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EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME
An Employment Opportunity for Women

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GOKHALE INSTITUTE OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS
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FOREWORD

The problem of rural poverty arising largely out of rural underemployment has attracted wide attention of social scientists and policy makers during the last decade. There has been widespread advocacy for creating additional employment opportunities for underemployed men and women in small or large public works in addition to the employment created under the normal plan programmes in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors. The Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) of the Government of Maharashtra is the first and so far the most comprehensive programme in this direction in the country.

The present study, which was undertaken in the International Women's Year, had two related purposes. The first was to assess the extent to which the EGS had an impact on the rural employment situation in Maharashtra. The second was to assess the extent to which female workers participate in and benefit from such a programme.

The study is based on both the statistical returns routinely compiled by the concerned Government agencies relating to the EGS, and a sample survey in 60 EGS works in 12 districts of the state. It estimates that EGS by 1977 appeared to have created additional full employment (300 days in the year) for between 2.3 and 3.9 lakh persons in a year, which amounted to between 5 and 8 per cent of the landless labour force in rural Maharashtra. This is no doubt significant, though it falls short of the total requirement. The study shows the greater response to this scheme in the drought-prone areas of the State; but the lesser response in other regions is more likely due to lack of state initiative in starting work programmes under the EGS. The study draws attention to the large discrepancy between the different estimates of additional employment created by the EGS, which points to possible serious shortcomings in the record-keeping task and, more importantly, to leakages in the expenditure on the programme.

The study shows that almost half the workers on the EGS were women, belonging mostly to what is called the weaker section in rural society. In fact, two persons, man and woman, from most participating households were found to be working in the EGS works. This is contrary to the fears of many that poor households may not be helped by such public works programmes since women in our society would be generally reluctant to come to such works. Indeed, this appeared to have come as a source of economic strength to rural women. The average daily wages received appeared low, lower than the wage rate fixed for the normal quantum of daily work. This is disturbing and requires more careful examination; however, it is possible to improve this through both better organisation of the working groups and plugging the leaks. Earning from the EGS appeared to account for nearly two-

thirds of the total earnings of the participating households. The study estimates that even at the going wage rates two adult working members could support more than two non-earning children if at least 300 days of work were available to both in the year.

For a poverty-stricken rural society, these are not insignificant achievements and possibilities. They underline the need for expansion, better administration and more effective formulation of EGS work projects. It is hoped this study will be found useful by all those interested in this basic task.

The study received generous financial support from the Indian Council of Social Science Research, New Delhi, and we are grateful to the Council for the assistance.

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N. RATH
Director

June 30, 1983

PREFACE

This report was completed three years back. Its publication though late still illustrates the three main aspects of the Employment Guarantee Scheme as seen even to day in rural Maharashtra. These aspects include the important part played in the scheme by illiterate rural females, the change in the income distribution of workers employed in the scheme and the severe weaknesses of the scheme. These weaknesses if left uncorrected might throw the scheme into disrepute. Hence the need of drawing attention to them.

In preparing this report, Dr. Nilakantha Rath, the Director of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, helped me a lot. In spite of his heavy work schedule he read the manuscript very carefully and made a number of suggestions to improve the report. The staff of the Gokhale Institute and especially Mrs. Ghodke (nee Miss Manjushree Sathe) assisted me in analysing the information collected for the report. I am grateful to them all.

June 30, 1983.

Kumudini Dandekar

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INTRODUCTION

THIS REPORT carries out a broad assessment of the Employment Guarantee Scheme (briefly, EGS) as implemented in Maharashtra State. The special focus is on employment of women since there has never before been a scheme where men and women worked in equal numbers as in the EGS. The scheme is ambitious and can have far reaching consequences. In its early stages, rather than being critical about its shortcomings, one may examine the advantages and feasibility of the Scheme in order to give it a proper turn.

Since the Scheme provides work to women, it attains great importance in this decade for women. The current emphasis on women's studies and on reduction of poverty leads one to look into the EGS which generates employment for men and women who are equally handicapped due to illiteracy, absence of skills, poverty and unemployment. In such a situation do men and women react differently to the Scheme? Does the same wage rate for men and women¹ offered by the EGS attract varying numbers of the two sexes to the Scheme? These and similar questions are answered in the present report.

Biological handicaps, the burden of child bearing and rearing, the low status of the women compared to that of men in both the family and the society are supposed to come in the way of women's employment anywhere including the EGS. There are a number of preconceived notions regarding women's ability to participate in productive work. Women are supposed to avoid participating in public works such as road building, etc. They are believed to be reluctant to go to the project location which often means walking a few miles up and down to work. With small children they cannot afford to work outside home. These and other similar aspects of the question of female employment in rural areas in the light of the EGS constitute the subject matter of this study. The utility of the EGS in attacking the problem of rural unemployment in general and of the problems of women's employment in particular can be

better understood against the problems of rural unemployment in India and the State of Maharashtra.

Generally the EGS seems to be a right direction for running a programme to deal with poverty and unemployment of rural men and women as it offers bright prospects to the rural poor. A number of problems however arise in the administration of this Scheme in Maharashtra. It is a challenge to the organizing capacity of its managers to obtain the largest returns from the investment made. There are on the one hand funds raised through taxes and on the other the unemployed poor masses. The administration or planners are expected to provide the link between the two, as for instance, through the EGS.

A summary of problems in the employment of women in general would prove to be a worthwhile attempt in itself and would also serve as a background to the EGS in order to judge its utility from a broader perspective. This and other aspects of the evaluation of the EGS are presented in the report in the following order.

Chapter I compares the employment levels of women, in India and Maharashtra, with those of men as revealed by available data from the censuses and surveys.

Chapter II is devoted to a description of the EGS, the objectives behind the scheme, arrangement for its funding, its distribution over the various types of project activities and total attendance on a variety of works.

In this Chapter, the regional distribution of attendance on the EGS, its relationship to the scarcity of land and water and the quality of records maintained for attendance on EGS are examined. The importance of proper record-keeping to facilitate the judgement on the scheme and to improve the effectiveness of the scheme is brought out.

Chapter III describes the findings of the survey conducted on sixty of the projects taken up in the EGS in terms of the conditions of employment of men as well as women before and after launching of the EGS. The projects were spread over 12 districts of the State and furnish a living picture of the prevalent conditions of operation of the EGS in Maharashtra.

Chapter IV summarises the bright and the dismal findings of the evaluation of the scheme as implemented currently. The policy implications of the findings are examined and, in conclusion, the importance of continuing this scheme with necessary improvements is stressed.

CHAPTER 1

TRENDS IN WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT

SUMMARY

The problem of unemployment has cumulatively reached enormous proportions in Maharashtra and in India. Until recently, agriculture could passively absorb the burden of the rural unemployed thrust on it. But that capacity of agriculture was over-extended by about 1970 in Maharashtra due to the continuous deterioration of land in the State and the difficult exploitation of its limited water resources. Could the poor, of whom women are the poorest and hold a dependent status within the family, continue to face the situation? Is the EGS a satisfactory response to the present culture of grinding poverty in rural Maharashtra? These issues are examined in this Chapter.

. . .

CREATING REGULAR EMPLOYMENT opportunities for women is not a problem specific to India. Regular employment for women has always been a universal problem in rich as well as poor countries and in advanced as well as backward economies. Both labour scarce and labour surplus countries pose problems for employment of women. The root cause of this universal malady does not, therefore, lie in the economic conditions of a country or in its backwardness. With poverty the problem only gets exaggerated and finds various expressions with changing cultural milieu. The root cause of the problem lies in the biological limitations of women in being able to work regularly outside their homes. The biological explanations behind women's employment have different implications in various countries depending on the prevalent socio-economic and demographic conditions. For instance, communist countries, offering relatively better employment opportunities to women, sometimes seem to overstrain them to the limits of their biological capabilities.

In India, more or less total dependence on the relatively under-productive agriculture is the source of the malady of unemployment in general and of women in particular. With the prevalence of chronic poverty in the country, the problem of unemployment no doubt attains dreadful proportions, so much so that the income earned is inadequate to provide the minimum needs of subsistence for many families.

In any country, it is impossible to introduce schemes for the exclusive employment of women without first tackling the unemployment problem of men, since men are traditionally regarded as the primary bread-winners. The idea of employing only women is not only impracticable but strange especially when men are found to be unemployed in large numbers. Therefore, a scheme like the EGS, which provides

employment opportunities for both men and women, deserves close study.

The trend in employment of women has shown a decline over the decade 1961-71, while the decline for men is somewhat less, due to the perception of their economic role as earners and their relatively better level of education and skills. Most employment is confined to the agricultural and traditional sectors in unskilled and semi-skilled jobs for men and more so for women. Their unsure hold on modern industrial employment results in chronic redundancy and in the low productivity of their labour in agriculture and in traditional industries. The salient features of women's employment in India as seen from a review of the literature on the subject are summarised below:

(1) In 1971, 87 per cent women in rural India and 94 per cent in rural Maharashtra depended on agriculture for employment of which more than half worked as agricultural labour on other's farms. Corresponding percentages for men and especially their smaller dependence on agricultural labour can be seen in Table 1.1. The increasing dependence on agricultural labour for both men and women in the decade 1961-1971 reveals perhaps a deteriorating income position among them and hence the pressing need for creating greater employment opportunity in rural areas.

(2) One may note that all the employment as agricultural labour above only indicates the employment opportunity badly needed in rural areas and not necessarily the volume of persons 'really' absorbed in agriculture. Agriculture seems to accept passively any load of workers. That is why the agricultural wage rates have rarely risen to the minimum expected by law except perhaps in the peak season. It may be noted that the number of men and women recorded as agricultural labourers are not fully employed as such during the year; it only means their major source of employment and earning is wage labour on farms. In fact they get very inadequate employment as wage earners. The growing numbers on the other hand keep the daily wage rates from rising. Women generally got 50 to 65 per cent of the wage men got for any agricultural operation.² In the Agricultural Labour Enquiry of 1974-75, women rarely got wages above Rs. 2.50. The wage rates for 1964-65 as well as 1974-75 are given in Table 1.2 at the end of this chapter.

(3) Type of agricultural work done by women is determined by custom. Ploughing is more or less a man's job, transplanting and weeding are jobs for women. Harvesting is done by both though more by women (see Table 1.3).

(4) There was an overall worsening of conditions of female employment in both the agricultural and the non-agricultural sectors during 1961-71. (see Table 1.4). Even if the census data are adjusted for changes in the

definitions of the censuses of 1961 and 1971, one finds about 25 per cent decline in the number of women recorded as workers. It really means so many more were forced to remain outside the labour force. The decline in employment was common to agricultural as well as non-agricultural sectors. The deterioration in the employment level in India was however worse (31 per cent) in the non-agricultural sector compared to that in Maharashtra (17 per cent).

(5) It is alleged that women are used to work with the agricultural rhythm. This is often given as a reason for their remaining out of labour force in urban areas. But it is not only women but men also who have to work with the seasonal rhythm of agriculture if their lands depend only on rains as they mostly do in Maharashtra. In rural areas 55 to 60 per cent of all women are in the labour force whereas in urban areas only 20 to 25 per cent enter the labour force (see Table 1.5). If the extent of poverty in rural and urban areas is about the same, urban women should be as much willing to join the labour force as rural women. The urban atmosphere seems noncongenial to women's work. The proportion of women in the labour force as well as in the non-agricultural operations has been steadily dwindling over the last 60 to 70 years (see Table 1.6). It is specially due to deterioration of their employment in the non-agricultural sector from a level of 11 per cent in 1901 to only about 3 per cent in 1971 (see Table 1.6).

(6) The total deterioration in employment is brought out specially by the negative rates of growth for women during 1961-71 in most sectors and the increase in men working as agricultural labourers by about 83 per cent (see Tables 1.7 and 1.8).

(7) With education, employment of women improved in some non-agricultural sectors though its effect on the total employment was little; e.g. the educational and medical services recorded an increase of 102 per cent (109 per cent for Maharashtra) and 46 per cent (71 per cent for Maharashtra) respectively in India. Both these services employed substantial numbers such as about 6 lacs and more than 2 lacs respectively in the two kinds of services in India in 1971. Public administration also employed about 2 lacs of women and showed an increase of 58 per cent in employment in India during 1961-71. Without education, however, there was no hope of employment of women in urban areas. For more details in growth of employment in the skilled categories (see Table 1.9). The welfare activities of the State could employ women but the pace of development of such activities was too small to make any significant impact on their employment level especially when the growth of their education and work skills was slow.

If the living conditions have to improve, population dependent on agriculture has to be employed in rural areas either by improving the labour absorption capacity of agriculture or by starting other projects in rural areas which

will promote the absorption of labour as well as improve the living conditions. During 1961-71 the rate of increase in population growth and the increase in agricultural produce did not match, the agricultural growth being very poor especially in Maharashtra.³ In fact irrigation level in Maharashtra was very low with little hope of improvement. This naturally left little hope of more labour absorption in agriculture than was found in 1961. According to certain estimates (Dandekar and Rath, p.9), more than half the population of rural Maharashtra was living below poverty line by 1961. The situation had probably worsened in rural Maharashtra by 1971.

One may venture to assume that the population engaged in agriculture may be stabilised at the level of 1961 in rural Maharashtra. This may not be an unreasonable assumption for there was widespread underemployment in 1961 as well, and it may be fair to assume that the growing need of increased farm work in a developing agriculture can be met by this unchanging work force.⁴ Thus if 6.9 million males were working in agriculture in 1961, only 6.9 million males may work in this sector in 1971 or later. But by 1971 if the male population had increased by 27.8 per cent the total male work-seekers would be 8.8 million. If only 6.9 million were to be in agriculture as of 1961 (with prevalent technology), 1.9 million males would have to be provided employment either away from agriculture or in agriculture with improved technology. At the rate of 270 days' (or 300 days') working of the year, 51 crore (or 57 crore) man days of employment had to be generated for men in 1971 to keep them fully employed.

As for women, their population increased by 27 per cent during 1961-71. The work seekers among females could be assumed to increase by the same percentage i.e. from 6.4 million to 8.1 million by 1971. Therefore, 1.7 million more women would be available for work away from agriculture by 1971 under conditions same as those assumed for men above. Even if a female is regarded as half a male working unit due to her household responsibilities, i.e. if an adult female would on an average put in only half the time of an adult male in productive work, 23 crore (or 25.5 crore) days of work should have to be generated for the additional women labour outside of agriculture or in agriculture with far improved technology by 1971. Thus about 75 to 80 crore man-days of employment would have been needed away from agriculture by 1971 if the burden on it was to be kept only at 1961 level.

For similar calculations for 1981, the relevant data are not available. But if the decadal growth rate is assumed to be 24.36 per cent, about 150 to 175 crores of mandays will be needed for men and women if the assumptions made are the same as those for 1971. These calculations are only to indicate the enormity of the problem of employment rather than to give precise estimation of unemployment.

Thus obviously the task is enormous. Moreover the culture of rural areas in many regions in India is suspected to be a *non-working culture* at least partly due to decades and centuries of underemployment. Our basic goal is to raise the level of living of the rural folk by generating employment for them and putting purchasing power in their hands. Therefore to have public works to promote agricultural development or to complement the growth and to avoid inordinate rural-urban migration, much of the public investment budget has to be allocated to the provision of the needed infrastructure in rural areas.⁵ It includes: Land shaping and development, soil conservation projects, major and minor irrigation projects, road and housing construction and better health and hygiene in rural areas. Such provision will necessitate an expanded rural works programme which is to be dovetailed with preferences and seasonal availabilities of labour. All this, of course has to be more productive than the semi-relief programmes of the past conducted specially in famine times in rural areas. This is because the employment generation here is not for a short period. It has to be continuous to create confidence among the workers. Hence the country cannot afford to offer employment in unproductive work.

An intensive as well as united political effort is needed to implement the above kind of programme since many vested interests may be affected in this process. But an answer to the development problem cannot be obtained unless under-utilized labour is used productively and in the manner as is being conceived through the EGS.

Sixth Five-Year Plan Draft

National plans have by now, lost their status in this country. Despite this it must be noted that the draft of the sixth five-year plan categorically rules out industrialisation as an avenue for expanding employment. Changes in the output-mix and in the technique-mix should have a bias for low investment, labour-intensive schemes. The stress on employment of weaker sections may thus increase demand for goods produced by the poor and this is what one can achieve through the EGS if properly managed.

Table 1.1 : LAND-CULTIVATORS AND AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS AS PER CENT AMONG TOTAL FEMALE AND MALE WORKERS IN THE CENSUSES OF RURAL AREAS IN 1961 AND 1971 IN INDIA AND MAHARASHTRA

	<u>Total Agr. employment</u>		<u>Cultivators</u>		<u>Agr. labourers</u>	
	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971
	Females					
Rural India	83.7	87.2	58.9	38.9	24.8	46.2
Rural Maharashtra	93.7	94.4	59.1	39.1	34.5	55.3
	Males					
Rural India	76.9	81.0	61.1	55.5	15.8	25.5
Rural Maharashtra	80.2	82.4	55.7	51.5	24.5	30.9

Source : *Census of India 1971, Series 1 - India: Miscellaneous Studies, Paper 1 of 1974. Report on Resurvey of Economic Questions. Some Results.* 1971 figures were adjusted according to 1961 definitions.

