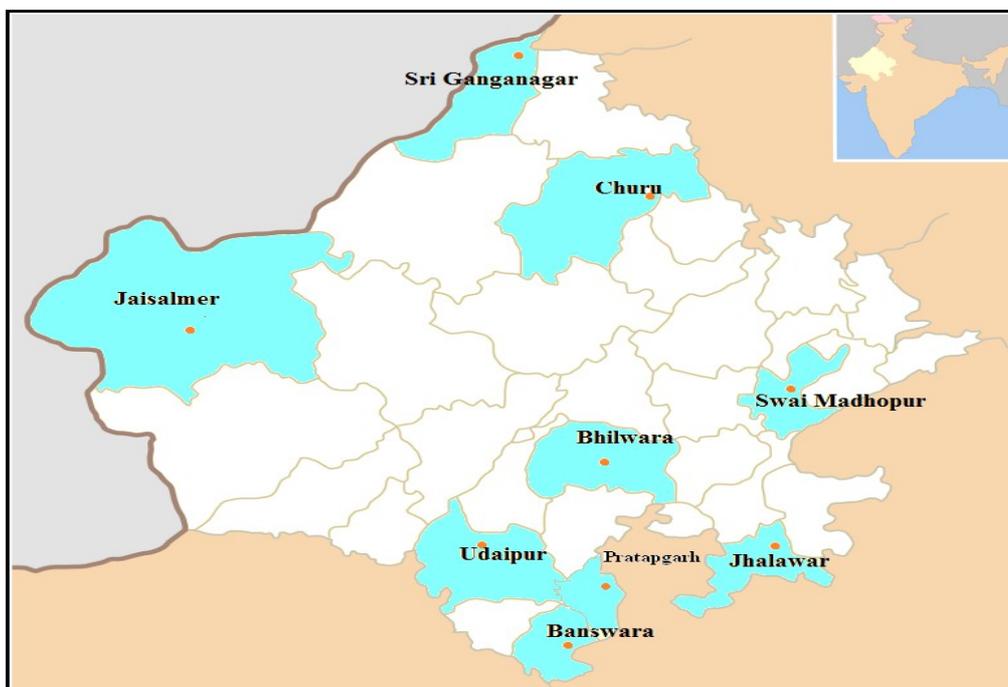


METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE

Rajasthan has been in the forefront of a number of rights-based civil society interventions in the last decade and a half. These have focused on basic livelihood issues including food security, health and employment in rural areas of Rajasthan. Therefore, the rationale for the selection of the Rajasthan lies in the fact that this civil society activism has played an important role in creating awareness of the rights of villagers and in securing their entitlements. However, after the initial enthusiasm, the momentum seems to have slowed down. It is felt that a contextualized study of the state will unfold many nuggets of the working of MGNREGA; give further insights and feedback/feed into the policy implementing agencies.

Map of Rajasthan showing sampled districts in Survey



Plural Methods

The study involved plural methodologies. On the one hand, it is an outcome of a comprehensive survey of beneficiaries. In that sense, the study is an assessment of MGNREGA from the prism of beneficiaries. The other arm of the study may be referred to as ‘thick descriptions’ involving different pathways i.e. interviews of key functionaries, focus group discussions with a number of stakeholders, case studies and inspection of MGNREGS

worksites. Both the arms together constitute the basic structure of the study and complement as well as supplement each other.

The comprehensive survey focused on a cross-section of job card holders from one district in each of the seven divisions in Rajasthan. Additionally, one district was picked up for intensive study. In each of the seven districts, two blocs were sampled and in each block four Gram Panchayats were surveyed. While the districts were identified on the basis of human development indices, social composition and performance in the MGNREGS, the blocs and the Gram Panchayats have been selected using the random sample technique. Udaipur district was selected for intensive study and in this district we selected one-tenth Gram Panchayats from each block of the eleven blocks of the district.

The survey involved structured interviews with MGNREGS job card holders. These were sampled from the list of job card holders available on the MGNREGA website of the Government of India by using the probability proportionate to size (PPS) method. Since the list is available at the Gram Panchayat level, names of 40 job card holders were sampled by using the PPS method. A sum of 4240 respondents was sampled by this process and of this sample 3615 respondents could be interviewed. A team of more than 60 field investigators, 4 research supervisors led by a Research Associate carried out the survey activities.

