

PG Department of Geography, Patna University

Paper – Regional Geography

Unit- V

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An Introduction to MGNREGA

Introduction- Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the flagship programme of the Government to influence the life of poor masses positively and enhance their development. MGNREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is the first ever law internationally Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The primary objective of the MGNREGA is augmenting wage employment. Its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like deforestation, drought and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. To strengthen the democratic system and enhance transparency and accountability in it, the process outcomes are focused towards improving the grassroots methodology of democracy.

Objectives of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA -The basic objective of the MGNREGA is to enhance livelihood security of the people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year, to a rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The poor masses of rural areas are provided with an opportunity of means of

livelihood and access to durable assets under MGNREGA. The choice of works suggested in the Act address causes of chronic poverty like deforestation, drought and soil erosion so that the enable to sufficient generation of employment opportunities on a sustainable basis.

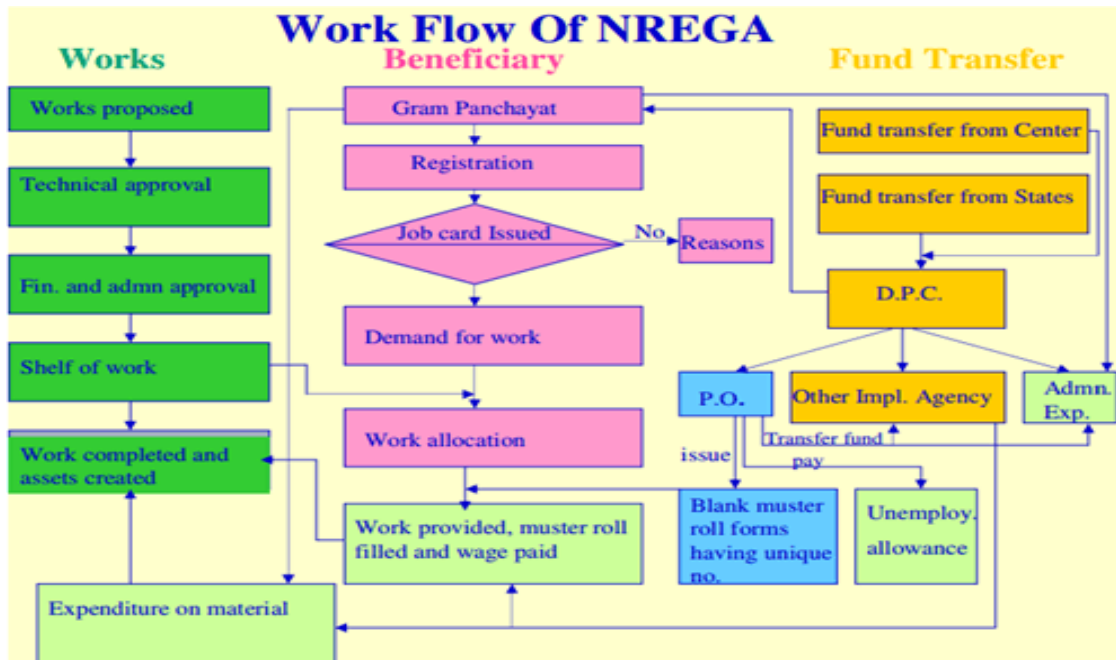
Goals of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA Specific goals of the Act are-To provide backup or alternative source of employment to the vulnerable groups of society so that they are strong and secure, both socially and economically. • To create durable assets and strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. • Flood management and drought-proofing in rural India.

- To act as a growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy.
- Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Castes (SCs) through the processes of rights based legislation.
- Deepening democracy at the grass- roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.
- Effecting greater accountability and transparency in governance.
- To eliminate or at least reduce practice of forced migration from rural to urban areas. In view of the above advantages, MGNREGA is much more than being simply an initiative of welfare. It is a constructive effort and a stepping stone for the development of Indian Economy.

Therefore Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has 3 distinct goals:

- Promotive
- Protective
- Preventive

It protects the rural poor from vulnerabilities by providing them demand based employment. It prevents risk associated with agricultural investment and forced migration of rural poor people. By increasing the demand of consumers, it indirectly promotes and enhances prosperity in the economy of rural areas. 87 Therefore Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is an influential instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on livelihood security, social protection and democratic empowerment.



Source: Official web site of MGNREGA (www.nrega.gov.in)

Features of the MGNREGA are-

- Registration of Rural Household for Wage Employment- Adult family members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work may apply for registration either orally or writing to the local Gram Panchayat (GP). Under the MGNREGA, each household is entitled to a 100 days of employment every year.
- Job Card for every registered household- Once all required mandatory documents and information are verified of place of residence and age of the members, the registered household is issued a job card (JC). A job card is to be issued within 15 days of registration. Job card forms the basis of identification for demanding employment. The job card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the households willing to work under MGNREGA. The registered households are not charged anything in lieu of the job card issued to them with photograph.

- Application for Work- written application seeking work is to be made to the Block Office or Gram Panchayat, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. A dated receipt is issued to the applicant for employment by Gram Panchayat.
- Allotment for Work- Within 15 days of submitting the application or from the date when employment is sought, employment should be provided by the Gram Panchayat.
- Payment of Unemployment allowance- In case the state fails to provide employment to the beneficiary within 15 days, it will pay an unemployment allowance to the MGNREGA beneficiary.
- Minimum Entitlement of Labourers - Wages are to be paid according to piece rate, as per the Schedule of Rates (SoRs). • Wages are also to be paid as per the State-wise Government of India (GoI) notified Mahatma Gandhi NREGA wages. • Payment of wages is mandatorily done through the joint/individual post office/bank beneficiary accounts. • Wages are mandatorily to be paid weekly. In no case can the payment be delayed beyond a fortnight. • Women are given the priority, such that at least one-third of the beneficiaries under the MGNREGA are women. • The location of work provided cannot be beyond 5 km, of the radius of the village. In case, work is provided beyond 5 km, extra wages of 10 percent are payable to meet living expenses and additional transportation.
- Worksite Management • In order to maintain the spirit of MGNREGA and keep wage employment as its main priority, MGNREGA mandates that in the total cost of works undertaken in a Gram Panchayat, the wage expenditure to material expenditure ratio should be 60:40. • To ensure that the direct benefit of MGNREGA goes to the workers without any hurdle, the Act prohibits the use of machinery or contractors in execution of the works. • Worksite facilities Work site facilities such as creche, shade and drinking water have to be provided.
- Creation of Durable Assets- The focus of the work is on Drought Proofing including afforestation and plantation • Water harvesting and water conservation including contour trenches, boulder checks, contour bunds, underground dykes, gabion structures, spring shed development, stop dams and earthen dams • Renovation of traditional water bodies including distilling of tanks • Land Development • Construction of storm water drains for coastal protection, flood control and protection works including drainage in

water logged areas including deepening and repairing of flood channels and chaur renovation • Rural connectivity to provide all weather access, including culverts and roads within a village, wherever it is considered essential • Irrigation canals including minor and micro irrigation works • Construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra as Knowledge Resource Centre at the Block level and as Gram Panchayat Bhawan at the Gram Panchayat level • Rural drinking water related works • Fisheries related works • Any other work which may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government.

- Accountability and Transparency Accountability and Transparency- and in the programme is ensured through the following: • Grievance redressal mechanisms and rules have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process. • Social Audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha at least once in every six months. • All accounts and records relating to the Act should be available for public scrutiny.