Table 1.2 : AVERAGE DAILY EARNINGS OF MEN AND WOMEN BELONGING TO RURAL LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS ENGAGED IN DIFFERENT AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS

	<i>Wages in Rupees for Agriculture Work</i>						
	<i>Plough- ing</i>	<i>Sow- ing</i>	<i>Trans- plant- ing</i>	<i>Weed- ing</i>	<i>Harve- sting</i>	<i>All Agri. Opera- tions</i>	<i>Others</i>
1964-65							
<i>India</i>							
Male	1.39	1.53	1.86	1.38	1.42	1.41	N.A.
Female	0.88	0.78	1.00	0.81	0.87	0.89	0.92
<i>Maharashtra</i>							
Male	1.48	1.80	1.70	1.27	1.40	1.46	N.A.
Female	0.89	0.79	1.07	0.71	0.75	0.77	0.78
1974-75							
<i>India</i>							
Male	3.35	3.72	3.38	3.11	3.41	3.13	
Female	2.35	2.60	2.50	1.95	2.39	2.29	

Source : *Rural Labour Enquiry Final Report on Wages and Earnings of Rural Labour Households*, published by Labour Bureau, Ministry of Labour, Government of India, Chandigarh, 1981.

Table 1.3 : PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WAGE PAID EMPLOYMENT OF USUALLY OCCUPIED 'MEN' AND 'WOMEN' IN DIFFERENT AGRICULTURAL OPERATIONS IN TERMS OF FULL DAYS IN THE YEAR.

a = 1963-65; b = 1974-75

Agricultural Operations		INDIA		MAHARASHTRA	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Ploughing	a	21.9	5.3	21.8	4.6
	b	18.1	1.7		N.A.
Sowing	a	2.6	3.0	2.4	2.1
	b	2.5	3.4		N.A.
Transplanting	a	3.4	8.7	0.5	0.9
	b	4.4	10.2		N.A.
Weeding	a	6.2	15.2	6.5	20.1
	b	11.2	23.7		N.A.
Harvesting	a	18.2	30.9	22.0	36.3
	b	23.8	34.7		N.A.
Others and Unclassified	a	47.7	36.9	46.8	36.0
	b	40.0	26.3		N.A.
All Agricultural Operations	a	100.0 =183.30 days	100.0 =136.84 days	100.0 =215.10 days	100.0 =170.73 days
	b	100.0 =160.00 days	100.0 =118.00 days		

N.A. = Not available

Source : Rural Labour Enquiry (1963-65) Final Report.
Rural Labour Enquiry (1974-75). Summary Report.

Table 1.4 : GROWTH OF POPULATION AND WORKERS IN VARIOUS CATEGORIES (PER CENT) DURING 1961-71, DATA ADJUSTED* AND UNADJUSTED FOR CHANGES IN DEFINITIONS

	<i>Unadjusted</i>		<i>Adjusted</i>	
	<i>India</i>	<i>Maharashtra</i>	<i>India</i>	<i>Maharashtra</i>
	<i>Increase per cent</i>			
Total Population	24.8	27.4	24.8	27.5
Males	25.6	27.8	25.6	27.8
Females	24.1	27.0	24.1	27.0
Total Workers	-4.3	-2.9	4.4	0.4
Males	15.5	16.6	18.0	16.6
Females	-47.3	-34.3	-25.1	-25.6
Total Agricultural Workers	-4.1	-9.9	5.8	-5.1
Males	20.1	14.4	22.4	15.1
Females	-47.0	-36.1	-23.5	-26.8
Total Cultivators	-21.4	-25.1	-13.7	-22.13
Males	3.7	3.7	5.3	3.4
Females	-71.9	-59.5	-51.8	-52.5
Total Agri. Labourer	50.7	19.6	67.5	27.8
Males	83.0	38.5	87.7	41.3
Females	11.2	2.9	42.8	16.0
Total Non-Agri. Workers	-4.9	13.3	1.2	13.1
Males	6.8	19.8	9.9	18.8
Females	-48.7	-21.7	-31.3	-17.4

* The 1971 Census figures have been adjusted according to the 1961 Census definitions.

- Source : 1) For unadjusted estimates : *Census of India and Maharashtra, 1961 and 1971.*
- 2) For adjusted estimates: *Census of India 1971. Series 1, India Miscellaneous Studies Paper 1 of 1974. Report on Resurvey on Economic Questions - Some Results.*

EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME

Table 1.5 : DISTRIBUTION OF PERSON-DAYS (AGE-GROUP 15-59 YEARS)
BY CURRENT ACTIVITY STATUS AND SEX FOR INDIA AND
MAHARASHTRA (RURAL AND URBAN) (ALL SUBROUNDS COMBINED)

Current Activity Status	INDIA		MAHARASHTRA	
	Estimated No. (in '00) of		Estimated No. (in '00) of	
	Person days		Person days	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
	RURAL			
Total population of ages 15-59 years	1286149	1275784	102224	105268
Total labour force	1134350	442303	90070	59416
Percentage of total labour force to total population of ages 15-59 years	(88.2)	(34.7)	(88.1)	(56.4)
	URBAN			
Total population of ages 15-59 years	377280	330656	57170	48633
Total labour force	316281	66927	47617	11039
Percentage of total labour force to total population of ages 15-59 years	(83.8)	(20.2)	(83.3)	(22.7)

Source : N.S.S. 32nd Round July 1977-June 1978. Schedule 10:
Employment and Unemployment. Issued by National Sample
Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, Ministry of
Planning, Government of India.

Table 1.6 : TRENDS IN FEMALE ACTIVITY RATES DURING THE VARIOUS CENSUS YEARS, 1901 TO 1971.

Census Year	Total		Female Activity Rates			
	Maharashtra	India	Agriculture		Non-Agriculture	
			Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra	India
1901	-	31.63	-	20.32	-	11.31
1911	-	33.70	-	23.81	-	9.89
1921	-	32.63	-	23.35	-	9.29
1931	-	28.93	-	19.66	-	9.27
1951	-	23.29	-	17.89	-	5.40
		(25.33)		(19.65)		(5.68)
1961	-	27.51	-	22.25	-	5.26
	38.10	(25.66)	33.41	(20.76)	4.69	(4.90)
1971	19.70	11.87	16.81	9.50	2.89	2.37

Note: i) Figures in brackets relate to All India figures minus those for the states of A.P., Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.

ii) Before 1961, no data were available for the present Maharashtra State.

Table 1.7 : PERCENTAGE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WORKERS DURING 1961-1971 ACCORDING TO THE CENSUSES

Census Category of Activity	Main Activity	Maharashtra		India	
		Males	Females	Males	Females
I	Cultivators	3.69	-59.49	4.12	-72.35
II	Agricultural Labourers	38.48	2.93	82.72	10.50
III	Livestock etc. }	-12.99	-14.61	4.48	-26.07
IV	Mining & quarrying }				
V	Manufacturing etc:				
	a) Household Industry	-24.21	-48.96	-35.28	-71.73
	b) Other than Household Industry	43.02	13.21	38.69	10.37
VI	Construction	23.13	-12.75	9.14	-23.24
VII	Trade & Commerce	50.17	-12.90	39.33	-33.98
VIII	Transport, Storage and Communication	26.18	11.18	33.33	42.53
IX	Other Services	5.86	-12.84	-13.75	-48.59
X	Non-Workers	42.74	64.79	38.26	51.40

Table 1.8 : RATIO OF FEMALE TO MALE WORKERS ACCORDING TO ACTIVITY IN 1961 AND 1971 CENSUSES IN INDIA AND MAHARASHTRA

Category of Activity	Female Workers per 100 Male Workers							
	Rural				Urban			
	1961		1971		1961		1971	
	Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra	India
1. Cultivators	85.00	50.10	33.47	13.34	55.54	38.88	14.27	9.25
2. Agri. Labour	113.14	81.84	85.42	49.92	120.98	85.62	66.87	41.60
3. Livestock etc.		31.22	11.76	23.43		20.06	9.20	14.41
4. Mining & Quarrying)	17.67	-	29.67	17.93	19.61	-	24.07	11.96
5. Industry								
a) Household Industry	42.09	63.77	33.50	27.96	67.77	61.33	30.94	26.87
b) Other than H. Industry	12.53	19.33	10.21	14.42	8.97	7.70	6.98	6.14
6. Construction	24.15	14.96	17.23	9.89	14.36	11.59	11.37	8.89
7. Trade & Commerce	18.63	19.52	8.84	8.04	8.76	6.78	5.84	4.39
8. Transport etc.	3.00	1.93	3.45	2.16	5.40	2.35	4.59	2.46
9. Other Services	25.60	35.25	11.02	15.41	22.00	20.53	23.59	18.70

Table 1.9 : CATEGORIES OF SKILLED FEMALE EMPLOYMENT WHERE INCREASE WAS NOTED DURING 1961-72

Category of Industrial Classification	Total female employment in 1961		% Increase during 1961-71	
	Maharashtra	India	Maharashtra	India
Electricity, gas and water works and supply	1281	8853	14	7
Transport and storage	18667	65016	27	125
Financing, Insurance, real estate and business service	5754	18347	127	95
Manufacturing -				
a) Manufacturing of beverages	84042	385247	8	18
b) Manufacturing of paper, 1971 paper products, printing and publicity		11481	25	25
c) Manufacturing of rubber, plastic, petroleum and coal products	1124	2578	258	199
d) Manufacturing of Machinery	306	1784	763	412
e) Manufacturing of electrical machinery	359	3788	237	317
f) Manufacturing of transport equipment	747	3104	67	56
Services -				
a) Public administration and defence	17591	103078	47	58
b) Education, scientific and research services	42528	341745	109	102
c) Medical and health	20315	152402	71	46
*Wholesale trade	2247	14116	40	39

* The employment in 'Retail trade' has decreased by 41 per cent.

Source : Census data of 1961 and 1971 relating Industrial Classification of Workers in General Economic Tables Part II B.

CHAPTER II

EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME (EGS)

(Organisation, description, funding and functioning of the EGS in Maharashtra)

SUMMARY

The EGS has made an unprecedented dent on the prevalent unemployment in rural Maharashtra. It was certainly a right step towards reduction of poverty and unemployment. For females, it proved a boon unheard of in employment history of the development effort. But did the administration and management match the task? The corruption in management reached its peak in the EGS. Could one blame the EGS for it?

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Backward of the EGS

AGRICULTURE IN MAHARASHTRA was very much neglected and there was acknowledged and easily perceivable deterioration in agricultural production and productivity⁶ in most districts of the State during the period 1960-61 to 1971-72.⁷ On the other hand the state, though the strongest in the country in industrialization and the urban sector, was not capable of providing adequate employment to the growing population as revealed in the Census of 1971. It resulted in additional burden of population in Maharashtra on agriculture of the order of 14 per cent during 1961-71. It is worthwhile noting here that the agricultural production had grown only by 0.07 per cent per annum (compound rate) during 1960-69 (see foot note 6) while the population had grown by 2.4 per cent per annum during 1960-69. On the other hand the per capita income was the third highest in the country (R.F.C. 1978, p. 146) (exceeded only by Punjab and Haryana) providing ample evidence of increasing uneven distribution of income in the State. Per capita income of the State is very misleading here because it is high only in the city of Bombay. It contains 12.1 per cent of the State's population and includes 66.1 per cent of its industrial employment and 33 per cent of the employment in the tertiary sector. The high per capita income only brings out the vast differences in wage rates in the agricultural and industrial sectors. If Bombay and Thana i.e. Greater Bombay was excluded, Maharashtra was economically as backward as many poor states of the country.

Two things, therefore, seemed absolutely urgent. One was the need of bringing forth the neglect and miseries of the rural poor through organized effort to attract attention of the planners and leaders. Secondly, the necessity of direct attack on poverty through guaranteed employment that had to be enmeshed with the growth strategy

in the State. The idea was to tax the rich to employ the poor through the EGS, creating at the same time productive assets in the state by employing the unemployed labour in rural Maharashtra.

Launching of the EGS

Realizing the conditions in the State, the Government launched what was called the Employment Guarantee Scheme (i.e. EGS) on 1st of May 1972 guaranteeing thereby employment to all able-bodied adults of age 18 and above in rural areas who wanted work and were willing to work on public works undertaken by the State. Every worker was to do manual work for scheduled wages. The scheme, however, could not take the planned shape due to severe famine conditions prevailing in large parts of the State till 1974. During this period the *ad hoc* Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE), proposed by the Government of India all over the country helped gathering experience to launch the statewide programme for employment of weaker sections. The experiences of Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (PIREP) too could provide proper guidance for implementing the EGS. The State Government gave statutory support to the guarantee of employment through the Employment Guarantee Act of 1977, brought into force from 26th January 1979. The EGS thus was the first step to recognize the right to work contained in Article 41 of the Indian constitution.

The Experiences of the PIREP

It is worthwhile noting briefly the experiences of the PIREP. The PIREP was an action-cum-research programme for a period of three years completed in October 1975, in 15 states of India. About 180 lakh mandays of employment was generated in this programme with a view to creating durable assets and to train workers in low-level skills on the jobs. The PIREP was a well conceived project incorporating in its planning three elements viz. (a) conducting unemployment surveys (b) preparation of employment budget and (c) enrollment of those offering to work in the PIREP by a formal registration and planning the execution of work projects with reference to employment requirements. The plan of work was supposed to accommodate the varying seasonal demand for work. This point may raise a controversy since the administration of varying numbers working on projects gets difficult and lowers the efficiency and productiveness of works. On the other hand the requirements of employment were no doubt varying. The problems arising due to this are discussed later in this report.

As for the unemployment surveys, the nature and dimensions of unemployment could hardly be known in PIREP especially due to absence of continuity of works. People could not have faith in them. The works under PIREP were more or less of the same kind as in the EGS though rural water supply, housing for weaker sections and construction

of school buildings for rural areas were probably additional items of works undertaken under the PIREP. Selection of schemes under the PIREP was found faulty since they could not create durable assets. The productiveness of works measured by cost-benefit ratios did not raise much hope regarding advisability of works undertaken. It is worth noting this since the works under the EGS are very much similar to those in the PIREP and this point will come up again in the discussion on worthiness of projects under the EGS. There seemed an utter need of project works formulated consistently with the block plans or such sectoral Master Plans as for districts. There were no such plans nor was there any attempt to do so even in the EGS.

Conditions of Employment Guarantee

The EGS was started with vigour in Maharashtra in 1975. The provisions of the scheme were as follows:

(1) It was notified in every village asking all able-bodied adults to register their names with the Village Talathi if they wanted employment on public works at a specified minimum daily wage rate for specified amount of work.

(2) A group of 50 persons asking for employment had to be provided work by starting a new project within a radius of 5 kilometers of their location. In 1980 this distance was allowed to be 8 kilometers.

(3) The public work had to be productive and the proportion of expenditure on labour to that on skilled work, supervision, material and equipment, etc. was to be at least 60:40. In fact during 1976 to 1980, 76, 73, 78 and 80 (see Table 2.1) per cent of the total expenditure were respectively spent on manual wages for consecutive years in the EGS in the state. In the PIREP, this ratio was fixed at 70:30 but was found very inconvenient and the suggestion was made to change it to 60:40. But it is not being used in the EGS. It is difficult to understand the reasons behind this except perhaps the lack of confidence in the utility of the schemes under the EGS.

(3) The EGS employment was not to affect the availability of agricultural labour at lawful minimum wages and hence the wages offered on the EGS were lower than this minimum. In fact the scheduled wage rate was Rs.3 for the work done by average adult in 7 hours.⁸ This clause was put specially due to the complaints of land owners that the EGS might make it difficult for them to get hands as agricultural labour and hence agriculture could suffer.⁹

(4) The EGS was not to affect the labour availability on the plan or non-plan public works already started. Besides the above, it was added later that any person demanding work had to be given work on EGS either in the Taluka

or neighbouring Taluka though the guarantee was for the district. Person demanding work had to apply in a specific form to a specific authority. In practice this rule was not always followed. If he or she did not get employment they could demand an unemployment allowance of one rupee a day. At the same time, the Government policy was never to allow a case to demand unemployment allowance by offering it work.