Table 2.1: Sample Frame for the Survey in Rajasthan

S. No.	Division	District	Block	Gram Panchayat	No. of Villages	Target Sample	Achieved Sample
1	Udaipur	Udaipur (intensive)	11	50	200	2000	1829
2	Udaipur	Banswara	2	8	32	320	268
3	Ajmer	Bhilwara	2	8	32	320	253
4	Jodhpur	Jaisalmer	2	8	32	320	276
5	Bharatpur	Sawai Madhopur	2	8	32	320	255
6	Jaipur	Churu	2	8	32	320	257
7	Kota	Jhalawar	2	8	32	320	207
8	Bikaner	Sri Ganganagar	2	8	32	320	270
Total	7 Divisions	8 Districts	24	106	424	4240	3615

Thick Descriptions

The study comprised of four pathways: **focus group discussions** with beneficiaries as well as non-beneficiaries of MGNREGS, **in-depth interviews** with officials, elected representatives and social volunteers at various levels (district, block and village level officials in all sampled districts), eight **case studies** (one in each of the sampled district) and a **work-site check** of the available facilities. We refer to these as ‘thick descriptions’. These were accomplished by the team of four research supervisors who travelled to different research locales either together or in a group of two.

Focus group discussions have become a critical part of field based studies. Interactions with stakeholders in their own milieu provide useful window to map and measure their opinions, attitudes and views. During this study, more than 50 **focus group discussions** were held with beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries on the basis of a check list of questions prepared beforehand. The non-beneficiaries were identified during field work by talking to key informants in the villages and holding focus group discussions. Amongst the beneficiaries discussions were held with groups of women, Scheduled Castes and tribes and minorities (Sikhs in northern districts and Muslims in eastern parts of the state).

While the study was being designed it was felt that to gather information and to elicit views as well as opinions about the implementation of the employment scheme, it will be necessary to talk to key functionaries. As such, more than 30 **In-depth interviews** were conducted on the basis of a list of questions which were given to the research team. The list of interviewees included worksite mates, junior engineers, executive engineers, computer operators, MGNREGA Programme Officers, employment assistants, village secretaries, BDOs, CEOs of Zila Parishad, ward Panch, Sarpanch, Pradhan and members of Social Audit committee. It was not an easy task to locate these functionaries and to make them understand the intent and purpose of the study. Instances were not rare where some of the senior functionaries either refused to meet the researchers or declined to talk to them. It was felt that both elected representatives and officials view such research studies with apprehension.

Interviews indubitably are very important parts of any empirical research. But there is always a need to supplement these with more intensive methods of research. Case study is one such research instrument. It gives the researcher an opportunity to dig more deeply into instances, events and individuals who have some unique experience to share. We intended to unearth at least eight such studies, one in each district. But ultimately could manage only six **case studies** in six districts. These focused on varying experiences of the program by different individuals and organizations.

A critical part of the research was to visit NREGS work sites to have a firsthand exposure to working conditions and also to check the facilities which are a statutory requirement. More than 100 **work site inspections** were done by the research team in extremely inhospitable weather conditions and in villages where no transportation facilities were available. This part of the study was indeed an eye opening experience as one became aware of the harsh weather conditions and difficult physical terrain in which the villagers toil to make a livelihood.

Preparing the Research Instruments

Since the research involved both quantitative and qualitative methods, ample care was taken to prepare standard research instruments which had to be administered at the field level. Preparing the tools consumed considerable time. It required at first a thorough look at the provisions of the MGNREG Act and also an exhaustive review of literature available on the subject. The exercise also involved ongoing discussions with office-bearers at the panchayat level, social activists, officials as well as subject experts. The Principal Investigator and the research team paid frequent visits to a host of villages and MGNREGA work sites for a hands-on experience of the nitty-gritty involved at the field level. Focus group discussions were held with villagers to identify relevant issues. The draft questionnaire was pre-tested in four villages and was administered to 40 beneficiaries. Non-beneficiaries were also identified in one village to get a grip on their concerns. It was on the basis of the pilot test and other feedback that the instruments were finalized.

Commissioning the Research

Conducting a quantitative survey is a challenging task in any situation and place. In Rajasthan, the challenge is all the more intense because of the vastness of the state. What made the task even more difficult was the requirement to conduct the survey at a time when work is being done under the employment scheme. The survey, therefore, had to be conducted during peak summer months i.e. April-June. A team of 4 research supervisors and 60 field investigators was selected with great care. The research supervisors had considerable field experience of MGNREGA work and its intricacies. Similarly, the field investigators were mostly college going students from different backgrounds and mostly hailing from villages.

The field work was done in two phases. In the first phase, the quantitative segment which involved a cross-section survey was accomplished. A training workshop of the entire research team was held at Udaipur from April 14-15, 2012. In different sessions of the workshop the trainees were exposed to the research instruments and the code book related to the schedule. A power point presentation was given by a MGNREGA social activist explaining the provisions of the Act. After the indoor sessions, all the field investigators were required to interview at least one person in the nearby villages based on the schedule. Only those investigators were finally sent to the field who had shown that they had understood the research process. The researchers left for their respective areas in a team of two on April 15, 2012 and most of them started the field work on April 16-17, 2012. The research supervisors were asked to monitor the progress in the field. The quantitative segment of the study was completed by April 28, 2012 and all the field investigators handed over the filled-in schedules by April 29, 2012. They also submitted a list of non-beneficiaries from their research sites. The schedules were thoroughly screened by the research supervisors before these were submitted for data entry. Data set was transmitted to the Delhi office of CSDS by May 25, 2012 for further statistical analysis.

