EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of Impact of IEC Campaign

Background: The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is a holistic welfare scheme which addresses the issues of unemployment, rural infrastructure, water harvesting and conservation, farm productivity etc. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was notified on the 7th September, 2005. The Act provides a legal Guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work at the minimum wage rate.

However, despite being a flagship legislation of the Government and having a substantial monetary outlay, the Scheme is still far behind its envisaged goal. One of the perceived reasons for the low performance of the Scheme is lack of awareness among the target segment. Therefore, in order to ensure that the salient features of the scheme effectively penetrate and percolate into the target groups, an invincible and impressive publicity and awareness campaign was deemed essential.

Therefore, the Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Division of the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) carried out a special campaign on Television to popularize and create awareness about MGNREGS through the two visuals namely “Hindustan Ki Guarantee” and “Zamana Kehta Hai”. Having done so, it was deemed essential to assess the appropriateness of the spots, extent of the awareness generated about the key issues of MGNREGS and the effect of the programme on the target audience.

Objectives of the Study: A study was taken up with the basic objective to assess the reach, efficacy and impact of the IEC activities on MGNREGS through the two visuals namely “Hindustan Ki Guarantee” and “Zamana Kehta Hai” in the three identified states i.e. Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and also the National Capital Region.

The specific objectives of the study are:

- To identify the popular sources of information, and their influence on the target group.
To assess the media habits of the target groups, especially the deprived sections of the society, with respect to print media and electronic media, popular channels, popular programs, preferred time slots, etc.

To assess the level of penetration and reach of Cable & Satellite channels used for the campaign.

To assess the level of comprehension of the beneficiaries (MGNREGS Card holders) to draw benefits from MGNREGS.

To assess the efficacy of messages related to MGNREGS telecast over Cable and Satellite channels in selected States.

To assess the impact of the special campaign on the popularity of MGNREGS

To assess the recall value of the messages

To assess the content value, adequacy and informative aspect of the message

To identity other popular TV channels of local preference.

To identify the deficiencies, if any, and recommend appropriate issues / changes to be addressed in future media campaigns so as to achieve the desired objectives.

To explore other options besides the strategy adopted for the special campaign

**Methodology**: A comprehensive methodology including collection of the required information / data from both secondary and primary data sources, was adopted for the study. The primary data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative research techniques basically from the households of beneficiaries / potential beneficiaries of MGNREGA at the village level and the persons in-charge of MGNREGA at the block and district levels and also the In-charge of IEC activities of MGNREGA in the Ministry of Rural Development. A set of questionnaires / guidelines was developed for the purpose of the study.

**Sampling Frame**: The Ministry of Rural Development, pre-determined the overall sample size of 3600 households, spread over three states, namely Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and the National Capital Region (NCR) also, covering both rural and urban population. A statistically robust sample of 400 households at the district level was covered. One district with the highest ratio of
total job cards and employment provided and one district with the lowest ratio were selected in each selected State. Since Uttar Pradesh is a big State, one extra district with medium ratio was also covered. In case of NCR, one district overlapping with UP and one district overlapping with Haryana were selected as they are part of the NCR.

Two blocks within each district using the same criteria were selected. Within each selected block, 9 villages were selected depending upon the performance of MGNREGS. The villages which served as block head quarters were covered in order to achieve the urban sample.

Households in the selected villages were listed and households with exposure to TV were selected at random and a sample of 20 households in each selected village was drawn.

**Overview of Media Strategy** : The media strategy to disseminate messages on MGNREGS was designed to reach out to the poorest of the poor and create awareness among the target audience and convey the rights and privileges of the beneficiaries. Since MGNREGS is basically catering to the poorest of the poor segment, which is largely illiterate, one of the effective ways to reach them is through electronic media i.e. TV or Radio. It is perceived that the reach would be better with attractive visuals on the TV. Therefore, the two spots, namely – “Hindustan Ki Guarantee” and “Zamana Kehta Hai” were developed with relevant messages.