Raising of Funds

Large funds were expected to be required for implementing the EGS. The idea was to raise these funds from the people who had more than those who were unemployed in the society. Therefore the State Government imposed some additional taxes and surcharges on existing taxes. The collections from these were earmarked for the EGS. The taxes and surcharges and the revenues from these sources in 1975-76 are given below:

	Crores (Rs.) 1975-76 Estimated
1) Taxes on professions, trades, callings	10.41
2) Surcharge on sales tax for the EGS ¹⁰	7.20
3) Tax on urban property such as non-residential urban lands and buildings	1.30
4) EGS surcharge on motor vehicles	0.75
5) Surcharge on land revenue on holdings above 3.2 hectares	2.34
6) EGS cess on irrigated holdings at 25 paise per hectare	3.00
Total	----- 25.00 -----

The State Government also provided a matching contribution from its general revenues for the EGS every year. The net collection of taxes and levies and the matching contribution from the State Government were credited to the EGS fund, to ensure that the resources raised are used only for the EGS. If there was any balance, it was carried over for the EGS into the following year.

In all this fund-raising, there was a complaint from the general population that well-to-do farmers and rural populace got advantage due to the EGS without paying for it.

Employment Generated under the EGS as in the Government Report

The planning department of the State initially estimated the potential demand for employment in the EGS. This was based on the findings of the 25th round of the

National Sample Survey (NSS) conducted in 1970-71 which was confined to the lowest 10 per cent cultivators and the landless labour households in the rural areas of the State. The estimated unemployed mandays were 14 crores which, at the rate of Rs. 3 a day would need Rs. 42 crores as wage bill for the year 1974-75 when food grains were not provided to the workers (see Table 2.1).

The increase in the total number of mandays of employment provided on the EGS from year to year, was perhaps due largely to the gradual extension of coverage of the EGS to various parts of the state and the growing trust of the people in the rural areas about the genuineness and continuity of the Scheme. The twenty crores of mandays of employment in 1979-80 would thus appear to be larger than the estimated 14 crore mandays in 1975. This incidentally may indicate the inadequacy of the employment surveys, conducted by the NSSO, in estimating real unemployment in the countryside.

The table shows that in 1979-80, 20 crores of mandays' employment was generated. One may compare this employment with the needed employment in 1980 estimated in Chapter I. One finds that the EGS had provided additional employment for roughly one-eighth of the potential surplus labour. This no doubt would be a great achievement in reducing poverty and keeping a stationary number at 9161¹¹ level employed in agriculture. Of course, the EGS was supposed to create more employment opportunity even in agriculture due to a variety of schemes undertaken under the EGS.

As seen from the Table 2.1 a large amount of money was raised through taxes and employment of about 20 crores of mandays was generated on the EGS by 1979-80. It is worthwhile examining whether the employment generated was utilized by the unemployed weaker sections. Otherwise even the non-needy could take advantage of it due to its convenience, its being close by, at their doors. There were no data to check this 'needness' aspect of the workers. Only if the workers belonged to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, that was probably noted.

Documentation in the EGS Works

There was an enormous amount of documentation about the various projects conducted under the EGS. For instance there were weekly/monthly and fortnightly reports from the individual works. There was a format called IIIA giving periodically for each work project the employment potential, expenditure sanctioned, expenditure incurred, number of male/female workers employed, scheduled caste and scheduled tribe workers, wages paid, whether the work was in progress, completed or stopped and the reason for stoppage of the work. Consolidated reports were prepared for works carried out by departments organizing the work as also for the district as a whole. All of these supply a massive amount

of data on the EGS. Initially our idea was to examine and analyse these data. But confusion in accepted definitions of a number of concepts in these seemed proportionate to the vastness of data and one rarely came across an officer in the district administrative office aware of the precise definitions and of the need of consistencies in the various documents. For instance, 'employment potential' of a project was noted for each work in III-A forms. It gave a figure such as 100, 250 or 500, etc. But no mention was made of the potential in terms of mandays of employment that could be provided on the work. At times an explanation was given that minor, medium irrigation itself meant some specific number of persons to be employed. But nobody really knew the potential either for such irrigation works or percolation tanks. The documentation needed a lot of streamlining. Very recently a good deal of enthusiasm prevailed in the EGS administration since the idea of computerizing the enormous data got accepted. The computer can handle vast data but cannot clean or improve these. Especially the consistencies of the data regarding the relationship between wages paid, person days worked, and expenditure incurred are very relevant for successful running of the EGS according to stated conditions. One could check the number of actually observed workers on the projects with those entered in the reports. This was essential for locating the misuse of funds sometimes complained about either by the EGS workers or the close observers of the EGS.¹²

Worthiness of Projects Undertaken under the EGS

One very important but difficult aspect of the EGS was to have works which were productive. This productive-ness of works was hard to define. With the government documents productiveness of works meant works which led to direct or indirect increases in production or the absence of which could inhibit increase in production. Increase in production in rural areas was defined essentially as increase in agricultural production. Thus medium and minor irrigation schemes, soil conservation, land shaping and development were considered as productive. Constructing percolation tanks was another method of helping irrigation though the productiveness of tanks needed definition. In certain regions afforestation programmes were started as productive. Road construction was allowed as productive in hilly regions having poor communication. Earlier the road construction elsewhere was not considered productive. Lately however it is accepted under the EGS.

The projects undertaken in various years show that afforestation never took more than 3 to 5 per cent funds, soil conservation less than 20 per cent, and irrigation schemes more than 50 per cent or so before 1979 (see Table 2.2). But during 1979-80 this last percentage came down to 42 per cent. There was a Government Resolution that 20 per cent should be the upper limit of expenditure

on roads which help bring inputs and facilitate marketing of produce. Up to 1977-78, 10 per cent or less was spent on roads. But in the following year, it increased to 21 per cent and in 1979-80 to 27 per cent. The feeling that expenditure on roads was wasteful arose because the roads were not metalled. In the absence of metalling, road construction often amounted to making roads again and again, since these were washed out in the rains.¹³ To avoid this waste, metalling was necessary. But the work was so strenuous that wage rates for it had to be much higher than the usual EGS rates. Because of the unwillingness of the EGS workers to work for metalling at the EGS rates some workers had to be stopped. Hence, in certain areas the raising of wages for metalling was under consideration. In fact recently i.e. in 1982 the wage rate for metalling is raised to more than Rs. 10. Metalling however cannot be accommodated in the 40 per cent component allocated for material, equipment and skilled work including supervision. Hence non-EGS funds have to be provided from Plan provisions (Vyankateshan)¹⁴ called complementary Plan Provisions for funds. The earlier part of the work of road construction is supposed to be 'easy' from two points of view. One is that the work is not strenuous for the wages obtained. Secondly road construction projects can be started any where and especially near the villages. Hence there is a tendency to start such projects wherever the demand for work cannot be answered by any other projects. Road construction is therefore started more recently even when a large number of other works are closed or left incomplete for shortage of labour. This does not sound proper.

As for the irrigation schemes cost/benefit ratios needed an estimation which was often very difficult. In the PIREP, this ratio was calculated for an irrigation project in one Block (Trithala in Kerala) as 9.33 (especially for lift irrigation schemes) and for road construction 1.84¹⁴. But the statements based on such evaluations seemed uncertain and hence diffidence prevailed in using them as found in the PIREP report. Similar unfavourable ratios seemed to prevail for percolation tanks in Maharashtra too. Occasionally the percolation tanks built were too big for the level of rains available in the region. Sometimes their construction was harmful causing water - logging, etc. The techniques of constructing percolation tanks also at times needed a change as suggested by a senior irrigation engineer. It is quite possible that Maharashtra, which has little hope of irrigation, showed such results. In other regions the same techniques could result in substantially improved irrigation conditions: On the whole however there seemed a pressing need of search for innovative projects, the utility of which could be easily felt and calculated. Here the imagination and ingenuity of planners was at severe test and was a crucial factor in channeling the EGS effort to attain the desired goal.

In the PIREP report an effort made at filling in sanitary holes was stated to be disturbing. But what was

wrong with such projects? Helping the health and hygiene in rural areas, improving or protecting the drinking water supply through the EGS will certainly reduce the expected expenditure on health services. Garbage disposal and converting it into compost manure could be another productive programme under the EGS. Betterment of living could thus include better health, better sanitation, better roads to walk on. The EGS could change its face from one region to the other depending on the conditions of the region. It seems that a district like Chandrapur in Nagpur division may promote exploring natural resources such as coal, etc. Thus narrow definitions of productiveness supported by easily definable but not easily calculable cost/benefit ratios need rethinking. Utilization of human/animal/plant waste should also attract attention in the programmes under the EGS. A list of such possible projects should be made for each region.

The definition of productiveness also needs rethinking. Productiveness is measured by cost/benefit ratios. Cost here generally includes opportunity cost to the labour. This being zero in case of the EGS workers cost/benefit ratios should generally show favourable results. Moreover one is obliged to go slightly beyond cost-benefit, ratios simply because the same techniques and definitions of productiveness are not applied to each and every work in other professions or works. Why is it that a teacher, a peon, a driver, a professional like a doctor, lawyer or a clerk, a manager do get the wages they get? How does one measure the productiveness of their works? If differential skills is the answer, why is it that a sweeper or a typist or one with similar skills is paid differently in different organizations? Why is the difference in the wages of rural and urban labour so vast? Answers to some of these questions could be sorted out only to some extent in the non-agricultural sector in urban areas. But when the question of terms of trade between agricultural and non-agricultural sectors comes up, the problem gets enormously complicated. In India more than two-thirds of the workers depend on agriculture. Hence any rethinking on their question means rethinking on the whole set of socio-political problems, answers to which, though not easy, have to be given in solving the problems of poverty and 'productive' employment. In a poor country like India, leaving the old set-up, enormous sacrifices on the part of the better-to-do alone can help the poor majority. This is discussed again in Chapter IV.

The above of course does not mean that works need not be productive. Schemes of works cannot be *ad hoc*. They should have continuity at least for a decade or even longer. Such continuity can be possible only if the works started are economically productive. They have to be a part of the mainstream of the economy. Workers have to be producers one day, if not initially. But then the solution is to devise projects of the required kind in the EGS and not to blame the EGS.

With the present set-up of the EGS and the projects under it one could get an idea of employment required by persons in various districts if proper records are maintained for various seasons.

Verification of Employment Generated

The total mandays of employment under the EGS in the State could be estimated from returns under III-A forms for the districts. Generally for any project the attendance' on the last day of each fortnight was recorded in the reports rather than the total or average attendance of the entire fortnight. This in our view was not proper. This would not facilitate the auditing of the wage-bill and mandays employed on the EGS and could provide opportunity for corruption in the project. The average attendance for each month was thus in effect available from two sample days. Seasonal variation or variation from month to month could be obtained from attendance on only two sample days each month. The total attendance for 12 months as well as the monthly average for the 12 months was arrived at from such monthly data. The number of person years¹⁵ of employment provided on the EGS is calculated by dividing the total mandays of employment in a year by 300 workdays for a person. For Maharashtra State as a whole 3.94 lakhs of 'person years' were employed in the EGS during 1977-78.¹⁶ The relevant person years of employment for each of the 25 districts as percentage of that for the whole State, percentage of total landless labourers, the number of drought-prone as well as total talukas in each district are set out in Table 2.3. The percentage of workers attending the EGS works could be compared with the percentage of the total number of people of weaker sections of the state in each district. Since the total number of workers in the weaker sections was not easily available, the percentage of landless labourers which forms a significant portion of the weaker sections was used for the purpose. Their number for 1978 was estimated from the census of 1971 on certain assumptions. The percentage distributions of the landless labourers and the EGS workers may be compared from Table 2.3. The percentage of the EGS workers should normally vary with that of landless labourers; it would also be larger in drought-prone areas. Similarly presence of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in larger proportion could affect the attendance on the EGS works. Table 2.3 shows the effect of all these factors put together. A few observations on the table can be made as follows:

(1) Districts which are more progressive otherwise could easily grab the funds under the EGS with required plans of EGS work. The Table shows that though larger percentage of the total EGS expenditure was in the districts with larger percentage of landless labourers (or weaker sections), not all districts with larger population of labourers in the state benefitted from the scheme. In fact many relatively under-developed or backward districts were

poor users of these funds. The relatively advanced (organizationally and politically as also economically) districts of Western Maharashtra had the larger proportion of the EGS funds.

(2) Many districts with greater incidence of drought-prone lands did not have adequate share in the EGS expenditure due to reasons mentioned above. More drought-prone districts like Nasik, Ahmednagar, Solapur ought to take advantage of such schemes. However about two-thirds of the EGS expenditure reportedly went to the drought-prone areas.

(3) Some districts with greater tribal population like Thane, Dhule, Nasik record greater attendance in the EGS. This would lead to a better implementation of the minimum legislation in agriculture in the districts where the exploitation of the tribals is well known. The more the exploitation by landed farmers, the greater was the attendance on the EGS. Here the law of minimum wages could be better implemented with the EGS.

(4) Backward districts with large tribal population, like Buldhana, Chandrapur, Jalgaon, had only a small share in the expenditure on EGS employment.

(5) If landed farmers had more influence in politics they could manage to hinder the EGS works in their districts and more easily so if the region was not drought-prone. Forcing of minimum wage through the EGS was difficult here. Nagpur division had low expenditure on the EGS during 1976-79. But more recently it has caught up. For instance in Bhandara district in 1979-80 the demand for the EGS works shot up. Reportedly it was motivated by political leaders. It is not known how far it was genuine since the works when started did not attract corresponding attendance. The crowd was reportedly to get unemployment allowance in case the Government could not start the EGS works in the area.

While the impact of the EGS in different districts was uneven, significant achievement of the EGS appears to be the employment of about 3.9 lakhs of person years under the EGS. As mentioned above the manner in which the official records are maintained to arrive at this estimate, make it difficult to accept it without independent corroborative evidence. If the records were of any value, actual counting of workers on projects surveyed by us could be used to check the number reported in the planning department for those specific days. This method however did not prove practicable as far as we were concerned. It was made impossible for us to lay our hands on the relevant records. Government would do it if it intends to do so. There was, however, the 32nd round of the NSS providing the employment level of person days and of the males and females in various activities

including Public Works in Maharashtra in the age-group 15-59 years (see Tables 2.4 and 2.5).

In rural areas of Maharashtra in 1977-78, 2.6 per cent of the days of female workers belonging to the labour force were occupied in casual labour on public works (see Table 2.4). Corresponding percentage for males was 2.1. Public works include all types of works undertaken by the central, state and local authorities in the state. Separate information about the public works under the EGS is not available. Comparing the Maharashtra data with all-India figures from the National Sample Survey (Tables 2.4 and 2.5), it is found that in India only 0.7 per cent male days and 0.8 per cent female days were spent on public works. In the absence of any other data, it is assumed that public works other than EGS would have employed 0.7 per cent male days and 0.8 per cent female days in rural Maharashtra too. In fact with the EGS launched in a big way, it is possible that other public works would have somewhat reduced importance in Maharashtra. Therefore one may grant that the EGS could provide work for about 1.4 per cent (i.e. 2.1-0.7) or higher percentage of 'male days' employment and 1.8 per cent (i.e. 2.6-0.8) or higher female days' employment in rural Maharashtra. If these rates are applied to male and female population of working age after allowing for their possibility of belonging to the labour force at the rates observed in rural Maharashtra of the NSS, it is possible to estimate the number of days employed on the EGS in Maharashtra of 1977-78. This estimate comes roughly to 2.29 lakhs of person years employed on EGS in that year. This perhaps is a lower limit of the employment on the EGS. This estimate is to be compared with the employment of 3.9 lakhs of person years reported as generated under EGS by the department of Planning. The discrepancy between the two estimates is large namely 1.6 lakhs of person years' employment. This discrepancy could not be removed even if all the work on public works was done only on EGS in Maharashtra. Naturally one wonders why this level of discrepancy. The calculations are all rough, still such discrepancy cannot be easily explained.

If the 32nd round of the NSS or any other source could give a more precise estimate say E of the Employment on the EGS, the discrepancy between E and the reported 3.9 lakhs could reveal the faked employment if there was any.¹⁷ There were complaints of such employment. But with sample surveys such as the 32nd round of the NSS, one could never expect more precision and one could not get stated above. At the moment one can only comfort oneself that an appreciable impact had been made by the EGS on the problem of rural employment supposedly of weaker sections. But the discrepancy observed above is disturbing. Moreover the discrepancy remains with the same sign even if one assumed that all the work on public works reported in the NSS was under the EGS.

Employment Potential of EGS vis-a-vis the Employment Needed

One way of looking at the employment generated by the EGS would be as follows:

There were no data regarding the economic status of the workers on EGS in Government records. As long as all the workers were prepared to work under the conditions of the EGS works they could be assumed to belong to weaker sections as defined in the 25th round of the NSS mentioned earlier. According to this definition the estimated size of population of weaker sections in 1978 was roughly 7.99 million in rural Maharashtra under certain assumptions. Out of these 5.95 million were from landless labourers and 2.04 from the lowest ten per cent cultivators. If 50 per cent among these were of ages 15-59 years, roughly 4 million workers belonged to weaker sections in 1978. In other words an employment of 3.9 lakhs generated in the EGS meant taking care of about 10 per cent workers from among the weaker sections, if all of them were totally unemployed. Taking care of unemployment on the part of EGS will look much improved if they are partly employed.

