

# What Determines the Success of '100 Days Work' at Panchayat Level?

A Study of Birbhum District in West Bengal



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# National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

- Launched on February 2, 2006.
- *Secures minimum 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to all rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour .*
- First phase (2006-07) included 200 districts (10 in West Bengal)
- Second phase (2007-08) included 130 more districts (7 in West Bengal)
- Last phase (2008-09) cover the remaining districts

# Twin objectives of NREGA



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- Enhances the income security of the rural poor in the short run
- Creates durable assets in the village through the process of employment and thus generates productive infrastructure on a sustainable manner => may be useful for poverty alleviation in the long-run

# Implementation of NREGA

- PRIs are major designated agencies for implementation
- GPs are responsible for identification, execution and supervision.
- Panchayat samitis and Zilla Parishads are also involved in different capacities
- Gram Sabhas are given power to conduct social audit in order to maintain checks and balances during process of execution

# West Bengal and NREGA

- West Bengal – a successful case of democratically decentralised participatory governance
- Strong and effective PRIs
- Rural poverty ratio is substantially high (28.6 per cent) (PC)
- Significant percentage (12%) of rural households do not get adequate food to eat everyday (NSSO 61<sup>st</sup> Round).
- Agricultural wage rate is lower than the minimum national wage rate with discrimination against female (NCEUS)

***All these factors are expected to work in favour of successful implementation of NREGA. Unfortunately two financial years do not show West Bengal's good performance.***



