MGNREGA AND ITS EFFECTIVENESS IN EMPLOYMENT GENERATION, POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

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ABSTRACT:

To narrow the employment generation gap in rural India, the Indian government is implementing employment-generating programmes. The first law in Indian history to promise both a job and a wage is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. This paper examines how MGNREGA affects job creation, impact women empowerment, and the degree to which the programme is effective at reducing poverty as well as development in rural India. Numerous experts have discovered that this initiative significantly affects rural India's employment structure. The purpose of the current paper was to examine and describe how MGNREGA might improve rural poor people's quality of life by combining labour and skill. Additionally, the payment process has to be improved. Secondary data have been used in this paper to achieve its goal.

Keywords: MGNREGA, rural development, poverty alleviation, women empowerment

I. INTRODUCTION

In India, where rural areas account for two-thirds of the population, rural development projects are of utmost significance. The majority of jobs and means of subsistence for this rural community are provided by agriculture. Agrarian life has been negatively impacted by frequent weather fluctuations, and because they have no other source of income, they continue to sink more and further into poverty. Significantly, poverty and unemployment are growing worse in rural India, which is hurting the country's overall development. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), the Indian government's flagship
programme, was launched in 2005 through the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. This law guarantees a specific employment and a minimum salary for everyone in the poorest rural households. In addition to providing economic opportunities, MGNREGA also fights poverty in rural India. Rural Indians have more purchasing power thanks to MGNREGA. After this program's initial phase, rural residents may now meet their basic needs for subsistence. It has been stated that the MANREGA's goal of giving rural residents access to employment opportunities is not its only goal and that it has had a variety of effects on the rural Indian economy. The MGNREGA has recently had a positive impact on women's employment patterns and levels of empowerment. It aims to improve livelihood stability by offering every rural household, particularly for women, minimum 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year. Women's engagement has considerably grown, and they feel more secure and independent as a result.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The literature review provides comprehensive insight into the research problem and aids the researcher in choosing the best research plan. Thus, a number of studies that are pertinent to the research issue have been evaluated. Mishra Kumar Sushanta (2011) did research on MGNREGA asset generation. According to the survey, rural households are significantly impacted by the assets produced by MGNREGA. However, additional monitoring efforts could increase the productive worth of these assets. Panda Santanu and Majumder Arup(2013) looked into India's rural development initiatives. According to the study, MGNREGA, which has been termed the largest anti-poverty programme in the world, provides a means of subsistence that will reduce migration, child labour, and poverty while also enabling villages to become self-sufficient. This is accomplished through building useful assets like roads, cleaning up water tanks, and carrying out soil and water conservation work. Rao Mallikarjuna (2013) examined the effectiveness of MGNREGA and revealed that, especially in times of hunger and drought, it functions successfully as a safety net for the unemployed. They now have enough money to support at least their most basic need, which is food, thanks to this. In addition to providing rural residents with means of support, MGNREGA also engages them in various non-agricultural jobs. In the state of Sikkim, Chhetri Madan (2015) investigated the MGNREGA program's efforts to reduce rural poverty. The analysis showed that MGNREGA directly benefited agricultural labourers by pressuring the government to raise the minimum agricultural wage rate. MGNREGA gave the
less powerful groups in society a new sense of strength and identity. RAJALAKSHMI V and SELVAM V (2022) studied that MGNREGS was not intended to be a programme for the empowerment of women, but it has contributed to their economic and social advancement. The MGNREGS has undoubtedly given women workers more economic and social power, and "Gender-Neutral Measures" like increased female participation in MGNREGA planning and social audits, implementation of better worksite facilities, timely payment of wages, phased construction planning, and swift grievance resolution will encourage women to request more work under this programme.

III. OBJECTIVES

1. To examine how MGNREGA contributes to job creation in rural India.
2. To determine MGNREGA's potential for rural development
3. To look into how MGNREGA has affected India's empowerment of women.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Variety of sources, including MGNREGA publications, academic papers, journals, and the organization's website are used for the review.

The day this law went into effect, a clearer picture of rural unemployment emerged. At first, there were many questions about the advantages and disadvantages of this statute's applicability. Although the strongest aspect overall is the idea of set wages for everyone enrolled, Additionally, MGNREGA requires that at least 1/3 of participants be women. Other than a reduction in income, losing motivation, skills, and self-reliance at work, family disruption, difficulties in social interactions, migration, and stress related to gender disparities are also extensive repercussions of unemployment. The act has a number of benefits that have directly or indirectly improved the lives of rural residents by ensuring their dependence and employment, as well as significantly reducing migration. Less migration out of communities gives women and their families stability and the chance to work by fostering a solid social environment.

