



MGNREGA: A public policy for employment of rural poor in India

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Abstract

A public policy is considered appropriate when it efficiently solves the problems of people, effectively ensures social justice, and successfully encourages active popular participation. In a country like India where majority of people live in rural areas, one of the aims of public policy is to deliver services for rural development and reduce rural poverty. For improving health and educational status of the rural people and fulfilling their basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing, the people of rural areas must be provided with adequate means of livelihood. However, many schemes have not achieved these targeted objectives. Generally, it is argued that there remains a disparity between the efforts of the state governments and the central government. Further, the process of implementation differs from state to state. For effective implementation of the schemes various factors are responsible.

Keywords: public policy, rural poverty, rural employment, poverty alleviation

Introduction

The majority of people in India lives in rural areas and because of this, India is called a country of villages. They generally earn their wages through unskilled, casual, and manual labour. Hence, rural India is engulfed with the chronic problem of poverty. Poverty is one of the main and important issues that describe the disadvantaged rural situation in which a person remains dissatisfied as he is deprived of the fundamental needs of his daily life such as food, clothes, shelter, etc. 'Only the growth of economy cannot create social justice and balanced development unless it is attached with poverty alleviation and employment generating opportunities for deprived and marginalized section of the society. MGNREGA is an important one because of its imperative features, great consequences, and covering magnitude'^[1].

'In the rural economy, which is based on agriculture, there are prolonged periods (between agriculture operations) when no work is available for the agriculture workers. The resultant underemployment restricts the economic growth of rural areas. It also causes periodic distress migration out of rural areas, which brings more misery to the households than benefit to the economy. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has conceived a programme to be implemented in rural areas of the country. This programme aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing up to one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work'^[2]. According to World Bank Report, 'MGNREGA becomes the world's largest public works programme in India, the seventh largest country in the world which got its independence in the year 1947. And one of the greatest men in the history of India's independence is unarguably Mahatma Gandhi. So is the Programme MGNREGA with his name. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

(MGNREGA), initially called National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 is an Indian labour law and social security measure which aims to guarantee the "right to work"^[3].

Methodology

This Research paper is based on secondary data collected from various sources found in the form of published literature on the subject. The various sources include reports on Public Policy, Government of India's Annual Reports on MGNREGA and Poverty Alleviation Scheme, and research papers found in different journals, publications by Ministry of Rural development, and other materials found in different websites related to MGNREGA.

Concept of Public policy

'Public policy as a term is frequently used in our daily life and in the academic literature where we often make reference to the national health policy, the new education policy, wage policy, agriculture policy, American or French foreign policy, and so on. It is important and essential to understand the idea of 'public' for a discussion of public policy. We often use such terms as 'public interest', 'public sector', 'public opinion', 'public health', and so on. The starting point is that 'public policy', has to do with those spheres which are so labeled as 'public', as opposed to spheres involving 'private'; public dimension is generally referred to 'public ownership' or control for 'public purpose.' However, there has always been a conflict between what is 'public' and what is 'private'. The idea of policy, like the idea of 'public', the notion of 'policy' is also not precisely defined. Policy denotes, among other things, 'guidance for action'. It may take the form of: Authoritative decision, principle or rule, purposive course of action, system of governance, Manifestation of considered judgment, Expression of political rationality, and Declaration

of common goals [4].” Thus, public generally refers to people and public policy means policy related to people in general.

Actors in the Policy Cycle

‘The policy cycle links a variety of key players in the policy process through their involvement in different stages. Individuals, institutions, and agencies involved in the policy process are called actors. Though the Government is often thought to be the only entity involved in policy making, it does have the ultimate decision making and funding power; there are many other factors that contribute to public policy, often in a network on which government relies for the delivery of policy goals. Policy making is a complex process in which many actors are involved. (a) The Government has social control of behavior and the power of coercion; (b) the Cabinet has the monopoly over supply of legislation and locus of power and as a few people make decisions it provides unity; (c) the Public Servants assist in giving technical knowledge and policy advice, and they are the service providers; (d) the Political Parties develop relationships in exchange for political support; (e) the Media report information to the public, generate interest, and shape public opinion; (f) the Interest Groups seek to advance interests of members, have a major influence on policy formulation and can force policy network to react; (g) the Legal system interprets laws independently; and (h) the Public elects government, forms opinions, joins interest groups and coalitions, and relies on the media for information. Global Insights in 13 July 2013 [5]” “Public policy means by which a government maintains order or addresses the needs of its citizens” [6]