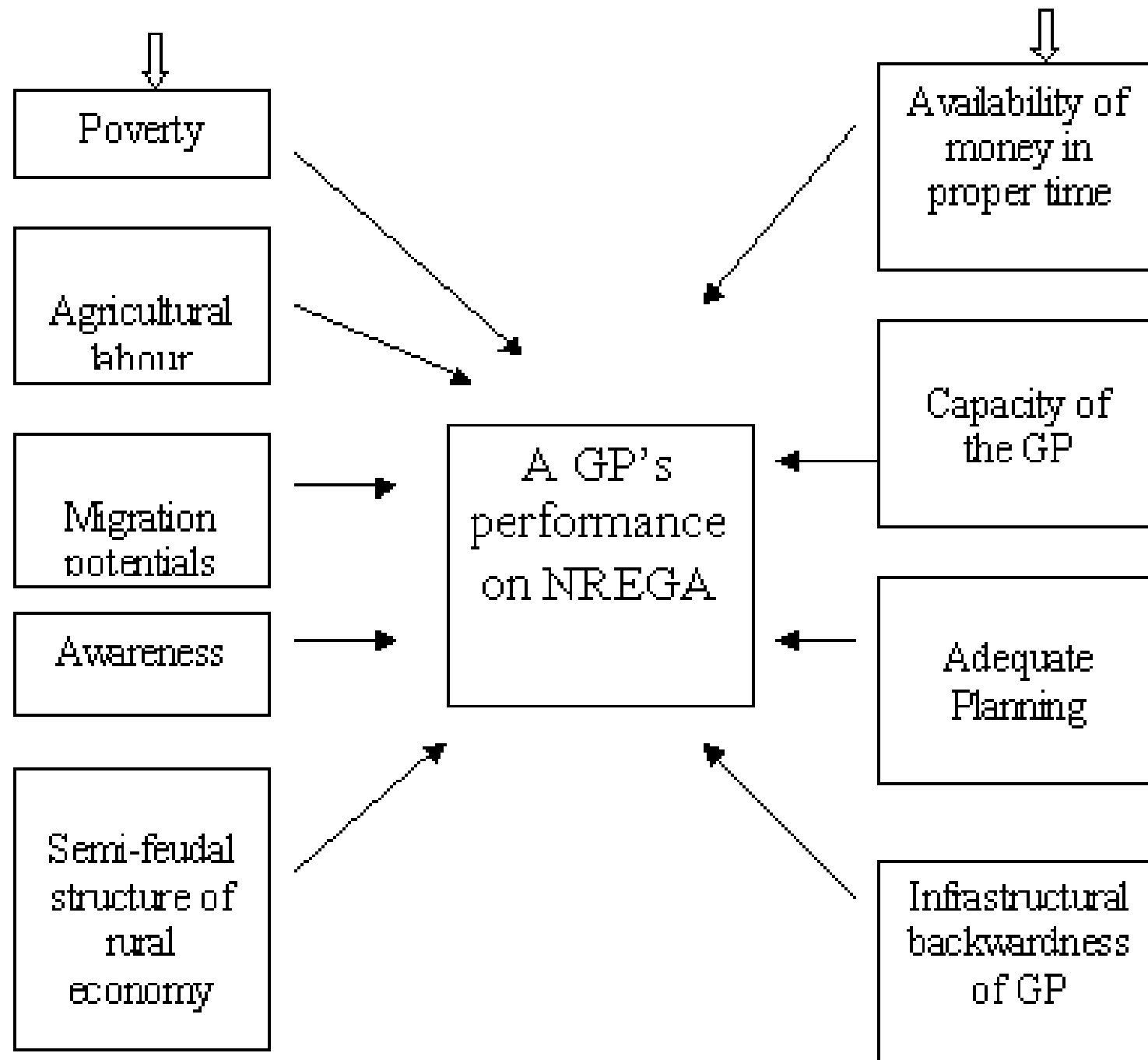
# Our questions

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- Where does West Bengal stand in the national context as well as its inter-district variations with regard to its performance on NREGA? *(how do we measure performance?)*
- Identifying the factors influencing good or poor performance with regard to NREGA. *(identifying factors at which level?)*

**Demand side factors**

**supply side factors**



# Data sources

- Information available on the official website of NREGA ([www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)).
- Data provided by the District NREGS Cell, Birbhum district, West Bengal.
- Data from Census 2001.
- A primary survey which interviewed 219 households and more than 20 GP members and *sachibs* in two study GPs in Birbhum district.

# West Bengal in the National Context

<b>States</b>	<i>Average person days per household</i>		<i>Share of women in total person days</i>	
	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08 *</i>	<i>2006-07</i>	<i>2007-08*</i>
Assam	72	35	32	35
Bihar	16	28	17	27
Kerala	21	29	66	67
Madhya Pradesh	68	53	43	43
Maharashtra	5	51	37	39
Orissa	57	35	36	34
Rajasthan	85	65	67	70
Tamil Nadu	28	60	81	82
<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>India</b>	43	35.89**	41	44

Note: \* up to January 2008; \*\* As on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

Source: [www.nregs.nic.in](http://www.nregs.nic.in)



# Inter-district variation in West Bengal

**Table 2: Average person-days created under NREGA per applicant household in the districts of West Bengal**

Districts	2006-07				2007-08 (Up to January, 2008)			
	<i>Average person days created per household</i>				<i>Average person days created per household</i>			
	SC	ST	Other	Total	SC	ST	Other	Total
Bankura	20	39	24	24	25	28	44	31
<b>Birbhum</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>22</b>
Purulia	13	14	11	12	21	19	19	20
North 24-Parganas	--	--	--	--	8	9	9	9
Burdwan	--	--	--	--	15	13	14	15
Nadia	--	--	--	--	10	9	11	10
Purba Medinipur	--	--	--	--	6	8	*	28
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>

Note: \*9 households created 492000 Man-days as found in [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)

Source: Calculated from [www.nregs.nic.in](http://www.nregs.nic.in)

# Inter-district variation in WB (continued)

Table 3: The combined percentage share of SC and ST in total population and person-days created per household (April 2007- January 2008).

	<i>Share of (SC+ST) in total Population* (1)</i>	<i>Share of SC+ST in total person-days (2)</i>	<i>Favour ratio [(2)/(1)]</i>
<b>Birbhum</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1.4</b>
Burdwan	33	66	2.0
Coochbehar	51	40	0.8
Darjeeling	29	39	1.3
Hoogly	28	65	2.3
Nadia	32	28	0.9

Note: \* population figures correspond to Census 2001; \*\* figures on person-days are pertaining to 2007-08 up to January 08).

Source: [www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in); Census of India, 2001

# NREGA in Birbhum

- No. of households provided employment is more than 3.85 lakhs (latest figure).
- Fund utilisation: Birbhum (68%), West Bengal (39%).
- 85% of job card holders demanded work.
- No difference between no. of households demanded employment and provided employment.