The potential of the EGS for employing people could be judged in still another way. If 150 to 175 crores of mandays' work was needed for keeping the employment in agriculture stationary at 1961 level (see Chapter 1), the generated employment of 1978-79 namely 20 crores could be supposed to take care of about one-eighth of that required employment. This then was a substantial achievement. However one did not have the proportionate satisfaction due to achievements of the EGS for a number of reasons. One was that the confidence in the total employment generated was not strong enough either on the part of administrators, planners or the academicians. A variety of reports regarding leakage of funds from various sources reduced this confidence. Secondly employment could not mean keeping people, just occupied. Employment had to yield adequate wages so that a worker could earn subsistence for himself and his dependents if he worked. The daily wages were still not satisfactory to achieve this as will be seen later. Thirdly the notions of productivity of works were still very hazy and not meeting the expectations. The works started under the EGS often seemed useless and unproductive to the authorities of the programme themselves and occasionally the distributed wages were equated to giving doles or relief to the unemployed. Lastly the lack of supervision at most of the works left one disturbed and this was the main reason for having no confidence in the tenability of the EGS. Musters were not properly kept nor always maintained. Hence there seemed four to five works in our survey with no supervision at all and there was a great need to strengthen the confidence in the EGS which if divested of its defects could prove to be a great boon. But, for this purpose a lot of preliminary preparations had to be done before the works were started. It is discussed later.

Sex-ratio of Workers

As stated earlier, weaker sections certainly include women from those sections since they are weaker among the weak. It was worthwhile examining the female component of the EGS workers. The EGS document namely III-A, provided the sex-ratio of workers on every project each month. In Table 2.6 the number of females attending the EGS works at the end of March in 1979 and 1980 are set out for all the districts. There were about 4 lakh females working in the scheme. Their percentage among total number of EGS workers shows that more than 40 per cent of the workers in the state were females in both the years. Thus there were about 70 females working on the EGS per 100 males. If one considers the number of women available to the labour force in rural Maharashtra vis-a-vis the number of men, the number of females on the EGS will look still more favourable to females. If one compares this ratio of male to female workers with similar others in 1971 census in various categories of-activity of Table 1.8 in Chapter I, there is no activity - not even agricultural labour that could employ such proportion of females. This proportion was exceeded only in the Census of 1961 by those working as agricultural labour. Hence emerges the great importance of the EGS in employment of women and hopes of raising their status through the EGS.

The number of female workers exceeded that of males in Ahmednagar and Kolhapur districts. The former district is very much drought-prone and used the EGS to a large extent while the latter - relatively rich - did not need the EGS to that extent and hence if any work was started, females nearby took advantage of it if at all it was convenient. Males relatively were not interested in the work. Chandrapur, a tribal district also had larger number of females than males working on EGS (see columns 4 and 5 of Table 2.6). One could rarely trace any relationship between the percentage of female workers on EGS and the socio-economic conditions in the districts from Table 2.6. If work or wages were available the poor and needy of both the sexes flock to the works. The percentage of females was found relatively lower in the Nagpur division in Table 2.6. III-A forms giving sex-ratios for each project when examined for a sample of projects did not bring out this regional trait regarding females. The survey described in the next chapter revealed that the number of female workers predominated in most works. For example, village notes prepared by our investigators for 28 projects showed 1283 female workers on EGS per 1000 males. For a sample of 26 projects from III-A forms again 1304 females were found to work for each 1000 males. Thus the sex-ratio given in Table 2.6 appeared less favourable to females compared to one actually observed. Sometimes one wondered whether the relatively larger number of males on EGS reported in the Government records was real. Because any visits to EGS works often revealed larger number of females than males.

There was another way of looking at the number of female workers on the EGS in various districts. Their percentage distribution could be compared with the percentage of landless labourers in the districts. Thus the figures in the last column of Table 2.6 could be compared with those in the neighbouring two columns. One could check whether the percentage of females working in a district changed proportionately with the percentage of landless labourers. It was not necessarily so. There seemed a regional and cultural trait about it. Generally the percentages of female workers were smaller in Nagpur division, Marathwada districts and coastal districts.

The evidence of females being employed in substantial percentages on the EGS is presented above. Predominance of working females was also noted in many famine-relief works. This probably had something to do with poverty. Households with predominance of widowed and divorced females could be poor. This is discussed in the next chapter. Work-wise predominance of females was also noted from III-A forms for 25 projects. It was found as follows:

	No. of projects with	
	Predominance of females	Not such predominance
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Forest works	2	-
Irrigation works	9	2
Soil Conservation works	-	5
Road works	3	3
Khar lapd work	-	1
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	14	11

Thus the predominance of females generally observed on works seemed more marked than that set out in Table 2.6.

The proportion of workers from backward classes on the EGS works was also of great interest since it meant helping the socially handicapped. As revealed in Table 2.7 only a little less than half belonged to this class. Their excess in Thana, Nasik, Dhule was understandable since backward classes formed sizeable numbers in these districts. But their predominance in many districts of Nagpur division indicates that non-backward classes did not show much interest in the EGS works there. Could it be that these districts did not need the EGS? Or was it that the influential leaders did not want the EGS to develop in these areas?

Total Attendance on the EGS

In administration of the EGS works the uncertain number of workers on the EGS proved a serious hindrance. The

number varies from month to month or season to season to a very large extent. It was difficult to have any hypothesis regarding the variation in attendance to be expected in a region. If a district was mostly drought-prone, one could expect large attendance on the EGS most of the year. In other words the ratio of maximum/minimum attendance could not be high as found in Table 2.8. In highly irrigated areas one expected the same feature with of course a low level of attendance. But when it was high in the districts of Nagpur division one could not trace easily the reason behind such values except that of cropping pattern with cotton as a major crop. This uncertain attendance was a great headache from a number of points of view. Especially one suspected biases in these numbers when the attendance for each month noted at the planning department was not the average for the month based on daily attendance but that averaged for the last days of the two fortnights of the month. In our view this method of giving average attendance could lead to leakage of funds and corruption in general.¹⁸ It seemed that the idea of catering for varying demand needed some streamlining. Workers perhaps could announce their requirements of employment and stick to these as far as possible. It could make the administration of the EGS works relatively easy. This topic will be taken up for discussion in Chapter IV suggesting improvements in the programme.

Registration of persons opting for EGS works

A card was designed for registering those needing employment on EGS. On 31st December 1979, 38 lakhs were found registered. In July 1978 this number was about 28 lakhs. The actual attendance on the EGS in 1977-78 was roughly 4 lakhs of person years. Thus each registered person on an average could work one-seventh of the person year in 1978 i.e. $300 = 43$ days approximately. Gramasevaks or talathis got the 7 villagers registered. In Ratnagiri (in 1978) persons were reportedly registered even when they did not opt for the EGS work. This probably was done only to show that registration work was done rigorously for the region. Thus the objective behind registration was thwarted. There was no recording of the seasonality or otherwise of the employment needed by a person. Every such opportunity was wasted without using it to know at least the basic needs of the region. It could reveal the requirement of employment opportunity to be created each season for the administration of the EGS. There was no way of expecting the registered persons to work any time since the days they required work were not noted. Occasionally a substantial proportion of non-needy persons got registered only to demand unemployment allowance if the work was not provided as promised. Hence the registered number and the average number working on the EGS were hardly found related as seen in Table 2.9. The whole registration expenditure could be put to much better use if properly planned.

The ratio of males and females in the registration did not again seem related to any factor not to even the numbers working on the EGS. The data for 35 villages are set out in Table 2.10. Registration probably meant nothing.

A number of projects were stopped after starting them as seen in Table 2.11. Among the important reasons for this stoppage one probably was the demand for work from non-needy persons. Sometimes, people preferred working on *easy jobs* with no supervision, no muster, etc. They avoided working at strenuous jobs. Besides labour non-availability, other reasons included technical difficulties, land acquisition problems and the unwillingness of workers to work on metalling for the usual wages given on the EGS. Metalling needed exceptionally hard work and no one enjoying Rs. 3 a day on other works was prepared to work on metalling even for double the wages. It is worth noting these reasons which caution against starting wrong works. A large percentage of incomplete works should be completed in a time-bound manner. The supervision becomes costly if the number of workers is small. Workers avoid works that involve difficult labour and good supervision. They flock to *easy* works in road construction or soil conservation leaving incomplete the other works. This should not be allowed. It seems that sometimes the EGS works attract workers simply because of its *easiness*, raising the volume of wage bill and hence of the food for work.

To conclude, the EGS had not only made a marked dent on the unemployment problem, it had helped to raise the status of the females by employing them in numbers equal to or larger than those of males. This had to draw careful attention especially because poor families may be poor due to load of females, children and the disabled ones in the absence of social security. The only problem was to make the EGS productive, but that was a headache for leaders and the intelligentsia.

Some observations on the actual working of the EGS in Maharashtra are described in the following chapter.

Table 2.1 : EXPENDITURE, WAGE BILL, MANDAYS' EMPLOYMENT AND FOOD GRAINS DISTRIBUTED ON THE EGS WORKS IN VARIOUS YEARS

Year	Expenditure (Crores of Rs.)	Wage Bill Per cent of expenditure	Mandays' (Crores) Employment on EGS	Food grains distributed in Million Tons	Value of foodgrains in Crores of Rs.	Total Expenditure (Crores of Rs.)
1974-75	13.72		4.81			
1975-76	34.43	75 to 80	10.95	1315	0.13	34.6
1976-77	49.88		13.32	12240	1.22	51.1
1977-78	49.20	73	11.73	23440	2.34	51.5
1978-79	68.87	78	16.35	53000	5.30	74.2
1979-80	89.45*	80	20.54	170540 ¹	19.78	109.2

* This figure varies slightly in the various documents available from the Government.

¹ The foodgrains included here are: 114540 m. tons wheat + 30,000 m. tons of jowar + 26,000 m. tons of rice.

Source : *Statements of the Department of Planning, Government of Maharashtra.*

Table 2.2 : DISTRIBUTION OF EXPENDITURE INCURRED UNDER THE EGS ACCORDING TO THE CATEGORY OF WORKS

Sr. No.	Category of Works	(Rupees in Crores)							
		1972-73 Rs.	1973-74 Rs.	1974-75 Rs.	1975-76 Rs.	1976-77 Rs.	1977-78 Rs.	1978-79 Rs.	1979-80 Rs.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	Canals of Major Irrigation Projects	-	-	0.63 (4.6%)	1.51 (4.4%)	6.48 (13.0%)	7.98 (16.2%)	8.20 (11.9%)	7.55 (8.4%)
2.	Medium Irrigation Projects	-	-	-	0.57 (1.7%)	1.12 (2.2%)	1.30 (2.6%)	1.60 (2.3%)	1.34 (1.5%)
3.	Minor Irrigation Works (Including Percolation Tanks)	Not available	Not available	10.04 (73.2%)	15.85 (46.0%)	18.31 (36.7%)	18.07 (36.8)	21.56 (31.3%)	29.11 (32.6%)
4.	Soil Conservation (Including Nala Bunding)	-	-	1.56 (11.4%)	7.02 (20.4%)	9.74 (19.5%)	8.79 (17.9%)	12.18 (17.7%)	15.74 (17.6%)
5.	Land Development	-	-	0.11 (0.8%)	3.56 (10.3%)	4.89 (9.8%)	5.66 (11.5%)	6.60 (9.6%)	7.52 (8.4%)
6.	Afforestation	-	-	0.37 (2.7%)	0.95 (2.8%)	2.34 (4.7%)	1.69 (3.4%)	1.71 (2.5%)	3.05 (3.4%)
7.	Roads	-	-	0.79 (5.7%)	2.81 (8.2%)	4.42 (8.9%)	5.16 (10.5%)	14.29 (20.8%)	24.24 (27.1%)
8.	Other works and expenditure on staff etc.	-	-	0.22 (1.6%)	2.16 (6.2%)	2.58 (5.2%)	0.55 (1.1%)	2.73 (3.9%)	0.90 (1.0%)
Total		1.88 (100.0%)	1.89 (100.0%)	13.72 (100.0%)	34.43 (100.0%)	49.88 (100.0%)	49.20 (100.0%)	68.87 (100.0%)	89.45 (100.0%)

Figures in brackets indicate percentage of total expenditure.

Source : Statements of Employment Guarantee Scheme in Maharashtra.- A note published by the Department of Planning, Government of Maharashtra in 1977.

Table 2.3 : NO. OF TALUKAS, DROUGHT-PRONE TALUKAS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LANDLESS LABOURERS AND OF TOTAL WORKERS IN THE EGS IN 1977 IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS

District	Total No. of Talukas	No. of Drought-prone Talukas	Per cent Agr. Land-less Labourers of Age 15-59	Percentage attendance on the EGS work
Konkan				
Thane	13	-	3.8	7.8
Kolaba	14	-	1.7	0.5
Ratnagiri	15	-	1.4	0.2
Western Maharashtra				
Nasik	13	9	5.0	11.0
Dhulia	10	6	4.8	5.2
Jalgaon	13	8	6.4	2.3
Ahmednagar	13	13	4.9	11.5
Pune	14	9	2.8	3.2
Satara	11	6	1.9	1.9
Sangli	8	6	1.9	2.6
Sholapur	11	11	4.7	13.5
Kolhapur	12	2	2.2	0.2
Marathwada				
Aurangabad	12	7	4.5	7.1
Parbhani	8	-	4.6	7.9
Bhir	7	6	3.2	4.0
Nanded	8	-	3.8	3.1
Osmanabad	11	5	4.7	6.5
Vidarbha				
Buldhana	5	2	4.7	0.6
Akola	6	-	6.0	1.0
Amravati	6	-	5.4	0.3
Yeotmal	5	-	6.5	2.2
Wardha	3	-	2.8	0.8
Nagpur	5	-	3.5	1.6
Bhandara	3	-	4.1	3.2
Chandrapur	6	-	4.7	1.8
Total	232	90	100.0	100.0
			4974231	393704

Source : 1971 Census of India (Maharashtra), General Economic Tables and Joint Evaluation Report of EGS of Maharashtra 1977 and reports of the Planning Department.

Table 2.4 : DISTRIBUTION OF PERSON DAYS (AGE GROUP 15-59) BY
CURRENT ACTIVITY STATUS CATEGORY AND SEX FOR RURAL
MAHARASHTRA STATE
Maharashtra (All sub-rounds combined)

Current Activity Status	Rural Estimated Number (in 00) of	
	Person Days	
	Male	Female
Total population of ages 15-59 years	102224	105268
Total Labour Force	90070	59416
Percentage of total labour force to total population of ages 15-59 years	(88.1)	(56.4)
Total working	84519	53944
Percentage of total working to total labour force	(93.8)	(90.8)
Total unemployed	5551	5472
Percentage of total unemployed to total labour force	(6.2)	(9.2)
Casual labour in public works	1902	1524
Percentage of casual labour in public works to total labour force	(2.1)	(2.6)
Casual labour in other type of work:		
i) in agriculture	16602	19261
ii) in non-agriculture	3385	1623
iii) total	19987	20884
Percentage of casual labour in other type of work to total labour force:		
i) in agriculture	(18.4)	(32.4)
ii) in non-agriculture	(3.8)	(2.7)
iii) total	(22.2)	(35.1)
Percentage of casual labour in public works to total working	(2.3)	(2.8)

Figures in parenthesis are relevant percentage figures.

Source: NSS 32nd round July 1977 - June 1978 Schedule 10 :
Employment and Unemployment. Issued by National Sample
Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, Ministry of
Planning, Government of India.

Table 2.5 : DISTRIBUTION OF PERSON DAYS (AGE-GROUP 15-59) BY CURRENT ACTIVITY STATUS CATEGORY AND SEX FOR RURAL INDIA.

India (All subrounds combined)

Current Activity Status	Rural Estimated Number (in 00) of	
	Male	Female
Total population of ages 15-59 years	1286149	1275784
Total labour force	1134350	442303
Percentage of total labour force to total population of ages 15-59 years	(88.2)	(34.7)
Total working	1048538	400260
Percentage of total working to total labour force	(92.4)	(90.5)
Total unemployed	85812	42043
Percentage of total unemployed to total labour force	(7.6)	(9.5)
Casual labour in public works	8112	3384
Percentage of casual labour in public works to total labour force	(0.7)	(0.8)
Casual labour in other type of work:		
i) In agriculture	191975	115766
ii) In non-agriculture	39126	13736
iii) total	231101	129502
Percentage of casual labour in other type of work to total labour force:		
i) In agriculture	(16.9)	(26.2)
ii) In non-agriculture	(3.5)	(3.1)
iii) total	(20.4)	(29.3)
Percentage of casual labour in public works to total working	(0.8)	(0.8)

Figures in parenthesis are relevant percentage figures.