Poverty Level of India

Poverty is a major problem in India. But some parts of the country are more poor than the other parts. ‘According to Rangarajan Panel, Chhattisgarh, Manipur, Odessa, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Bihar, and Assam figure among the poorest states where over 40 per cent of people are below poverty line. According to the report of the panel headed by former Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister-(PMEAC) Chairman C Rangarajan, 47.9 per cent people are poor in Chhattisgarh followed by 46.7 per cent in Manipur and 45.9 per cent in Odessa in 2011-12. The poor population was 44.3 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 42.4 per cent in Jharkhand, 41.3 per cent Bihar and 40.9 per cent in Assam’ [7].

The Planning Commission in June 2012 had constituted the expert group under Rangarajan to review the Suresh Tendulkar Committee methodology for estimating poverty, following chaos over the number of poor in the country. The expert group which submitted its report on poverty to Planning Minister Rao Inderjit Singh, has pegged the population of poor at 29.5 per cent in the country for 2011-12, higher than 21.9 per cent estimated on basis of Tendulkar Committee methodology. As per the report, Goa is the most prosperous state as it has least proportion of 6.3 per cent poor population. The state has rural poverty at only 1.4 per cent. The report further revealed that urban poverty is the highest in the country at staggering 73.4 per cent. Among the other states, Bihar has high incidence of urban poverty at 50.8 per cent, meaning that every second person living in cities is poor’ [8].

Rural Employment Programmes in India

India is the world's second largest country in terms of population. Since independence the Government has faced the challenges of the twin problems of poverty and unemployment. When India opted for planned development in the country it was realized that there was a need to evolve a mechanism for supplementing the existing livelihood sources in rural areas. To remove poverty from rural areas people must be given additional scope for employment so that they can earn some extra amount to augment their depleting income. Therefore, many welfare schemes have been adopted in the country to remove the disadvantages of rural population. The efforts have been made in this direction by the Governments both at Central and state levels. There are many schemes which have been adopted in the country much before Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

‘The strategy and policy of direct attack on poverty by way of target approach for rural poor came into being in the Fourth Five Year Plan. Towards this end many wage employment programmes were being implemented in the rural areas with the main objective of improving the asset base of the poor and to involve the poor in the production/income generation processes’ [9].

The following table presents the list of different wage employment programmes in India.

Table 1

History of Rural Wage Employment Programmes	Year of beginning	Objectives of various scheme
Rural Manpower Programme (RMP)	1960-61	The wage employment programmes started as pilot projects
Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme and Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act, 1977	1972	To provide wage employment to those who demanded it.
Crash Scheme for Rural employment (CRSE)	1972	For rural employment
Food for Work Programme (FWP)	1977	Creation of additional employment in rural areas through utilization of surplus food grains for payments as wages and thereby to create durable community assets.
National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)	1980-81	To provide profitable employment opportunities to the rural poor
Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP).	1983	For providing employment to landless farmers and laborers
Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY 1993-94) (NREP+RLEGP)	1989	To arrest the seasonality of wage employment and provide a positive impact on the prevailing wage rates in rural areas.