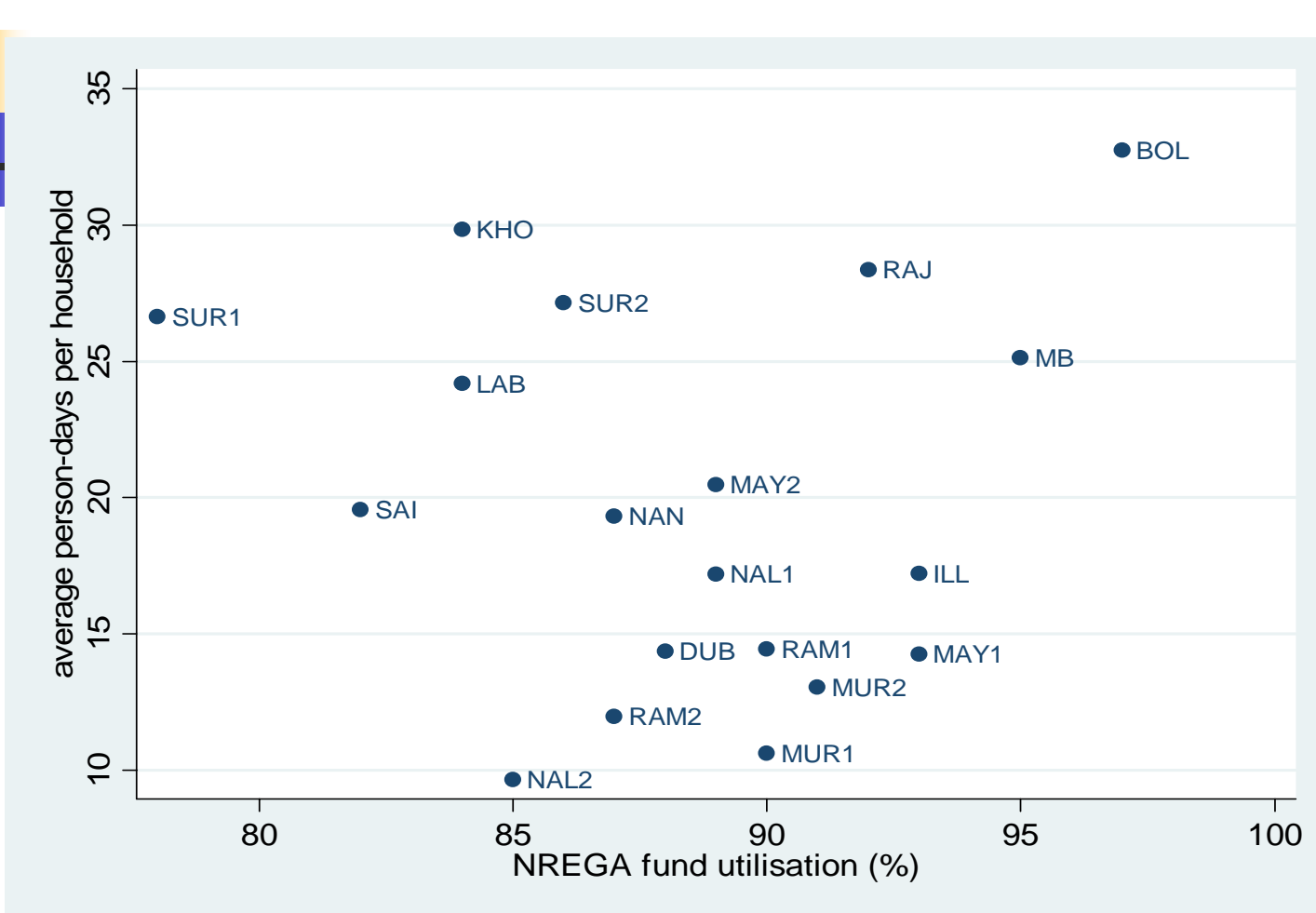
**Table 4: Average person-days created per household and utilisation of NREGA funds across blocks of Birbhum (2006-07)**

Block	person-days per household			% Utilization of NREGS funds		
	Min	Max	average	Min	Max	average
Suri I	10	32	27	54	87	78
Suri II	18	43	27	78	99	86
Md Bazar	6	48	25	74	100	95
Saithia	12	35	20	68	93	82
Rajnagar	20	38	28	83	97	92
Dubrajpur	10	23	14	70	98	88
Khoyrashole	13	66	30	72	92	84
Bolpur-Sriniketan	18	57	33	94	100	97
Illambazar	11	28	17	82	100	93
Labpur	15	54	24	53	100	84
Nanoor	9	38	19	92	80	87
Rampurhat I	7	35	14	74	100	90
Rampurhat II	6	27	12	73	100	87
Mayureswar I	11	16	14	87	97	93
Mayureswar II	11	32	20	72	100	89
Murarai I	9	18	11	70	100	90
Murarai II	6	27	13	79	100	91
Nalhati I	9	25	17	71	100	89
Nalhati II	8	11	10	62	100	85