Source: NSS 32nd round July 1977 - June 1978 Schedule 10 : Employment and Unemployment. Issued by National Sample Survey Organisation, Department of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Government of India.

Table 2.6 : DISTRICTWISE FEMALE LABOUR ATTENDANCE ON EGS WORKS IN MARCH 1979 AND 1980

District	Female labour attendance at the end of March of		Percentage of female labour to total labour attendance at the end of March of		Percentage distribution of		
	1979	1980	1979	1980	Female workers	All landless labourers	
Thane	16586	2676	40.6	6.2	4.3	0.7	3.8
Kulaba	816	383	48.2	25.3	0.2	0.1	1.7
Ratnagiri	826	1037	38.6	21.8	0.2	0.3	1.4
Nasik	38357	24671	43.5	40.2	9.9	6.3	5.0
Dhule	36014	19014	51.4	47.7	9.3	4.9	4.8
Jalgaon	11962	14229	35.4	48.2	3.1	3.6	6.4
Pune	15010	12508	44.3	37.4	3.9	3.2	4.9
Ahmednagar	53423	33149	44.3	57.9	13.8	8.5	2.8
Satara	10177	10996	52.4	42.0	2.6	2.8	1.9
Sangli	4153	3951	53.3	46.7	1.1	1.0	1.9
Solapur	20804	17015	46.0	41.1	5.4	4.3	4.7
Kolhapur	897	1846	56.3	62.0	0.2	0.5	2.2
Aurangabad	13792	10240	37.4	37.9	3.6	2.6	4.5
Parbhani	8591	6368	31.4	28.7	2.2	1.6	4.6
Bhir	16333	10069	43.3	41.3	4.2	2.6	3.2
Nanded	12810	11385	42.6	36.9	3.3	2.9	3.8
Osmanabad	10947	11506	38.1	47.2	2.8	2.9	4.7
Buldhana	6298	9812	38.1	41.6	1.6	2.5	4.7
Akola	11296	9984	34.9	33.9	2.9	2.6	6.0
Amravati	6482	4317	36.4	26.0	1.7	1.1	5.4
Yeotmal	8841*	9488*	44.1*	31.0*	2.3	2.4	6.5
Wardha	6734	5797	40.1	40.9	1.7	1.5	2.8
Nagpur	9388	9374	42.5	28.9	2.4	2.4	3.5
Bhandara	44188	101735	49.8	44.1	11.4	26.0	4.1
Chandrapur	22881	49746	53.2	52.8	5.9	12.7	4.7
Total	387606	391296	43.4	40.9	100=	100=	100=
					387606	391296	4974231
							(Landless labourers in the state

* Estimated

Source: Statements of the Department of Planning, Government of Maharashtra

Table 2.7 : ATTENDANCE OF LABOURERS ON EGS BELONGING TO BACKWARD CLASSES

District	Attendance of Labourers belonging to Backward classes at the end of March of		Percentage of attendance of Labourers belonging to Backward classes with total labour attendance at the end of March of	
	1979	1980	1979	1980
Thane	25332	40264	62.0	93.7
Kulaba	100	181	5.9	11.9
Ratnagiri	543	2304	25.4	48.3
Nasik	42498	33139	48.2	53.9
Dhule	39137	23184	55.9	58.2
Jalgaon	8882	4986	26.3	16.9
Pune	7842	4684	23.1	13.9
Ahmednagar	27372	28148	22.7	49.2
Satara	5468	6675	28.2	25.5
Sangli	2893	2369	37.9	28.0
Solapur	9583	14982	21.2	36.2
Kolhapur	343	327	21.5	7.9
Aurangabad	10718	7997	29.0	29.6
Parbhani	12357	8287	45.1	37.3
Bhir	10645	6206	28.2	25.5
Nanded	14291	12341	47.5	40.0
Osmanabad	11494	12305	40.0	50.5
Buldhana	9063	13529	54.9	57.3
Akola	18574	17871	57.3	60.8
Amravati	6284	16968	36.3	100.0
Yeotmal	16402	14232	53.6	39.4
Wardha	5286	8194	31.5	57.8
Nagpur	8160	13619	36.9	42.0
Bhandara	44094	92852	49.6	40.2
Chandrapur	37089	70447	86.2	74.7
Total	374648	456001	41.9	47.7

Source: *Employment Guarantee Scheme Information*. Note from the Planning Department, Bombay, Part II, P. 58.

Table 2.8 : STATEMENT SHOWING MAXIMUM AND MINIMUM LABOUR ATTENDANCE UNDER THE EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME DURING 1978-79.

District	Labour Attendance				Maximum
	Maximum	Month	Minimum	Month	Minimum
Thane	50692	February	2989	July	16.96
Kulaba	9075	January	297	October	30.55
Ratnagiri	3931	January	265	July	14.83
Nasik	121139	January	44125	June	2.74
Dhule	71845	January	11469	July	6.26
Jalgaon	33768	March	3153	October	10.71
Pune	33880	March	7593	July	4.46
Ahmednagar	122657	January	31782	April	3.86
Satara	19421	March	5753	April	3.37
Sangli	12385	July	6691	November	1.85
Solapur	59162	May	37965	February	1.56
Kolhapur	1893	April	298	October	6.35
Aurangabad	43218	February	25888	October	1.67
Parbhani	44689	May	19453	December	2.30
Bhir	37731	March	11680	October	3.23
Nanded	47459	March	8935	August	5.31
Osmanabad	34013	June	17417	November	1.95
Buldhana	20326	February	584	August	34.80
Akola	32412	March	2637	August	12.29
Amravati	17831	March	27*	September	660.40*
Yeatmal	30627	March	3246	August	9.43
Wardha	16784	March	1173	August	14.31
Nagpur	22071	March	1868	September	11.81
Bhandara	88812	March	3169	August	28.02
Chandrapur	43017	March	3802	August	11.31

* Doubtful figure.

Source: Statements of the Department of Planning, Government of Maharashtra

Table 2.9 : INFORMATION REGARDING REGISTRATION OF EMPLOYMENT SEEKERS AND AVERAGE LABOUR ATTENDANCE ON EGS

District	Employment Seekers Registered on		Average Labour Attendance on the EGS Oct. 1977 - Sept. 1978
	31-12-1979	31-7-1978	
Thane	162967	127325	30513
Kulaba	37722	32875	1919
Ratnagiri	62898	14301	696
Nasik	166762	165755	43200
Dhule	198779	155067	20626
Jalgaon	104705	81145	9137
Pune	127601	66827	12486
Ahmednagar	281470	255453	45426
Satara	60290	31980	7313
Sangli	43387	26131	10345
Solapur	204172	187053	53249
Kolhapur	34063	27286	829
Aurangabad	213158	163149	27810
Parbhani	149040	146440	31006
Bhir	197256	196662	15696
Nanded	195635	143318	12367
Osmanabad	249200	196036	24515
Buldhana	103814	96218	2331
Akola	136474	92308	3974
Amravati	120814	73699	1388
Yeotmal	149577	78966	8616
Wardha	60578	46531	2998
Nagpur	112351	80292	6450
Bhandara	348153	185503	12637
Chandrapur	251978	156326	7276
Total	3772844	2826646	393703

Source: *Statements of the Department of Planning, Government of Maharashtra.*

Table 2.10 : PERCENTAGE REGISTERED AMONG MALES AND FEMALES OF WORKING AGES IN 35 INDIVIDUAL VILLAGES OF 4 DISTRICTS

District	Village	Male	Female	District	Village	Male	Female
Buldhana	(1)	21.4	5.5	Nanded	(1)	Negligible	Negligible
	(2)	34.5	44.8		(2)	"	"
	(3)	8.5	-		(3)	51.0	64.1
	(4)	3.1	2.8		(4)	52.6	Negligible
	(5)	18.8	6.4		(5)	23.3	60.2
Akola	(1)	9.9	3.5	(6)	33.7	Negligible	
	(2)	10.1	3.6	(7)	18.9	41.8	
	(3)	43.1	89.7	(8)	30.5	Negligible	
	(4)	42.2	50.4	(9)	Negligible	Negligible	
	(5)	19.0	25.9	(10)	74.6	"	
Amravati	(1)	22.8	51.1	(11)	67.8	"	
	(2)	19.7	1.3	(12)	17.9	30.7	
	(3)	23.2	14.4	(13)	30.3	Negligible	
	(4)	9.7	3.2	(14)	29.9	83.2	
	(5)	9.8	2.5	(15)	36.8	35.7	
	(6)	10.9	2.2	(16)	8.8	0.8	
	(7)	4.9	-	(17)	21.2	65.3	
	(8)	11.1	3.1				

Source: Survey conducted by the Gokhale Institute.

Table 2.11 : PERCENTAGE OF WORKS TEMPORARILY STOPPED AFTER STARTING

District			Sanctioned	Temporarily stopped (%)
Dhule	January	1979	3347	26.6
Kulaba	April	1979	342	53.5
Aurangabad	September	1978	196	14.0
Nagpur	January	1979	152	22.4
Ahmednagar	July	1978	375	44.0
Satara	May	1978	1193	6.9
Bhandara	October	1978	513	20.9
Buldhana	November	1978	339	20.9
Akola	December	1978	172	14.0
Ratnagiri	April	1979	1129	35.3
Nanded	November	1978	389	29.3

Source: III-A Forms of Government Records.

CHAPTER III

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONDITIONS OF THE EGS WORKERS

SUMMARY

The experiences of fifteen hundred and odd workers on the EGS portray a picture of satisfaction on the part of workers since two persons from each of their households could work on the EGS. But the EGS wages seemed low. Even if both husband and wife worked on the scheme all the year round they could support 1.5 dependent adult units on an average. Of course one could not expect more from the EGS.

Reportedly two-thirds of the Income of the workers' households came from the EGS. Food for work programme made quite a difference in their living. However there was a lot to be desired about the EGS works to make them productive. If not done in time, it is feared the scheme will fall into disrepute.

Can the poor, especially poor women excuse the leaders if the scheme fails?

. . .

In the preceding chapter the EGS as judged from the official records has been depicted. To assess the success of the EGS a three-pronged examination was needed as described below:

(a) Inspection of the worthiness of the projects was one prong. The soundness of techniques used in the projects such as construction of percolation tanks, etc. and judgement regarding their productiveness seemed important.

(b) Identifying methods of finding leakages and loop holes in money transactions was necessary for efficient running of the programme.

(c) Observing the class of people working on the EGS and noting the change in their financial circumstances due to the EGS was another objective of the examination. Their views on the EGS and its utility also deserve recording.

Of the three aspects mentioned above, the first one needs engineering skills and judgement and hence is beyond the scope of the present report. Joint Evaluation Report of the Department of Economics and Statistics, Maharashtra Government and Programme Evaluation Organization of the Planning Commission, Government of India, (published in 1977), evaluated 11 to 22 works in each of 2 talukas of 4 districts covering in all 119 projects. It is difficult to judge the adequacy of the evaluation especially regarding the two aspects (a) and (b) mentioned above.

As for worthiness of the projects, though engineering skills needed to evaluate the works were absent with us, a few complaints regarding the projects are relevant and are given below:

- 1) Some areas had too many percolation tanks
- 2) Choice of location of percolation tank was not always properly made. Occasionally, too much water logging due to percolation tank spoilt the region for any agriculture.
- 3) The size of percolation tank was often too big for the rainfall of the place. Construction of such size of tank was thus wasteful and technically wrong. The size of the tank was supposed to be such that 80 per cent seasons at least it was to be full to the extent of 80 per cent when there were rains.
- 4) Cost/Benefit studies conducted did not show any favourable results. In fact the ratio was too large.

As for identifying the leakages in money transactions, there were ways and ways of locating them. Actual visits on the spot of the project and verifying the records for the specific time could easily be done. If there was a will, there was a way even to verify a number of stories of corruption that went round.

As regards productiveness of the works, generally there seemed little confidence in their utility. There was great need for reviewing the projects already launched or that could be launched.

The third prong for examining the utility of projects i.e. (c) above is dealt with in the following paragraphs. This is done with the data collected through interviews of workers on the EGS projects.

Assessing the Socio-Economic Conditions of the EGS Workers

To know the socio-economic conditions of the EGS workers there was no other way but to contact the workers on the projects by visiting the projects. There were no data in the official records regarding these aspects of the workers except the noting of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Our interest was in knowing the financial conditions of the workers or their households before and after launching of the EGS. Hence a survey was conducted in 12 districts of Maharashtra.

In each of the 12 districts, five projects of the EGS were chosen. Initially the idea was to include one project of each of the five classes of projects in the EGS in every-

one of the 12 districts. These classes included (a) medium and minor irrigation and canal and nala bunding, (b) percolation tanks, (c) soil conservation and land development, (d) afforestation, (e) road works, and (f) others such as khar land development, etc. for Konkan region. But choosing one project from each class was not always possible. One had to visit a variety of departments in various locations even to know whether any project was at the moment working. It meant a lot of cost on travel. Therefore instead of getting data for 60 projects in 12 districts only 56 projects that were running at the time of our survey were covered in our interview. On each project 15 men and 15 women were interviewed through two separate questionnaires copies of which are available at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Poona 411 004. The questionnaires are described briefly in the following:

Information collected in the survey dealt with (a) the size and composition of the workers' households, (b) workers' socio-economic background including caste, occupation, land holding if any, their earning, educational level, marital status, number of children - sons and daughters born and living with their ages, (c) work history of the interviewed before the EGS and with the EGS, (d) their income before the EGS and present, from the EGS and other sources, (e) the wages they got, number of days they worked, (f) the number of days they worked on the EGS and the number of days they wanted work, (g) their views on the EGS work and relevant problems such as difficulty in carrying out the work, special problems of women having small children, or strenuousness of work, problems of walking to the place of work, etc. and (h) problems of food grains obtained with the work.

Besides the above, a few questions were also included regarding the attitudes of male and female workers on education of their children, the differential attitudes to sons' and daughters' education, the help they got to look after their children. Further, a few questions on sterilization, if undergone, whether it was voluntary, whether it had any effect on their capacity to do manual work were added.

Besides the interviews, the investigators were supposed to make notes on a variety of observations typical of the area near the project. In one forestry project corruption was rampant. When the investigator unguardedly started making notes on this aspect, all his papers were torn and thrown away by persons involved in it. The number of interviews therefore fell short of expectations. Occasionally fifteen men or women were not working on the project. Thus the investigator ended up with only 1544 interviews of men and women working on 56 projects. The questionnaires were canvassed among 757 women and 787 men. The interviews were distributed over various projects as follows:

<u>Type of Project</u>	<u>No. of interviews</u>
Irrigation	450
Forestry	120
Roads	265
Percolation tanks	327
Soil conservation and land development	353
Other (Khar land etc.)	29
Total No. of interviews	1544

In collecting data for households of the workers, there were 5 among 1544 who happened to be husband and wife. Hence ultimately, 1539 households of workers were included under the survey.

Earlier in Chapter II it was revealed that socially handicapped sections of rural areas namely scheduled castes and scheduled tribes worked on the EGS to the extent of 42 per cent or so. The caste composition in the present survey also revealed that the same percentage of these classes worked on the EGS. Starting of the EGS works was thus a positive gain to the socially handicapped sections. As far as the economically weaker sections were concerned, 45 per cent of the workers were landless labourers. About 42 per cent had less than 5 acres and only 3.5 per cent had more than ten acres of land as seen below:

No land	Cultivated land in acres					Total	
	Up to 1	1-2	2-5	5-10	More than 10		
EGS Survey ½ house- holds	45.4	10.9	10.8	20.0	9.4	3.5	100.0=1539

In no case was the land irrigated as can be expected in Maharashtra. That is why even with 10 acres of land some of them could produce little and hence they participated in the EGS. Among the landless labourers were included 5 per cent who did non-agricultural labour. On the whole most of the workers belonged to economically weaker sections as expected. All this information was noted to ensure that the EGS wages were not going in wrong hands as suspected by some. The leakage of funds that was talked about could however go to such hands.

The annual income of the households of the EGS workers was assessed. The usual difficulties of ascertaining income in the surveys were experienced in the present survey too. But this income distribution could be compared with the income distribution of the weaker sections of 1970-71

obtained in the 25th round of the NSS. An adjustment was needed for the price-rise before their comparison for the time lag of 8 years between the NSS and the present survey. The price indexes were available with 1960-61 as base for the agricultural labourers of the two years namely 1970-71 and 1978-79. These were 192 and 316¹⁹ respectively. The income distributions made comparable with adjustment are set out below for the two surveys.

