



IMPACT OF MGNREGA ON LIFE OF PEOPLE AND REFORMS

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MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National rural employment guarantee act is designed to provide job guarantee for at least 100 days in rural parts of the country. Through adult members (at least 18 years of age) of the any family in rural part of the country are given non-skilled work. The Mahatma Gandhi Nationwide Non-Urban Career Assurance Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee program, presented by regulation on Aug 25, 2005.

The goals of MGNREGA are to provide social protection to the most vulnerable people living in rural India; livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improve, water security, soil conservation and increased land productivity; drought-proofing and flood management in rural India; empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, scheduled castes and schedules tribes, through the processes of a rights-based legislation; strengthening decentralized, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives; deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayat Raj Institutions; and effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance. These goals are thus indirectly related to agriculture.

NDA government has come in power with various developmental schemes. Government seeks to link NREGS to agriculture that is new rays of hope for labours and farmers. These two active agents of agriculture can fill the gap between supply and demand of food in India. Due to bright light effects of urban areas, new generation is not interested to work in agriculture as they seems it is labourious and low status job. It indicates labour shortage in agriculture in the future. Mechanization is an alternate of labour but it has some limitations such as high cost of machineries, small landholdings, and high cost of maintenance during offseason. Food producers are decreasing day by day and consumers has increasing in higher rate, resultant of this increase prices of food items. In this grim situation government has given positive indication towards agriculture sector by proposing MGNREGA link to agriculture. We would be grateful if it is success. But, how NREGA links with agriculture is a matter of debate. We have some ideas on this issue are discussing forth. The farmers asked that village panchayat should assure the



farmers the availability of agricultural labour during the peak period, and should assure the labour jobs with full wages. In this way the farmers would overcome labour shortage problems and labour would get jobs in the same village and would not migrate. It will help agricultural growth and prosperity in the village. This model should be implemented as a pilot project in all the regions of India. We hope this would give fruitful results to the nation. Thus, MGNREGA should not be stopped but it needs modification and it would be implemented in a balanced way, such that agricultural operation is not affected.

Changes in the village after the introduction of MGNREGA:

The MGNREGA gives employment to the rural people . It gives bargaining power to the labor class of the village. The MGNREGA has redefined the understanding of the daily private wage rate in the village and, because of this programme, the private rate has gone up which is effecting the relationship amongst the farmers and laborers. The village are being developed, new roads constructed and now people can move easily inside the villages. The act empowered the laborers, and now they are aware of their rights; they are no more slaves of the farmers. The laboreres' purchasing power has improved now they have access to all those goods and services which earlier considered only for the wealthy people.

The MGNREGA has changed the pattern of agriculture in the village. Since there is less availability of the laborers in the village hence the farmers are adopting new ways of doing farming. While doing agricultural work with machines the farmers don't get fodder for their animals therefore nowadays farmers reducing their domestic animals.

On the one hand MGNREGA has brought large change in the life of the laborer; on the other hand its impact on the agriculture is very poor. However, the MGNREGA does not intend to affect the agricultural pattern but because of changes brought it is directly affecting the agricultural system of the sample selected and can be generalized in the larger context in the country.

Reforming MGNREGA

Monitoring and Evaluation is a must in any development programme. Corruption and irregularity has been seen in the MGNREGA in the current and past year. This scheme requires strong monitoring and evaluation to control corruption and irregularity. In this proposed model panchayat, however, labour and farmer can make another informal agreement, and



distribute money amongst them. For example, a farmer who has leased out his total land and is registered as a labour bank card holder according to the land records can ask the panchayat for MGNREGA labour, even though he is not a cultivator. In this way he can collect labour subsidy charge from the panchayat. So, only those registered farmers should be eligible who are cultivating land whether own land or leased in land. Similarly labour and farmers can make another agreement that is “I would hire you and you would hire me” even there is no need to hire labour. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation is a must for this programme to succeed. MGNREGA should be strengthened and should be better utilized. This system of utilizing MGNREGA workers into farmers’ field would build a harmonious relationship between labour and land owner. Agriculture labour shortage problem will overcome.

MGNREGA workers should be available for agriculture work in the farmers’ field. MGNREGA has positive and negative impacts on agriculture and rural households as on one hand earning of the labour/small farmers from MGNREGA are being used in agriculture and household expenditure and on the other it is responsible for the increasing wage rate in agriculture. MGNREGA gives equal opportunity to men and women in terms of work and wage rates. Women are happy with MGNREGA because of on time payment of wages, whereas in agriculture they get lower wages than men (Sivanandan, 2012).

A parliamentary panel expressed dissatisfaction over households not getting 100 days of employment in the past two years under MGNREGA and suggested a scientific analysis of rural assets created under the scheme.

As India is a diverse country in terms of resources and the demand for labour, reforms should be carried out in view of problems that exist in a specific region rather than reforming the programme universally. The success of the MGNREGA in various States shows that any programme targeting the rural poor can be implemented successfully only with greater political commitment and empowering grass-roots level institutions. In India, there is the problem of disguised employment in agriculture, and the MGNREGA should be reorganised in order to attract such unproductive labour from agriculture into more productive work in the rural areas. It should not remain as an employment-supply programme producing unskilled labour. There must be innovation so that labour should learn some skills while working. The MGNREGA can also have a greater role to play in the new flagship programmes.



MGNREGA has affected farmers, especially those who have faced a natural calamity. It has directly contributed to labour scarcity, besides leading to an abnormal increase in the daily wages of labourers. Farmers are entirely labour-dependent, especially in the early and later stages of cultivation. Finding labour is therefore a Herculean task. Most labourers prefer work under the MGNREGA as it has flexible working hours with the least amount of physical work, even at above the wage rate offered under the Act. In order to achieve food security and protect the interests of farmers, authorities must monitor the programme at different levels and ensure that MGNREGA work is not undertaken during the season of peak farming activity. States and union territories Strengthen social audits of works under MGNREGA scheme.

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