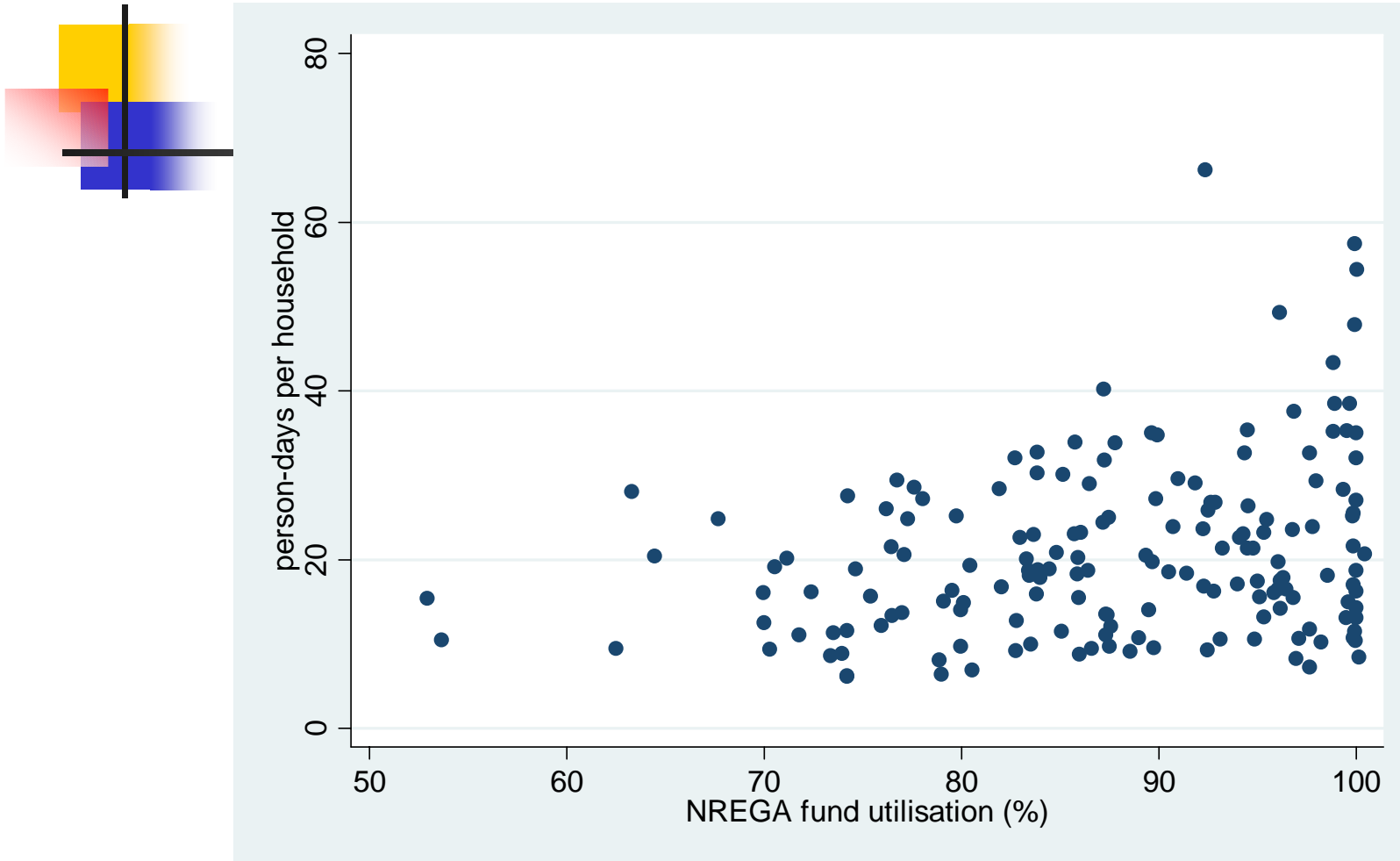
Note: Min (or max) shows the minimum (or maximum) value of person days / utilisation of available NREGA funds of the GP under the block.