**Areas Covered under the Campaign** : Both the spots on MGNREGS were telecast in the Northern States of Bihar, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh and also in the National Capital Region (NCR).

**Media Instruments / Channels** : The two spots were telecast on the following 8 Cable and Satellite Channels –
- ETV Bihar
- ETV Rajasthan
- ETV Urdu
- ETV Uttar Pradesh
- SS Bihar
- SS Rajasthan
- SS Uttar Pradesh
- SS NCR
- Mahua

**Duration of the Spots** : Both the spots under study were of very short durations, i.e. Hindustan Ki Guarantee is a 40 seconds spot and Zamana Kehta Hai is just 30 seconds spot.
**Period**: Both the spots were flashed on the above channels to create awareness on MGNREGS. The present impact study is focussing on the telecast of the above mentioned spots during the period 23.01.2010 to 23.03.2010.

**Timing**: The two spots were interspersed between the regular TV programs that are popular in the area. On each of the channels of ETV network, 34 insertions were there and 12 to 13 insertions were there on the SS network.

**Findings of the Study**: 
A detailed analysis of the different media available for communication of messages, their reach, preferences of the target group regarding the various forms of presentation, profile of the households etc is needed to arrive at proper conclusions to decide the impact of IEC activities.

**Profile of Households**: The impact of IEC activities of MGNREGS needs to be studied while giving due consideration to the economic and social profile of the target segment. Majority of the sampled houses belong to APL families. Exposure to TV being one of the criteria for selection of sample, there is nothing surprising if the sample is dominated by APL households. Proximity of the sample districts to urban areas also could have resulted in this sample selection.

The IEC activities are intended to reach the backward sections of the society. About two fifths of the sample of 3593 households belongs to SC category and rest of them belong to other castes. So also majority of the households have 5 or less members. This throws light on the profile of the households selected.

**Access to TV**: Less than one third of the households visited own TV sets and around half of them are connected to Satellite. Very few people have cable connections. Those who do not have TVs watch programs in their neighbour/relative’s house if possible. It is a point to be noted that none of the households covered watch village or community TV.

**Access to Other Media**:
- Similarly only 27 percent of men and 24 percent women have access to radio.
- Other media like news papers and art forms like street plays, puppet shows etc also have a great use in reaching messages to the masses.
Only 52 percent of the households in all the three States of Bihar, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh and NCR put together, get to read newspapers.

About 75 percent of the households in the study regions watch street plays but more than 99 percent watch occasionally.

It is observed that while a reasonable percentage of people in the various regions do watch puppet shows, the frequency is very low as a large percentage tends to watch these shows occasionally.

Folk song also is a very effective medium to communicate with the rural audience like puppet shows. While 70 percent households get to listen to folk songs, as high as 92 percent listen occasionally.

Announcement through Mikes is one important and traditional method of communication used for campaigns. Sixty nine percent respondents in the 3593 households visited said that they listen to mikes and almost all of them listen to communications through mikes only occasionally.

Campaign through posters and hoardings etc is also another effective method of communication of messages. On the whole, around 77 percent of respondents read messages on posters and hoardings.

On an average 62 percent respondents in all the three States covered in the study and the NCR read messages from flyers and handbills.

It is found that on the whole 79 percent of the respondents in the three States and NCR attend village or community meetings and get their messages. In the current modern scenario the effectiveness of the system of announcement by beating of drums also appears to have reduced as only 43 percent of the households get to listen to announcements / messages through drumming.

Another important and most effective method of communication suggested by the district officials in the visited areas is to write the messages on walls in local language. While this may be an effective way, illiterate labourers cannot read and understand these messages.

**Media Habits of the Target Segment**: When the media habits of the people are studied, it was found that people spend very less time watching TV, that they prefer to watch family sops and that they watch TV after their day’s work. Doordarshan ranks first as the most preferred channel and ETV Rajasthan and
Mahua channels rank next. Radio did not stand anywhere near TV in respect preference as a source of entertainment and information.