	Income Class (in Rs.)			Total
	-1500	1500-3000	3000+	
	Percentage distribution of households			
Present EGS Survey (1978-79)	35.5	49.5	15.0	100.0=1539

	Income Class (in Rs.)			Total
	-1000	1000-2000	2000+	
	Percentage distribution of households			
NSS 25th round of 1970-71	37.1	51.0	11.9	100.0

The two income distributions presented above show that they are more or less the same. One could therefore argue that EGS was successful in preventing further deterioration of the conditions of weaker sections in rural Maharashtra in the interval of 8 years. In addition to the wages paid, in cash, from October 1978, wheat coupons were given to the EGS workers, deducting from their wages 30 paise for a kilogram of wheat. Wheat given was roughly proportionate to the wages earned so that up to three rupees' earning, 30 paise were deducted giving 1 kilogram of wheat; from earnings of Rs. 3 to 6, 60 paise were deducted with 2 kilograms of wheat, etc. (see Appendix A for more details). Thus workers got wheat beside cash payment. Information on total annual income of the EGS workers in cash was available for 84 per cent males and 88 per cent of the females. The average earning of the males was Rs. 817 (Table 3.1). Of this income, 59 per cent was from the EGS. The average total earning of females was Rs. 607 with 73 per cent coming from the EGS (Table 3.2). If wheat was available to all the EGS workers during the whole of the year 1978-79, their income distribution could look much improved. For instance, a reference family with one man and woman working in the EGS earned on an average about (Rs. 817 + Rs. 607) Rs. 1424 out of which Rs. 485 + Rs. 443 i.e. Rs. 928 came from the EGS. Thus 65 per cent of the total earning of such a family was from the EGS. With addition of wheat the EGS income increased roughly from 3 to

4.2 (Rs. 3.00 - Rs. 0.30 + Rs. 1.50) if a kilogram of wheat was supposed to cost Rs. 1.50. Thus with wheat, share from the EGS income of 65 per cent went up by 40 per cent (i.e. from Rs. 3 to 4.2) to 73 per cent. In other words, the original income of Rs. 100 of EGS workers improved to (Rs. 65 x 1.4 x Rs. 35) Rs. 126 due to addition of food-grains. Thus the EGS workers who seemed to maintain the same level of earning as of 1970-71 through EGS in 1978-79 had improved their earning by about 26 per cent. This no doubt was a substantial gain in the income of the EGS workers.

Besides income, one was interested in the precise number of days, persons worked on the EGS during the preceding year. This was not easily reported. Workers could rarely report, even roughly, the number of days they worked on EGS. They broadly reported their earnings from the EGS. The days of work had to be broadly estimated from the earnings and the wage rate. Out of 1544 individuals 603 had reportedly continuous work on the EGS. But from their earnings it seemed that they did not work for more than 130 days on an average.

The total number of months worked on the EGS (with or without breaks) up to the time of survey was reported by the workers (Table 3.3). Both males and females had worked on an average for about 19 months or so.

Problems of getting work under the EGS

There were two groups among the EGS workers. About 48 per cent or half of them belonged to one group that badly needed more work on the EGS. Other group comprising the other half included those that reported continuous or adequate work on the EGS. The average number of days worked by them on the EGS was smaller though they did not complain about it. They reported continuous work on the EGS even when they had worked only about 4 months. The average work days on the EGS for all the interviewed together were about 160. Thus if our sample was representative of the EGS workers, 3.9 lakhs of person years of employment generated in rural Maharashtra in 1978 was roughly put in by about 7.3 lakhs of people (i.e. 3.9 x 300) and about half of them were still prepared to put in more work on the EGS if that could be offered.

One may note here that all the interviewed workers did not work continuously on the EGS during the year and they found some occupation in the break period. They were asked the reasons for getting the break in EGS work. These are given below in Table 3.4.

As seen above most of those having a break in the EGS work did not want it. There were found villages where there was no work nearby though they wanted such work started. Probably they did not have the right kind of

organization to demand work. In fact our intention was to select a random sample of villages in Maharashtra and try to find out whether they demanded EGS works or got them after demand, etc. Such a survey by us covered 56 villages from 6 districts. The findings are set out in Table 3.5. Among 56 villages, 13 did not have any EGS work nearby. Twentyfour got the work after pestering the leaders, nine for all the seasons, and fifteen for only off agricultural season. Generally most of the villages knew about the EGS and tried to get the EGS work.

Per Capita Income of the Households and the Load of Dependency the EGS Workers could sustain

It is a worthwhile exercise to know the economic situation in the households of the EGS workers. In a hypothetical situation where both husband and wife are working, they will earn Rs. 1260 + Rs. 1260 = Rs. 2520 if they totally depended on the EGS and worked for 300 days a year with the new rates of wages inclusive of foodgrains namely Rs. 4.2 a day. The minimum per capita need of income was Rs. 240 for food (Dandekar and Rath, p.9) at the price level of 1960-61. If this level is changed to 1978-79 level of prices for agricultural labourers the minimum need for food rises to more than Rs. 720 per capita. Thus a couple depending totally on the EGS and working all the year round can afford a family of 3.5 persons $(\frac{Rs. 2520}{Rs. 720})$, which meant that the working couple could afford the burden of 1.5 dependent adult units and not more, if they were to live at subsistence level. Without food for work programme the earnings of the couple would be Rs. 1800 so that the burden of dependents afforded by it could be only $(\frac{Rs. 1800}{Rs. 720} - 2)$ and not 1.5 as above. Hence the importance of Food for Work Programme on the EGS works. As will be revealed later in this chapter, distribution of wheat was considered to be a very important advantage by workers of the DGS.

Per capita income of the households of EGS workers is presented in Table 3.6. The income is shown in two components, one from the EGS and the other from the non-EGS sources. With growing size of the households both the components decrease. Only 11 per cent workers lived above subsistence in their households if Rs. 720 were needed for subsistence per annum. This was after the EGS earnings were available. The per capita income of all the persons in the households of workers had to be raised from Rs. 457 by Rs. 263 to attain the subsistence level of Rs. 720 per annum per head. The number of mandays of work needed for such rise could be estimated for a given wage rate of say Rs. 4.2. The number of total EGS workers from 1539 households of the interviewed workers was 3080. If (a) the per capita income of the 1539 households was the same as that for 1390 households of Table 3.6 and (b) the earnings of the EGS workers other than the interviewed from these households (i.e. 3080-1539) were of similar kind then the

number of mandays of additional work needed by the 3080 workers could be estimated as follows:

There were 8130 persons in the 1539 households. The increase of Rs. 263 per person meant Rs. $8130 \times 263 = (2138190)$ i.e. 21.4 lakh additional rupees had to be earned by 3080 workers per year. It meant 163 days additional work to be provided on the EGS for 3080 EGS workers to attain the subsistence level.

At the moment more than four-fifth of the EGS workers were living below subsistence. This fact emphasizes the urgent need of help to rural workers and also the need of controlling the load of dependency to improve their level of living.

Utility of the EGS in providing Employment

In each household of the interviewed there were 2.8 earners on an average (see Table 3.7). Out of these 2 worked on the EGS and 0.8 worked elsewhere. In fact among the 1539 households there were 4350 earners out of which 3080 worked on the EGS. Thus without EGS, 2 workers per household would have worked on nothing, keeping themselves somehow occupied at the time of survey. That is why a large number of EGS workers were pleased with the EGS which offered them work nearabout their village premises. The females who find it difficult to leave their households in search of work going far off distances found the EGS a boon. Still, there seemed limits to distance commutable every day for those who could attend EGS work (for both males and females) as seen in Table 3.8.

Most of the workers i.e. two-thirds of them lived within 3 kilometers of the EGS work. One-fourth negotiated 3 to 5 kilometers up and down per day. It was only 5 per cent that went more than 5 kilometers up and down. About one and a half per cent lived on the site itself due perhaps to the great need of work and no availability of work nearby their own villages. Occasionally there was expressed an impression that persons from relatively better-to-do classes availed of EGS work if it was very close to their village. That however did not seem to be the general case though one-fourth of the workers were within a kilometer of the work.

The Quality of Labour Available to EGS

There prevailed a general feeling that the quality of labour available for the EGS was low with predominance of females, old men and children. Hence the contention was that EGS wages were just dole-distribution to the weak in a roundabout way with unproductive schemes of the EGS. The findings of the present survey with regard to this aspect were based on 3080 EGS workers from 1539 households of the interviewed. Their age distribution is given below in

Table 3.9. Obviously there was no excess of old males or females among the EGS workers. They were young vigorous folks either freshly entering the labour force or they had entered it slightly earlier perhaps without success and hence they preferred to work on the EGS. Females from age 40 and up, and males from age 50+ were less prone to work on the EGS. On the other hand the non-EGS workers had younger and older persons predominant among them. By old age the fortunate were settled in their non-EGS employment.

To some, predominance of females on the EGS was another factor for downgrading the quality of the EGS work. But this numerousness of women had to be accepted. Among the poorer classes it is natural that men and women both should be willing to work. The slight excess of females among the EGS workers (see Table 3.10) could be a general phenomenon of poverty-stricken households where females probably predominated in numbers. For instance, the marital status of persons from the workers' households manifested widowhood being more common among females, as seen in Table 3.11.

There was a general feeling before starting the EGS that women will not work on public works. But women came in large numbers as soon as the works were within easy reach. In fact some women complained that they were refused work unless they brought a male worker with them. On some works when the question of female predominance among workers was discussed the supervising engineers reported that heavy work such as digging was done by males while females worked as draft-power and hence a specific ratio of male to female workers could be tolerated. The interviews with women regarding their men not coming to the EGS work revealed that men worked on better paying jobs while women worked on the EGS. From landless households men and women came almost in equal numbers. But with even small land holdings men worked on their own farms letting their women work on the EGS. Occasionally the perception that EGS work was easy, prevailed probably due to lack of supervision on works. Moreover if the wage rates were the same for males and females why not have females work on the EGS? Such was the attitude of some villagers to the EGS work. However one could not complain about the quality of work from persons who belonged to weaker sections such as females, widows or separated women as they had no other help available to them. Moreover lack of supervision on the EGS work was not their fault.

Attitudes of workers towards the EGS work

It is not surprising that the EGS workers approved of the work. When asked about the merits and demerits of EGS, one-fifth of them complained that the work was not available all the time (see Table 3.12). Probably they needed it badly. Another 28 per cent expressed the same feeling only seeing the bright side of the EGS, saying "the EGS at least offered them some work". About 9 per cent

complained about the level of wages. Eleven per cent stated wheat coupon as a very beneficial part of the EGS.

A question was asked to the workers - both males and females - whether EGS work seemed strenuous to females. The answers are exhibited in Table 3.13. Rarely have these women been shown such consideration as evinced by this question on strain. But the usual biases of men and women are manifest in the answers since 272 men and 359 women reported positive strain of work for women in working on the EGS. Sometimes it seemed that they complained about the strain simply because the specific question referred to the strain. This question was of course not a good question. It was based on 'our' ideas about EGS work.

Arrangements for young children of EGS workers

The female EGS workers were asked about the arrangements made by them to look after their young children below 7 years of age. This limit of 7 years was kept because the children had to go to school at that age. Of the 757 women 342 had no young children. Among the remaining 415 with small children 23 per cent had elder children and 27 per cent had elder persons at home to look after them. Women brought their children to the work place in 42 per cent cases leaving them to themselves for play. In 8 per cent cases children were left home to play by themselves. Only in 2 cases a paid woman looked after the children. In fact from the latter half of the year 1979, creche arrangements were expected on the EGS works to look after children brought by women workers. This could be done if there was some minimum number of children to be looked after. A women worker was paid from the EGS to look after the small children of workers coming to the EGS project. In fact this was provided among many other facilities introduced more recently on the EGS works. The facilities included provision of drinking water, a shade to take rest especially in the hot season and provision of first-aid if required.

Interest in Schooling of Children

On the whole the schooling of children seemed to suffer due to poverty of the workers going round for work. The EGS work certainly did not help promotion of education among children. Often the workers said "Give us a wage rate of Rs.8 a day, then we shall send our children to school". For those that left school before 14, reasons for leaving school were given as in Table 3.14.

In Table 3.14, 24 per cent males and 44 per cent females left school if cases of non-response are excluded. If they are included among those not going to school 28 per cent males and 50 per cent females did not attend any school. The main reason reported for this was financial circumstances. But if this state continues the children without education will again be forced to do only manual

work in their later lives. If the works were big enough to continue for at least a term EGS facilities could include teaching of children to attain literacy with teachers from among the EGS workers themselves at even a slightly higher level of payment. The educational level of the EGS workers themselves is worth noting here (see Table 3.15). Though majority of the females were illiterate, among the males about 10 per cent had education above the 7th standard and any from these or from the four per cent with education above S.S.C. level could be assigned the teaching work of the children if they accompanied the EGS workers.

Teaching facilities at the EGS works cannot probably be provided in their present set-up. Urgent need to provide and change the set-up of the present EGS works are discussed in the next chapter. It was found that a number of questions included in the questionnaire such as "How much education will you give your sons or daughters?" or "Should it be of the same level?" or "Preference for variety of jobs - salaried or otherwise" were beyond the perception of the EGS workers. In their utter poverty such questions as above seemed 'funny' and manual labourers of the present generation were likely to be replaced by manual labourers in the next generation, unless the conditions changed drastically.

Some Relevant Demographic Features Affecting the Living of EGS Workers

The infant mortality rate assessed from children born and living to EGS workers was 110 per 1000 live births. It seemed an under-estimate. But it determined the attitudes of workers towards child-bearing and hence the possible load of dependency. Due to the propaganda for sterilization in rural Maharashtra 33 per cent of the 1293 married workers were found sterilized. (In three cases both husband and wife were sterilized). Seventy per cent had undergone vasectomy. However this was bound to have relatively little effect on the birth rate since the workers had reportedly 5.2 children born before sterilization. Of these 4.0 were living. The average number of sons was 2.2 among them.

Considering the above data, sterilization-oriented programme seemed ineffective to bring down the birth rate or load of dependency. Reversible methods of contraception such as condoms and other had to play important role in the programme. With the present level of sterilization, birth rate could be about 38 or so per thousand of population of workers and it could not easily come down.

There prevails an impression that sterilization disables persons from doing manual work. But the following data in Table 3.16 and 3.17 provide no strong evidence for the phenomenon. There seemed a tendency among females to exaggerate the troubles due to sterilization not only in this survey but in many other surveys too. When the workers

were asked whether they repented for the action undertaken, 86 per cent (about 89 per cent males and 83 per cent females in Table 3.18) reported no repentance at all. About 90 per cent had no need of any treatment after sterilization (Table 3.17). The attitudes of the workers towards sterilization depend on how far they undertook it voluntarily. Among 423 sterilization, 60 (i.e. 14 per cent) were done under some pressure. Hence complaints could arise only from among these 14 per cent. However sterilization did not seem the full answer to the problem of population growth or load of dependency unless supported by practice of reversible contraceptive methods in young age. At the moment social security, old age security, etc., seem to obsess the couples especially in the poor conditions in which they live. Hence one felt the need for guarantee of income which the EGS could provide if set in a productive setting. The EGS is therefore a must and it should provide income guarantee to the poor in bad times. But the investments involved in the EGS are so enormous that the scheme cannot be continued if it is not productive and properly set. But that does not mean that the EGS should be scrapped. The EGS must be continued and it is a great challenge to the ingenuity of our planners and intelligentsia to make it productive. This is discussed in the next chapter.

Table 3.1 : ANNUAL INCOME OF INDIVIDUAL MALES WORKING ON THE EGS

Income Group (Rs.)	No. of Males	Total Income (Rs.)	EGS Income (Rs.)	Other Income (Rs.)	EGS Income as per cent of total	Average total income of the individual
Up to 50	4	100	100	0	100.00	25
51 - 250	28	4200	3825	375	91.07	150
251 - 500	57	21375	13275	8100	62.11	375
501 - 750	210	131250	74650	56600	56.88	625
751 - 1000	225	196875	135075	61800	68.61	875
1001 - 1250	77	86625	56200	30425	64.88	1125
1251 - 1500	36	49500	35050	14450	70.81	1375
1501 - 2000	11	19250	1125	17875	5.84	1750
2000 & above	12	30000	1025	28975	3.42	2500
Total	660	539175	320325	218600	59.41	816.9
Average Individual income	-	816.9	485.3	331.2		

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.2 : ANNUAL INCOME OF INDIVIDUAL FEMALES WORKING ON THE EGS

Income Group (Rs.)	No. of Females	Total Income (Rs.)	EGS Income (Rs.)	Other Income (Rs.)	EGS Income as per cent of total	Average Income
Up to 50	16	400	400	0	100.00	25
51 - 250	51	7650	7150	500	93.46	150
251 - 500	174	65250	37550	27700	57.55	375
501 - 750	215	134375	94875	39500	70.60	625
751 - 1000	174	152250	127950	24300	84.04	875
1001 - 1250	28	31500	18050	13450	57.30	1125
1251 - 1500	9	12375	10025	2350	81.01	1375
1501 - 2000	1	1750	150	1600	8.57	1750
2000 & above	-	-	-	-	-	2500
Total	668	405550	296150	109400	73.02	607.1
Average Individual income		607.1	443.3	163.8		

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.3 : PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS ACCORDING TO TOTAL NUMBER OF MONTHS WORKED (WITH OR WITHOUT BREAKS) ON THE EGS TILL THE TIME OF SURVEY

<i>No. of total months of work in EGS</i>	<i>Males %</i>	<i>Females %</i>
Upto 6 months	38.4	37.3
7 - 12 months	16.8	15.5
13 - 18 months	9.1	9.5
19 - 24 months	9.0	10.0
25 - 30 months	8.7	9.4
31 - 36 months	6.2	6.8
36 +	11.8	11.5
Total workers	100.0=778	100.0=748
Total average - months worked	18.5	18.8

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.4 : PERCENTAGE MALES AND FEMALES REPORTING REASONS FOR BREAK IN EGS WORK

<i>Reasons</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>
Agricultural labour in harvest season	0.7	0.9
Work on own farm	6.3	5.6
Seasonal Work	2.7	1.6
Sugarcane crushing (very high wage rates)	4.1	0.5
No work available on the EGS	83.9	90.1
More wage available elsewhere	2.3	1.3
Total	100.0=442	100.0=446
Continuous work* on EGS	345	311
	787	757

*'Continuous' was not all the year. It included even short intervals. workers only did not complain about discontinuity and they said they had adequate work.

