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MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME AS AN INSTRUMENT OF ASSET CREATION IN MEGHALAYA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MYLLIEM BLOCK AND UMSNING BLOCK

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Abstract:
This paper examines the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) as a pivotal instrument for asset creation in the two Blocks-Mylliem Block of East Khasi Hills District and Umsning Block of Ri-Bhoi District, Meghalaya, India. The MGNREGA being a unique employment programme goes beyond, poverty alleviation, enhancing rural households' income, curbing gender inequalities and improving the quality of life. It has been particularly transformative in an agrarian poverty driven economy like Meghalaya. Through a review of literature and empirical analysis, this study assesses how MGNREGA has been instrumental in building assets focussing on natural resource management, rural sanitation and rural infrastructure. The finding highlights both successes and challenges in emphasising the role of the program in enhancing rural/local infrastructure, improving livelihoods and fostering sustainable rural development. Key factors influencing the effectiveness of the program and policy implications are discussed and identified to optimise the impact of MGNREGA in the socio-economic context of Meghalaya.

Key Words: MGNREGA, Asset Creation, Rural Infrastructure, Mylliem Block, Umsning Block.

I. Introduction:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), enacted in 2005, represents a paradigm shift in India's approach to rural development by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment annually to every rural household. Beyond mere wage provision, MGNREGA aims to create durable assets that contribute to sustainable livelihoods and economic resilience in rural areas. This paper focuses on MGNREGA's implementation and impact specifically in Meghalaya, a state characterised by its unique socio-economic and geographic challenges.

Meghalaya located in the north eastern region of India, is predominantly agrarian with a significant tribal population. The state faces constraints such as hilly terrain, limited infrastructure and seasonal agricultural unemployment. Against this backdrop, MGNREGA plays a crucial role in providing employment opportunities and creating assets that address local development needs.

The effectiveness of MGNREGA in Meghalaya can be evaluated through its contributions to infrastructure development, natural resources management and rural connectivity. By analysing empirical data and case studies, this paper seeks to assess how the creation of assets like footbridges, footpaths, community washing facilities, water conservation, land development, household latrines and rural connectivity under MGNREGA has promoted sustainable rural development in Meghalaya. The study is significant for understanding not only the localised impact of MGNREGA but also informing policy recommendations aimed at improving asset creation strategies under the program.

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By examining the experiences of the two Blocks- Mylliem Block under East Khasi Hills District and Umsning Block under Ri-Bhoi District within the broader context of rural development of Meghalaya, India, this study contributes to the ongoing discussions on effective poverty alleviation and inclusive growth initiatives through employment generation and asset creation program.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURES:

Various Annual Reports and Evaluations by the Ministry of Rural Development of the Government of India and other governmental bodies provided detailed assessments of MGNREGA's performance in creating assets such as roads, water bodies and other infrastructure in rural areas. Numerous studies have been undertaken with regards to the diverse effects of MGRNEGA. Some of the studies conducted were in terms of the trends and effects of the assets created at the regional or state or local level.

The Centre for Science and Environment[1] revealed that MGNREGA is the world's largest ecological regeneration program for building assets, water conservation structures and afforestation for economic change. **Roy**[2] also found that MGNREGA in rural areas gives an opportunity to create effective and useful economic assets. **Prasad**[4] recognised that the MGNREGA has given rural livelihoods and also involve locals in other non-agricultural work which in turn improves the rural infrastructure i.e. rural asset building and will ultimately lead to sustainable development.

Bhargava[5] evaluated the assets created through employment generation by MGNREGA and among the many findings has found that many productive assets serve as positive indicators of economic growth of Ajmera District, Rajasthan.

Sukumar and Rajeev[6] however, focuses on the utilisation and maintenance of assets created under MGNREGA addressing issues related to sustainability and long -term benefits. **P.Mishra and S.K. Mishra**[7] in their study revealed that creation of productive assets has opened up avenues for sustainable livelihood in the backward districts of Kandhamal and Mayurbhanj in Odisha while in West Bengal, it was found that attainment of sustained livelihood opportunities, self- sufficiency and disaster preparedness in rural areas were the main focus.

Khera and Reetika[3] provided an overview of the impact of MGNREGA on asset creation across different states in India, emphasising its role in infrastructure development and rural livelihood enhancement.

