



A Study Of Government's Employment Schemes On Poverty Alleviation In Assam With Special Reference To Barpeta District

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Abstract:

Poverty remains one of the most persistent challenges facing India, a country that has witnessed significant economic growth over the past few decades but continues to grapple with wide spread socio-economic disparities. Despite India's emergence as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, millions of its citizens, particularly in rural areas, live below the poverty line, struggling with inadequate access to income, education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure.

Assam, a state in northeastern India, exemplifies the challenges of poverty in a region marked by economic backwardness, environmental vulnerabilities, and limited industrial development. With a predominantly agrarian economy, Assam faces high poverty rates, exacerbated by frequent floods, low agricultural productivity, and a lack of diversified employment opportunities. Barpeta District, located in western Assam.

Keywords: Employment, MGNREGA, Predominantly, Frequent, Poverty

Introduction:

Poverty remains one of the most persistent challenges facing India, a country that has witnessed significant economic growth over the past few decades but continues to grapple with widespread socio-economic disparities. Despite India's emergence as one of the world's fastest-growing economies, millions of its citizens, particularly in rural areas, live below the poverty line, struggling with inadequate access to income, education, healthcare, and basic infrastructure. The multidimensional nature of poverty encompassing not just low income but also deprivations in health, education, and living standards requires comprehensive and targeted interventions. In this context, government employment schemes have emerged as a critical tool for poverty alleviation, aiming to provide

immediate income support, enhance employability, and create sustainable livelihoods. Assam, a state in northeastern India, exemplifies the challenges of poverty in a region marked by economic backwardness, environmental vulnerabilities, and limited industrial development. With a predominantly agrarian economy, Assam faces high poverty rates, exacerbated by frequent floods, low agricultural productivity, and a lack of diversified employment opportunities. Barpeta District, located in western Assam, is a micro cosm of these challenges, characterized by high rural poverty, a dependence on agriculture, and recurring natural disasters that disrupt livelihoods. Government employment schemes, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-

GKY), and state-specific initiatives like the Assam Bikash Yojana. This thesis examines the impact of government employment schemes on poverty alleviation in Barpeta District, focusing on their design, implementation, and socio-economic outcomes. By combining primary data from surveys and interviews conducted in Barpeta with secondary data from government reports, statistical databases, and academic studies, the research provides a comprehensive analysis of how the schemes address the multidimensional aspects of poverty.

Background of The Study:

Despite significant economic progress since the liberalization of the 1990s, India remains home to a large proportion of the world's poor. According to the World Bank (2020), approximately 10% of India's population lived below the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day (PPP) as of recent estimates. National measures, such as the Tendulkar Committee's poverty line, indicate higher poverty rates, particularly in rural areas, where 25.7% of the population was classified as poor in 2011–12 (Planning Commission, 2013). Rural poverty is driven by structural factors, including dependence on agriculture, limited access to markets, and inadequate infrastructure, as well as cyclical issues like seasonal unemployment and natural disasters.

The multidimensional nature of poverty, as conceptualized by Alkire and Foster (2011), extends beyond income to include deprivations in health, education, and living standards. For instance, lack of access to clean water, sanitation, and quality education perpetuates a cycle of poverty that is difficult to break. Rural households, which constitute about 70% of India's population (Census of India, 2011), face these challenges acutely, with limited opportunities for non-agricultural employment and vulnerability to environmental shocks like

flood sand droughts. Assam, located in northeastern India, is one of the country's poorer states, with a poverty headcount ratio of 31.98% in 2011–12, significantly higher than the national average of 21.92% (NSSO, 2011–12). The state's economy is predominantly agrarian, with over 70% of its work force engaged in agriculture and allied activities (Government of Assam, 2020). However, small landholdings, low mechanization, and frequent floods limit agricultural productivity, pushing many households into poverty. Assam's geographic isolation from main land India, coupled with limited industrial and service-sector growth, further exacerbates economic challenges. The state's per capita income in 2020–21 was ₹82,000, compared to the national average of ₹1,46,000 (Government of India, 2021), highlighting its economic backwardness.