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.5 : SAMPLE OF VILLAGES WITH AND WITHOUT THE EGS WORK

District	Number of villages visited	EGS works implemented	No. EGS works implemented	Pestered for work all the year and got EGS work	Pestered for work in off agricultural season when got EGS work
Buldhana	5	3	2	-	3
Akola	8	7	1	1	7
Amravati	9	8	1	-	3
Nanded	17	14	3	6	-
Satara	2	2	-	2	2
Kulaba	15	9	6	-	-
Total	56	43	13	9	15

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.6 : PER CAPITA INCOME OF HOUSEHOLDS OF EGS WORKERS FROM EGS AND NON-EGS SOURCES

Family size	No. of Households	Per capita income from EGS including foodgrains	Per capita other income	Per capita total income
1	29	653.3	330.7	984.1
2	120	559.3	368.2	927.5
3	159	353.2	281.8	635.0
4	246	296.6	244.9	541.6
5	250	263.6	195.0	458.6
6	227	238.5	185.1	423.7
7	157	211.7	200.7	412.4
8	90	217.6	158.8	376.4
9	44	139.4	188.1	327.4
10+	68	192.0	148.9	340.8
Total	1390*			457.0

Income of 149 households could not be ascertained.

* These Included 7373 persons of all ages.

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.7 : AVERAGE MALE/FEMALE EARNERS AND AVERAGE MALE/FEMALE EARNERS ON EGS WORKS PER HOUSEHOLD

District	Average male earners in the household	Average female earners in the household	Total earners	Average male EGS workers per household	Average female EGS workers per household	Total number of households
Ahmednagar	1.7	1.3	3.0	1.0	0.9	107
Akola	1.3	1.3	2.6	1.0	1.1	152
Aurangabad	1.7	1.3	3.0	1.1	1.1	139
Bhandara	1.4	1.3	2.7	0.8	0.9	150
Buldhana	1.9	1.5	3.4	1.1	1.2	150
Dhulia	1.6	1.5	3.1	1.0	1.3	150
Kolaba	1.4	1.3	2.7	1.1	0.9	117
Nagpur	1.2	1.2	2.4	1.0	0.9	150
Nanded	1.4	1.2	2.6	0.9	1.0	150
Ratnagiri	0.9	1.5	2.4	0.5	0.6	26
Satara	1.5	1.3	2.8	0.8	0.9	99
Solapur	1.6	1.4	3.0	1.1	1.0	149
Total	1.5	1.3	2.8	1.0	1.0	1539

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.8 : DISTANCE IN KILOMETERS COMMUTED FOR THE EGS WORK BY MALES AND FEMALES

Sex	Distance of the EGS project from residence					Total
	Up to 1 km	1 to 3 kms.	3 to 5 kms.	5 kms & above	Stayed on site	
Male	23.3	39.5	30.8	4.9	1.5	100 = 787
Female	27.0	41.6	25.0	4.8	1.6	100 = 757
Total	25.1	40.6	27.9	4.8	1.6	100 = 1544

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.9 : AGE DISTRIBUTION OF EGS AND NON-EGS MALE AND FEMALE WORKERS AND THAT OF 1971 CENSUS

	Age Groups							Total
	-14	15-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	
<i>Males</i>								
1971 Census	6.0	9.3	23.0	22.9	18.1	11.9	8.8	100.0
<i>Present Survey</i>								
EGS Workers	2.1	10.4	36.3	23.3	18.0	8.2	1.7	100.0
Non-EGS Workers	15.9	15.2	20.8	12.7	16.7	14.2	4.5	100.0
<i>Females</i>								
1971 Census	8.6	10.8	26.3	24.2	17.0	8.7	4.4	100.0
<i>Present Survey</i>								
EGS Workers	5.8	18.6	32.0	24.7	14.8	3.6	0.5	100.0
Non-EGS Workers	16.5	17.5	24.3	14.4	17.3	7.4	2.6	100.0

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.10 : SEX RATIO AMONG 3080 EGS WORKERS IN 12 DISTRICTS

District	EGS Female Workers/ Total EGS workers
Ahmednagar	0.49
Akola	0.54
Aurangabad	0.48
Bhandara	0.51
Buldhana	0.53
Dhulia	0.56
Kolaba	0.45
Nagpur	0.47
Nanded	0.53
Ratnagiri	0.59
Satara	0.61
Solapur	0.48
Total	0.51

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.11 : MARITAL STATUS OF MALES AND FEMALES FROM HOUSEHOLDS OF EGS WORKERS

Sex	Unmarried	Married	Widowed	Divorced or Separated	Married twice	Total
Males	2236	1787	74	13	7	4117
%	54.30	43.41	1.80	0.32	0.17	100.00
Females	1821	1860	283	49	-	4013
%	14.38	46.35	7.05	1.22	-	100.00

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.12 : THE BENEFITS OR OTHERWISE OF THE EGS WORKS AND REASONS FOR THEIR IMPRESSIONS REPORTED BY THE INTERVIEWED

Sex of the interviewed	Bene- ficial (reasons not stated)	Not bene- ficial (reasons not stated)	Beneficial because it provides some work at least	Beneficial because employment in off- season	Beneficial but wages should be increased	Beneficial but conti- nuous work should be provided	Beneficial and work less strenuous	Bene- ficial due to wheat coupons	Total inter- viewed
Male	27.6	0.6	28.2	0.9	8.6	21.5	1.7	10.9	100.0 = 787
Female	30.4	1.6	26.9	0.8	8.7	19.3	1.2	11.1	100.0 = 756
Total	29.0	1.1	27.5	0.8	8.7	20.5	1.4	11.0	100.0 = 1543

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.13 : ANSWERS TO QUESTION "DO WOMEN SUFFER MORE HARDSHIPS THAN MEN" TO EGS WORKERS

<i>Do women face more hardships than men?</i>	Male	Female	Total
Yes	133	168	301
No	67	74	141
Men does more laborious work Men and women have same amount of strain	256	203	459
Woman faces more hardships because she also has to do house work	139	191	330
Vague answer	27	27	54
No response	9	7	16
Total	787	757	1544

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.14 : REASONS FOR LEAVING SCHOOL FOR THOSE BELOW 14

<i>Reason for leaving school</i>	<i>Percentage Distribution</i>		
	Male	Female	Total
Financial circumstances	59.7	59.1	59.2
No liking for school	18.0	7.3	11.4
To look after the younger children	2.2	11.8	8.1
Going to be admitted in school	9.7	6.6	7.8
Dumb, deaf and sick	3.4	1.4	2.2
Nobody feels the need	1.1	9.6	6.4
No further education facilities	2.2	1.4	1.7
No permanent address	3.7	2.8	3.2
Total leaving school	100.0 =	100.0 =	100.0 =
	267	425	692
Schooling	857	535	1392
No response*	61	110	171
Grand Total	1185	1070	2255

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

* These probably belonged to the category "Children not going to school", though the reasons for not attending school were not reported in their cases.

Table 3.15 : PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF MALE/FEMALE EGS WORKERS BY EDUCATIONAL LEVEL

Sex of the interviewed	Educational Level							Total interviewed
	Illite- rate	Lite- rate	Upto 4th std.	5th 7th std.	to 8th lith but below S.S.C.	S.S.C. passed below gradua- tion	Graduate and above	
Male	44.2	4.1	26.7	15.2	5.8	3.7	0.3	100.0 = 787
Female	88.2	0.4	7.7	3.3	0.3	0.1	-	100.0 = 757
Total	65.8	2.3	17.4	9.4	3.1	1.9	0.1	100.0 = 1544

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.16 : SEX OF THE EGS WORKER AND TYPE OF TROUBLE AFTER STERILIZATION ONLY FOR STERILIZED COUPLES

Sex of the interviewed Worker	Type of trouble after sterilization	No trouble at all	No Serious trouble but backache pain in the waist	Weakness	Serious trouble	Not given	Total sterilized* couples with either husband or wife sterilized.
Male		155	7	7	8	7	184
%		87.6	3.9	4.0	4.5	-	100 = 177
Female		187	31	7	11	3	239
%		79.2	13.1	3.0	4.7	-	100 = 236
Total		342	38	14	19	10	423
%		82.8	9.2	3.4	4.6	-	100 = 413

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

* Among the interviewed males or females either they or their partners were sterilized thus resulting in 70% vasectomies.

Table 3.17 : SEX OF THE EGS WORKER, AND TREATMENT AFTER STERILIZATION ONLY FOR STERILIZED PERSONS

<i>Sex of the interviewed worker</i>	<i>Treatment after sterilization</i>	<i>No trouble or slight trouble so no treatment needed or obtained</i>	<i>Treatment taken</i>	<i>Trouble but treatment not taken</i>	<i>Not reported</i>	<i>Total</i>
Male		163	11	1	9	184
%		93.1	6.3	0.6	-	100=175
Female		204	22	5	8	239
%		88.3	9.5	2.2	-	100=231
Total		367	33	6	17	423
%		90.4	8.1	1.5	-	100=406

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

Table 3.18 : SEX OF THE EGS WORKER AND WHETHER RESPONDENTS REPENT HAVING GOT STERILIZED

Sex of the interviewed worker	Whether respondent repents having got sterilized	Yes	Yes because has no son or only one son	Yes due to trouble after operation	Yes because of failure of operation	Yes because of no necessity of sterilization	No	No fear of having any more children	No respondent has enough children	Not given	Total
Male %		5 2.8	-	11 6.1	3 1.7	-	97 54.2	30 16.8	33 18.4	5 -	184 100=179
Female %		10 4.3	7 3.0	21 9.1	1 0.4	1 0.4	122 52.6	23 9.9	47 20.3	7 -	239 100=232
Total %		15 3.6	7 1.7	32 7.8	4 1.0	1 0.2	219 53.3	53 12.9	80 19.5	12 -	423 100=411

Source : Present EGS Survey, 1978-79

APPENDIX A

FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMME

Food for work (FFW) programme was initiated on a pilot basis in December 1974, on one percolation tank in Nasik district. In february of 1975 it was extended to 125 works in 14 selected talukas of all districts of Maharashtra. It was with the help of CARE, the Co-operative for American Relief Everywhere.

In February 1975 government extended this programme to cover 125 works in 14 selected talukas of 11 districts of Maharashtra. The mode of payment of wages was to be as follows: for every Rs.10 earned by a worker, or a part thereof, Re.1/- worth of wheat was given to the workers as wage in kind for the week. The collectors of the concerned districts, were requested to collect their wheat quota requirements on a quarterly basis. (From 1st Feb. 1976 all unskilled workers employed on EGS work were brought under the purview of FFW.

According to the G.R. issued on 26th October 1978, a new schedule of payment of wages in kind was drawn.

Weekly wages earned on the basis of schedule of rates (Rs.)	Cash to be deducted from wages (Rs.)	Wheat to be supplied
1. Up to 3.00	.30	1
2. 3.01 to 6.00	.60	2
3. 6.01 to 10.00	.90	3
4.10.01 to 15.00	1.20	4
5.15.01 to 20.00	1.80	6
6.20.01 to 30.00	2.40	8
7. Above 30.00	3.00	10

This schedule came into effect from 23rd Oct. 78. A supply of 10 kg. of wheat per worker for a week was to be the upper limit.

CARE's assistance has been discontinued from 1st April 1979. The FFW is now to be implemented with the sole assistance coming from the Government of India. Wheat and rice have been made available to the State Government.

CHAPTER IV PROSPECTS OF THE EGS

SUMMARY

Serious discussion to reorganize the EGS must precede the launching of the scheme anywhere else in the country. The management of the EGS is not only an economic problem but a problem in politics too. A number of suggestions to improve EGS programme are presented here. One great advantage of the EGS, namely organizing the unorganized, will prove useful only if carefully handled. Otherwise it may affect the so-called guardians of the weak like a boomerang. Moreover, it may prove another breeding ground for corruption and other similar vices.

This Report has emphasized the need for generating greater employment in rural areas. Furthermore it is contended that normal or routine programmes of rural development are not likely to generate adequate additional employment to meet the needs of the situation. Hence the need for giving a special thrust to the situation by launching a special programme like the EGS. A great deal of discussion has taken place especially on how far these programmes can be maintained as special programmes. An approach of starting the programme in a small way and then getting it absorbed in the routine will not work since people cannot trust a programme which has an air of *ad hocism*. For instance the PIREP works started in various regions in 1974 could not attract adequate labour in spite of heavy unemployment or underemployment in the region. On the other hand if one starts the programme in a big way as Maharashtra has done through its EGS, there arise problems of management, supervision, etc. which bring down the quality of work, the quality of productiveness of works and hence blaming the scheme. The questions raised include the following:

(1) The problem of productivity needs reconsideration and especially so in a poor country with a vast mass of population living below subsistence. Productivity defined at present does not include the welfare aspect of the population and rightly so as far as theory is concerned. However this aspect has to be taken care of by a proper distribution of income especially in a poor country. Among the major defects of the employment guarantee scheme is the element of unproductive works undertaken in the scheme. Certainly the works must be productive. But with all the restrictions like (i) dealing with completely unskilled labour, (ii) sixty per cent to be spent on wages and only forty per cent for the rest, the productivity is bound to be limited even when the best management methods are employed and the most fruitful projects such as irrigation, land development and soil conservation, afforestation, are properly implemented. Here one has to note that the best

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productivity cannot be had and expecting a productivity comparable even to average projects which have no such restrictions means only wrong emphasis on the scheme. It also means little understanding about the reasons behind starting the programme which was meant to apply a corrective to the uneven distribution of income.

(2) *Continuity of guaranteed employment:* This requires continuity of works. When one is completed another must be ready for execution. This requires an agency to prepare blue-prints for different types of works on a continuous basis.

Preparation of public works of various kinds in rural areas which involve heavy employment of rural unskilled labour, requires a somewhat more widespread consultation than is the traditional practice with the Government work programmes. Local people, knowledgeable people, local peoples' organizations like Panchayats, Panchayat Samitees and Zilla Parishads have to sit with technical personnel to suggest and examine specific work proposals. This has to be done on a continuous basis. Absence of such organizational effort and blue prints for meaningful projects leads to discontinuity in work, frustration and a feeling in administrative circles that there are no works that can be provided. On the other hand, pressure for employment leads to any type of work that has not been thought out and planned properly leading to wasteful expenditures. Despite the 6/7 years spent on EGS so far, this aspect has not received the attention it deserves.

(3) *Small versus large works:* Large works often have the advantage of greater continuity, easier supervision and better provision of the necessary facilities for workers. But it may mean moving many workers longer distances. On the other hand small works are likely to involve less commuting for the workers, but less effective supervision. It would however be inadvisable to insist on either one type or the other. Prior planning, that is scheduling of works on the basis of prepared blue prints is the most important thing rather than the consideration that works should be nearer the villages or farther away.

(4) *Poor supervision:* The idea of spreading the work over thousands of villages makes the supervision difficult and corruption sets in. For instance if a person or two are employed for maintaining hygiene in all the thirty-five thousands and odd villages of Maharashtra, less will have to be spent on health budgets. But one cannot manage this easily and the money may be spent without attaining better hygiene. Poor supervision leads to corruption in work that eats into earnings of genuine workers. Superior official supervision on the one hand and some type of unionization of common workers on the other are possible remedies against widespread corruption.

