

## PERFORMANCE OF MGNREGA IN CHHATTISGARH- AN ANALYSIS

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### ABSTRACT

*The ultimate objective of any democratic country is to achieve the objective of social welfare by solving the problems of chronic poverty, unemployment, hunger, and inequality etc. After the Independence, the Government of India has taken a number of steps for such purpose. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most important initiative with the objective of generating/providing employment opportunities to rural population. Since its enactment in 2005, it is playing a crucial role to provide the livelihood security and improving the living standards of rural Indians by securing a floor level of income and employment for them. This paper is an attempt to assessing the performance of the Act in Chhattisgarh state during the period from 2011-12 to 2020-21.*

**KEYWORDS:** MGNREGA, Employment Generation, Empowerment Of Women And Weaker Sections.

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### INTRODUCTION:

India calls the country of villages because around two-third of its population lives in rural areas which constitute the most backward, and deprived section of the population. As per the report realized by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) around 229 million Indian were poor at the end of year 2020. According to that report, in India around 90 percent of poor people i.e. 205 million were living in rural areas (TOI, October 17, 2022). Now a days one of the most important challenge before the country is to provide a decent standard of living by eradicate poverty and creating adequate livelihood opportunities.

After independence, the Government of India gave considerable importance to rural reconstruction and has implemented various rural development programs in forms of employment generation programs, social assistance programs, and many more schemes for providing specific facilities of housing, health and medical facilities. Employment generation programs are one of them. It has well recognized that employment security affects income security. A floor level of income may be secure by providing employment opportunities which automatically affects others determinants of social welfare by breaking the cycle of rural poverty and, therefore, the Government mainly concentrates on generation of more employment in rural areas.

In 2005, the Government of India took a historic step by enacting the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) which is presently known as MNREGA, by merging Swaranjayanti Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) & National Food for Work (NFFWP) with an objective to ensure livelihood security to rural population of the country by providing employment security.

**1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:** The study has been organized for the following objectives:

- To understand the provisions regarding the implementation process and mechanism of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.
- To examine the performance of MGNREGA in Chhattisgarh, and
- To identify the deficiencies in implementation mechanism and point out important suggestions for making it more effective.

**2. METHODOLOGY USED FOR STUDY:** The study is based on secondary data covering a period of ten years i.e. from 2011-12 to 20-21. The data has collected from various sources such as the official website of NREGA ([www.nrega.nic.in](http://www.nrega.nic.in)) and annual reports on MGNREGA in Chhattisgarh ([www.mgnrega.cg.nic.in](http://www.mgnrega.cg.nic.in)).

**3. DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY:** The study has been discussed in three parts. First part has covered an overview of MGNREGA covering its history, permissible works and its implementation mechanism. Whereas, performance of MGNREGA in respect of Chhattisgarh has been discussed in second part of the study.

## **PART-I**

**A. MGNREGA- A BRIEF HISTORY & ITS MAIN PROVISIONS:** The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) which was formerly known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was passed by the Indian Parliament on 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2005 and promulgated on 7<sup>th</sup> September, 2005. It came into force from 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006. It is landmark in the history of rural development policies in India through employment generation. In the past, public employment programs in India targeted at the poor were generally identified with the poverty alleviation but MNREGA goes beyond poverty alleviation and recognizes employment as a legal right. In fact MNREGA is the largest employment generation programme initiated by the Government of India.

The Act was implemented on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2006 covering 200 districts of the country at its initially stage. At present it extends to whole of the country covering all districts. Silent features of the MNREGA are as follows:

- Adult members of every rural household is eligible to apply for employment to the local Gram Panchayat if they are willing to do unskilled manual work.
- After the verification, the Gram Panchayat will issue a Job Card to the household as a whole. The photographs of every adult members of the household will be shown on issued such job card who are willing to work under MNREGA.
- A household having job card may submit a application to his/her Gram Panchayat in written form for employment stating the time and duration for which work is sought. According to the Act, the minimum days of employment will be fifteen.

- After receiving the application, the Gram Panchayat will issue a receipt letter showing the date of receiving such application. The guarantee of providing employment within the fifteen days of the date mentioned on receipt letter it means employment will be given within fifteen days of application for work by an employment seeker.
- The Act provides that in case employment is not provided within 15 days, there is a provision of unemployment allowance paid in cash on daily basis. The State Government is wholly responsible for paying such allowance.
- As per the provisions of the Act at least one-third of persons to whom work is allotted have to be women.
- According to the Act the wages will be disbursed on weekly basis.
- As per the provisions of the Act, Panchayat Raj Institutions will have to play the principal role in planning and implementation of the Act.

**B. WORKS PERMISSIBLE UNDER THE ACT:** According to the Act the following categories of works are to selected be provide employment under the Act:

- Water Conservation and water harvesting,
- Drought Proofing including plantation and afforestation,
- Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works,
- Flood control and protection works
- Minor irrigation and horticulture
- Developing the land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY and land reform beneficiaries,
- Renovation of traditional water bodies including desalting of tanks, and
- Land Development, and Rural Connectivity.