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS).	1993	To provide employment of at least 100 days employment of unskilled manual work to the rural poor.
Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) (The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was merged with Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) from 1999- 2000 and was made a rural infrastructure programme.)	1999	To develop rural infrastructure at the village level.
Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana	2001-02	To provide wage employment and food security in rural areas and also to create durable economic and social assets.
National Food for Work Programme	2004	To provide additional resources apart from the resources available under SGRY to 150 most backward districts of the country so that the additional wage employment will be provided simultaneously in these districts.
The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)	2005	The programme aims at enhancing livelihood security of the rural poor by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Background of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA

MNREGA is the world's largest public welfare scheme. 'Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is a public welfare scheme which is the biggest employment-oriented scheme in the world. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a flagship Programme of Government of India. The Act was notified initially in 200 most backward districts of the country on 02 February, 2006 and subsequently extended to all over India in two phases. It was extended to additional 130 districts in the financial year 2007-2008 (113 districts were notified with effect from April 1st 2007 and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh were notified with effect from 15th May 2007). The remaining districts have been notified under MGNREGA with effect from April 1, 2008. Thus, the MGNREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population. The programme aims at enhancing livelihood security of the rural poor by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Act seeks to create durable assets and strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. The works suggested in the Act address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation, soil erosion, etc. so that the process of employment generation is on a sustainable basis' [10].

Objectives of the MGNREGA

'The basic objective of the Act is to increase the livelihood security in rural areas to those adult members who are willing to do unskilled manual work. The Act also aims at generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural urban migration and fostering social equity' [11].

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was notified on 7 September 2005. The Act aims at providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year (FY) to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. The objectives of the programme include:

- Providing at least 100 days' work as per demand resulting in the creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and productivity;
- Strengthening the livelihood resource base of the poor;
- Proactively ensuring social inclusion; and

- Strengthening Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs).

Procedure for Implementing MGNREGA

- **Registration:** Adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work may apply for registration either in writing, or orally to the local Gram Panchayat (GP). The unit for registration is a household. Under the Act, each household is entitled to a 100 days of employment every year.
- **Job Card:** After due verification of place of residence and age of the members (only adult members are eligible for employment), the registered household is issued a Job Card (JC). Job Card forms the basis of identification for employment. A Job Card is to be issued within 15 days of registration. Each Job Card has a unique identification number. The demand for employment in the Gram Panchayat, or at block level has to be made against the Job Card number. Job Cards are also to be updated with days of work and payment made to the beneficiary as and when the work is undertaken.
- **Application for Work:** A written application seeking work is to be made to the Gram Panchayat or Block Office, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.
- **Unemployment allowance:** In case employment is not provided within 15 days, the state (as per the Act) will pay an unemployment allowance to the beneficiary.
- **Provision of Work:** While allocating work, it has to be provided within 5 kilometers (kms) radius of the village. In case, work is provided beyond 5 kms, extra wages of 10 per cent are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses. Priority is awarded to women, and at least one-third of the beneficiaries under the Scheme are to be women. At least 50 per cent of works, in terms of cost, are to be executed by the Gram Panchayats.
- **Wages:** Wages are to be paid as per the State-wise Government of India (GOI) notified MGNREGA wages. Wages are also to be paid according to piece rate, as per the Schedule of Rates. Payment of wages has to be done on a weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case. Payment of wages is mandatorily done through the

individual/joint bank/post office beneficiary accounts.⁵

- **Planning:** The nature and choice of works to be undertaken, the site of works, etc. are decided in open assemblies of the Gram Sabha (GS) and ratified by the Gram Panchayat. Works that are inserted at Block and District levels have to be approved and assigned a priority by the GS before administrative approval can be given. The GS may accept, amend or reject them.
- **Cost Sharing:** The GOI bears the 100 per cent wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 per cent of the material cost, including the wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- **Worksite Management:** To give benefit to the workers, the use of contractors or machinery is prohibited under the Act. To provide employment to the jobless rural people the ratio of the wage expenditure to material expenditure should be 60:40. Further, facilities like crèche, drinking water and shade have to be provided at all worksites.
- **Transparency and Accountability:** 'Transparency and accountability in the programme is ensured through the following: Social audit, 7 to scrutinize all the records and works under the Scheme are to be conducted regularly by the GS. Grievance redressed mechanisms and rules have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process. All accounts and records relating to the Scheme should be available for public scrutiny' ^[12].

Work Preference

Besides providing rural employment the Act also focuses on sustainable rural development. Therefore, what works can be undertaken under the scheme have been specified.