These scholarly literatures on MGNREGA's impact on asset creation provides a comprehensive overview and evaluation of its role in enhancing rural infrastructure, livelihoods and socio-economic development in India.

III. OBJECTIVES:

1.To examine the trends in growth of assets creation in Umsning Block and Mylliem Block.

2.To examine and identify the contribution of different categories of work toward total asset creation in each Block.

3. To make a comparative study between the two Blocks with regards to the contribution of the different categories of work towards asset creation

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[3]Khera, Reetika. (2011). "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)- A Decade of Rural Transformation?" *Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 46. No. 31.*

IV. HYPOTHESIS:

To provide an insight into the role of MGNREGA as an Instrument of Asset Creation, the following hypotheses can serve as a guiding principle for conducting empirical research-
1.There are significant contributions of the MGNREGA on the creation of assets in the two Blocks during the period under study.
2.There is a no uniformity in the creation of different categories of assets in the two Blocks i.e., Mylliem and Umsning Block.
3. Rural Connectivity of Category III is the major contributor towards asset creation in the two blocks

V. DATA AND METHODOLOGY

Secondary data which relate to the reports on the performance of MGNREGA in Meghalaya, provided by the concerned Department and also which are available on the website are used for the study. The study period is from the year 2013-14 up to 2019-20. Discussion with the officers/staffs of the respective departments such as Directorate of MGNREGA in Meghalaya-Umsning Development Block and Mylliem Development Block, has helped understand about the concept of the scheme as well as calculation parts. Interview with some beneficiaries of the Scheme were also in some villages.

The following statistical tools are used in this study: -

1.Bar diagram – To make a comparison in the growth of asset creation in the two Blocks.
2.Coefficient of Variation (C.V) – To determine the variability or uniformity or homogeneity of the distributions presenting assets creation.
Year-to-year growth formula to study the annual growth rate or upward/ downward movement of the data are also used in the study.
In analysing the assets created through MGNREGA project in the two Blocks of Meghalaya, the various assets have been broadly classified into four Categories –

- Category – I (Public Works relating to Natural Resource Management)
- Category – II (Community Assets or Individual Assets).
- Category – III (Rural Infrastructure).
- Category – IV (Works on Individual Lands)

Any assets created which do not fall under the above-mentioned categories are specified as Other Works.

Table – 1 represents the Classification of Assets in the two Blocks.

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Table – 1: Typology of Assets creation in the two Blocks.

Category	Sl. No of items in each Category	Name of Works/Assets Creation
I. Public Works Relating to Natural Resource Management	1.	Water Conservation and Water Harvesting
	2.	Drought Proofing
	3.	Micro Irrigation Works
	4.	Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies
	5.	Land Development
II. Community Assets or Individual Assets	1.	Fisheries
	2.	Rural Sanitation
III. Rural Infrastructure	1.	Flood Control and Protection
	2.	Rural Connectivity
	3.	Rural Drinking Water
	4.	BNRGSK
	5.	Playground
	6.	Aganwadi/other Rural Infrastructure.
IV. Works on Individual Lands	-	-
V. Other Works.	-	-

Source: Authors' Compilation based on the various Reports, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.

Analysis of the Trends and Growth of Asset Creation in Mylliem and Umsning Block

1 (a). Composition and Growth of Assets in Mylliem Block

Table 2 below shows the Asset Creation of Mylliem Block during the period under study:

Table – 2: Trends in Assets Creation of Mylliem Block

Number of Works or Assets Creation								
Category	Sl. No.	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
I	1.	16	5	7	14	29	15	46
	2.	0	3	35	6	0	0	6
	3.	3	0	0	1	0	0	3
	4.	10	2	0	4	0	0	4
	5.	2	0	0	11	9	11	10
Total		**31**	**10**	**42**	**36**	**38**	**26**	**69**
II	1.	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
	2.	22	92	8	9	12	2	3
Total		**22**	**92**	**8**	**9**	**12**	**3**	**5**
III	1.	22	11	12	29	61	39	43
	2.	209	76	108	136	175	143	155
	3.	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
	4.	0	1	6	2	0	0	0
	5.	0	0	0	1	2	0	0
	6.	0	0	0	0	5	22	25
Total		**231**	**88**	**126**	**168**	**243**	**204**	**223**
IV		**0**	**0**	**0**	**174**	**992**	**516**	**342**

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Other Works	**6**	**4**	**51**	**83**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Grand Total	**290**	**194**	**227**	**470**	**1287**	**749**	**639**

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, Reports

Category wise analysis indicate that the first three Categories, creation of assets took place regularly throughout the study period while in Category – IV it started in the year 2016-17. Though there are sizeable increase in the total number of assets created in different Categories, it has also been observed that the Assets Creation of Categories I, II and III show a cyclical movement during the study period. This fluctuation in the number of Assets created in Mylliem Block is reflected in the year-to-year percentage change during the study period as shown in Table – 3.

