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MGNREGA- THE SUCCESSFUL JOURNEY TOWARDS DECADE

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment. Over the decade, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has delivered the largest employment programme in human history, which is unlike any other in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, people-centred, demand-driven, self-selecting, rights-based design is new and unprecedented. Never have in such a short period so many crores of poor people benefited from a government programme. The study also depends on the reports published by the Government of India. Performance of MGNREGA is evaluated for the period 2006-07 to 2015-16 by considering number of persons employed, categories of persons employed.

Key words: Poverty, Unemployment, Inclusive growth and Employment programme.

1. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment. Over the decade, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has delivered the largest employment programme in human history, which is unlike any other in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, people - centered, demand - driven, self-selecting, rights-based design is new and unprecedented. Never have in such a short period so many crores of poor people benefited from a government programme. The Census of 2011 estimates that 833 million people continue to live in rural India. The Eleventh Plan saw an unprecedented injection of resources from the Union Budget to the rural and farm sector. This thrust forms the substance of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has provided a

major foundational support over the period of nine years since 2006-07.

2. Objectives

The present study is undertaken to assess the following objectives:

- 1) Growth of total the employment generated by MGNREGS.
- 2) Growth in the share of women in MGNREGS.
- 3) Growth in the Share of SC/ST Households in MGNREGS.

3. Methodology

The present study relies on secondary sources for information to analyze and infer the conclusions. The study also depends on the reports published by the Government of India. Performance of MGNREGA is evaluated for the period 2006 - 07 to 2015 - 16 by considering number of persons employed, Total job card issued, Employment provided to household categories of persons employed and Average person-days per household, Percentage of SC's/ST's and Women

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4. The Journey of MGNREGS

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a powerful instrument for inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment. Over the decade, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has delivered the largest employment programme in human history, which is unlike any other in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, people-centered, demand-driven, self-selecting, rights-based design is new and unprecedented. Never have in such a short period so many crores of poor people benefited from a government programme.

The Act was notified in 200 districts in the first phase with effect from February 2nd 2006 and then extended to an additional 130 districts in the financial year 2007-2008 (113 districts were notified with effect from April 1st 2007, and 17 districts in UP were notified with effect from May 15th 2007). The remaining districts have been notified under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA with effect from April 1, 2008. Thus, the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA covers the entire country (658 Districts) with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population.

Ever since work on MGNREGA was launched there have been two divergent perceptions about its relationship with agriculture – one, as a relationship of positive synergy and the other, of a potential source of conflict. The sources of synergy are many:

- 1) The MGNREGA has led to major increases in wages of rural workers and when we recognize the fact (attested by NSSO data on “landed laborers”) that the majority of MGNREGA workers are impoverished small and marginal farmers, especially in our tribal areas, we can see the direct impact MGNREGA has made on raising incomes of our small and marginal farmers.

- 2) The tightening of the labour market post-MGNREGA is a positive indicator of poverty alleviation and also signals a pressure for technological advances that raise farm productivity in areas of relative labour shortage. This is the process of agrarian transformation the world-over.
- 3) What is more, since a very large proportion (80 %) of the works under MGNREGA are also focused on soil and water conservation on the lands of the small and marginal farmers, it is clear that MGNREGA is making a potential contribution to raising their incomes through improved agricultural productivity, and also reducing the need for small and marginal farmers to continue to work on MGNREGA sites.

5. Provisions of MGNREGA

The main provisions of Act are

- 1) Employment to be given within 15 days of application for work.
- 2) If employment is not provided within 15 days, daily unemployment in cash is to be paid.
- 3) Employment within 5 km radius, else extra wages to be paid.
- 4) At least one-third beneficiaries have to be women.
- 5) Gram Sabha will recommend works.
- 6) Gram Panchayat to execute at least 50 percent of works.
- 7) PRIs have a principle role in planning & implementation.
- 8) Transparency, accountability & social audit would be ensured through institutional mechanism at all levels.
- 9) Grievance redressal mechanism to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation.



Table - 1: Lists of Employment Generation Programmes

S. No.	Programme	Year
1	Community Development Programme (CDP)	1952
2	Rural Manpower Programme (RMP)	1960
3	Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE)	1971
4	Intensive Rural Employment Programme (IREP)	1972
5	Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Scheme (MFAL)	1973
6	Food for Work Programme (FWP)	1977
7	National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)	1980-1989
8	Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)	1983-1989
9	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)	1989-1999
10	Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)	1993-1999
11	Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY)	1999-2002
12	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)	2001
13	National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP)	2004
14	NREGA 200 districts	2006
15	Extension of PhaseII-NREGA to additional 130 Districts	2007
16	NREGA PhaseIII-Extended to cover all rural districts of India	2008
17	NREGA renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and extended whole country	2009

