Evidence for Policy Design (EPoD) is part of the Center for International Development, Harvard Kennedy School.

Conviction: Public resources need to be optimized for the benefit of low-income populations through evidence-based policymaking.

Primary Activity: Research that utilizes economic tools to provide answers to pressing policy questions.

Reputed Partners:
- National Bureau of Economic Research, MA, USA
- International Growth Centre, London, UK
- Center for Economic Research in Pakistan, Lahore, Pakistan
• EPoD’s partner in India is the Institute for Financial Management and Research (Chennai)

• EPoD India operates out of New Delhi, but is active across states
  • Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar

• EPoD India’s current projects
  • MGNREGA Monitoring
  • Skill Training and Evaluation
  • Attendance at Central Government Offices (attendance.gov.in)
  • Environmental Compliance
  • National Rural Livelihood Mission
  • PolicyHack
  • LBSNAA training programs

• EPoD India has been working very closely with the NIC, the MoRD, and the Delhi Government
EPoD INDIA’S ENGAGEMENT WITH MGNREGA

- Since 2013, EPoD India has been working on NREGA-related issues
  - EPoD India has been working closely with the MoRD (under an MoU)
- Our involvement is aimed at enhancing efficacy and transparency
- Engagement with MGNREGA includes the following projects
  - MGNREGA Public Data Portal
  - MGNREGA Dashboards
  - MGNREGA Report Cards for Bihar Officers
  - MGNREGA Village View
PAYMENT DELAYS UNDER MGNRGEA

AN ANALYSIS
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

• Payment Disbursal process involves multiple steps and actors
  • Block Office
  • Gram Rozgar Sewak (GRS)
  • Engineers/Technical Assistant
  • Village/Panchayat Administration

• For FY 2014-15, across most states/UTs, average time for wage payment was more than 15 days
  • Of 20 states/UTs for which data is available, only Puducherry has an average < 15 days

• Most delays happening at three stages
  • MR Closure to Data Entry into MIS
  • MIS Data Entry to Wage List Generation
  • First Sign on FTO to Second Sign

• Delays are proving detrimental to beneficiaries and MGNREGA’s appeal
  • Undermining the goal of smoothing income shocks
  • Evidence that demand is lowered by delays in payment
PAYMENT PROCESSING SYSTEM
(EXAMPLE FROM UTTAR PRADESH)

1. ATTENDANCE FILLING IN MUSTER ROLL (M.R.)
   - GRS

2. CLOSURE OF M.R.
   - GRS

3. MEASUREMENT OF WORK IN MEASUREMENT BOOK (M.B.)
   - TA

4. VERIFICATION OF M.R. & M.B. AT VILLAGE LEVEL
   - Sachiv/TA

5. SUBMISSION OF M.R. & M.B. COPIES TO BLOCK OFFICE

6. DATA UPLOAD INTO MIS AT BLOCK OFFICE
   - APO/CO

7. WAGE LIST GENERATION
   - APO/CO

8. RECONCILIATION OF WAGELIST WITH COPY OF M.R.
   - AO

9. Closure of M.R.
   - APO/CO

10. Wage List Generation
    - BDO

11. Bank Processing of Payments

Note: White boxes beneath steps present the officials responsible for implementing that step.

**Official Roles:**
- GRS - Gram Rozgar Sewak
- APO - Assistant Program Officer
- TA - Technical Assistant
- AO - Accounts Officer
- CO - Computer Operator
- BDO - Block Development Officer
Note: Time-stamped data was unavailable for other states
INTRA-STATE DISPARITIES IN PAYMENT PROCESSING FY 2014-15

PUNJAB- ONE OF THE WORST PERFORMERS (BEST AND WORST-PERFORMING DISTRICTS)

JHARKHAND- ONE OF THE BEST PERFORMERS (BEST AND WORST-PERFORMING DISTRICTS)
• **Major bottlenecks at three steps**
  - MR Closure to Data Entry into MIS
  - MIS Data Entry to Wage List Generation
  - First Sign on FTO to Second Sign

**NUMBER OF DISTRICTS (OUT OF 438) WHERE INDIVIDUAL STEPS TAKE MORE THAN 15 DAYS (WEIGHTED AVERAGE) FOR FY 2014-15**

- **181 districts**
- **128 districts**
- **65 districts**

Note: Time-stamped data available for 438 districts (of 676 total)
• MR Closure to Data Entry into MIS
  • Informational Failures among GRS, Engineers, Block Office, Sachiv
  • Data Connectivity Problem at the Block Office
  • Violation of deadlines by officials due to over-burdened work schedules, lack of motivation, etc

• MIS Data Entry to Wage List Generation
  • Uploading only MR details in time, and not MB details
    • Engineers violating deadlines

• First Sign on FTO to Second Sign
  • BDO’s unavailability
  • Data Connectivity Problem at the Block Office

*SOURCES OF DELAY (2/2)*

*Based on field scoping in MP, UP*
CONSEQUENCES OF DELAYS

• Purpose of MGNREGA is defeated
  • Harder to effectively smooth income throughout the year when faced with delays

• MGNREGA becomes unattractive source of employment
  • Delays make other sources of employment more attractive

• New avenues for informal lending by richer individuals in village
  • Sarpanch may provide upfront payments, and then recover money with his share*

* Anecdotal evidence found in MP, UP
A Management and Information Tool
- Aimed at fixing responsibility for delays at the ground level
- Currently under development (final stages)
- Pace of development currently contingent upon response from MoRD’s NIC unit

Major Features
- Cost-effective
- Real-time updates
- Benchmarking

Part of our ongoing engagement with the MoRD
- Work order Issue
AVERAGE (WEIGHTED) NUMBER OF DAYS AT EACH STEP OF PAYMENT PROCESSING (FY 2015 TILL JUNE’15)

- MR Closure to Data Entry
- Data Entry to Wage-List Generation
- Wage-List Generation to Wage-List Signature
- FTO Generation to First Sign
- First Sign to Second Sign
- Second Sign to Bank Confirmation

15-DAY MARK

Stipulated Payment Time from MR Closure (15 days)
APPENDIX-2

CHHATTISGARH MGREGA PAYMENT PROCESSING PERIODS

Apr-Jun 2014

Average for total processing: 31.8 days; Average for 1st step: 11.4 days

Jul 2014-Mar 2015

Average for total processing: 155.6 days; Average for 1st step: 20.7 days

Graphs by period

- MR Closure to Data Entry
- Entry to Wage List
- Wage List to WL Sign
- WL Sign to FTO
- FTO to Sign

- 1st Sign to 2nd Sign
- 2nd Sign to Processing