"The Permissible Works are

- Water Conservation
- Drought Proofing (including plantation and a forestation)
- Irrigation Canals
- Minor Irrigation, horticulture and land development on the land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY and land reform beneficiaries
- Renovation of traditional water bodies
- Flood Protection
- Land Development
- Rural connectivity
- Any other work that may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government ^[13]."

Funding the Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi Narega

Both the Central Government and State Government share the cost of MGNREGA, though the contribution of the former is much more.

"The Central Government bears the costs on the following items:

- The entire cost of wages of unskilled manual workers.
- 75% of the cost of material, wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- Administrative expenses as may be determined by the Central Government, which will include, inter alia, the salary and the allowances of the Programme Officer and his supporting staff and work site facilities.
- Expenses of the Central Employment Guarantee Council.

The State Government bears the costs on the following items:

- 25% of the cost of material, wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers.
- Unemployment allowance payable in case the State Government cannot provide wage employment on time.
- Administrative expenses of the State Employment Guarantee Council. Districts have dedicated accounts for Mahatma Gandhi NREGA funds. Proposals are submitted based on clearly delineated guidelines so that funds may be distributed efficiently at each level, and adequate funds may be available to respond to demand. Under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, fund releases are based on an appraisal of both financial and physical indicators of outcomes ^[14]."

Formulation of Employment Guarantee Schemes

'Each State Government (where the Act is notified) shall formulate an Employment Guarantee Scheme. This is required under Section 4 of the Act. The Act defines the legally non-negotiable parameters within which the State Governments have the flexibility of drawing up the Employment Guarantee Scheme according to their contextual requirements. Schedule I of the Act specifies the minimum features of a State Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, and Schedule II defines the entitlements of workers employed under the Scheme. In addition, Annexure A-1 of these Guidelines suggests the essential points that the State scheme should cover. The Scheme so formulated will be called the State (Name of the State) Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS). In these Guidelines, it is referred to as the 'Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (REGS)', or simply 'the Scheme' ^[15].

Village Level

a) Gram Sabha (GS)

The Act gives special importance to Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha recommends, monitors, and supervises the works and conducts social audits of their implementation. The Gram Sabha can be used as a forum for sharing information about the Scheme. In addition, the Gram Sabha can ensure transparency by verifying applications for registration and conducting social audits.

b) Gram Panchayat (GP)

The Gram Panchayat is responsible for planning of works, registering households, issuing job cards, allocating employment, executing 50 per cent of the works, and monitoring the implementation of the Scheme at the village level. The implementation of NREGA involves a considerable organizational burden at the level of the Gram Panchayat. This involves registering families, issuing job cards, receiving applications for work, maintaining records, allocating employment and so on, aside from planning and executing the 'Panchayat works'. It will be very difficult for these tasks to be effectively discharged by the ordinary staff of the Gram Panchayat. Therefore, it may be advisable to appoint an 'employment guarantee assistant', in each Gram Panchayat for this purpose. The employment guarantee assistant could be called 'Gram Rozgar Sevak', or an equivalent term in the local language' ^[16].

Block Level

a) Intermediate Panchayat (IP)

The Intermediate Panchayat will be responsible for planning at the Block level, and for monitoring and supervision. It can also be given the responsibility of executing works from among the 50 per cent that are not to be executed by the Gram Panchayat.

b) Programme Officer (PO)

A Programme Officer will be appointed at the Block level with necessary support staff for facilitating implementation at the Block level. The Programme Officer will be a full-time officer, not below the rank of the Block Development Officer, who may be selected from among Departmental personnel or may also be taken on deputation. The important functions of the Programme Officer are: scrutinizing village plans; matching employment opportunities with the demand for work at the Block level; supervising the Implementing Agencies; safeguarding the entitlements of REGS workers; ensuring that social audits are conducted by the Gram Sabhas, and responding to complaints. Ultimately, the chief responsibility of the Programme Officer as coordinator of REGS at the Block level is to ensure that anyone who applies for work gets employment within 15 days. The Programme Officer will also assist the Intermediate Panchayat in its functions. He/she will be answerable to the District Programme Coordinator.

