMENT BLOCK respectively are of the opinion that there has been considerable reduction in out-migration of rural workers as a positive impact of MGNREGA.

Table 15 presents opinion of the sample workers of Dhemaji district on impact of MGNREGA in checking out-migration of rural workers.

Table 15 denotes that as high as 56.00 per cent of the sample workers are of the opinion that MGNREGA is partially successful in checking rural-urban migration of workers as they observe that migration of workers has reduced to some extent only after MGNREGA came in to operation.

There is another group (23.00%) of workers which is more optimistic and observes that due to positive impact of MGNREGA out-migration of rural workers has considerably reduced in the Dhemaji district.

Thus, as high as 79.00 per cent of the sample workers of Dhemaji district believe that out-migration of rural workers has reduced to some extent or other as fallout of MGNREGA.

Table 15: Views of the sample workers of Dhemaji district on migration of workers from rural to urban areas after introduction of MGNREGA.

Workers’ Statement	Murkongselek Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	Sissiborgaon Dev. Block (No.)		Total (No.)	District Total (No.)
	Dekapam G.P.	Junai G.P.		Silapathar G.P.	Betanipam G.P.		
Considerably reduced	11 (22.00)	13 (26.00)	24 (24.00)	12 (24.00)	10 (20.00)	22 (22.00)	46 (23.00)
Reduced to some extent	29 (58.00)	30 (60.00)	59 (59.00)	25 (50.00)	28 (56.00)	53 (53.00)	112 (56.00)
Not reduced at all	04 (8.00)	03 (6.00)	07 (7.00)	06 (12.00)	07 (14.00)	13 (13.00)	20 (10.00)
Undecided	06 (12.00)	04 (8.00)	10 (10.00)	07 (14.00)	05 (10.00)	12 (12.00)	22 (11.00)
Total	50 (100.0)	50 (100.0)	100(100.0)	50 (100.0)	50 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	200 (100.0)

Source: Field Survey inputs

N.B: Figures in the brackets indicate percentage of total workers

Still there is another section of the workers who observes that MGNREGA has failed to invite any positive impact on out-migration of rural workers as they find there is no reduction in out-migration of rural workers after introduction of the programme.

However, the general belief is that after introduction of MGNREGA, migration of rural workers to urban areas has reduced "to some extent" in Dhemaji district.

Between the two sample D.Bs, 59.00 per cent of Murkongselek D. B workers are of the opinion that due to introduction of MGNREGA, migration of rural workers to urban areas has reduced to some extent; while 53.00 per cent workers of the Sissiborgaon D. B maintain the same opinion. Further, 24.00 per cent and 22.00 per cent workers of Murkongselek and Sissiborgaon D.B respectively believe that there has been considerable reduction in rural-urban migration of workers after MGNREGA was operationalised. Contrary to these, 7.00 per cent and 13.00 per cent workers of Murkongselek and Sissiborgaon DEVELOPMENT BLOCK respectively do not find any change in the incident of migration even after introduction of MGNREGA.

From what has been discussed under tables 14 and 15 here above, we can infer as follows:

1. Majority sample workers of the Sibsagar (50.50%) and the Dhemaji (56%) districts are of the opinion that after introduction of MGNREGA migration of rural workers to urban vicinities has reduced "to some extent".
2. Only 24.00 per cent of the sample workers of Sibsagar district and 23 per cent of those from Dhemaji district observe that there has been "considerable reduction" in the incidence of migration of workers from rural to urban areas after introduction of MGNREGA.
3. Meager 4.50 per cent of the sample workers of Sibsagar district and 10.00 per cent of those from Dhemaji district do not observe any positive impact of MGNREGA on checking rural-urban migration.

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