

## A Right to Employment: Mnrega

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**Abstract:** This paper deals with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MG NREGA) that what is the Act, what are its objectives and what are its salient features. As MNREGA was notified on September 7, 2005 and it guarantees 100 days wage employment in a financial year. helps in developing the village infrastructure, creates assets and empowers women. But despite its positive intentions towards rural development' it is not free from corruption.

**Keywords:** MNREGA, Rural Employment Guarantee, Village.

"MNREGA is work selection by people, demanded by people, done by people and audited by people." Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is Considered as world's largest welfare program, run by Government of India Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) was notified on September 7, 2005 to enhance livelihood security in rural areas. Under this Act, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MNREGA), came into force on February 2, 2006 from Anantpur in Andhra Pradesh. In beginning this Act was called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but on 2 October 2009 at Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary this was renamed with prefix "Mahatma Gandhi." Initially this scheme was started in 200 districts and aimed to cover whole of rural India by 2010. In April 2007. 138 districts were

added to scheme but from April 2008, this scheme was started in all districts of India.

### Main Objectives of Act

The Act is a significant legislation. Main focus of this Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing a legal guarantee of at least 100 days employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members are volunteer to do unskilled work.

- As it is a rural guarantee scheme for rural Indians, its aim is to provide strong social safety for miserable groups by providing a fall back employment source, when there is no other employment, available.
- MNREGA acts as growth engine for sustainable development of an agricultural economy as it provides employment on works that address

causes of chronic poverty such as draught, deformation and soil erosion by strengthening natural resource base of rural livelihood and creates durable assets in rural areas.

- It empowers rural poor by providing legal right to employment.
- It aims to provide a model of governance reform anchored on the principles of transparency and grass root democracy.

### Salient Features of the Act

- (i) Adult members of a rural Household, who are willing to do unskilled manual work can apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat.
- (ii) After verification, the Gram Panchayat will issue a job card with photograph and information of all adult members of that household Job card is free of cost.
- (iii) Job card should be issued within 15 days of application.
- (iv) A job card holder have to submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat mentioning the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen.
- (v) Gram Panchayat issues a dated receipt of the written application for employment and employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not provided then daily unemployment allowance has to be paid according to the Act. Liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the states.
- (vi) Work should be provided within 5km radius of the village otherwise 10% extra wages has to be paid to meet additional transportation and living expenses.
- (vii) Wages should be paid according to the Minimum Wage Act 1948 for agricultural labourers in the state, unless centre notifies a wage rate which will nto be less that Rs. 60/- per day.
- (viii) Equal wages will be paid to both men and women.
- (ix) Wags are paid according to piece rate or daily rate. Wages should be paid on weekly basis or not beyond of fortnight in any case.
- (x) At least one third beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme.

- (xi) Facilities such as crèche, drinking water, shade etc. at worksite should be provided.
  - (xii) The shelf of projects for a village i.e. what works should be done, will be recommended by the Gram Sabha and approved by the Zila Panchayat.
  - (xiii) At least 50% of works will be allotted to Gram Panchayat for execution.
  - (xiv) Major permissible works should include water and soil conservation offer-station and land development works.
  - (xv) A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained.
  - (xvi) No contractors and machinery is allowed.
  - (xvii) The central Government bears the 100 percent of wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 per cent of the material cost including the wages of skilled and semiskilled workers.
  - (xviii) Social Audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha.
  - (xix) Grievances of labourers should be given due response.
  - (xx) All accounts and records related to the scheme should be available on public demand.
- (i) Water conservation and water harvesting including contour trenches, contour bunds, bouldescheks, gabion structures underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams and sprinshed development.
  - (ii) Drought proofing including afforestation and tree plantation.
  - (iii) Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;
  - (iv) Provision of irrigation facility dug out farm pond, horticulture plantation from building and land development on land owned by households belonging to the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes or below poverty line families or the beneficiaries of land reforms or beneficiaries under the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India or that of small or marginal formers as defined in the agriculture debt Waiver and debt Relief Scheme, 2008, or the beneficiaries under the scheduled tribes and other tradition forest dwellers (Recognition of forest rights).

