Chapter 7

Data Organization as Structure for Collaborative Governance:
The Case of Implementation of Employment Guarantee Legislation in Rural India

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ABSTRACT

NREGA is an employment guarantee legislation promulgated for the rural workers of India. It provides 100 days of employment in a year with a provision of unemployment allowance by implementing agencies. To monitor the legislation, a collaborative platform has been developed that is customized to the requirement of the multiple stakeholders (e.g., different governments, village bodies, beneficiaries, public, work engineers, etc.). A large amount of the data is generated on the platform. Despite this, it takes lot of time in complaint redressal and mostly it is done manually. The chapter attempts to explore ideas of how the collaborative platform could be made more effective by organizing the data such that the requirement of field-based variability can be minimized.

INTRODUCTION

In India, the right based rural employment scheme has been on ground to address the rural unemployment problem and development challenges. The scheme is promulgated as legislation known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (NREGA). It provides the employment guarantee of 100 days to the village based individual. The rural workers may be engaged in the works like watershed management, rural connectivity, afforestation, land development etc. The scheme is financially supported by the union government and implemented by the state government. In India, the governance structure is at village, block, district and then state level. The key challenge of the structure is the orchestration of the right kind of role, information and participation of general public residing in the villages, elected representatives of village, block, district, state and national level and civil servants of village, block, and district and above. Despite of the fact that the use of information system is envisaged at the village level, the delay in the implementation of IT system and the challenges related to its robustness results in to the failed outcome. Various officials responsible for the governance often has solution to the problem, however for the want of robust and time bound information system, the concerns are not reaching to them.

Data organization is a concept where data is sent to the right authority for the disposal. The point where the data is generated remains buried there only due to absence of auto-data dissemination mechanism to the right authorities. The book chapter aims to bring out the limitation of the common data pool of the employment guarantee scheme of India. These limitations would be related to achievement of the legislative goals. The typical problems related to implementation of employment guarantee legislation are unavailability of the prescribed number of the work days made available to the beneficiaries, reduction of the work days due to slow progress at work and the convergence of this scheme with the other schemes of the union/ state government.

The chapter attempts to highlight that the data generated in the compliance of the monitoring specification needs to be disseminated to the concerned authority on the real time basis. Citizen's emersion is important for the collaborative governance. Rural governance in India has developed a portal by which the citizen's can convey their concerns to the authority. However, what if when the citizen's are not literate enough to convey the concerns through the portal. What if when the concerns are not properly addressed. How the chain the unaddressed issues are devised such as all the actors of the governance network occupy their roles and citizen's gets counselling, solution and satisfaction from the governance.

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