The key clause of the Act is:
1. Employment must be offered within 15 days of a job application.
2. Daily unemployment compensation should be granted if employment cannot be found within the allotted time (15 days).
3. The workplace must be within a 5-kilometer radius.
4. The percentage of women recipients must be at least one-third.
5. Gram Panchayat should be responsible for 50% of the job.
6. Social audit should be used to ensure transparency and accountability.

The act also has the features listed below:
By creating chances for wage employment in projects that expand the locality's infrastructure base, you can increase the livelihood security of the rural poor.
- encourage the usage of the area's natural resource base.
- develop efficient rural infrastructure.
- stimulate the local economy by creating jobs paying the minimum wage.
- assuring the involvement of women in development.

The MGNREGA's role in rural India's economic development is as follows:
Many parts of rural development address both long- and short-term issues. Construction of infrastructure for water collection, drought relief, and flood control are recommended labor-intensive jobs under MGNREGA, which promotes economic growth in rural areas. The MGNREGA pays rural workers for tasks completed in support of the development of rural communities. The following are the numerous projects that MGNREGA carries out to support rural economic development.
1. Harvesting and preserving water.
2. Drought mitigation, such as afforestation and tree planting.
3. Irrigation canals, including micro- and small-scale irrigation schemes.
4. SC/ST or INDIRA AWAAS YOJANA receiving households providing irrigation services to landowners.
5. Restoring historic water features,
6. Land development
7. Infrastructure protection and flood control, including drainage for flooded areas
8. The development of all-weather in rural locations.
9. Any other projects that the federal government may announce in conjunction with the state governments.

Through these development initiatives, the MGNREGA has made a substantial contribution to the infrastructural growth in India's rural areas. The development of rural India has been
significantly impacted by MGNREGA, including the building of roads, irrigation canals, rural homes, and other infrastructure.

**To study the impact of MGNREGA on employment generation in rural India:**

Phase-1 of MGNREGA, which began with 200 districts across the nation in 2006–2007, was expanded to 130 additional districts in Phase II, which began in 2007–2008. All of rural India was covered under MGNREGA as of 1 April 2008. MGNREGA served as the main approach for ending poverty in the Eleventh Five Year Plan. However, there were a few notable exceptions. States like Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal appear to have used MGNREGA more than other states considering their levels of poverty.

![Graph showing number of households and poor people per state](image)

Source: Data on poverty and MGNREGA for employment data from Planning Commission

States like Bihar, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh periodically seem to be relative laggards in using MGNREGA funding when compared to their levels of poverty. According to an examination of state-by-state announcements made by the ministry, four states—Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh—accounted for 50% of the total expenditures made under the scheme. Additionally, it was found that just around 20% of the funding allotted was utilised in three states, Bihar, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh, which together accounted for 46% of the rural poor. As a result, the programme only provided employment to 20% of all households. This implies that there was little connection between the MGNREGA's implementation and the level of poverty in a state.

**VI. FINDINGS**

**Table 1: Total Number of Aadhar Nos./ EID Nos. entered for MGNREGA Workers in MIS**
VII. CONCLUSION

The aforementioned information and observations clearly indicate that the MGNREGA has contributed to the development of rural India and the overall decrease of poverty. The MGNREGA programme has altered the entire employment structure. However, there are a lot of software components that want improvement. The document above describes several difficulties this programme has encountered. MGNREGA has more job card holders when it comes to creating jobs, however the work distribution is not sufficient. Despite the difficulties encountered during implementation, MGNREGA was still able to improve the condition of underprivileged rural residents. The most important factor is the 100-day job guarantee provision of the law; failure to provide work within 15 days would result in payment without work. Rural poor women's equitable involvement ensures workplace equality.
On the one hand, MGNREGA reduced unemployment; on the other, it falls short in terms of skilled work. Although MGNREGS was not intended to be a programme for women's empowerment, it has contributed to the economic and social advancement of women. The MGNREGS has undoubtedly given women workers more economic and social power, and "Gender-Neutral Measures" like increased female participation in MGNREGA planning and social audits, implementation of better worksite facilities, timely payment of wages, phased construction planning, and swift grievance resolution will encourage women to request more work under this programme. The goal of incorporating skills with growth through MGNREGA work could lead the government to consider emerging skills.

VIII. REFERENCES

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