To illustrate the kind of supervision, a junior engineer with a diploma should be able to handle a single work involving about 50 people and the administrative cost probably brought within the ratio of 40/60 that is prescribed today. Young graduates (that is any graduates) given six months' training in the execution of small civil work may discharge this responsibility and junior engineers can be in charge of routine and surprise checks of works, measurements, payments, musters, etc. The unions of workers can be given a consultation status.

Corruption and lack of supervision both are genuine problems and demand for their handling a level of efficiency unheard of in any broad-based programme in this country. Hence one feels like repeating that it is a challenge to the capabilities of the intelligentsia of this country. Giving the poorest in the country an income guarantee, the administration has to suffer or sort out whatever follows. Often the complaint is that the EGS is mainly for keeping people just occupied or at times it is a dole distribution and not a development programme. This probably is due to the fact that many of the projects under the EGS were just completion or extension of the famine relief programmes started in the early seventies. But this kind of discussion cannot go on for long. In a poor country, one cannot afford to have unproductive works; but let this burden of finding out productive projects be passed on to the abilities of the upper classes who will be forced to sacrifice to unburden the poor of their starvation or destitution.

The question cannot remain an academic one of discussion on 'precise role and rationale of special employment programmes' such as the EGS etc. For instance the EGS can certainly become an integral part of district or any level planning. The soil conservation and land development with irrigation facilities moulded properly for maximum gains all need careful consideration. Even the cropping pattern will have to be decided on. Starting with economic problems, the question raises problems in management which ultimately may demand political solutions. That, no doubt, is a difficult area to tread. That is why one talks of challenges to the intelligentsia. For instance, if the unorganized labour gets organized, what is it? Is it a gain or a loss? Economically they may not be productive; but if they gather strength to fight, is it an achievement? Such strength may even sweep the intelligentsia off its feet if it is inefficient. Is it a gain? Such are the questions that arise in discussing the EGS and they demand serious attention.

Among the other practical difficulties faced today one may enumerate a series of problems such as:

(5) There is disruption of agriculture as well as departmental administration with the EGS. Of agriculture, it is due to small or marginal farmers neglecting their

land. Their earnings from land are so small that EGS wages attract them and their families. On the other hand they are not prepared to get rid of their land because it is the ultimate support of their destitute lives. Such farmers should be allowed to rent out their land changing even the tenancy act for the purpose.

Shortage of farm wage labour due to concurrent EGS work is another problem of continuing agriculture. One approach to tackle this problem may be the releasing of all workers on EGS who want to remain absent for ten days or so with an assurance of reabsorption at the expiry of the period. But this kind of action, also needs right announcement on the part of workers regarding their employment needs.

A second alternative is to take farm work on people's farms on piece rate contract as a part of EGS organization. This of course may require more systematic organization at EGS level. Among the corruption stories of the past in one case the EGS workers were used on private farm with the EGS money. Such irregularities must be weeded out. They are a grave danger to the scheme.

Dislocation of departmental administration is of course understandable. People can do hard work but there is a limit to it. Overburdening workers especially junior engineering supervisors and others only turn them dishonest. This again should be contemplated in the administration under practical and humane considerations. Perhaps the EGS does need more supervision than is available now. The local officers such as Gramsevak and others used now are bound to be small in stature and hence influenced by the local political leaders. What is needed is therefore a strong punishment for the corrupt and guilty. Otherwise such programmes as the EGS will not work.

(6) The idea of keeping the ratio of expenditure on unskilled wages to skilled wages, material and equipment to 60:40 is of course welcome and pertinent. At the moment however even the 40 per cent is not used for skills or material, etc. It is about 20 per cent or so. It does not seem justified simply because the productivity of works suffers due to such policy. Supervision is badly lacking and materials such as those needed for lasting and durable roads, etc. are not adequately provided. It thus results in total wasteful expenditure. Thus the above ratio need not be rigidly held but relaxed in the interest of better work.

(7) Unmustered staff maintenance is an unmanageable problem. Keeping of a proper muster should be a must, and checking its reliability obligatory. For this, strengthening of supervision is important. But it can be done even by non-engineer supervisors as mentioned in (4) above.

(8) Wages are not paid in time. Occasionally they were not paid even for two months. This latter was however rare. From the side of administration, it was complained that the payment was done after measurement of work which had to be done by supervising engineers. Most of the time the engineers were busy measuring the work and paying the wages, which resulted in delays in payment and producing substandard work. These being in short supply, had no time at all to check the technicalities of works specified in the blue-prints of the works. Their duties could be bifurcated and assigned to proper persons to avoid inordinate delays and waste of skills of engineers as suggested by the use of any graduates in (4) above.

There is also a need to educate these workers - of course gradually - to save for the future or for bad days. This can be arranged through labour unions so that occasional delays in payment can be got over.

Another solution may also be found in making payments in kind which will ensure at least food for the delayed periods. State should ensure daily supply of grains in shops and if this is not possible, a shop for selling grains should be opened on the pay day every week. A couple of workers may be engaged in measuring out the food grains, at daily ways on the EGS work.

(9) At the moment dereliction of duty and commission of serious financial irregularities are producing work of substandard quality. In other words it is not the women, old men and children working on the EGS that produce low quality work. It is low quality management that produces low quality work. At present there are a number of loopholes in the management which help augmentation of corruption, leakages of funds and irregularities on the part of most of the salaried workers. Adequate staff of a variety of order should be provided to straighten out the difficulties of overwork on the part of junior engineers. But the added staff has to be only the 'right' type and should be employed after careful consideration. Otherwise the addition may increase corruption only.²⁰

Besides the provision of adequate supervisory staff with unfailing transport for some, certain kind of machinery needed for a variety of the EGS works should also be supplied.

(10) Percolation tanks, their feasibility or otherwise all need careful attention especially in keeping these projects productive and away from the pressure of local leaders to decide on the location of the works. Technical skills of the engineering staff have to be applied here. Some cost-benefit studies have come out with unfavourable reports on the construction of percolation tanks. Apparently all the construction rules regarding the relationship between size of construction and the

rainfall are not often observed. This perhaps leads to wasteful expenditure on percolation tanks and their limited utility.

(11) The problem of providing works to workers within walking distances probably results in starting any unproductive works feasibility of which is sometimes doubted. The fear is that people may not come in large numbers away from homes. This latter may be proved to be a myth later. In the NSS surveys in the year 1970-71, the interviewed seemed prepared to leave their homes if they could get Rs. 100 a month. This does not seem impossible if the EGS continues its expansion with the present rate of wages. The EGS is gaining confidence of the villagers. Those that are genuinely needy are bound to attend the work if reasonable wages are offered and the EGS wages are considered reasonable if supported with foodgrains.²¹ Continuity of work is also to be ensured. Hence proper works should be started the productiveness of which is undoubted so that persons moving away from their homes are mopped off the villages only to productive works. This will leave a smaller load of dependents on agriculture, ensuring at the same time continuity of their attendance such projects can have better efficiency.²²

(12) The law of minimum wages in agriculture has no meaning unless enforced. It is the EGS alone that can help its implementation. But the influence of landed gentry can force the EGS works to be closed, especially when they are small and involve just a few villages. This has to be examined carefully.

(13) Workers in the present survey complained that they had to pay for the revenue stamp every time they were paid. Further, their contention was that their wages were cut if they worked less. But they were not paid more if they worked more. These complaints perhaps were routine complaints and education alone could help them get over these. Allocating work to gangs of people probably solved the problem of differentiation of wages to workers. Only those who could work in a team worked together and smoothened the problems of differential capacity to work.

(14) Food For Work programme is considered to be the most attractive part of the EGS. But anything attractive to workers is palmed away by those that are business-minded. Care has to be taken to ensure corruption-free distribution of foodgrains. Otherwise situations like the following arose as reported in the survey:

- (a) Wheat or foodgrain coupons were sometimes not given at all.
- (b) Some middle-man collected the coupons from the workers and provided foodgrains to the workers because the foodgrain shop is too far off. In

this process, the workers lost their earnings. Occasionally the middlemen bought the coupons from workers for some paltry cash.

- (c) The good and very bad varieties of grains distributed to workers resulted in grumbling for differences made.
- (d) The shop-keepers refused to give any foodgrains with the argument that they have no foodgrains in their shops. One could not imagine the situation behind this happening except as corruption. Suggestions made regarding opening a grain shop in (8) above are worth considering.

(15) The idea of mobile working units on EGS projects may work relatively better. Along with it comes the idea of moving colonies to the EGS works. Where the works are large such as those of land reclamation, major irrigation etc. Colonies have to be well-knit and well organized. They can look after their own goods or save them from calamities that villagers usually face when they come to new localities. For instance, villagers though starving do not leave their mother villages because in the new situation they may not easily wield the social relationship they have in their own villages. They may not get foodgrains or provisions without cash or loan. They will not have any credit in the new place to take care of their hope of festivities, etc.

On the other hand with the moving colonies of workers one can organize community kitchens employing some workers on EGS wages for preparing food.²³ In such community kitchens problems of corruption of food distribution can be got over relatively more easily.

(16) Among the facilities on the work sites hutting arrangements will have to be made if people are moving out long distances. Schooling of children in their colonies can be easily arranged in an orderly manner on lines referred to earlier in Chapter III. It can be carried out with high school educated EGS workers as stated before. This is a very important facility and should be provided to improve the lot of workers' household.

Furnishing of creches or similar arrangements may provide the opportunity of maintaining health for such communities. Problems of provision of drinking water or need for sheds for rest in the sun can be taken care of for such living.

Apart from the welfare programmes with which these mobile communities can be equipped there are certain cultural advantages that may accompany this community living. These are:

The living on big EGS works in any part of the state or country stops the exodus of villagers to towns or cities in search of work. In fact the EGS may constitute a part of urbanization policy in this country. It may reduce further growth of slums and crime that infest big cities currently.

Leaving the mother village, one leaves a whole complex of culture which binds one to the people of the village. Just as there are advantages of social relationship in living in the village, there are hindrances of the village such as pressures of traditionalism, casteism, etc. which can be connived at when one is in the village. But these latter are certainly derogatory to the process of modernization. Casteism gets diluted when people leave their home region. The culture of most of the villages is a non-working culture which provides one with ample free time. This has developed due to centuries of unemployment. The leisure time is utilized in attending marriages, deaths, etc. so much so that the whole villages are busy in these social events. Moving out to colonies may introduce a culture which is also a working culture. The atmosphere at colonies in the premises of some big EGS works may resemble that of a modern factory where everything during the day is oriented to work for everybody. It might resemble living in communes organizing their lives in a modern way. Education, health, illness can be taken care of, once the workers are organized. The organization might also help them to unite against exploitation from the upper classes.

All the moves above lead to the need of taking a number of decisions on the organization and management of the EGS. None can think of scrapping the EGS. Villagers now have tasted the fruit of EGS. There can be no going back on the scheme, though its form may have to change substantially. All the corruption stories regarding EGS must be routed, punishing the culprits in time using the strength of the unionization.

Foot-notes

1. More recently, the demand in certain areas of Maharashtra is for 'unequal' wages for women, that is, same money wage for doing 80 per cent of the work of average male worker, since women have to bear the burden of household chores as well.
2. In advanced countries also, discontinuous labour-force-participation of women causes employment problems. Women enter occupations requiring less training or professions needing less "on the job training". Hence low payment occupations employ them.
3. After 1973 conditions in Maharashtra are claimed to have improved.
4. All attempts at betterment of living in a country should ultimately result in absolute constant numbers depending on agriculture. Initially in a developing country the percentage depending on agriculture stabilizes though the absolute number may go on increasing. At the next stages the absolute numbers should stabilize. In a country like India with the expectation of better levels of living in future the absolute numbers depending on agriculture should stabilize not at 1961 level but probably at lower level. This is because there is no hope of agricultural growth in Maharashtra and even in 1961 people lived at extremely low levels of living.
5. Considering the investments necessary to employ one person in agricultural sectors, generating adequate employment in the non-agricultural sector seems beyond the reach of this country at least at present. Secondly a change in agricultural technology also seems imminent in India for two reasons. One is that with provision of proper infrastructure in rural areas, it may be possible to employ 122 persons for 100 hectares rather than 93.2 persons employed at present. In Egypt and Japan they employ 181 and 219 persons respectively per 100 hectares in 1971.
6. Two Districtwise studies were available: (i) One by Bhalla and Alagh showed that during 1962-65 to 1970-73 Maharashtra registered a decline in foodgrains output of 2.06 million tonnes, with an area decline of 8.43 lakh hectares under agriculture. Further, productivity declined from 554 Kg. per hectare to 401 Kg. per hectare. Some part of the decline however was due to 1971-72 being exceptionally bad period in Maharashtra. Source : Performance of Indian Agriculture by G.S. Bhalla and Y.K. Alagh (Sterling Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, Page 57) 1979; (ii) Another study by M.P. Khare, et al., (Agro-economics centre at the Gokhale Institute, Pune) showed that the productivity decreased by 0.16 per cent per annum during 1960-61 to 1969-70. During the same period production increased by 0.07 per cent per annum in Maharashtra. Source : Report by M.P. Khare, et al., submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, 1979. Unpublished.
7. Conditions after 1973 are however claimed to be better than what they were in the preceding decade.
8. Maharashtra had been divided into zones with different levels of minimum wages. A wage of Rs. 3 was the smallest among the several minimum wages in the zones. In June 1981 the wage rate were raised further. However, in all our estimates here the wage rates prevalent at the time of survey are assumed. However, till the end of 1978, it seemed that EGS workers were paid according to rates which were ten per cent below the schedule of rates of soil conservation in the agricultural department, 30 per cent below schedule for departmental road works and 20 per cent below schedule rates of irrigation and other departments.

9. Such a complaint was not always justified. However if it was, even the EGS itself could undertake to work on private farms with at least the minimum wages or higher which the farmers boasted of offering.
10. This could be passed on to the consumer burdening him, in spite of the law against it. Hence articles of mass consumption such as kerosene, edible oils, vanaspati, betel nuts, safety matches, footwear up to value of Rs. 15, agricultural machinery and essential raw materials were excluded from this surcharge.
11. By 'Agriculture at 1961 Level' is meant the quality of agriculture as in 1961, in terms of irrigation, fertilizers, land development, soil conservation with its employment potential. If these levels change, relative increase in employment in agriculture will have to be allowed, to live at the poverty level of 1961. If the same number as in 1961 is allowed to work in the changed conditions the level of living will improve. Obviously the latter was desirable.
12. In June 1982, there have been exposed a number of cases of corruption and misappropriation of funds as reported in news papers such as Sakal, Pune. It seems that the officers exposing corruption are transferred since politicians did not approve of the exposure. Corruption in the EGS however has been complained about all along.
13. It is very relevant to discuss these problems at higher levels of technology and understanding to make road-construction meaningful. The backward and forward economic links of road construction, etc. should be discussed carefully.
14. Report of the Review Committee on Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP) page 36 (August 1977), Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation, Government of India, New Delhi. The values of the Benefit cost ratio are given here calling them Cost/Benefit ratios perhaps by mistake.
15. The person year here is not of 365 days but 300 work days.
16. The idea in taking the year 1977-78 rather than a more recent one was to compare the figures in NSS 32nd round of 1977-78.
17. One may note that a person year means an expenditure of Rs. 3 x 300 = 900 rupees at least. If one had to explain 1.6 lakh person years, it meant explaining an expenditure of Rs. 900 x 1,60,000 i.e. 14 crores 40 lakhs of rupees. It shows how important it is to maintain reliable records of attendance on the EGS to avoid leakages of funds.
18. Because of lack of supervision, there was no regular muster in some places. In certain others it was *Gramsevak* who maintained the muster. He being the lowest in the Government echelon could be influenced by the village leaders and others with possible effect on the level of attendance. In our view this could be one possible reason for finding the difference in the sex-ratio of workers in official records and those actually observed on works.
19. For the Index of 1978-79, refer to *Indian Labour Journal*, December 1979.
20. Some member of the supervisory staff complained "Stop these village leaders bringing pressures on us, only then will the work improve." At the moment however the leaders dabbling in the work of junior supervisors only train those young folk in the corrupt methods themselves since junior engineers find no other way to deal with the situation. If the village

leaders ask them to put in a few names of non-workers among the workers young supervisors learn to add a few of their own too.

In some cases, the land-holders nearby were found to have stopped the EGS work when they were short of labour.

Among the corruption stories one was: A canal was completed from the two ends. But these could not be joined for months because this joining involved lands of a legislator.

21. The wage rates are revised from time to time and by 1982 they are much above what has been reported in the present survey.

22. It has been observed that certain dams and bridge-construction firms employ labour all along the year (with certain exceptions) and they form a mobile township. Such townships have all the qualities of urban industrial living so that labourers get removed from traditionalism of the villages which have elements of non-working culture. One wonders whether this is very desirable to inculcate modern working culture among the rural folk.

23. In Vidarbha some tribals coming from northern regions organize community kitchens when on work.

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