Table – 3: Annual Growth Rates of Assets Creation in Mylliem Block.

Years	**Year to Year growth rates in Different Categories (Percentage)**				**Aggregate Annual Growth Rates of Total Assets Creation (Percentage)**
	I	II	III	IV	
2014-15	-68	318	-62	-	-33
2015-16	320	-91	43	-	17
2016-17	-14	13	33	-	107
2017-18	6	33	45	470	174
2018-19	-32	-75	-16	-48	-42
2019-20	165	67	9	-34	-15

Source: Authors' computation

As shown in Table – 3, in 2015-16, the total assets created in Category – I recorded an increase of 320 percent over that of the previous year, marking the highest annual growth rate. This sharp increase is due to a huge jump in the item no. 2 i.e., Drought Proofing. This was followed by the annual growth rate of 165 percent in 2019-2020 which was mainly due to the huge jump in item no. 1 i.e., Water Conservation and Water Harvesting. Under this Category – I, the annual growth rate is negative in three years during the study period. Under Category – II, the highest annual growth rate was 318 percent during the year 2014-15 which was mainly due to the huge jump in item no. 2 i.e., Rural Sanitation. The annual growth rate is negative in two years during the study period, indicating that the number of assets created actually dropped in these years compared to the previous years. In Category – III, the highest annual growth rate was 45 percent during the year 2017-18 which was mainly due to the increase in item – 1 and item – 2 i.e., Flood Control/Protection and Rural Connectivity respectively. The negative growth rate took place during the years 2014-15 and 2018-19. The highest annual growth rate in Category – IV took place in the year 2017-18 which was about 470 percent which was followed by the negative growth rates in the subsequent years.

The aggregate annual growth rate of the total assets created in Mylliem Block during the study period was highest during the year 2017-18 which was about 174 percent. This sharp increase was mainly due to the huge jump of items created in Categories – III and IV along with marginal increase of items in Categories – I and II. the least aggregative annual growth rate which was -42 percent and was mainly due to a sharp decline in the items created in Categories – III and IV along with the moderate fall in the items of Categories – I and II.

1 (b) Contribution of Different Categories of Works towards the Total Assets Creation in Mylliem Block:

The contribution of different Categories of Works towards the total asset creation can be estimated from Table –2. In the absence of Category – IV in the first three years of study i.e., from 2013-14 to 2015-16, Category – III emerged as the dominant contributor towards the total asset creation in Mylliem Block except in the year 2014-15 which has been replaced by Category – II as the dominant

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contributor where the number of assets created in Categories II and III are 92 and 88 respectively. During this period of three years, the contribution of Category – III ranges from 45.36 percent to 79.65 percent

A comparison between Categories I and II, shows that the contribution of Category – I is higher throughout the study period, except in the year 2014-15. The contribution of Category – I towards total assets ranges from 2.95 percent (2017-18) to 18.50 percent (2015-16) and the maximum number of assets in this Category was 69 (2019-20) while the minimum number was 10 (2014-15). However, from the year 2016 – 17 onwards, Category – IV has emerged as the dominant contributor towards the total assets creation where its contribution ranges from 37.02 percent to 77.08 percent. During this period, Category – III still continue to be one of the major contributors (next to Category – IV), where its contribution ranges from 18.88 percent to 35.74 percent. It is also to be noted that Other Works appear to be one of the major contributors (next to Category – III) towards total assets created during the year 2015-16, where the number of assets created was 51, representing 22.47 percent of the total assets created.

