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Role of MGNREGA in poverty alleviation in India

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Abstract

MNREGA was set up on Feb 2, 2006 from district Anantapur in the state of Andhra Pradesh, India and originally protected 200 real "poorest" zones of the nation. The Act was applied in phased way - 130 zones were included in the year of 2007-08. With its propagate over 625 zones across the nation, the leading program of the Government has the prospective to increase the buying power of nonurban inadequate, decrease problems migration and to make useful resources in non-urban Indian. In addition, it can promote public and sex equal rights as around 23% employees under the program are Planned Castes, total 17% Planned Communities and around 50% women. In the year of 2014-15, about 71 thousand houses were applied on NREGA worksites. India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world but is also home to 22% of the world poor. While economic reforms did India a prosperous country, it failed to reach many sections of the society, especially the marginalized and the disadvantaged.

Keywords: MGNREGA, poverty, employment, problems, community

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005 is landmark legislation in Indian history of social security legislation after independence. Enacted after a successful struggle for an employment guarantee legislation, this legislation is a partial victory towards a full-fledged right to employment in any developing country context. The essential feature of this legislation which separates it from any other public service provisioning scheme is its enactment through the parliament of India. Read with the Right to Information Act, this legislation has been bringing about a silent revolution in rural areas of the country.

The real challenge as well as the strength of the Act comes from it being given the legitimacy as well as authority from the Indian Parliament, which puts the onus of its implementation in the hand of the recipient as well as that of the implementing authorities. The recipients have a greater role, at least by design, not only in demanding the employment but also in deciding on how the Act will be implemented. It also drastically alters the power equations which the agents of the state and the powerful groups within the local society have become used to enjoying. Moreover, for the first time, it provides for mechanisms for penalizing the government if it fails to provide employment on time.

Although a programme of this magnitude will take time to settle down and be of any relevance in changing the landscape of rural India in such a short span of time, initial reports of the evaluation studies of MGNREGA by various institutions and individuals has documented the processes of revival and resurgence largely driven by the MGNREGA as an axis of struggle by the rural poor. It has neither been claimed nor was envisaged that MGNREGA is the key to successful rejuvenation of rural areas of the country that have remained marginalized in the growth process of the country. This requires many such efforts particularly towards ensuring the broken linkages.

Nonetheless, it does offer an opportunity for the rural poor to stake claim to the fruits of the growth. Moreover, success stories of MGNREGA provide opportunities for mainstreaming and legitimizing the struggle for other social security legislations. Above all, they re-enforce the faith in the state in being able to do something for the poor and marginalized of the country in being included in the growth process.

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Therefore, the success of NREGA is as much a hope for those civil society activists fighting for the rights for the poor as it is a critique of the developmental state in case it fails to deliver.

The central Government of India has recognized a finance known as the Nationwide Career Assurance Fund, from which allows are launched straight to Zones. Turning resources are to be set up under REGS at the Region, Prevent and local Gram Panchayat levels, with individual records being started out for such resources at each level.

MGNREGA as a Social Protection

The present study is initiated within the framework of social protection to the informal workers. If we broadly divide provision of right to work in terms of "job security" and "employment security", the right to work falls in the category of "employment security". While job security refers to ensuring regular work and guaranteeing against arbitrary dismissal, employment security refers to provision of certain minimum days of work at an assured minimum wage so as to enable the underemployed or unemployed workers earn a certain minimum supplementary income to overcome deprivation and distress migration. Thus, MGNREGA fits as one of the important measures of social protection.

Though the MGNREG Act and its operational guidelines are uniform for the whole country, irrespective of its regional diversities, it is hypothesized that for effective functioning, different states will need to find their own feet in ensuring effective implementation. While implementation mandates adhering to the broad framework within which the programme has been circumscribed at the national level through its detailing in the Act, state governments have been given sufficient flexibility to incorporate design innovations. The works to be undertaken under MGNREGA as mentioned earlier include broadly nine types with a primary thrust on improvement of rural land and water resources, and rural connectivity. An important aspect of the works to be undertaken that has direct link as a social protection measure relates to the provision that resource development could include not only public works but also land development and irrigation facilities on the lands of poor Surveyed Castes and Surveyed Tribes, land of below poverty line (BPL) households, land assigned under land reforms, lands of households benefiting from the housing scheme – Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) and also of small and marginal farmers as provided for recently. Works undertaken under the MGNREGA are bound to reflect the diversity of local needs and priorities since the choice is made at the local level. Rural connectivity figured as the most common one in the early stages in all the states. For instance, in Bihar the share of rural habitations still to be connected to pucca roads is as high as 66.4% and rural connectivity is a dire need. This reflects not only the fulfillment of a relatively long pending need but also the type of work that could be taken up without much conflict of interest and relatively less amount of time needed in planning. But as the scheme progressed over the last few years there have been clear regional variations in the types of works.

MGNREGA works of the kind observed shows the potential for increasing the productivity of small land holdings, thereby increasing the income base of these poor households. But in Bihar hardly any such works on the lands

of the poor was noticed, reflecting the political and administrative conditions that may not easily facilitate interventions in favour of the poor^[5].

