MGNREGS: Empowerment of the Socially Disadvantaged People

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Started from 200 districts on 2 February 2006 under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (earlier known as NREGA) but now renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). It is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. It aims to ensure livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. In the financial year 2007-08 130 additional districts was added to NREGA (113 districts were included on April 1st 2007, and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh (UP) were included on May 15th 2007) and with the effect 1 April 2008 it covers almost all the district of the country. The establishment objective of NREGA was social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities, empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation

Thus, the present study attempts to critically examine the implementation process of this programme and its impact on tribal livelihoods. The study state there is a significant effect of MGNREGS on tribal livelihood and the socially disadvantaged people.

Keywords----- NREGA, tribal livelihood, socially disadvantaged people and right to work.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGS) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, mal-nourished children, anaemic pregnant women, farmer suicides, starvation deaths, migration resulting from inadequate employment, poverty, and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. In order to make solution of these problems and to provide livelihood security to rural unemployed, Government of India (GOI) enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. It is the biggest poverty alleviation programme in the world which is started with an initial outlay of Rs. 11,300 crore in year 2006-07 and now it is Rs. 40,000 crore (2010-11). This Act is called as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA from 2009. The Act provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household will to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Thus it is a universal programme. This minimum wage varies from state to state, in some states it is Rs. 80 whereas in other it is Rs. 125 or Rs. 120. According to the Act the minimum wage cannot be less than Rs. 60. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year. The MGNREGS has given rise to the largest employment programme in human history and is unlike any other wage employment programme in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, people centred, demand-driven, self-selecting, rights-based design is distinct and unprecedented.

II. OBJECTIVES OF MGNREGS

1. Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities
2. Livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity
3. Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India
4. Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation.
5. Strengthening decentralised, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives
6. Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions
7. Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance

Thus, MGNREGS is a powerful instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihoods security and democratic empowerment

Implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA (MGNREGS):

Implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA (MGNREGS) involves roles and responsibilities of a large number of stakeholders from the village to the national level. The key stakeholders are:

1. Wage seekers
2. Gram Sabha (GS)
3. Three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), especially the Gram Panchayat (GP)
4. Programme Officer at the Block level
5. District Programme Coordinator (DPC)
6. State Government
7. Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)
8. Civil Society
9. Other stakeholders [viz. line departments, convergence departments, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), etc.]

Basic Operational Criteria of MGNREGS:

1. The employment will be avail to elder person of the family who is ready to do an unskilled work
2. The employment should be provided within fifteen days after the application otherwise he/she will be eligible for unemployment allowance
3. Labour Material Ratio: The labour material ratios are meant to distribute project amount among labour and raw material. The Standard ratio for the distribution is 60:40 in which 60% are meant for unskilled labour and remaining 40% for skilled, semi-skilled and material like cement, road sariya, royalty and sign-board (as the requirement of the project)
4. A household may avail to 100 days of guaranteed employment in a financial year
5. Water Conservation and water harvesting
6. Water Conservation and tree plantation
7. Micro irrigation works and minor irrigation canals
8. Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by Schedule castes and scheduled tribes, beneficiaries of land reforms and beneficiaries of Indira Awas Yojana etc to be indicated separately
9. Renovation of traditional water bodies
10. Land development
11. Flood control & protection
12. Rural connectivity
13. Rajeev Gandhi Seva Kendra, Block resource centre to provide information
14. Agriculture related works like NDEP Composting, Vermi composting.
15. Animal wastage realted works like cowshed, goat shed, poultry shed
16. Fishries tank.
17. Rural sanitation works(Individual toilets, Aaganbadi Toilets, School Toilets..)
18. Play grounds Any other activity suggested by central government

III. HISTORY OF MGNREGS

NREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Govt. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) from 2001;National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) from 2004 were national rural employment schemes. Among these, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

IV. RESEARCH & METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study on MGNREGS the data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from the persons of MGNREGS. And different employees, labour and people who directly or indirectly connected with MGNREGS. Semi structured informal interviews also taken from selected households. Transect walk into the MGNREGS worksites were conducted to have firsthand experience on the MGNREGS works at the community level. The secondary data was gathered through MGNREGS guidelines, published reports of similar projects, journals and literature form social science discipline.

Objectives:

The objective of this study is to explore implementation procedure of MGNREGS in the NAINITAL district and the impact of MGNREGS on socially disadvantaged people.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The MGNREGS has plays a vital role in the growth of rural area population of the country. According to the recently World Bank Group’s report (July 2015) titled as “The State of Social Safety Nets 2015,” MGNREGS has been ranked as the world’s largest public programme.

The following are some important facts about MGNREGS:

1. Around 182 million beneficiaries (15 percent of India's population) are provided social security by MGNREGS (under Ministry of Rural Development).
2. The Mid-day meal scheme under the Ministry of...
3. The Janani Suraksha Yojna under the National Rural Health Mission has around 78 million beneficiaries and is the top-most social security programme in terms of conditional cash transfers. (Conditional cash transfers involve transfer of money only when the persons meet the certain criteria).

4. Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) launched by the Ministry of Rural Development is the second largest social security programme in the world for unconditional cash transfer.

5. The world’s top five largest social safety net programmes are all from the middle-income countries. Besides India, the other three countries are China, South Africa and Ethiopia.