District Level

a) District Panchayat

District Panchayats will be responsible for finalizing the District Plans and for monitoring and supervising the Employment Guarantee Scheme in the District. District Panchayats can also execute works from among the 50 per cent that are not to be executed by Gram Panchayats.

b) District Programme Coordinator (DPC)

The State Government will designate a District Programme Coordinator, who can be either the Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat, or the District Collector, or any other District-level officer of appropriate rank. The DPC shall be responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the Scheme in the District.

c) Implementing Agencies

In addition to Panchayat, Line Departments, NGOs, and Central and State Government Undertakings, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) can also be identified as Implementing Agencies.

d) Delegation of Powers

The State Government shall delegate financial and administrative powers to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officer, as is deemed necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme.

State Level

a) State Employment Guarantee Council (SEGC)

A State Employment Guarantee Council (or 'State Council' for short) is to be set up by every State Government under

Section 12 of NREGA. The SEGC shall advise the State Government on the implementation of the Scheme, and evaluate and monitor it. Other roles of the State Council include deciding on the 'preferred works' to be implemented under REGS, and recommending the proposals of works to be submitted to the Central Government by the State Government under Schedule I Section 1 (ix) of the Act. The State Council will prepare an Annual Report on REGS, to be presented to the

State Legislature

a) The State Government will formulate REGS, and the Rules pertinent to its implementation, in consonance with the Act. It will set up the SEGC and may establish a State Employment Guarantee Fund to ensure timely resource support to the Scheme. It will ensure that the State Share of the REGS budget is released on time. It will ensure wide communication of the Scheme and dissemination of information regarding its implementation. It will ensure all administrative, financial and technical support to the District Programme Coordinator, Programme Officer, PRIs and all other agencies involved in implementation. The State Government will ensure that the agencies involved are trained for their tasks. It will establish a network of professional agencies to ensure technical support to the Implementing Agencies as well as for quality-control measures. It will undertake the regular review, monitoring and evaluation of REGS processes and outcomes. It will also ensure that the implementation of the Scheme at all levels is transparent and accountable to the public.

b) Employment Guarantee Commissioner: 'The State Government will designate an officer, not below the rank of a Commissioner, as the State Rural Employment Guarantee Commissioner responsible for ensuring that all activities required to fulfill the objectives of the Act are carried out. The Commissioner may also function as the Member Secretary of the SEGC, and be authorized to hear appeals that may lie against the decisions or actions of the DPC. He may also be directed to ensure that the system of grievance redressed, social audit, application of the right to information, and other measures of public accountability and transparency are effective as well as responsive to the demands of REGS workers and the community'^[17].

Central Level

a) Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC)

A Central Employment Guarantee Council (or 'Central Council' for short) will be set up by the Central Government. The Central Council shall be responsible for advising the Central Government on NREGA-related matters, and for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Act. It will prepare Annual Reports on the implementation of NREGA and submit these to Parliament.

b) Ministry of Rural Development (MORD)

The Ministry of Rural Development will be the nodal Ministry for the implementation of NREGA. It will set up the Central Council. It will be responsible for ensuring timely and

adequate resource support to the States and to the Central Council. It will undertake regular review, monitoring and evaluation of processes and outcomes. It will establish an MIS to capture and track data on every critical aspect of implementation, and assess the utilization of resources through a set of performance indicators. It will support innovations that help in improving processes towards the achievement of the objectives of the Act. It will support the use of Information Technology (IT) to increase the efficiency and transparency of the processes as well as improve interface with the public. It will also ensure that the implementation of NREGA at all levels is sought to be made transparent and accountable to the public^[18].

Mgnrega and Women's Participation in Some States

'At an aggregated level, women's participation in the scheme is higher than the mandatory 33 per cent; it was 54.86 per cent till 5 May 2015. At a disaggregated state level, women's participation varies from state to state. While states like Kerala, Goa and Tamil Nadu show higher women's participation, other states like Andhra Pradesh and Himachal show high participation. But states like Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and the North Eastern states show very low women's participation. It is reflective of the sex ratios in the states. According to Census 2011, the top five states with healthy sex ratios are Kerala (1,084 per 1,000 males), Pondicherry (1,038 per 1,000 males), Tamil Nadu (995 per 1,000 males), Andhra Pradesh (992 females per 1,000 males) and Chhattisgarh (991 females per 1,000 males)^[19].

