



IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGA SCHEME IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, MGNREGA aims at providing employment to the weaker section of society in rural areas to guarantee the right to work. The main purpose of this act was to provide livelihood to every adult member of the house. Especially unskilled workers willing to work and guarantee them work for 100 days in a financial year. Another purpose of this scheme was to provide inclusive and sustainable development by building roads, canals, bridges, dams etc. with the help of these unskilled labourers and also guarantee them wages for their work. The main objective of this paper is to throw some light on the developments made by the government under the MNREGA scheme as the scheme was implemented by UPA government and still carried on by NDA government in addition to various schemes for the weaker section of the society.

KEY WORDS: NREGA, MNREGA, Unskilled Labour, employment, Government.

INTRODUCTION

MGNREGA aims to guarantee the right to work by providing employment for people to support their way of life in rural areas of the country. The act was passed with the goal of increasing the security of rural residents' by providing means of subsistence through the provision of guaranteed wage jobs. The NREGA Act was brought out on August 23, 2005, by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh. This act aims to give every household with members who are willing to perform unskilled manual labour at least 100 days of paid employment in a financial year.

The MGNREGA was set up with the objective of "improving rural areas' livelihood security." Another purpose of MGNREGA is to create durable assets ,such as roads, canals, ponds and wells etc. Within 5 kilometres of an applicant's home, employment must be available, and minimum wage must be paid. Applicants are eligible for an unemployment payment if employment is not found within fifteen days of applying. If the government fails to provide them work, it has to provide certain unemployment allowances to those people.



Therefore, employment under MGNREGA is a legally entitlement of job to the people living in rural areas.

MGNREGS provides employment to the labourers in rural areas by registering them and providing ID cards and guarantees job of hundred days for each financial year. The scheme includes non skilled workers with an effort to make inclusive and sustainable development of the country. The act of NREGA was passed under labour laws in 2006 in 200 districts. Till 2008, it covered almost all over the country. Later on the scheme was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

MGNREGS has helped the country in decreasing the poverty by helping poor people earning their livelihood. This aspect cannot be ignored according to the International Food Policy Research Institute's Global Hunger Index, there was a decrease in underweight children below five years of age. Only 30 percent of children were left underweight in 2014 as compared to 43.7 percent in 2005 reports. Besides providing economic security to the unskilled labour it has also helped in women empowerment, protecting the environment, reducing social inequality and reducing labour unrest and migrations.

OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of the research paper is to check the implementation of MNREGA with criticism and suggestion to improve.

1. To view the successful implementation of MNREGA by government in rural areas.
2. To critically view the scheme with suggestions to make some improvements.

Implementation of MGNREGA

Gram Panchayats were responsible for the implementation of MGNREGA in every district of the country. According to the reports of MNREGA by government sources, since the implementation of MNREGA the total expenditure incurred by the government of India was 289817.04 crores and provided employment to 68,26,921 workers on 2,61,942 sites of work till June 2015. The minimum wages guaranteed per day was Rs. 100 but later keeping in view the State Labour Employment Act, the rates were revised by the states and range was increased. In Bihar it increased to 163 Rs and in Kerala it rose to 500 Rs.

After the implementation of MGNREGS it has been criticised on many grounds that it leads to corruption and it is also treated as election card for the government. According to some critics it increases inequality because the benefits of the scheme do not reach the



labourers actually; ultimately it is a cause of financial drain for the country's resources. There are varieties of reasons for the unsuccessful implementation of this scheme.

The system of social audit was also introduced under this scheme in order to remove the discrepancies if any. System of social audit was introduced to exhibit a great interest in social security.

Social Audit

Social audit guarantees transparency by checking and scrutiny of accounts and records by public. Basically, social audit was implemented in order to keep a check on MGNREGS to avoid corruption and inequality. Reviewing official records is a process used to determine whether or not the state's stated expenditures match with the actual ones. Civil Society organisations, Non Government Organisations, Political Representatives, Civil Servants organised such social audits to remove mass corruption.

In order to keep a check on these schemes Mobile Monitoring System was also introduced, this was real time monitoring of the projects and their progress under labour employment scheme. This was also helpful in regulating attendance and progressive work environment on the sites. The government at the same time sanctioned 147 crores to strengthen the system of social audit used by the MGNREGS.

The objectives of social audit were correct identification of requirements, proper utilization of funds, to priorities developmental activities, to fill the physical and financial gap and scrutiny of different policy decisions. Proper documentation and availability of documents is a part of social audit, which leads to improvement in standard of governance and provides benefit to disadvantage people.

Criticism of MGNREGS

The public has attacked MNREGA for corruption and leaks in its implementation. It has been found that some people have received benefits and money for work that they either did not accomplish or did merely on paper. In some cases, the applicants or beneficiaries were not poor in the first place.

One of the main criticisms of the MGNREGA is that a lot of the funds distributed by the government were misappropriated by the middlemen, leaving many MGNREGA employees with unpaid salaries or wages that were below minimum wage. Most MGNREGA employees in Mahuadand, a town in Jharkhand, did not receive their payments, and some are receiving



less than the minimum wage or were handed 5 kg of rice by private contractors in lieu of pay. It is also criticised for making agriculture less profitable. Landholders oppose the scheme on the grounds that landless labourers are lazy and don't want to work on farms since they can make money at MNREGA work sites without doing anything, which may force them to sell their land. MNREGA has been referred to as "an inefficient instrument of shifting income to the poor" by economists like Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya. Then general thinking is that it costs five rupees to transfer one rupee to NREGA workers. Economists including Surjit Bhalla have referred to it as an unsuccessful scheme.

Suggestions to Save MNREGA

During the combined meeting of the national leadership of CITU, AIAWU, AIDWA, and AIKS in New Delhi, a list of demands titled "Save MGNREGA" was put forth. The discussion of the new government's dilution of the MGNREGA programme was on the agenda for the meeting. The demands or proposals that were made during the meeting are listed below.

1. The government should increase the budgetary allotment for the programme by increasing the amount to rupees 300 and number of days should be increased to two hundred rather than hundred days.
2. The MNREGA programme should be expanded to include urban parts of the nation as well as rural areas, and all cardholders should be guaranteed at least 150 days of employment.
3. The minimum wage should be properly enforced, and wage payment issues like delay in payment of wages should be addressed.
4. Applicant who demands job should be given job card and employment benefits should also be given after fifteen days.
5. In order to check proper implementation of the scheme, Gram Sabhas should be strengthened to ensure that the programme is implemented properly and to combat corruption.
6. When farm work becomes available, the few older people who are unemployed for at least eight months a year head there first. Farmers hire only young, strong people to work in their farms and reject the others, therefore many older people are unemployed most of the time. So the suggestions should be followed for the successful implementation of the scheme and to eradicate poverty and provide employment to the needy people in the actual sense.



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