Source: Calculated from data provided by NREGA Cell, Birbhum district

**Figure 2: scatter showing the association (at the block-level) between percentage utilisation of NREGA funds and average person days created per household**



**Figure 3: scatter showing the association (at the GP-level) between percentage utilisation of NREGA funds and average person days created per household**



# Low average person-days per household

two possible reasons

- Not enough people available for longer time at wage rate offered by NREGA?

Poor connection between concentration of agr. labour and NREGA performance ([graph](#))

Strong connection between concentration of BPL and NREGA performance. ([graph](#)) . *Possible explanation*

- Weak connection between availability of funds at GP/block level and expected number of beneficiaries

Values Correlation coefficient

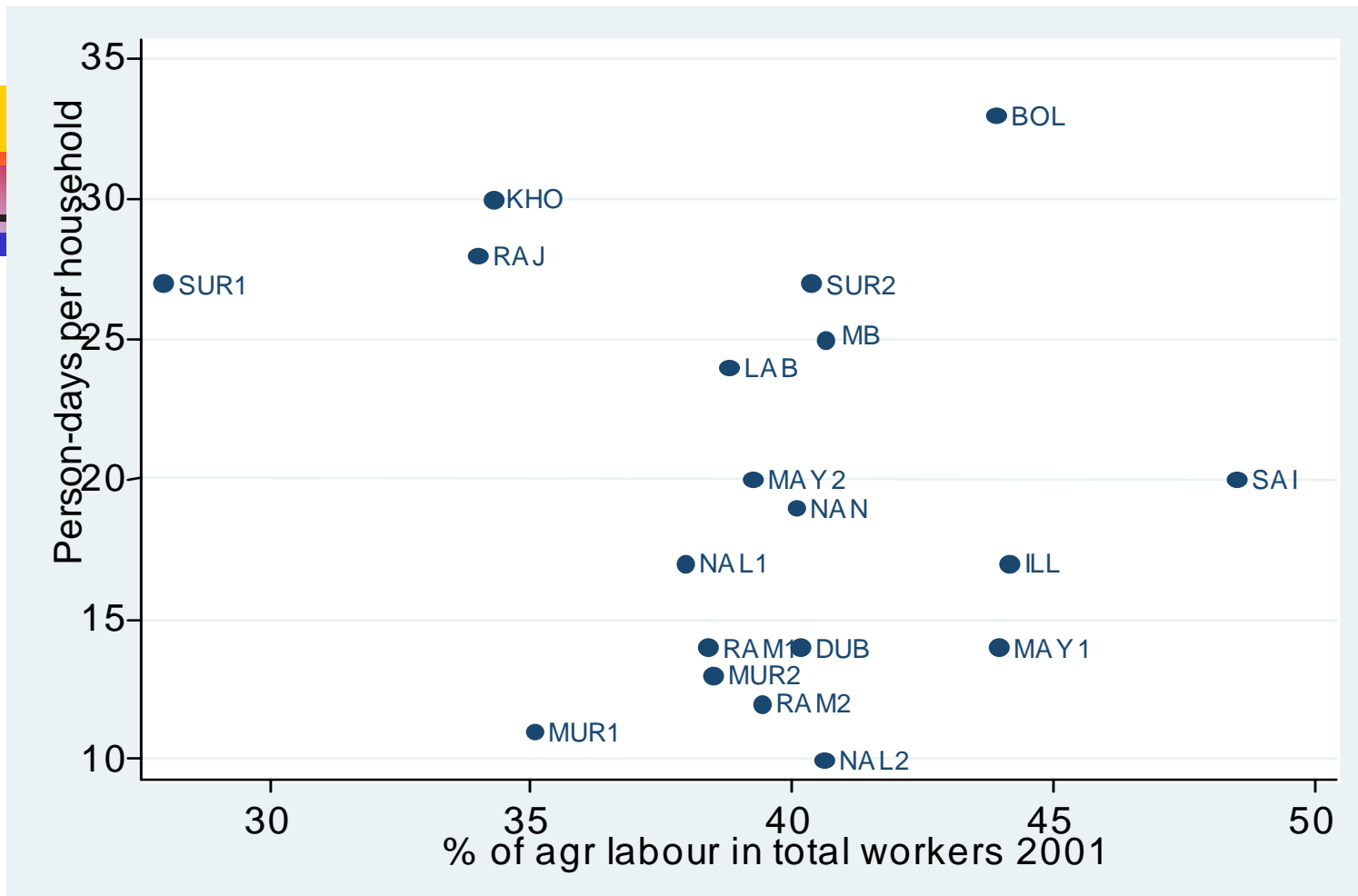
block level: funds & no. of job card 0.43,

funds & no of hh 0.57;