1(c) Contribution of various Items towards respective Categories of Works in Mylliem Block:

In analysing the data (Table 2), one can also study and estimate the contribution of different items towards their respective Categories. Under Category – I, the item no. 1 i.e., Water Conservation and Water Harvesting has emerged as the dominant contributor during the study period, except in the year 2015-16 which has been replaced by item no. 2 i.e., Drought Proofing. The percentage contribution of item no. 1 ranges from 16.67 percent (2015-16) to 76.32 percent (2017-18). During the first two years of study, even the item no. 4 i.e., Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies also emerged as one of the major contributors where its contribution stood at 32.26 percent and 20 percent during the year 2013-14 and 2014-15 respectively. But from the year 2016-17 onwards, the items no. 5 i.e., Land Development has emerged as the second major contributor, next to item no. 1. During these four years, the contribution of the item no. 5 ranges from 14.49 percent (2019-20) to 42.31 percent (2018-19). It has also been noted that in most of the years, the item no. 3 i.e., Micro Irrigation Work appeared to be the least contributor. Under Category – II, item no. 2 i.e., Rural Sanitation is the lone contributor except in the last two years of the study period i.e., 2018-19 and 2019-20, where the item no. 1 i.e., Fisheries has also emerged as another contributor. Throughout the study period, item no. 2 emerged as the dominant contributor where its contribution ranges from 60 percent (2019-20) to 100 percent in most of the years. Under Category – III, Flood Control and Protection as well as Rural Connectivity which belong to item no. 1 and item no. 2 respectively are the main contributors throughout the study period where item no. 2 is the dominant one. The contribution of item no. 2 ranges from 69.51 percent (2019-20) to 90.48 percent (2013-14) while that of item no. 1 ranges from 9.52 percent (2013-14) to 25.10 percent (2017-18). It is to be noted that the works under items no. 3 i.e., Rural Drinking Water do not take place throughout the study period. The remaining three items i.e., items no. 4, 5 and 6 have shown only marginal contribution.

2 (a) Composition and Growth of Assets in Umsning Block:

Table 4 below shows the trend of Assets Created in Umsning Block the period under study-

Table – 4: Trends in Assets Creation of Umsning Block

Number of Works or Assets Creation in Umsning Block							
Category	**Sl. No.**	**2014-2015**	**2015-2016**	**2016-2017**	**2017-2018**	**2018-2019**	**2019-2020**
I	1.	23	12	14	13	7	21
	2.	1	6	32	50	14	18
	3.	0	7	10	17	3	4
	4.	5	3	17	17	4	4

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	5.	10	14	34	22	5	4
Total		**39**	**42**	**107**	**119**	**33**	**51**
II	1.	0	2	22	20	9	4
	2.	9	17	5	0	0	0
Total		**9**	**19**	**27**	**20**	**9**	**4**
III	1.	3	1	2	9	1	0
	2.	131	110	168	168	59	70
	3.	0	2	12	12	5	2
	4.	12	9	8	1	0	0
	5.	0	0	1	10	7	2
	6.	0	0	0	0	4	8
Total		**146**	**122**	**191**	**200**	**76**	**82**
IV		**0**	**0**	**464**	**1204**	**333**	**222**
Other Works		**0**	**0**	**2**	**2**	**0**	**0**
Grand Total		194	183	791	1545	451	359

Source: Same as Table 2

Table – 4 above shows that some works under items of different categories took place regularly during the study period. These items are Water Conservation and Water Harvesting, Drought Proofing, Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies and Land Development which is items no. 1, 2, 4 and 5 of Category – I Rural Connectivity which is item no. 2 of Category – III. However, it is found that Category wise, the first three Category took place regularly throughout the study period while Category – IV took place regularly since the year 2016-17. Further, the assets creation of Categories I, II and III show a cyclical movement during the study period. It can be seen from Table – 3, that there is a sizeable increase in the number of Assets created in different Categories during the two consecutive periods. The number of Assets created in Category – I which was 42 in 2015-16 surged to 107 in 2016-17, showing an increase of about 155 percent. In Category – II, an increase took place from 9 in 2014-15 to 19 in 2015-16, showing an increase of about 111 percent. In Category – III, an increase took place from 122 during 2015-16 to 191 during 2016-17, showing an increase of about 57 percent. In Category – IV, an increase took place from 464 during 2016-17 to 1204 during 2017-18, showing an increase of about 159 percent. But this increase is also accompanied by a sizeable fall in the number of Assets created in some Categories. In Category – I, the number of assets fall sharply from 119 during 2017-18 to 33 during 2018-19. In Category – II, it fell from 20 during 2017-18 to 9 during 2018-19 and from 9 in 2018-19 to 4 in 2019-20. In Category – III, it fell from 200 during 2017-18 to 76 during 2018-19 and in Category – IV, from 1204 during 2017-18 to 333 during 2018-19. This surged and dipped in the number of assets created in Umsning Block is reflected in the year-to- year percentage change which show wide fluctuation during the study period as shown in Table – 5.