The second phase of the study which focused on the qualitative segment started in the second week of May 2012. All the four research supervisors worked in a team of two to undertake the focus group discussions, case studies, work site inspections and key informant interviews. Focus group discussions were held in all the sampled locales involving women, scheduled castes and tribes, members of minority groups such as Muslims as well as Sikhs. Both beneficiary as well as non-beneficiary groups were targeted. In-depth interviews with elected representatives of Panchayat Raj institutions as well as government officials were conducted. The supervisors also went to more than 100 work sites to inspect the facilities available on these sites. During the same period, case studies were accomplished at different locales. The qualitative part of the study was completed by the middle of June and reports were submitted by the first week of July.

A list of all the Gram panchayats where the quantitative and qualitative research was done is being listed below:

1. Division Udaipur: District Banswara

Block 1: Bagidora Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Karji

- Pindarma
- Nagawara
- Salia

Block 2: Sajjangarh Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Magarda
- Tambesra
- Sajjangarh
- Andeshwar

2. Division Ajmer: District Bhilwara

Block 1: Asind Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Karanasia
- Jeendras
- Sangramgarh
- Kailyas

Block 2: Mandalgrah Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Rajgarh
- Mahua
- Motaro ka Khera
- Sukhpura

3. Division Jodhpur: District Jaisalmer

Block 1: Jaisalmer Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Boha
- Basanpir (juni)
- Kanore Rawlotan
- Dena

Block 2: Sem Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Sem
- Mejar
- Reewari
- Deora

4. Division Bharatpur: District Sawai Madhopur

Block 1: Gangapur Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Rendayal Goojar
- Meri
- Chooli
- Talawra

Block 2: Sawai Madhopur Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Jetwara Kala
- Kundra
- Ramri
- Jaunpura

5. Division Jaipur: District Churu

Block 1: Rajgarh Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Siddhmukh
- Ghanav
- Dhandhal
- Neema

Block 2: Sujangarh Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Shobhsar
- Barabar

- Jaitasar
- Kalyansar

6. Division Kota: District Jhalawar

Block 1: Khanpur Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Layphal
- Khandi
- Akawad Khurd
- Akodiya

Block 2: Jhalrapatan Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- Dungargaon
- Khanwara
- Khanpuria
- Ank-Kheri

7. Division Bikaner: District Sri Ganganagar

Block 1: Sri Raisinghnagar Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- 79 RB-A
- 8 PTD-A
- 38 PS
- 22 NP

Block 2: Gharsana Panchayat Samiti

Gram Panchayat:

- 1 GM-A
- 1 PSD-B
- 2 KM
- 15 RJD

Table 2.2: District for intensive study: Udaipur

Name of bloc	Total Gram Panchayat	Sampled Gram Panchayat
Gogunda	40	4
Badgaon	25	2
Girwa	48	5
Mawli	47	5
Vallabh Nagar	52	5
Kotra	36	4
Jharol	45	4
Kherwara	62	6
Sarada	46	5
Salumbar	48	5
Dhariyavad	49	5
Total	498	50

Table 2.3: Gram Panchayats for intensive study in Udaipur district

Name of Block	Number of Sampled villages	Sampled Gram panchayat
Gogunda	4	Bhanpura
-	-	Kamol
-	-	Mori
-	-	chhali
Badgaon	2	Madar
-	-	Thoor
Mavli	5	Mavli
-	-	Intali
-	-	Dabok
-	-	Bargaon
-	-	Nauwa
Vallbhnagar	5	Akola
-	-	Peethal pura
-	-	Amar pura
-	-	Adinda
-	-	Dhamaniya
Girwa	5	Alsigarh
-	-	Kanpur
-	-	Barapal
-	-	Bambora
-	-	Jhamar kotra
Kotra	4	Barli
-	-	Mahad
-	-	Bikharni
--	--	Mewaron ka math
Jhadol	4	Phalasiya

-	-	Madri
-	-	Kolyari
-	-	Gorana
Kherwada	6	Badla
-	-	Pahara
-	-	Gurha
-	-	Dhelana
-	-	Sagwara
-	-	Chikhla
Sarada	5	Sarada
-	-	Adwas
-	-	Shaym pura
-	-	Rathora
-	-	Kunda
Salumbar	5	Gurel
-	-	Banora
-	-	Dharad
-	-	Shesh pur
-	-	Gingla
Dhariwad	5	Lasadiya
-	-	Baleecha
-	-	Mugana
-	-	Parsola
--	-	Jawhar nagar