

Implementation of the MGNREGA in Karnataka- A strategy to eradicate the rural unemployment

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Abstract

The basic objective of every modern welfare State is to provide basic needs, such as food, shelter, cloth, education, employment and so on. For the achievement of these objectives our Central and State Governments have launched many programmes and schemes soon after we have attained the Independence. India is constituted with Six and half lakh Villages. In spite of all efforts the Rural India is suffering with many problems. The unemployment and migration from rural to urban are the chronic problems today. To address these problems the Central Government has introduced the MGNREGA in the year 2005. To tackle the problem of unemployment and underemployment and poverty among the rural people in Karnataka, the MGNREGA has been introduced in the districts of Karnataka in phased manner since 2006. This Study is based on the secondary data, which would have been collected from the journals, periodicals, books and other resources.

Key Words: Eradication of poverty, Unemployment, Employment Guarantee, Rural Development Programmes,

Introduction:

Poverty remains a major challenge in India. According to International Monetary Fund, poverty has defined as living on US\$1.9 or less in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, in India was as low as 0.8% in 2019, and the country managed to keep it at that level in 2020 despite the unprecedented COVID-19 outbreak. According to the World Bank, India experienced a significant decline in the prevalence of extreme poverty from 22.5% in 2011 to 10.2% in 2019. Rural poverty has been declined from 26.3% in 2011 to 11.6% in 2019. The decline in urban areas was from 14.2% to 6.3% in the same period. The poverty level in rural and urban areas went down by 14.7 and 7.9 percentage points, respectively. According to United Nations Development Programme administrator Achim Steiner, India lifted 271 million people out of extreme poverty in a 10-year time period from 2005–2006 to 2015–

2016. A 2020 study from the World Economic Forum found "Some 220 million Indians sustained on an expenditure level of less than Rs 32 / day—the poverty line for rural India—by the last headcount of the poor in India in 2013.

Poverty alleviation is described as the set of ways framed by the government to deal with the issue of poverty. The main intention is to hoist people out of the grasps of poverty. Various schemes have been undertaken by the government to eliminate this evil of poverty from our country. Moreover, due to the lack of infrastructure and other basic facilities in the rural areas, the extent of poverty in rural households is more than the metropolitan ones. Some of the poverty alleviation programmes launched by the Indian government are, for instance, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Grameen Awaas Yojana Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA, Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushlya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)

Agriculture Census 2015-16 showed that the average size of operational holdings decreased to 1.08 hectares in 2015-16 from 2.28 hectares in 1970-71. The marginal (less than 1 hectare land) farmers constitute more than 68.5 per cent of the total cultivators and their average holding size is 0.38 ha. This situation is even worse in the central plateau area. The percentage of marginal farmers is more within Adivasi communities — around 77 per cent in Jharkhand and 76 per cent in Odisha are marginal farmers. Around 49 per cent of the net sown area in India is irrigated. For marginal farmers' land, it is around 54 per cent. The lack of employment opportunities forces villagers to migrate to cities in search of menial jobs. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted to give employment opportunities to rural employment seekers.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA,) earlier known as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act or NREGA, is a social welfare measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. This act was passed on 23 August 2005 and was implemented in February 2006. It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to at least one member of every household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Women are guaranteed one third of the jobs made available under the MGNREGA. Another aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds and wells). Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and minimum wages are to be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. That is, if the government fails to provide employment, it has to provide certain unemployment allowances to those people. Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal entitlement. Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, other things said to promote NREGA are that it can help in protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others. NREGA was scoped up to cover all the districts of India from 1 April 2008. The statute was praised by the government as "the largest and most ambitious social security and public works program in the world". MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by gram panchayats (GPs). The law stated it provides many safeguards to promote its effective management and implementation. The act explicitly mentions the principles and agencies for implementation, list of allowed works, financing

pattern, monitoring and evaluation, and detailed measures to ensure transparency and accountability.

Objectives of the Study,

- To Study the performance of the MGNREGA in Karnataka,
- To assess the employment generation through the MGNREGA in Karnataka.

Methodology,

This Study is based on secondary data, which will be collected from books, journals and periodicals. This study focussed on the performance of MGNREGA in rural Karnataka and to examine how this scheme helped to eradicate poverty and unemployment and how this helped to generate the employment for the rural masses.

Implementation of the MGNREGA in Karnataka,

The MGNREGA Scheme is introduced in Karnataka during the year 2006 and has been implemented across the districts into three phases. In the first phase (2006) the scheme was introduced into five districts only. Those were Bidar, Gulbarga, Raichur, Davanagere and Chitra Durga. In the second phase (April 2007), the scheme was introduced into six additional districts. In the third and last phase, (October 2008), the scheme was introduced in the rest of the districts.