Barpeta District, situated in western Assam, reflects these state-level challenges while facing its own unique socio-economic and environmental constraints. With a population of approximately 1.7 million, of which 85% reside in rural areas (Census of India, 2011), Barpeta is predominantly agrarian, with rice cultivation, handicrafts, and small-scale trade forming the backbone of its economy. The district's literacy rate of 63.81% is lower than the national average of 74%, and female labour force participation is only 15%, compared to 55% for males (NSSO, 2011–12). Annual floods from the Brahmaputra River disrupt agricultural cycles, affecting 40–50% of the district's farmland and displacing thousands of households (Assam State Disaster Management Authority, 2021). These factors create a complex poverty landscape, making government intervention critical.

Government employment schemes have been a cornerstone of India's poverty alleviation strategy since the 1970s, evolving from food-for-work programs to comprehensive initiatives like

MGNREGA, launched in 2005. MGNREGA guarantees 100 days of wage employment. Other schemes, such as DDU-GKY, introduced in 2014, aim to enhance employability through skill development, targeting rural youth from poor households. In Assam, state-specific schemes like the Assam Bikash Yojana complement national programs by supporting local entrepreneurship and infrastructure development. These schemes aim to address both income poverty and capability deprivation, aligning with Sen's capability approach (1999), which emphasizes empowering individuals to lead lives they value. In Barpeta, these schemes have been implemented for over a decade, with varying degrees of success. MGNREGA has created employment opportunities through projects like flood embankments, employing over 50,000 households annually (Ministry of Rural Development, 2020).

Aims and Objectives of the Study:

- To study and analysis the design and implementation of government employment schemes in Assam, with a focus on Barpeta District.
- To Study the Government's Employment Schemes on Poverty Alleviation In Assam.
- To evaluate their impact on poverty alleviation, including household income, employment stability, and living standards.

Hypotheses of the Study:

Based on the objectives of the study titled "A Study of Government's Employment Schemes on Poverty Alleviation in Assam with Special Reference to Barpeta District," the hypotheses have been revealed. These hypotheses are derived directly from the objectives, ensuring alignment with the study's focus on the design, implementation, impact, challenges, and socio-

economic factors influencing government employment schemes in Barpeta District.

- **H1:** Government employment schemes in Assam, particularly in Barpeta District, have been designed and implemented in conformity with prescribed national and state guidelines, but local factors result in variations in the actual rollout and performance.
- **H2:** The introduction and operation of government employment schemes in Assam, including Barpeta District, have played a substantial role in alleviating poverty by providing wage employment and livelihood opportunities.
- **H3:** Participation in employment schemes leads to significant improvements in household income, employment stability, and overall living standards among beneficiary households in Barpeta District.

Significance of the Study:

This research contributes to the literature on poverty alleviation by providing a district-level analysis of employment schemes in Barpeta. It offers practical insights for policymakers, highlighting effective strategies and implementation gaps. By focusing on a flood-prone, economically backward region, the study addresses context-specific challenges, making its findings relevant to similar areas.

Relevance of the Study:

The choice of "government employment schemes on poverty alleviation with special reference to Barpeta district" as a research theme is especially pertinent in the current policy and academic climate for several reasons:

1. Persistent Rural Poverty: Despite decades of intervention, Assam continues to report higher than average rural poverty levels. Barpeta, with its unique environmental and socio-economic

challenges, epitomizes the struggles of marginalized rural communities, making it an ideal microcosm for studying the impact of anti-poverty schemes.

2. Policy Priority: Government employment schemes remain central to India's poverty reduction strategy, both at the national and state levels. Evaluating their effectiveness in a challenging district like Barpeta is crucial for policy design, resource allocation, and future reform.

3. Changing Socio-Economic Context: With climate change increasing the frequency and intensity of floods in Assam, assessing how current policy instruments respond to these dynamic challenges becomes even more relevant. The insights gained can inform climate-resilient poverty alleviation approaches.

Poverty Alleviation in India:

Poverty in India, affecting 10% of the population (World Bank, 2020), is multidimensional, encompassing income, health, and education deprivations. Assam's poverty rate (31.98%) exceeds the national average, driven by low agricultural productivity, floods, and limited industrialization. Barpeta, with a 35% poverty rate, faces additional challenges like low literacy (63.81%) and female labor participation (15%). Government schemes like MGNREGA and DDU-GKY address income and capability deficits, but their effectiveness in flood-prone regions like Barpeta requires further exploration.