6. The total expenditure of 120 developing countries for social safety is around 329 billion dollars. This expenditure is in the span of 2010 and 2014.

**Socio-Demographic Profile of the Job Card Holders:**

The following information is collected from www.nrega.in which shows socio demographic profile of the job card holder:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ramnagar</td>
<td>2273</td>
<td>468</td>
<td>2955</td>
<td>5696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Haldwani</td>
<td>2360</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3290</td>
<td>5650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kotabag</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4134</td>
<td>5549</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bhimtal</td>
<td>1443</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4517</td>
<td>5976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Okhalkand</td>
<td>2191</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6052</td>
<td>8243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dhari</td>
<td>1665</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1939</td>
<td>3604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Ramgarh</td>
<td>2784</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>2424</td>
<td>5251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Betalghat</td>
<td>2505</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4159</td>
<td>6664</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16636</strong></td>
<td><strong>527</strong></td>
<td><strong>29470</strong></td>
<td><strong>46633</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above figures shows that the total no. Of job card holder is 46633 out of which 36% (i.e. 16636) is SC job card holder and 1% (i.e. 527) belongs to ST category. The Nainital district MGNREGS focusing on the backward classes but majority 63% belongs to others category.

**The employment demanded and expected labour budget:**

The following table provide information about employment demanded and expected labour budget:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Cumulative No. of HH demanded employment (Till the August 2015)</th>
<th>Cumulative Labour Budget estimation of employment provided (Till the August 2015)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above figure shows that the total number of applicant who wants to work with MGNREGS is 9785 and the estimated budget till the reporting month is 719

The employment provided and expected labour budget:

The following table provide the detail about employability comparative to its demand and budget (in Lakhs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>Cumulative No. of HH provided employment (Till the reporting month)</th>
<th>No. of HH working under NREGA during the reporting month</th>
<th>Cumulative Labour Budget estimation of person days (Till the reporting month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramnagar</td>
<td>748</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0.3172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haldwani</td>
<td>731</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotabag</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhimtal</td>
<td>1487</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okhalkand</td>
<td>1327</td>
<td>366</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhari</td>
<td>1676</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramgarh</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betalghat</td>
<td>1797</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9785</strong></td>
<td><strong>2188</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.31718</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table shows that the employment is made available to all applicant but the number of working HH (households) under MGNREGS is only 22.36% (i.e. 2188) and the cumulative Labour Budget estimation of person days is 31718

Person Days Generated in MGNREGS for applicants:

The following table providing information about Cumulative person days generated (In lakhs):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Blocks</th>
<th>a</th>
<th>b</th>
<th>c</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>e</th>
<th>Cumulative person days generated (In lakhs) (Till the reporting month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SC</td>
<td>ST</td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramnagar</td>
<td>0.14124</td>
<td>0.12438</td>
<td>0.20560</td>
<td>0.47122</td>
<td>0.00720</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haldwani</td>
<td>0.02787</td>
<td>0.00010</td>
<td>0.11879</td>
<td>0.14676</td>
<td>0.05422</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotabag</td>
<td>0.05075</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.23689</td>
<td>0.28764</td>
<td>0.06784</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhimtal</td>
<td>0.05525</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.29071</td>
<td>0.34596</td>
<td>0.02000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Okhalkand</td>
<td>0.06121</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.24488</td>
<td>0.30609</td>
<td>0.09182</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhari</td>
<td>0.05990</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.24469</td>
<td>0.30459</td>
<td>0.06380</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramgarh</td>
<td>0.06950</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.06236</td>
<td>0.13186</td>
<td>0.05800</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betalghat</td>
<td>0.15457</td>
<td>0.00000</td>
<td>0.21889</td>
<td>0.37346</td>
<td>0.15272</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.62029</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.12448</strong></td>
<td><strong>1.62281</strong></td>
<td><strong>2.36758</strong></td>
<td><strong>0.51560</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above figures shows that 31% person days given to backward categories and the total percentage of woman person days is 21%

VI. FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The present research work has been undertaken to evaluate how far the MGNREGS empowered the disadvantaged people. During this study following facts have been identified:

1. Majority of the job cardholders are belongs to others not backward caste (i.e. 63%) and only 36% works were allotted to SC applicants and 1% to ST which is very low. This ration can be improvised by allotting more works to them.

2. The number of applicant who demanded the work from MGNREGS is 9785 and it is comparatively low. MGNREGS should motivate unskilled worker to do work under this project and earn money for their survival.

3. Out of 9785 applicant only 2188 applicant started their work under the project this means only 87.64% not joined yet

4. Only 31% person days is given to backward people and the woman worker person days is 21%. MGNREGS officer can enhance this ratio by motivating them toward this project so that they can empower them.

VII. CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. It provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have an impact on reducing migration, restricting child labour, alleviating poverty, and making villages self-sustaining through productive assets creation such as road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc. For which it has been considered as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. But the success of this Act depends upon its proper implementation. MGNREGS has three distinct important roles protective, preventive and promotive. Hence, It should provide more employment to tribunal livelihood to protect them. But as far as this study reveals that there is so much area where MGNREGS has to empowered some more disadvantaged people through this project because MGNREGS has a responsibility to mobilise their funds in the interior area of every district of the country where many unskilled yet has no work to do.

REFERENCES

[4] India Today, New Delhi, July 9, 2015