Impact of MGNREGA on Rural Poor

Any Act has three types of impact on the society short term, medium term and the long term. It may also affect a given society at three levels—the value system, the institutions, and the processes. MGNREGA is one of the most recent Acts of India. It is also have insufficient basis to discuss the nature of impact of this Act upon the values or institutions. But there are enough studies to help us in finding out the short term as well as the procession aspects of the impact this step by the Indian state in the context of empowerment of the rural poor particularly the more vulnerable sections like women, SCs and STs.

NREGA has made a dent on poverty by increasing employment opportunities. During the first year of implementation (FY 2006-07) in 200 districts, 2.10 crore households were employed and 90.5 crore person days were generated. In 2007-08, 3.39 crore households were provided employment and 143.59 crore person days were generated in 330 districts. In 2008-09, 4.51 crore households have been provided employment and 216.32 crore person days have been generated across the country.

At the national level, average wage paid under NREGA has increased from Rs. 65 (FY 2016-17) to Rs.88.48 in FY 2018-19. This has led to strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor in India. In 2018-19, 67 percent of funds utilized (Rs.18200.02 crore as wage expenditure) were in the form of wages paid to the labourers. In 2009-10, 69 percent of the fund saved has been utilized in the form of wages (Rs.18806.39 crore as wage expenditure). Payments of wages through banks and post offices have been statutory.

NREGA workers have been identified as a category for Jana Shree Bima Yojana (JSBY) by Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). The scheme got statutory status and the autonomous nature of its budget, which together with provisions regarding workers' benefits; make this scheme administratively superior to any other programme. As on 2009, total agricultural labour households are 92.4 percent and total rural working household are 24.8 percent. About eight percent household completed hundred days employment. Total expenditure was Sixty-eight percent of which average wage expenditure per household was Rs.3438. Financial Year 2013-14, 45.1 million household were benefited with the scheme and as on February 2014, 619 districts were covered under the scheme on which 49.0 million households were benefited.

Total person days was created 2513 million, of which 737.9 million (30 percent) were Scheduled Castes, 540.3 million (22 percent) were Scheduled Tribes, 1210.5 million (49 percent) were women and 1224.8 (48 percent) were others. As on February 2014, total amount was released by Central Government Rs. 391 million of which 335.07 was spent for the scheme and the average wage per day was Rs.90. As on February 2016, total work taken up 4.10 millions, which 1.64 millions was completed. The categories of work completed was water conservation 51 percent, provision of irrigation facility to land owned by SC/ST/BPL and IAY beneficiaries was 16 percent. Rural road connectivity was 17 percent, land development 14 percent and any other activities 2 percent (Agenda Notes on NREGA,

Performance Review Committee, October 2012-2013, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India).

Issues Relevant to Job Cards

To make sure that non-urban families likely to seek inexperienced manual labor are determined & confirm against reasonably reliable local database so that non-domiciled contractors workers are not used on NREGA performs. Job cards confirmation is done on the spot against a current database and reducing enough time lags between program and issue of job cards to remove the possibility of rent seeking, and creating greater visibility etc. Besides guaranteeing that Job Cards are released prior to career need and perform allowance rather than being released on perform sites which could subvert the is designed of NREGA.

MGNREGA as a Poverty Eradication Programme

India is one of the fastest growing economies in the world but is also home to 22% of the world poor. While economic reforms did India a prosperous country, it failed to reach many sections of the society, especially the marginalized and the disadvantaged. The benefits of economic growth are unevenly distributed and some are even deprived of the benefits. It is also important to understand that some people are unable to be a part of the economic reform. The government has to ensure that such people are not excluded from the development process. To ensure this, government provides welfare measures in the form of poverty alleviation programs to ensure that such people survive if not prosper in this era of economic reform ^[11].

This was also the period of nationwide mobilization for making an Act to ensure livelihood support to the very poor and most vulnerable sections of society. It was led by a coalition of like minded economists, political activists, civil society organizations and a variety of pro-poor NGOs from different parts of India. Amartya Sen, Kamal Nayan Kabra, Aruna Roy and Jean Dreze were among the most influential supporters of this mobilization. It also received support from the left and democratic parties, trade unions and youth organisation as they have been demanding right to work since 1970s. Thus evolved the proposal for right to work which was presented and approved as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005. The scheme was renamed after the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) on 2nd October 2009.

Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is possibly the most ambitious income security programme for India's rural poor in Post Independent India. About 30 percent of Indians are living in absolute poverty but in actual terms it moves up to as much as 77 percent. The Ministry has set up an extensive tracking program. For efficient tracking of the tasks 100% confirmation of done work at the Prevent stage, 10% at the Region stage and 2% at the Condition stage examinations need to be assured. In purchase to boost the multiplier results of popular NREGA, the Ministry has set up a Process Power to look at the likelihood of unity of programs like Nationwide Farming Objective, complete Rashtriya-Krishi Vikas-Yojana, new Bharat Nirman, and Watershed Growth with popular NREGA scheme. These unity initiatives will

add value to NREGA scheme, performs and aid in developing resilient initiatives and allow organized and harmonized community investment strategies in non-urban places.

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