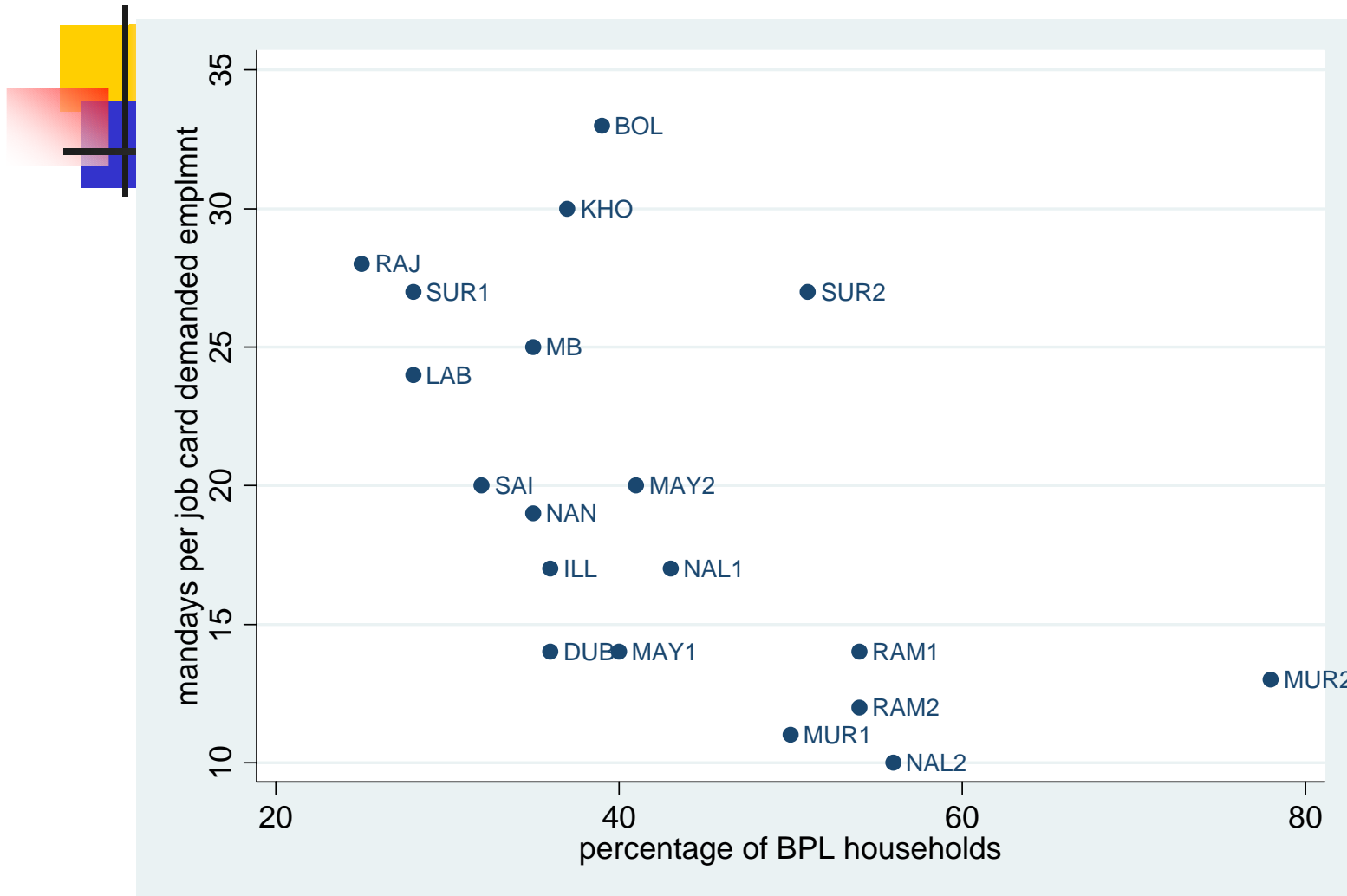
GP level: funds & no. of job card 0.17,

funds & no of hh 0.34)