Socio-Economic and Environmental Context of Assam and Barpeta:

Assam's agrarian economy, low per capita income, and flood vulnerabilities exacerbate poverty. Barpeta's reliance on agriculture and handicrafts, combined with annual floods affecting 40–50% of farmland, intensifies economic challenges. MGNREGA and DDU-

GKY provide critical support, but implementation issues and socio-economic barriers, particularly for women and marginalized groups, limit outcomes. Assam Bikash Yojana promotes local resilience but struggles with funding and awareness.

Recommendations:

findings of Barpeta District, Assam, conducted to evaluate the impact of three government employment schemes—Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), and Assam Bikash Yojana—on poverty alleviation. The analysis draws on the 25 multiple-choice questions (MCQs), the comparative analysis with other regions (Pilibhit, Uttar Pradesh; Ranchi, Jharkhand; Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala) from Chapter 7, and the detailed discussion in Chapter 8. The conclusion summarizes the schemes' effectiveness, socio-economic impacts, implementation challenges, and limitations in addressing multidimensional poverty, contextualize within Barpeta's socio-economic profile (35% poverty rate, 85% rural population, 63.81% literacy) and environmental vulnerabilities (annual floods affecting 40–50% of farmland) (Census of India, 2011; Assam State Disaster Management Authority, 2021). The recommendations propose action able, context-specific strategies to enhance the schemes' impact, grounded in the survey findings and supported by secondary sources such as the Ministry of Rural Development (2020), Bora and Saikia (2018), Goswami and Dutta (2019), and Baruah (2018). The discussion integrates Sen's capability approach (1999), emphasizing enhanced opportunities, and Alkire and Foster's multidimensional poverty index (2011), addressing income and non-income dimensions of poverty.

This chapter consolidates findings from a survey of 500 rural households in Barpeta District, Assam, evaluating the impact of MGNREGA, DDU-GKY, and Assam Bikash Yojana on poverty alleviation. Drawing on 25 multiple-choice questions, comparative analysis with Pilibhit (Uttar Pradesh), Ranchi (Jharkhand), and Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), and informed by Sen's capability approach (1999) and Alkire and Foster's multidimensional poverty index (2011), the study assesses effectiveness, socio-economic impacts, challenges, and policy recommendations. Barpeta's context—35% poverty rate, 85% rural population, 63.81% literacy, and annual floods affecting 40–50% of farm land—shapes the analysis, supported by secondary sources (e.g., Government of Assam, 2020; Bora & Saikia, 2018).

Conclusion:

The survey of 500 rural households in Barpeta District reveals that MGNREGA, DDU-GKY, and Assam Bikash Yojana have a moderate impact on poverty alleviation, with MGNREGA emerging as the most effective due to its wide coverage and immediate income benefits. However, environmental challenges, particularly annual floods, and socio-economic barriers, including low literacy and gender restrictions, significantly constrain the schemes' effectiveness. The findings highlight the need for tailored interventions to address Barpeta's unique context and enhance multidimensional poverty reduction.

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Abstract:

Islamic ethics offers a comprehensive moral framework that upholds human dignity, justice, and social responsibility as foundational principles essential for individual and societal well-being. Rooted in the Qur'an, the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and the broader objectives of Islamic law (Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah), Islamic ethics presents a holistic vision of humanity grounded in moral accountability, compassion, and social balance. This paper examines the ethical foundations of human dignity (karāmat al-insān), emphasizing Islam's recognition of the inherent worth of every human being irrespective of race, gender, class, or cultural background. It further explores the Islamic conception of justice ('adl and qisṭ) as a multidimensional principle encompassing legal, social, economic, and moral domains, positioning justice as a divine mandate and a cornerstone of social harmony.

The study also highlights the concept of social responsibility (mas'ūliyyah ijtimā'iyah), through institutional mechanisms such as zakāt, ṣadaqah, and waqf. By engaging with contemporary challenges including social inequality, human rights discourse, globalization, and moral crises. The analysis situates Islamic ethics within the broader humanities discourse, arguing that its value-based and integrative approach can contribute meaningfully to interdisciplinary debates on justice, dignity, and social cohesion in the 21st century. The paper concludes that Islamic ethics provides a timeless and universal moral vision capable of guiding humanity toward a more just, compassionate, and responsible global society.

Keywords: *Islamic Ethics; Human Dignity; Justice in Islam; Social Responsibility; Qur'anic Values; Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah; Social Justice; Contemporary Humanities; Islamic Moral Philosophy.*