Table – 5: Annual Growth Rates of Assets Creation in Umsning Block.

Year / Category	Year to Year Growth Rates in Different Categories (Percentage)				Aggregate Annual Growth Rates of Total Assets Creation (Percentage)
	I	II	III	IV	
2015-16	8	111	-16	-	-6
2016-17	155	42	57	-	332
2017-18	11	26	5	159	95
2018-19	-72	-55	-62	-72	-71
2019-20	55	-56	8	-33	-20

Source: Same as Table 3

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As shown in Table – 5, in 2016-17, the total assets created in Category – I recorded an increase of 155 percent over that of the previous year, marking the highest annual growth rate. This sharp increase is due to a huge jump in the item no. 2 i.e., Drought Proofing. This was followed by the Annual Growth Rate of 55 percent in 2019-2020 which was mainly due to the huge jump in item no. 1 i.e., Water Conservation and Water Harvesting. Under this Category – I, the Annual Growth Rate is negative only in one year ie in the year 2018-19 which was at -72 percent during the study period. Under Category – II, the highest Annual Growth Rate was 111 percent during the year 2015-16 which was mainly due to the huge jump in item no. 2 i.e., Rural Sanitation. The Annual Growth Rate is negative in three years during the study period, indicating that the number of Assets created actually dropped after the year 2016-17. In Category – III, the highest Annual Growth Rate was 57 percent during the year 2016-17 which was mainly due to the increase in item – 2 i.e., Rural Connectivity. The growth rates were negative during the years 2015-16 and 2018-19 respectively. The highest annual growth rate in Category – IV occurred in the year 2017-18 which was about 159 percent which was then followed by negative growth rates in the subsequent years.

The aggregate annual growth rate of the total assets created in Umsning Block during the study period was highest during the year 2016-17 which was about 332 percent. This sharp increase was mainly due to the huge jump of items created in Categories – I, III and IV along with marginal increase of items in Categories – II. The least aggregative annual growth rate which was -71 percent and was mainly due to a sharp decline in the items created in Categories – I, III and IV along with the moderate fall in the items of Categories – II.

2 (b) Contribution of Different Categories of Works towards the Total Assets Creation in Umsning Block.

In estimating the percentage contribution (from Table 4) of different Categories of Works towards the Total Assets Creation, it is found that in the absence of Category – IV for the first three years of study i.e., from 2013-14 to 2015-16, Category – III has been emerging as the dominant contributor towards the total asset creation in Umsning Block. During this period of three years, the contribution of Category – III ranges from 24.15 percent to 75.26 percent. From the year 2016 – 17 onwards, Category – IV has emerged as the dominant contributor towards the total assets creation where its contribution ranges from 58.66 percent to 77.93 percent. During this period, Category – III still continued to be one of the major contributors (next to Category – IV), where its contribution ranges from 12.94 percent to 22.84 percent. A comparison between Categories I and II, shows that the contribution of Category – I is higher throughout the study period. The contribution of Category – I towards Total Assets ranges from 7.32 percent (2018-19) to 22.95 percent (2015-16) and the maximum number of assets in this Category was 107 (2016-17) while the minimum number was 33 (2018-19). Other works category was an insignificant contributor towards total assets created contributing only 2 in the year 2016-17 and 2017-18. In terms of percentage, it contributed only 0.25 percent and 0.13 percent in the year 2016-17 and 2017-18 respectively.