**Figure 4: Scatter showing association (at the block-level) between average person days per household and percentage of agricultural labourers in total workers**



**Figure 5: Scatter showing the association (at the block-level) between percentage of BPL households and average person days per household.**



# Primary Survey

- Survey of two GPs of contrasting nature in terms of NREGA performance and other development indicators (Talowan => backward GP, Chandrapur => Advanced GP)
- Information base: 219 households. 22 GP members, 2 Sachib, other officials of GP including executives. Documents and office records provided by GPs
- Stratified random sampling (Strata: SC, ST, muslim and others)
- Survey time (Nov-Dec 2007)

# Evidence from primary survey

- Almost everybody knows about NREGA / 100 days work /job card.
- Most of the rural households applied for job card (confusion over the meaning of job card).
- Very few properly know about application process, work, unemployment allowance, maximum time limit for getting work and wage, compensation for delay in disbursement of wage
- None in the GP offices knows about paying compensation in case there is delay in disbursing wages.

	Backward GP	Advanced GP
<b>Percentage of people came to know about '100 days work' for the first time</b>		
Media	17	17
Panchayat Office or Panchayat Member	44	66
Others	39	16
<b>Percentage of households applied for job card</b>	81	74
<b>Percentage of people who went to enquire with Panchayat</b>	41	10
<b>Attitude of the GP staff in providing necessary information and other help</b>		
Very cooperative	25	41
Moderately cooperative	41	43
Not cooperative	34	16
<b>Who filled up the form</b>		
Applicant / somebody from applicant's family	31	16
Panchayat officials or members	50	62
Others	19	22
<b>Percentage of households keeping job card in the house</b>	46	66
<b>Percentage of respondents continuously worked for 15 days</b>	7	21
<b>Percentage of respondents reported delay in disbursing wage beyond 15 days</b>	57	49
<b>Unemployment benefits</b>		
Employment provided in time	15	37
Unemployment benefit was provided	4	3
No unemployment benefit was provided	82	59

Source: Primary Survey (2007)

## Evidence from Primary Survey (contd...)

**Table 6: Some select indicators of NREGA performance from households' point of view**

	Backward GP	Advanced GP
<i>Percentage of households reported to have applied for work</i>		
SC	26	43
ST	21	24
Muslim	45	26
Others	33	35
<i>Number of days worked (reported by household) in last year</i>		
SC	9	38
ST	10	23
Muslim	11	33
Others	11	33
<i>Percentage of job card holders keeping the job card at home</i>		
SC	73	70
ST	5	35
Muslim	29	81
Others	68	72
<i>Percentage of households worked continuously for two weeks</i>		
SC	5	28
ST	6	21
Muslim	8	40
Others	9	11


Source: Primary survey 2007

## Evidence from primary survey (contd...)

Migration weakly connected to NREGA at a poor level of performance

- Migration of skilled/semi-skilled labourers – not going to affect. Migration of agricultural labourers – either does not come in conflict with NREGA work or weak attraction for NREGA work.
- Too much administrative and managerial work for the NREGA , ← GPs' view
- more technical human resource for the Panchayat.

# Some concluding remarks

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- People's level of awareness to be enhanced, especially STs
  - GPs with higher agr. Labour/ BPL households need to develop more number of schemes. Helping backward GPs in capacity building.
  - Allocation of funds should not be left to GPs alone to come with schemes. Block/PS and Dist Adm/ZP should take proactive role to help backward GPs
  - Types of permissible works are of various types water conservation, water harvesting, drought proofing work, social forestry, minor and micro irrigation, benefiting scheduled castes, tribes, bargadar, pattadar, BPL, small and marginal farmers.

# Some concluding remarks

- For irrigation, flood control and protection work from NREGA funds alone: fixation of wage-material components; skilled and unskilled components pose constraints.
- Fixed unskilled components can not be continued in the long-run. Clear flexibility needed to increase the share of skilled wage components to sustain the NREGA work in a meaningful way.
- Flexibility exists to combine various schemes such IAY, MPGSY and others with NREGA work, GPs need special hands-on training how to combine them towards achieving common goal.
- Flexibility needed to converge NREGA work with infrastructure related work of the line departments (health, primary education and ICDS)

Thank you.