Table 2: Some State disaggregated women's participation for FY 2012-13 to FY 2014-15 ^[20].

S. no.	State	% age of women person days		
		2012-13	2013-14	2014-15 (till 05/06/2015)
1	Haryana	39.86	41.71	41.66
2	Arunachal Pradesh	30.27	30.35	30.21
3	Assam	26.01	24.75	28.19
4	Bihar	30.63	34.97	37.17
5	Chhattisgarh	46.93	48.53	49.87
6	Jharkhand	32.71	31.89	32.06
7	Madhya Pradesh	42.42	42.65	43.22
8	Rajasthan	68.95	67.76	68.26
9	Uttar Pradesh	19.70	22.17	24.75

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): an Overview

The budget provision for financial year 2016-17 was Rs. 48,220 crore under the programme which has been spent by the Ministry. The expenditure incurred by the central and state governments during financial year 2016-17 is Rs. 57,512 crore which is the highest since inception of the programme. During financial year 2016-17 in 5.04 crore household have been provided employment in 138.64 lakh works. In the process more than 235 crore Person days of employment have been generated. It also shows the highest rate of completion of

works; earlier on an average 25 to 35 lakh works used to get completed every year, but during financial year 2016-17, 52.4 lakh works have been completed. Around 68% of expenditure has been on agriculture and allied activities. Nearly 90 lakh hectare irrigation potential has been created during 2015-2017. About 62 per cent of total expenditure in financial year 2016-17 has been on Natural Resource Management (NRM) related works as against 49 present during financial year 2014-15. 30.43 lakh such works have been completed which include 5.79 lakh farm ponds. Out of the total employment 56 per cent employments has been generated for women^[21].

Table 3: Employment Status in India about MGNAREGA during **2017-18** ^[22].

	Indicators	India
1	Total households applied for job card	12,44,34,390
2	Total job cards issued	11,93,66,465
3	Total job cards (SC)	2,52,49,619
4	Total job cards (ST)	1,59,22,814
5	Total job cards (non-SC/ST)	7,81,94,032
6	Total households demanded work	4,98,39,246
7	Total persons demanded work	7,57,26,689
8	Total households allotted work	4,96,67,287
9	Total persons allotted work	7,53,55,573
10	Total households worked	4,34,16,426
11	Total persons worked	6,27,10,485
12	Total households worked (non-SC/ST)	2,66,51,800
13	Total person-days worked (non-SC/ST)	1,02,67,59,052
14	Total SC households worked	95,24,261
15	Total person-days worked by SCs	37,14,54,529
16	Total ST households worked	72,37,883
17	Total person-days worked by STs	28,15,42,801

18	Labour exp. (disbursed, Rs. In Lakhs)	32,90,276
19	Material exp. (disbursed, Rs. In Lakhs)	12,32,692
20	Amount sanctioned (Rs. In Lakhs)	3,08,17,19,58,365
21	Total works	9,28,60,962

Challenges

MNREGA as an employment plan faces many challenges. The Major challenges experienced in implementation of MGNREGA are given below:

- Low awareness about the Programme and public participation.
- Lack of Capacity Building of functionaries.
- Lack of work and Delay in wage payment.
- Shortage of staff.
- Fund Constraints.
- Lack of outcome-Based Monitoring.
- Inadequate coverage of person with Disability (PWDs) and women (in some states).
- Non-compliance with Transparency & Accountability Provisions (Social Audit).
- Lack of ICT Infrastructure.”

Conclusion

The primary objective of the Act is meeting the demands of employment in rural areas when the rural people have a lean period. The works permitted under the Act aim at removing the causes of drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that there is sustainable benefit for the rural mass. The Act also strengthens decentralization and deepening processes of democracy as it gives a important role to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. It links the top layer of Government with the lowest tier as it connects the Central Government with the villages during its implementation. Further, the Act tries to ensure inclusiveness in the development process; not only the neglected sections of society but also the women are given employment opportunity.

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