2 (c) Contribution of various items towards respective Categories of works in Umsning Block:

In analysing the contribution of the various items towards respective Categories of work revealed that item no 1 i.e., Water Conservation and Water Harvesting under Category – I, has emerged as the dominant contributor during the study period. The percentage contribution of item no. 1 ranges from 10.92 percent (2017-18) to 58.97 percent (2014-15). There has been an increasing trend in the contribution of item no 2 i.e Drought Proofing from 2.56 Per cent in the year 2014-15 to 42.42 Per cent in the year 2018-19, but its contribution fell to 35.3 in the year 2019-20. The contribution of item no 3 i.e Micro Irrigation Works ranges from 7.84 percent (2019-2020) to 16.67 Per cent (2015-16). There is a significant contribution from item no 4, i.e., Renovation of Traditional Water Bodies and its contribution ranges from 7.84 percent (2019-2020) and 15.89 per cent (2016-17). Items no. 5 i.e.,

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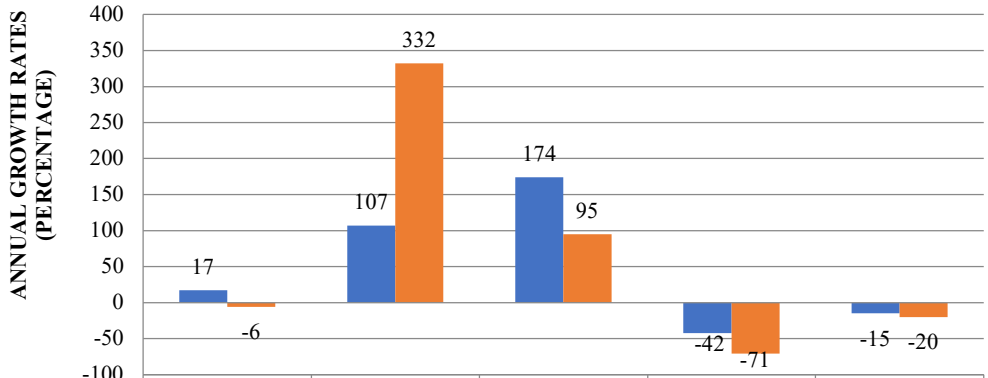
Land Development has emerged as the second major contributor, next to item no. 1. During the period of study, the contribution of the item no. 5 ranges from 7.84 percent (2019-2020) to 33.33 percent (2015-16). Under Category – II, item no. 1 i.e., Fisheries was the lone contributor in the last three years of the study period i.e., 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20, But in the year 2014-15 item No 2, i.e Rural Sanitation was the lone contributor. There are contributions from both Fisheries and Rural Sanitation in the year 2015-16 and 2016-17 but Fisheries contributed more in the year 2016-17 while Rural Sanitation contributes more in the year 2015-16. Under Category – III, Rural Connectivity which belongs to item no. 2 is the main contributor throughout the study period ranging from 77.63 percent (2018-19) to 90.16 percent (2015-16). All other Items have contributed insignificantly towards Category III.

3. Comparative Study of Assets created in Umsning Block and Mylliem Block:

A comparison of the regularity and irregularity of assets creation, annual growth rates and the contribution of different Categories of works towards the total assets created during the study period indicate that under Category – I, in Umsning Block, almost all items of work took place regularly during the study period except item no. 3 i.e., Micro Irrigation works, where no asset has been created during the year 2014-15. But in Mylliem Block, almost all items did not take place regularly except for item no. 1 i.e., Water Conservation and Water Harvesting. The creation of assets in Category – II shows that in Umsning Block, item no. 1 i.e., Fisheries take place regularly every year except in the year 2014-15 while in Mylliem Block, this item take place only in the year 2018-19 and 2019-20. But the reverse is for item no. 2 i.e., Rural Sanitation where creation of assets took place regularly only in Mylliem Block but not in Umsning Block. While analysing the Category – III, it is found that in both the Blocks item no. 1 and item no. 2 i.e., Flood Control/Protection and Rural Connectivity took place regularly every year, though it was absent only in the year 2019-20 in Umsning Block. It is also to be noted that during the study period, the number of Playground i.e., item no. 5 created in Umsning Block is almost seven times than that created in Mylliem Block. The Category – IV i.e., Works on Individual Lands took place regularly in both the Blocks since the year 2016-17 till the end of the study period.

