

A Study of The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

***Dr. Bharat Lal Meena**

ABSTRACT:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Work Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), launched by the Indian government in 2006, aims to increase the livelihood security of rural impoverished people by offering 100 days of guaranteed employment. This essay examines if the goal of the project was accomplished and considers whether it contributed to the growth of the rural poor. The author concludes the essay by outlining the necessary adjustments that must be made in order to successfully implement the scheme's goals.

Keywords: MGNREGA, MNREGA, Rural Development, Rural Employment

Introduction

Development of the rural household is essential for the development of India as a whole through inclusive and equitable growth, and doing so would unleash the potential of the enormous rural household that are currently in a state where there is no access to basic amenities and they are deprived of their essential needs to survive in this world. To address this issue, the Government of India launched its flagship programme, the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty." It is acknowledged as the greatest public works project in the world in terms of employment. The adult members of a rural household now have the legal right to request employment in public projects for at least 100 days per year under this law. Initiated with the goal of "improving 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 labour," this project has since expanded to include other types of employment.

The individual who applies for employment under this programme must get it within 15 days after the application; if it is not granted within that period, the applicant is eligible for unemployment benefits. The reduction of poverty in rural regions is the project's ultimate goal. In 2006, the initial phase of this act's implementation encompassed more than 200 districts. In 2007, it was expanded to cover 150 more districts, and starting in 2008, all rural regions were included.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a programme that guarantees employment. It came into effect on August 25, 2005. Senior members of any family who

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desire to work in an unskilled capacity are legally guaranteed at least 100 days of paid employment per year under this programme. If they don't do it, the government need to give their homes a wage. In the fiscal year 2010–2011, the central government provided RS 4000 billion in funding for this initiative. The purpose of this effort is to increase the buying power of rural residents who are illiterate or unskilled. Women make up around one-third of the workforce. On October 2, 2009, Gandhi's birthday, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), formerly known as this statute, was renamed "Mahatma Gandhi." The programme received a lot of criticism in 2011 because to controversies involving unscrupulous officials, a dearth of funds

The salient features of the Act –

1. Right to Work - In accordance with Article 41 of the Indian Constitution, which commands the state to ensure all citizens' "right to work," the Act grants adult members of rural households who are willing to work the right to undertake unskilled manual labour.
2. Time-Bound Employment Guarantee - The Act stipulates a 15-day window within which an application must be hired; if not, the applicant is entitled to employment allowance.
3. Each family is guaranteed a minimum of 100 days of paid work every fiscal year.
4. Decentralized planning: The major players in this endeavour are the Gram Sabhas. They are granted the authority to make recommendations, and 50% of the projects suggested by gramme sabhas are carried out. The PRIs handle the planning, execution, and monitoring.
5. Worksite Amenities - This programme provides employment at locations with a variety of amenities, including a crèche, drinking water, shade, and first aid kits.
6. Women's Empowerment - Women must make up at least one-third of the total number of employees.
7. Accountability and transparency - To guarantee accountability and the use of grievance redressal channels, the finances in question are audited on a regular basis.
8. Work that requires a lot of labour is at least 60% labor-intensive and 40% material-intensive.
9. Implementation: This plan must be put into operation, and the state government is in charge of doing so. The state government is required by sections 3 and 4 of this act to guarantee rural households 100 days or more of unskilled manual labour per fiscal year.
10. Funding - The central government bears the whole cost of material expenses, including the pay of semi-skilled and skilled labourers, as well as 100% of the wages for unskilled manual labour. The state government is responsible for covering 100% of the unemployment benefit as well as 25% of the earnings of skilled and semi-skilled labourers.

The government offers several hypothesised methods where the guaranteed employment in public work programme like these would lessen poverty, although it is unclear how giving employment of 100 days of unskilled physical labour will improve the current status of the rural home. Programs like

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the MNREGS provide minimum pay to those who work, increasing the income of rural residents, increasing their spending power and giving them access to the essentials that they would not otherwise have. Look through the available facts to determine if the MNREGS led to development in rural households or not.

