

MGNREGA: A HOPE FOR THE BETTERMENT FOR RURAL PEOPLE

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ABSTRACT

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was developed by the Indian government to reduce rural poverty through 100 days of guaranteed employment per year. Although MGNREGA offered some basic employment for marginalized groups, it did not provide substantial help to the most vulnerable. However, there was some evidence of small but significant shifts in labour relations. Higher wages, more opportunities for work, better implementation and a greater recognition of the care giving responsibilities of women will be required for this policy to fully meet its goals. This Paper is a modest attempt to study about the benefits of MGNREGA.

Key Words: Employment, Poverty, MGNREGA.

INTRODUCTION:

The Government of India has introduced several nationwide centralized social schemes to address poverty. One such scheme is The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (hereafter referred to as MGNREGA), offering a unique rights-based guarantee of employment to reduce income and food insecurity in rural areas. Significant investment has been made in this scheme, amounting to 5.3 billion dollars (Ministry of Rural Development, 2013–14), or 0.3% of the gross domestic product. Given the size of this policy platform, the substantial amount of public money invested in it and the potential impact on rural citizens, it is important to ascertain the extent to which MGNREGA has reached its stated policy goals. This article sets out to do this through assessing the extent to which this scheme has been able to provide rights-based social protection through

guaranteed employment for marginalized groups, particularly SC, ST and women. In addition, we ask a theoretical question: will this policy achieve meaningful poverty reduction for marginalized citizens in India.

The MGNREGA programme was implemented following a number of government employment programmes developed in response to the persistent poverty and inequality plaguing rural India. MGNREGA is the largest rural employment scheme in the world. It is described by the Government of India as a rights-based, demand-driven, self-selecting, bottom-up scheme. In addition to providing rural households with supplementary employment, MGNREGA also seeks to encourage and facilitate the empowerment of women through financial inclusion and independence, strengthen civic participation, as well as improve the rural landscape.

The Indian employment scheme was introduced in 2005, and was renamed MGNREGA in 2009, after the scheme had been rolled out across all Indian states. Under the scheme, adult members of rural households are guaranteed 100 days of employment each year at the statutory minimum wage rate of the state or greater, provided they are willing to do unskilled manual labour. Included in this employment scheme is the guarantee that if the government is unable to provide a job to a qualified applicant within 15 days of an application being submitted, the applicant will receive unemployment insurance.

THE STATED GOALS OF THIS POLICY ARE:

- 1) Social protection;
- 2) The creation of durable assets (such as water security, soil conservation, higher land productivity) through the manual labour conducted by the workers;
- 3) Employment of disadvantaged workers such as women, SC and ST; and 4) inclusive growth in rural India through the policy's impact on livelihood security and democratic empowerment.

India is mainly an agricultural country in which the strength of rural unskilled labour is very high and majority of the rural poor depends mainly on the wages they earn through unskilled, casual, and manual labour. The main significance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is to improve the livelihood conditions of the rural poor by providing 100 days of employment to any rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. The Act provides an opportunity to work in the lean season, which helps rural poor to maintain the consumption level and strengthen the livelihood resource base during this critical time period. Only the growth of economy cannot create social justice and balanced development unless, it is attached with poverty alleviation and employment generating opportunities for deprived

and marginalised section of the society. Thus, a study on MGNREGA as a hope to reduce rural poverty has been taken in the village Shanoo of district kupwara of state Jammu and Kashmir. Keywords: MGNREGA, Unskilled labour, Rural Livelihood, Poverty etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to assess the generation of employment and how far the poverty is alleviated and the definite objectives are as per following:

- To analyse the role of MGNREGA for Generation of employment in Rural India.
- How MGNREGA able to alleviate the status of poor rural people

BENEFITS OF MGNREGA ARE OUTLINED IN A NUTSHELL BELOW:

- Providing unskilled work for rural India in the rural areas.
- Ensuring complete openness and ownership in the governance.
- Improvising the entire system of democracy.
- Ensuring sustainable development by developing the natural resources of land and water.
- Providing an important role to the Panchayati raj.

MGNREGA contributes to benefit the poor with a special inclination to develop land and water. This has made life easy for the families of poor farmers and villagers as they are able to earn better and do not have to move to metros to earn their bread and butter. Moreover, these schemes focus on making the environment cleaner and greener, hence reduces any risk that is directly proportional to climate.

CONCLUSION

Without doubt, MGNREGA is the flagship programme and produced benefits when it comes to the development of rural India. The whole employment structure has been changed by MGNREGA. Although, the programme has many parts which need developments. Above paper describe various pitfalls faced by this programme. When it comes to the generation of employment MGNREGA has more job card holders but the allotment of work is not satisfactory. The shortcoming in this part of MGNREGA is no providence of work when required by the card holders, in respect of which Government has to pay wages for that. Somehow data showed that MGNREGA is very much successful in a gripping rural economy. MGNREGA Stopped huge amount of

relocations, availability of work and above all increment in the wage structure in rural India. Fixed wage allotment under MGNREGA leads to change in the wage structure in private sector works done by the rural population.

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