Chart -1: Comparison of Annual Growth Rate of Total Asset Creation in the Two Blocks



	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Mylliem Block	17	107	174	-42	-15
Umsning Block	-6	332	95	-71	-20

Source: Same as Table 3

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A comparison of the annual growth rates shows that under Category – I, the Umsning Block shows on increasing trend in most of the years except in the year 2018-19, while in Mylliem Block, both increasing and decreasing trend took place in an alternative manner. The asset creation in Category – II shows that an increasing trend took place in most of the years in Mylliem Block except in the year 2015-16 and 2018-19. But in Umsning Block, a declining trend took place consecutively in the last three years of the study period. Under Category – III, both the Blocks show a similar trend where there is a declining trend at the beginning of the period as well as in the year 2018-19. Both the Blocks show a similar trend during the year 2017-18 and then followed by a declining trend in the succeeding years.

In terms of contribution of different Categories towards the total asset creation, it has been found that Category – IV emerged as the dominant contributor in both the Blocks since the year 2016-17 onwards. But in the preceding years, Category – III emerged as the dominant contributor in Umsning Block only, while in Mylliem Block, Category – II is the dominant contributor only in the year 2014-15 which has been replaced by Category – III in the year 2015-16. But as far as minimum contributor is concerned, Umsning Block is represented by Category – II throughout the study period. Even in Mylliem Block, this Category – II is still the least contributor except in the year 2014-15 where it stood as the dominant contributor (Table 3 and Table 5). Comparison of the contribution of different items towards respective Category show that in both the Blocks, items no. 2 i.e., Rural Connectivity is the dominant contributor towards the Category – III. However, in terms of the total assets created in the two blocks, the distribution of assets created is more homogeneous in Mylliem Block than in Umsning Block.

The calculation of Coefficient of variation (C.V.), in terms of assets created between the two Blocks (Table 6) revealed that there is a wide variation in the creation of total assets during the period under study. Category-wise calculation also indicate a wide variation in the distribution of assets in the two Blocks. However, the distribution of asset creation in category- III is more uniform compared to the other categories of work.

Table 6: Coefficient of Variation in the Distribution of Asset Creation in Mylliem and Umsning Block

Category	Co-efficient of Variation
I	**57.85**
II	**59.23**
III	**38.77**
IV	**79.77**
Total	**88.41**

Source: Same as Table 3

4.Findings and Suggestions:

4. (a) Findings

1.Rural connectivity is the principal item of asset creation under MGNREGA as it takes place regularly, besides being one of the major contributors towards the total assets created in the Blocks.

2.Works on individual lands took place since the year 2016-17 and emerged as the dominant contributor towards the total asset creation in recent years. Besides, this category shows the highest growth rate in both the Blocks.

3.The progress of different categories carried out under the MGNREGA speaks about the importance of the division of labour or specialisation of workers in their respective fields.

4.The distribution of assets created in Category III is more uniform as compared to the other categories. But in terms of total assets creation in the two Blocks, the distribution is more uniform in Mylliem Block.

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4. (b) Suggestions

The following suggestions can be made for enhancing the effectiveness of MGNREGA in creating sustainable assets improving rural infrastructure and promoting socio-economic development in the two Blocks and across the state:

i. Rural connectivity should be carried out in such a way that it will promote the production and marketing of the various products besides connecting the different localities and places of significant importance such as ponds, river sides, schools, religious places etc.

ii. Special attention should also be given for maintenance/repairs of the assets created so as to maintain the achievement/development in the long run.

iii. As works on individual lands is one of the items of assets creation under MGNREGA, it is advisable that implementation of such works should be free from favouritism and discrimination. Besides a certain percentage of the expenses should be borne by the owner of land to avoid free rider problem.

iv. In rural areas, there are other developmental schemes that are being implemented in Meghalaya besides MGNREGA. The convergence between these schemes and MGNREGA may bring a better result.

v. Strengthen institutional capacity at the state and local levels to manage MGNREGA effectively. Aligning MGNREGA projects with local development plans and priorities. Co-operation between the village local Durbars and the officers/staffs of the respective Blocks can further improve or speed up the implementation of works under this scheme.

vi. Development of waste land and fallow lands can also be included in the scheme. In addition to irrigation facilities, construction of post-harvest storage facilities and work sheds also need to be taken into consideration to boost agricultural productivity.

vii. The focus of the scheme should not only be in the quantity of assets to be created but the assets should also be of high quality.

viii. Focus should not be only in providing wage employment but sustainable and long-term development through skill development.

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