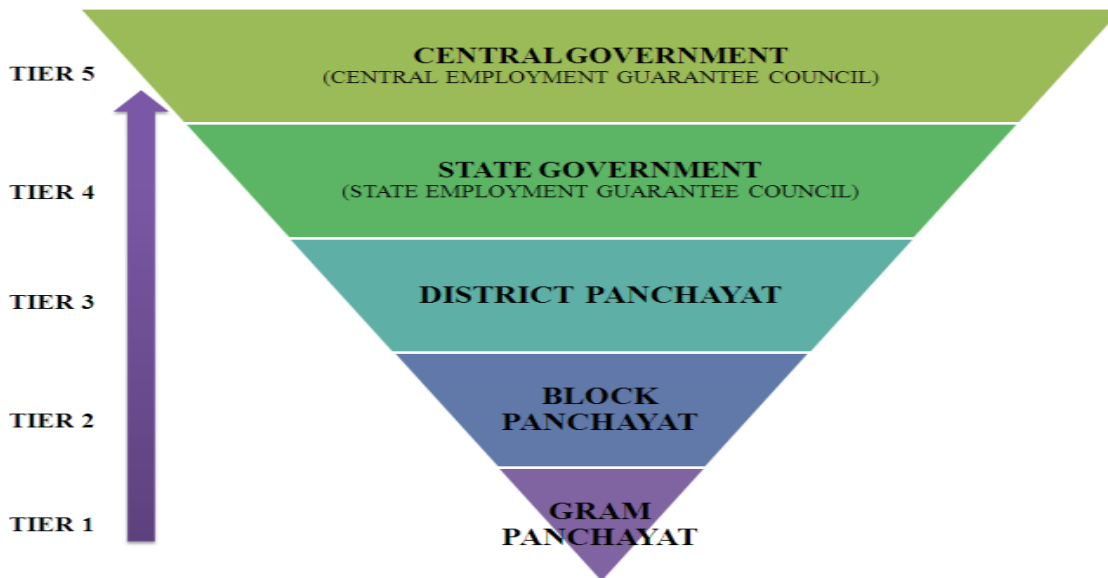
According to the Act, the projects has been prepared by Gram Sabha on priority basis. provides that the The Act also provides that every Gram Panchayat has right to execute at least 50% of projected works and has right to maintained wages and material costs in a ration of 60:40. As per the provisions of the Act contractors and use of labour displacing machinery are prohibited.

There are some important provisions mentioned in the Act which has been given as under:

- As per the Act work provided under the MGNREGA should be within 5 km radius of the village. If it does not, extra wages of 10% are to be payable.
- The Act provide that work site facilities such as creche, drinking water, shade have to be provided for workers.
- As per the provisions of the Act social audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha at least once in every six months.
- For ensuring effective implementation of the Act, there is a provision to set up a grievance redressal mechanisms.

➤ For ensuring the transparency in scheme, the act provides that all accounts and records relating to the Scheme are to be made available for public scrutiny and to any person desirous of obtaining a copy of such records, on demand and after paying a specified fee.

**C. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM OF MGNREGA:** The following figure describes the implementation mechanism of the Act which comprises that a total of five tiers in the implementation process i.e. Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat, District Panchayat, State Government and Central Government. In the whole implementation process, Gram Panchayat occupies the bottom whereas the Central Government is at the top. The Act clearly describes that the Panchayati Raj Institutions at different levels such as Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayat are main agencies which play the legitimate role in its implementation process.



**IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISM OF MGNREGA**

**PART-II**

**D. MGNREGA & THE STATE OF CHHATTISGARH:** In Chhattisgarh, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was implemented in different phases. It has been implemented in thirteen districts in first phase and in four districts in second phase. The remaining districts of the state has been covered in third and fourth phases. At present, the act has been covered all districts of the state.

**E. PERFORMANCE OF MGNREGA IN CHHATTISGARH:** On January 20, 2014, a press has been realized by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India regarding the directions of works under MGNREGA for STs in forest areas. According to this, there has been a provision of 150 days of wage employment under (MGNREGA) for Scheduled Tribe households living in forest areas. As per this, Chhattisgarh is the first state in the country to provide 50 days additional employment to the beneficiaries covering under the Act. As a result, the ceiling of the one hundred days of guaranteed works has been removed and now a days the a MGNREGA job card holder is eligible for 150 days secured employment.

The performance of MGNREGA during the year of 2011-12 to 2020-21 may be discussed under the following headings:

➤ **GENERATING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN RURAL AREAS:** The Act provides the legal entitlement to a adult members of every rural household for guaranteed wage employment of a minimum of one hundred days in a fiscal year.