Significance of the Act

1. The biggest recruiting system ever created by humans, MGNREGA is unlike any previous payroll system in both composition and push. Its rights-based, people-centered framework is one-of-a-kind and has never been stronger. A formal guarantee of wage is provided by MGNREGA.
2. A formal guarantee of wage hiring is provided by MGNREGA. It is a demand-driven system, meaning that people who desire money must find work in order for there to be employment.
3. Both when it fails to supply the employee with basics and when it is slow to pay the employee, there are legal measures for benefits and compensation.
4. Through its targeted payees, or the significant percentage of the lowest and most vulnerable people who look for work under this specific Scheme, MGNREGA solves the identification challenges. The legislation encourages nations to create jobs since it covers 100% of the cost of unskilled labour and
5. The MGNREGA is driven by demand and the movement of resources from institutional to globally depending on the need for service in each government, in contrast to the previous wage plans based on allocation. This gives States more motivation to use this Act to address the employment demands

Analysis

The MNREGA project has now lasted for eleven years, having completed 10 years of operation. Since its start, this initiative's reach has expanded yearly. Since 2006, almost 90 crore rural households have received job cards, and out of them, roughly 35% have requested work. Almost 98% of those who requested employment have received one.

An average of 4.5 crore families each year, or close to 30% of the country's rural household population, received employment during the years 2006–07 and 2014–15, totaling an estimated 40 crore households. Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal are the six states. From the beginning of this effort till the latest fiscal year, which was 2015–16, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have provided employment to more than 4 crore households. Up till this point, 2-3 crore families have been employed in each of the following states: Karnataka, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh. All other states have collectively employed fewer than 1.5 crore households.

The MNREGA initiative only guarantees partial employment because it is only required to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed employment per household (which is rarely achieved), and because

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there are frequently multiple workers in a household. As a result, households should rely on alternative employment in different fields like the agriculture sector or any other sector or casual labour work. The daily pay rates granted under the MNREGA vary from Rs. 80 to Rs. 150; the average daily wage rate is Rs. 100.

The minimum pay rate required under the Minimum Wages Act of 1948 was lower in several states than the wage rate supplied through the MNREGA programme. However, even though the MNREGA salaries were less than those mandated by the Minimum Wages Act, they were still more than the going rate for unskilled labour employed in agriculture and other industries.

The Survey found that by giving rural families guaranteed wage jobs, the MNREGA was effective in raising their yearly income. More than 60% of the households that took part in the survey acknowledged that the MNREGA initiative's wages had a positive impact on their annual income, which ranged from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 10000. Nearly 8% of the households reported an increase in their family's annual income of more than Rs. 10000, while the remaining households only reported an increase of up to Rs. 5000. 17 Nearly 98% of the households agreed that the money.

Utilization Pattern	No. of families	Percentage (%)
Good Food	141	81
Children's Education	126	72
Health related Expenditure	112	64
Household Things	61	35
Buying things for agriculture	49	28
Renovation of the house	25	14
Irrigation work	14	8
Paid back debts	11	6.3
New insurance policy	7	4

Suggestion

The MNREGA aims to increase rural residents' livelihood security by guaranteeing them 100 days of work. Statistics, however, demonstrate that state governments do not guarantee 100 days of work, and the typical number of employment days is quite low in comparison to the statutory minimum. If state governments take the necessary steps to assure that rural households obtain 100 days of guaranteed work, it would provide those households more money, which will help with their growth. This would improve the food security of the rural home and save the extra expense that was paid for their lunch, resulting in greater revenue at their disposal. New provisions for providing free lunch for the employees at the job must be incorporated in the law.

Conclusion

The MNREGA programme has given rural households the ability to improve their buying power, live a pleasant life with all the necessities provided, educate their children, and enjoy a number of additional advantages. The MNREGA has given rural households the extra money they need to spend on a higher standard of living. The survey data shows that 89% of households have electricity connections, 45% have televisions, and nearly 40% have access to mobile phones.²¹ This is the good

news, but sadly, the MNREGA's benefits are insufficient to help rural households, as 83% of them did not have LPG connections and 80% did not have access to mobile phones. Therefore, improving the quality of life for rural residents will need significant effort. Consequently, the MNREGA programme has undoubtedly developed rural households, allowing them to access numerous facilities and improving their quality of life, but this development is limited, MNREGA has not completely developed rural households, and it is not possible for MNREGA to develop the rural household completely on its own. Only until the federal and state governments implement policies and activities that promote rural household growth and development will this full development be possible.

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