### Works taken up under MGNREGS

- (v) Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks.
- (vi) Land development.
- (vii) Flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas including deeping and repairing of flood channels, Chaur renovation, construction of storm water drains for coastal protection.
- (viii) Rural connectivity to provide all weather access, including culverts and roads within a village, wher ever necessary.
- (ix) Construction Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra as knowledge resource centre at the bock level and as Gram Panchyat Bhawanat the Gram Panchayat level.
- (x) Agriculture related works, such as NADEP composting, vermal composting, liquid bio-manures;
- (xi) Live stock related works such as poultry, shelter, goat shelter, and construction of Pucca floor, urine tank and fodder through for cattle shed a zalla as cattle feed supplement.
- (xii) Fisheries related works, such as fisheries in seasonal water bodies on public land.
- (xiii) Works in coastal areas, such as, fish drying yards, belt vegetation.
- (xiv) Rural drinking water related works, such as, soak pits recharge pits.
- (xv) Rural sanitation related works such as, individual household latrines, school toilet units, Anganwadi toilets, solid and liquid waste management.
- Construction of Anganwadi centers.
  - Construction of play fields.
- (xvi) Any other work which may be notified by the central government in consolation with the state govt.

### **Some Important points regarding MGNREGS**

- No cash payments should be made under MGNREGS.
- Payment should be done through bank or post offices.
- Payment should be made within 15 days of work.
- Equal wages shall be paid to both men and women.
- Only in districts/bocks/GPs where the penetration and network of banks and post offices is weak wages may be

disbursed in cash through payment committees.

- Weekly Muster Roll is a necessary and primary condition to ensure payment.
- Unemployment allowance will be paid if the wage payment is not made within 15 days.
- No contractors or machinery is allowed under this Act.
- A labour budget must be prepared in December every year for the next financial year.
- Labour budget should be based on labour demand, identification of works to meet this demand and estimated cost of works and wages.
- Labour budget should be approved by Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat, Block Samiti, Zila Parishad, State Government and Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India.
- Records to be maintained under NREGA include Job Card Application Register, Job Card Register, Employment Register, Works Register, Assets Register, Complaint Register, Muster Roll Issue Register, Muster Roll Receipt Register and Monthly Allotment and Utilization certificate, Watch Register.
- Though Gram Sabha

monitors all the works at the village level yet Vigilance and monitoring committees should be formed at village level to monitor the progress and quality of work while it is in progress.

- The right to information act is directly attached to this scheme. All key documents related to MNREGA should be disclosed to the public without waiting for anyone to apply for them.
- Fees charged for copies of MNREGA related documents should not exceed photocopying costs.
- MNREGA makes provision for monitoring and evaluation of works through social audit and Grievance Redressal cell.
- Social Audit of every work is must which is done by Gram Sabha.
- All the information related of NREGA should be uploaded through MIS on MRNREGA website.

MGNREGS is very useful and one of the best complement schemes in India. In past years, at the world level when most European Economies are facing the Economic crises and there is decrease in employment, the MGNREGS is considered as the pillar, who supported Indian Economy and fight with unemployment. MNREGA is considered as world's largest welfare programme run

by Government of India. It has provided 84 crores person days to different Household and total 84.86 works have been taken up under MNREGA. ([www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)) But despite its best intentions, it is not free from corruptions. Daily in news we are listening stories about corrupt official delayed payments, poor quality of work etc. Wright and Gupta (2011) stated that the programme has been a failure. Even in Rajasthan. despite years of spending and creation of government mandated unskilled rural work, no major roads have been built, no new hones, schools or hospitals or any infrastructure to speak of has resulted from the MNREGA. There are many other such related stories like payments to dead people, less payment, forced work, poor quality of work etc. But as there are failure stories, there are some success stories also which cited the development and progress in the lives of people due to MNREGA.

### **Conclusion:**

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a very effective and best employment scheme of till date, as its main objective is the 'creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor.' Act provides each and every detail regarding the scheme and every care has been made for best implementation of the scheme in the Act.

Though the scheme is facilitated with RTI and social audit yet it is required to implement it strictly to make this scheme corruption free. The officials who are involved in corrupt activities should be punished strictly.

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