**TABLE-1 GENERATION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

S. N.	Particulars	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1.	Scope (Districts)	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	27	28
2.	Number of HHs Employment Provided (Lakhs)	27.27	26.37	25.12	17.48	21.74	21.32	23.26	24.42	24.45	30.60
3.	Number of Job Cards Issued (Lakhs)	43.87	44.19	41.80	39.37	38.97	36.25	36.68	37.72	38.85	40.97
4.	Number of Person days Generated (Lakhs)	1212.89	1194.34	1299.19	555.75	1014.04	885.94	1199.29	1386.09	1361.77	1840.92
5.	Number of HHs Aailed 100 days of Employment (Lakhs)	2.15	2.44	3.46	0.48	2.42	1.72	3.23	4.28	4.18	6.11
6.	Percentage of HHs Aailed 100 days of Employment (%)	7.88	9.25	13.77	2.75	11.26	8.07	13.89	17.53	17.10	19.97

**Source:** Annual Reports of MGNREGA (Chhattisgarh)

Table 1 represents the performance of the Act in terms of it's scope and generation of employment opportunities in Chhattisgarh. To start with 13 selected districts in first phase, presently, the Act is extended to all districts of the state. At state level, employment for households provided under scheme was ranged between 27.27 lakhs to 30.60 lakhs during the

year 2011-12 to 2020-21. It is clear from the table that minimum one job card is issued to every household. Under the scheme, 1212.89 lakhs person days was created during 2011-12 which has finally increased to 1840.92 lakhs person days in 2020-21. It is important to mention that during the year 2020-21 that was the first phase of Covid period, total 1840.92 lakhs person days employment was generated. Though, with the implementation of the Act a significant/large number of employments has been created in rural areas, yet it is unable to provide hundred days of employment to every household. Only about 3 to 20 percent of households are availed 100 days of employment which is much far from the objective of providing a minimum of hundred days of employment to every rural household.

➤ **STATUS OF WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION:** The Act ensures the participation of women and to allow women equity in both access to work and in the payment of wages. The participation of women in the workforce has surpassed the statutory minimum requirement of 33 percent and the trends also indicate an increase in the participation rate at the national level.

**TABLE- 2 WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN EMPLOYMENT**

S. N.	Particulars	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1.	Number of Person days Generated (Lakhs)	1212.89	1194.34	1299.19	555.75	1014.04	885.94	1199.29	1386.09	1361.77	1840.92
2.	Participation of Women (Lakhs)	548.83	560.54	630.46	277.16	497.10	436.87	596.11	693.72	690.44	929.60
3.	% of Women’s Participation	45	47	49	50	49	49	50	50	51	50

**Source:** Annual Reports of MGNREGA (Chhattisgarh)

Table 2 shows the women’s participation in employment provided under the Act. It indicates that participation of women ranges between 45 to 51 percent of total person days which is more than the participation level as specified in the Act (33 %). It’s also important to describe that in Chhattisgarh the percentage of women’s participation in the employment provided under MGNREGA is much better than the national level.

➤ **PARTICIPATION OF WEAKER SECTIONS:** To empower the weaker sections of society like SC and ST communities, the Act ensures the participation of such groups.

**TABLE- 3 PARTICIPATION OF WEAKER SECTIONS**

S. N.	Particulars	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21
1.	Number of Person days Generated (Lakhs)	1212.89	1194.34	1299.19	555.75	1014.04	885.94	1199.29	1386.09	1361.77	1840.92
2.	Participation of SC (Lakhs)	116.77	108.23	116.68	60.10	85.11	79.80	115.88	133.87	119.22	116.51
3.	% of SC's Participation	9.62	9.06	8.98	10.81	8.39	9.00	9.66	9.66	8.75	6.33
4.	Participation of ST (Lakhs)	455.54	459.17	518.63	178	431.35	340.63	443.99	508.78	524.16	672.42
5.	% of ST's Participation	37.56	38.45	39.92	32.03	42.54	38.45	37.02	36.71	38.49	36.53

**Source:** Annual Reports of MGNREGA (Chhattisgarh)

Table 3 presents the participation of weaker sections of the society i.e. SC and ST communities in works provided under this act i.e. person days generated. It is clear from the table's data that the participation of SC community ranges between 6.33 to 10.81 percent of total person. This table also presents the data regarding the participation of ST community which clears that during the study period one-third of the works are completed by the ST community that is range from 32 percent to 42 percent.

## CONCLUSION

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is one of the most progressive legislations enacted in the country to achieve the goal of empowering rural India. The study is focused on Chhattisgarh which is counted among the most poor and backward states of the country. On basis of results drawn from the study, it can be concluded that the Act is playing an important role in the development and upliftment of Chhattisgarh. Through this, it is helping in creating employment opportunities in the rural areas of the state so that it has been provided employment as well as income security to rural people of the state. The study of the implementation report of MNREGA shows that during the COVID-19, this scheme has acted as a pillar for the economy of the state because it has been successfully generated a large number of employments for rural population during COVID period. The study reveals that there has been a

significant participation of women as well as SC and ST communities in the employment opportunities provided under the Act and therefore, the Act is helping to strengthen the status of women and weaker sections of the society.

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