As already mentioned, the target group watch TV in late hours and at that time the insertions are low in number. Further a majority of the target group prefer to watch Doordarshan and the insertions mentioned above were in private channels. So more insertions should have been made on Doordarshan I for effective campaign.

**Exposure to Messages On MGNREGS:** Only 30 percent of the respondents in the 3593 households visited for the study said that they are aware of the messages regarding MGNREGA. The district officials, however, seem to be aware of the IEC campaign. Except the officials in Bhilwara district of Rajasthan, the officials in all the remaining study districts said that they are aware of the special IEC campaign.

Around 64 percent of the respondents saw the messages of ‘Hindustan ki gurantee’ themselves. Only 30 percent of the 1060 households that are aware of the messages on MGNREGS showed knowledge of the message “Zamana Kehta Hai”.

“Women going for work” and “women working” were the visuals recalled by majority of the respondents. It looks like women empowerment is the major issue in the visuals as per the feedback received from the respondents. It appears that the messages “100 din ki rojgaar guarantee hai’ ‘khushiyon ki guarantee” and “mahilaon ka hua aarthik sashaktikaran” of Zamana Kehta Hein could strike the cord with the audience because of their appealing content. It appears that people are happy to know about the guaranteed work which leads to ‘life with dignity’ and economic empowerment to women.

The district officials reacted very positively when they were asked to rate the visuals, content and schedule of the campaign. The officials of almost all the districts, except Bhilwara, were all praise for the visuals and content of the messages. The officials rated impact of the message, choice of channels and appropriateness of timing as very good or good.
Comprehension of the Messages: The two campaigns ‘Hindustan ki guarantee’ and ‘Zamana Kehta hai’ were expected to educate the target segment about the scheme and enhance their knowledge about the benefits of the scheme. From the recall of the viewers it is understood that additional benefits of the scheme like women empowerment, prevention and migration etc caught the attention of the viewers. The essential features of the scheme were not properly communicated.

Impact of the Campaign: The penetration of the messages is very less. Therefore, the impact of the messages is also likely to be very negligible. Just around one-fifth of the households that were exposed to the campaigns obtained job cards after watching the campaign. However, it appears that the households that were aware of the campaign were motivated to demand for employment. But considerable number of households that were exposed to the message Zamana kehta hai felt that the message could not enhance their understanding about the Scheme.

It can be concluded that the penetration of the messages is very less. In fact, it is almost negligible in Bihar state. There are many reasons for the low penetration of the messages, like, low exposure to TV itself, limited duration of watching TV, convenient time to watch TV being after 7 P.M, more number of insertions of the spots during day time, wrong choice of channels, telecast of messages on paid channels while DD1 enjoys higher viewership, etc.

Recommendations:

- It is a fact without dispute that TV is the most effective medium of communication in this modern era though a large segment of the target population is poor. Hence it is necessary that there should be community TVs in the rural areas where the poor can watch them after their working hours.
- The insertions of the messages should preferably be planned after 7 P.M. The rural folk, after a day’s hard work, may get some leisure time only after 7 p.m. Again they end the day also very early, say by 9 p.m. So the best time to beam the messages is between 7 to 9 p.m.
- The preference of programs for most of the viewers appears to be Family Sops. So the campaign programs should be interspaced between family sops during breaks.
- Doordarshan is a preferred channel for most of the viewers. Hence campaign programmes should be aired on Doordarshan and thus the expenses on payment to other channels can be avoided. Instead the money can be used to set up more community TVs.

- Campaigns through other forms like puppet shows and folk songs also can be explored because they are in local language and the rural masses identify themselves with the characters immediately.

- Campaign by organizing meetings in the villages is very effective. If the village headmen address the crowd, they listen to them attentively and with due respect. Further the headmen also use the local language and also know how to capture the moods of their fellow villagers.

- The content in the visuals should be simple and comprehensive for the uneducated villages to follow and assimilate.

- Writing on walls and eye catching posters with visuals are also recommended for attracting the attention of the poor who cannot afford any other medium of communication.