

Rural Development & Mnrega

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ABSTRACT

One significant and unique fact about MGNREGA is that it has provided a fair opportunity to people from rural India to earn their own income without any discrimination of caste, gender and Sex. Most remarkable feature of NREGA is that it pays women the same as men, something that was virtually unimaginable in rural India. The MGNREGA aims to achieve the twin objectives of rural development and employment. These two objectives are a landmark and milestone and would help to enhance human resources for inclusive growth.

Keywords: MNREGA, Employment

INTRODUCTION

Government of India through National Rural Employment guarantee Act 2005 aims to provide for enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult member volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

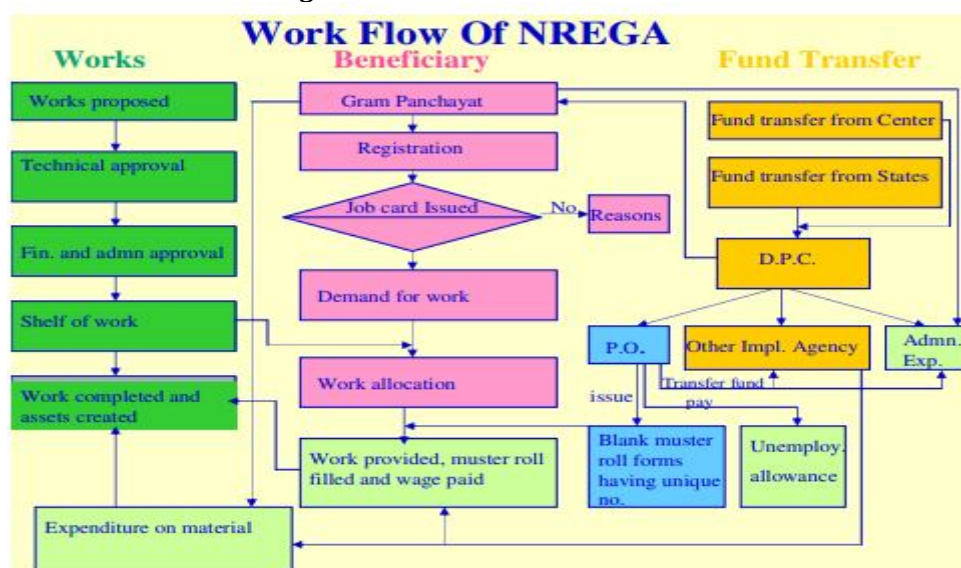
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) refers to the world's largest welfare program, run by the Government of India It is a job guarantee scheme for rural Indians. It was enacted by legislation on 25 August 2005.

The scheme provides a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of paid employment in every financial year to adult members of any household willing to do unskilled manual work related to public work at the statutory minimum wage of 120 (US\$1.80) per day in 2009 prices. If they fail to do so the government has to pay the salary at their homes. The central government outlay for the scheme was 4000 billion (US\$61 billion).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the overall performance of the MGNREGA
- To study the role of rural development through MGNREGA

Fig No-1.1: Workflow of MNREGA



Source: <https://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/iceg.pdf>

The act was first proposed in 1991 by P.V. Narasimha Rao. It was finally accepted in the parliament and commenced implementation in 625 districts of India. Based on this pilot experience, NREGA was scoped up to cover all the districts of India from 1 April 2008. The statute is hailed by the government as "the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world". In its World Development Report 2014, the World Bank termed it a "stellar example of rural development".

The MGNREGA was initiated with the objective of "enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Another aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds and wells). Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and minimum wages are to be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal entitlement.

MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by gram panchayats (GPs). The involvement of contractors is banned. Labour-intensive tasks like creating infrastructure for water harvesting, drought relief and flood control are preferred. Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, NREGA can help in protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND MGNREGA

Rural Development has different aspects covering long term and short term aspects. Certain activities like sanitation, agriculture, road, electricity, health facility, skill development, market linkage, awareness about basic facilities, digital inclusion etc. Rural population gets wages if drought like situation erupts so it should be continued to stop migration to cities and for rural mass uplift it is necessary. Labour-intensive tasks like creating infrastructure for water harvesting, drought relief and flood control are preferred in MGNREGA which helps the economic development in rural areas. The MGNREGA provides wages to rural employees against work done for the development of rural areas. The various works for the economic development of rural areas done through MGNREGA are as follows:

1. Water Conservation and water harvesting.
2. Drought proofing, tree plantation.
3. Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works.
4. Irrigation facilities for landowners by households belonging to SC/ST or to land of beneficiaries of the INDIRA AWAAS YOJANA.
5. Renovation of traditional water bodies.
6. Land development
7. Flood control and protection of works, including drainage of water-logged areas.
8. Rural connectivity to provide all weather roads.
9. Any other work, which may be notified by the Central government in consultation with the state governments

By these development works the MGNREGA has provided a main role in infrastructure development in rural areas of India. There is a visible change in development in rural areas of India by MGNREGA like the development of roads, development of irrigation canals, development of housing in rural areas etc.

There has always been a debate about the effectiveness of NREGA in terms of coverage of the target group, and also it is criticized on two grounds that it is expensive and corruption will not allow it to succeed, the experience of Maharashtra shows that it is partly true. The scheme is successful in terms of asset creation, watershed development, prevention of drought, large scale administration of rural public works and reduction in large scale migration. The scheme is also successful in terms of coverage of weaker sections of the society. However, the major problem relates to the employment generation as the mandays generated and the

number households provided 100 days of employment are quite low in almost all the districts of Maharashtra. With the sole exception of providing employment opportunities to the weaker sections of the society, the Act has not been able to succeed in any of its other provisions.

In Maharashtra, only 34 per cent households registered under NREGA received job cards, which is quite a low proportion. The wages offered under NREGA are low in several districts of the state, which could be due to improper methods of measurement of productivity. The other problems relating to wages encompass lack of information on the part of workers about wage rates for different kinds of work in different types of terrain, lack of their bargaining power, fudging of muster rolls leading to low wage payment, difficulty in understanding the mode of payment-mix of cash and kind as prescribed in Maharashtra, etc. However, the NREGA is much better scheme than any other employment related programmes. It has still to do a lot of catching to make its presence felt in different parts of the country. The linking of employment guarantee schemes with other schemes of public works will certainly improve skill levels among workers, though this will require improved levels of coordination in the public sector.

MGNREGA would lead to empowerment of various sections of the society –the development of personal competencies and skills to the process of challenging the existing power relations, household decision making, gaining access, control over resources like credit, income, it and, knowledge and subjective variables like sense of personal power and self-efficacy. The choice of works suggested in the Act address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is maintained on a substantial basis. A well designed employment guarantee programme can, under favourable circumstances, promote job creation, gender equality and pro-poor development.

CONCLUSION

MGNREGA has a great potential for increasing the volume of employment among the rural unemployed. It provides ample opportunities for creating rural public assets, which have been largely neglected. It helps to enhance the purchasing power of rural households, thereby contributing to poverty alleviation.

MGNREGA has played in providing a measure of inclusive growth. It has given the people the right to work, to re-establish the dignity of labour, to ensure people's economic and democratic rights and entitlements, to create labour intensive infrastructure and asset, and to build the human resource base of the country.

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