Source: Adapted from annual reports of MGNREGA, MoRD, GoI

Table - 2: Performance Of MGNREGs in terms of employment generation

Employment generation	Total job card issued (in crore)	Employment provided to household (in crore)	Total Person-days generated (in crore)	SCs	STs	Women	Others	Average person-days per household
FY 2006-07 (200 dist.)	3.78	2.10	90.50	22.95 (25%)	32.98 (36%)	36.40 (40%)	34.56 (38%)	43
FY 2007-08 (330 dist.)	6.48	3.39	143.59	39.36 (27%)	42.07 (29%)	61.15 (43%)	62.16 (43%)	42
FY 2008-09 (615 dist.)	10.01	4.51	216.32	63.36 (29%)	55.02 (25%)	103.57 (48%)	97.95 (45%)	48
FY 2009-10 (619 dist.)	11.25	5.26	283.59	86.45 (30%)	58.74 (21%)	136.40 (48%)	138.40 (49%)	54
FY 2010-11 (626 dist.)	11.98	5.49	257.15	78.76 (31%)	53.62 (21%)	122.74 (48%)	124.78 (48%)	47
FY 2011-12 (626 dist.)	12.5	5.06	218.76	48.47 (22%)	40.92 (19%)	105.27 (48%)	129.38 (59%)	43
FY 2012-13 (632 dist.)	13.06	4.99	230.33	51.21 (22%)	41.00 (18%)	118.23 (51%)	138.27 (60%)	46
FY 2013-14 (632 dist.)	13.15	4.79	220.34	49.79 (23%)	38.23 (17%)	116.24 (53%)	132.29 (60%)	46
FY 2014-15	13.20	4.14	166.29	27.51 (22%)	20.18 (17%)	67.32 (50%)	73.57 (61%)	40
FY 2015-16 (till Oct 2015)	13.04	3.07	100.11	24.03 (24%)	18.02 (18%)	54.06 (54%)	58.06 (58%)	33

Source: Ministry of Rural Development Report to the People.

Available online at: http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/writereaddata/Circulars/RTP_English15.pdf and http://nrega.nic.in/circular/People_Report.html. Last accessed on October 31, 2015



6. The other intended benefits from MGNREGA apart from job creation and improving livelihood conditions of the rural poor are

- 1) To reduce distressed migration from rural to urban areas and from one part of rural to another part of rural areas
- 2) Creation of durable assets in rural areas
- 3) Invigorating civic and community life and enlivening of PRIs as they have been entrusted to formulate, implement and monitor the scheme
- 4) Empowerment of rural women through opportunity to earn income independently and to participate in social groups
- 5) Overall development of rural economy
- 6) Promotion of inclusive growth and development
- 7) Multiplier effects on the economy

7. Milestones of Employment Generation Programmes

Poverty and unemployment is largest problem of India. Since First five year plan government of India took severe steps to solve these two major problems. Since then India implemented several programs from year 1952.

8. The seven flagship programmes:

Besides above listed the following are the programmes which are popularly operating in the rural areas besides Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

- 1) National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)
- 2) Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)
- 3) National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) and Total Sanitation Campaign (TSP)
- 4) Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP)
- 5) Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
- 6) Rural electrification, including separation of agricultural feeders and Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY).

9. Performance of MGNREGA's:

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has provided basic income security to a large number of beneficiaries. It provides employment to around 5 crore households, on an average, every year. This is almost one-fourth of the total rural households in the country. Since its inception Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has generated 1931.57 Crore Person days; Total expenditure Rs.303198.49 crore. The Scheme's notified wages have increased across all States since 2006. The average wage earned per beneficiary has risen from Rs. 65 per person day in 2006 to Rs. 148 by 2015.

The Scheme has also contributed to ensuring greater food security, monthly per capita expenditure, savings, etc. In many parts of the country, spectacular successes have been recorded in water harvesting. Distress migration has been arrested in several areas. Some State Governments have been leaders in this and the National Consortium of Civil Society Organisations on MGNREGA has also set up examples of excellent work.

a) Growth of Employment provided to household:

The main objective of NREGA is to meet employment demand. The number of households provided employment are around 5 Crore per year (See table 1 below for details on employment generated)

b) Growth of Total Person-days generated:

There has been a significant increase in the person days generated in NREGA to reinforce the focus on employment and to augment employment generation opportunities. Totally 1926.98 Crore Person-days were generated.

c) Growth in the share of women in employment:

The Act stipulates that priority shall be given to women. In terms of implementation it mandates that a minimum of one-third of the beneficiaries are women who have registered and



have requested for work. Around half of the population employed in NREGA are Women.

d) Share of SC/ST Households in Employment

In terms of providing employment to members of SC & ST households in 2006-07 the figure stood at nearly 56%. Though the programme is not confined to any particular group, experience in almost all States shows that most of SC and ST families are under BPL and they have been able to get employment under NREGA.

10. Conclusion

The implementation of MGNREGA resulted in right to employment for at least 100 days in a year in rural areas. The Act creating community assets and right to employment benefitted small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers. The assets created resulted in increasing the productivity of agriculture. MGNREGA is not only necessary but also it has to be strengthened through convergence of various departments to pool technology, skill and resource for efficient delivery. MGNREGA created employment and hence income to hitherto excluded sections and thereby it lead to achieve inclusive growth in rural areas. MGNREGA not only delivered economic benefits but also many social benefits to the society to attain sustainable development. Hence, financial allocations to MGNREGA should not be curtailed but it should be strengthened by removing any pitfalls in its implementation. The continuation of MGNREGA is essential to curtail excess migration to urban areas and given the literacy rate in rural areas.

11. References:

- 1) Ministry of Rural Development (2006-10, 2012, 2013 and 2015), Government of India, "Report to the People", available at http://nrega.nic.in/circular/People_Report.html and http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/writereaddata/Circulars/RTP_English15.pdf, Accessed on 10th April 2015.
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