Table 1:

Status of Rural Population and Households in Karnataka in 2001-2011

Items	Karnataka		India	
	2001	2011	2001	2011

State-wise Rural

Households (numbers)	6,725,882	7,946,657	137,747,384	168,565,486
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State-wise Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of Rural Households (Per Cent)		1.7		2.0
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State-wise share of Rural Households (Per Cent)	5	4.7	100	100
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Total Rural Population (in lakhs)	348.8	374.7	7,424.9	8,334.6
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State-wise Proportion of Rural Population to Total Population (Per Cent) (2001 and 2011)	66.0	61.3	72.2	68.8
State-wise Share of Rural Population in Total Rural Population of India (Per Cent)	4.7	4.5	100	100
State-wise Proportion of Scheduled Caste (SC) Population (Rural) (Per Cent)	18.4	20.0	17.9	18.5
State-wise Proportion of Scheduled Tribe (ST) Population (Rural) (Per Cent)	8.4	9.2	10.4	11.3

Source: Source: Census of India, 2001; 2011.

Table 1 presents the status of rural population and households in Karnataka for the period 2001 and 2011 as per census report. Out of the total rural households in the country, 4.7 per cent rural households reside in Karnataka. In 2011, around 61.3 per cent of the total population in Karnataka resides in rural areas. Out of the total rural population in the State, 20 per cent is scheduled caste (SC) and 9.2 per cent is scheduled tribe (ST) as per 2011 Census report.

Performance of MGNREGA in Karnataka**Table-2**

Sl. no	Progress	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
1	Total No. of Job cards Issued (in Lakhs)					79.5
2	Total No. of workers (in Lakhs)					181.35
3	Total No. of Active Job Cards (in Lakhs)					43.04
4	Total No. of Active workers (in Lakhs)					79.49
5	SC workers against active workers (%)					18.14
6	ST workers against active workers (%)					10.71
7	SC person days % as of total person days	17.67	17.36	17.25	16.6	17.19
8	ST person days % as of total person days	14.99	12.11	11.92	10.5	10.52
9	Women person days out of Total (%)	54.29	52.82	51.93	50.13	49.47
10	Average days of employment provided per household	17.85	46.32	42.52	48.21	49.09
11	Average Wage rate per day per person (Rs)	315.38	302.61	300.45	284.02	270.83
12	Total No of HHs completed 100 Days of Wage Employment	80	43,890	31,662	1,76,228	2,39,535
13	Total Households worked (in Lakhs)	12.75	29.99	29.59	33.85	30.15
14	Total Individuals Worked (in Lakhs)	21.81	54.16	53.18	63.61	56.69
15	Differently abled persons worked	11951	28678	27942	27423	20411
16	Total No of Works taken up (in Lakhs)	10.06	18.5	17.91	15.5	12.21
17	Centre Release in Lakhs	123727.65	540130.88	544816.08	591089.44	560500.51

Source; <https://nreganarep.nic.in>

Looking at Table 2, it is clear that out of a total of 12.75 lakh households worked under the MGNREGA in the year 2020-21, only 80 of households reached 100 days limit, similarly 29.99 lakh households worked under the MGNREGA in the year 2021-22, only 43,890 of households reached 100 days limit, in the same way 29.59 lakh households worked under the MGNREGA in the year 2022-23, only 31,662 of households reached 100 days limit, in the year 2023-24, 33.85 lakh households worked but only 1,76,228 of households reached 100 days limit, in the year 2024-25, 30.15 lakh households worked but only 2,39,535 of households reached 100 days limit, which is only 3.60 percent of total households worked under the scheme from 2020-21 to 2024-25.

Moving on gender dimension under the scheme, it is around 51 percent of total person-days generated in the state (Table 2). It was highest in 2020-21 when 54 percent women job days were generated. Considering the gender equality and empowerment of women on the economic front, it is important to the generation of person job days should be women-centric.

During Financial Years, 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25, 11951, 28678, 27942, 27423 and 20411 Differently abled persons worked respectively under this scheme. By this gesture, we can achieve social justice with the help of the MGNREGA.

Table-2 also clearly explained about the total No of works have been taken up during the financial years in the year 2020-21, 10.06 Lakhs of works have been taken up, in 2021-22, 18.5 Lakhs of works have been taken up, in 2022-23, 17.91 Lakhs of works have been taken up, in 2023-24, 15.5 Lakhs of works have been taken up, similarly in the year 2024-25, 12.21 Lakhs of works have been taken up.

If we examine the Table-2, we can easily understand that the adequate proportionate of SC and ST people engaging with the work under the MGNREGA. This table also explains about the Central financial assistance to this Scheme.

Findings,

- The wage rate for this Scheme should be enhanced, many critics have observed that the MGNREGA wage rate is not sufficient, hence this wage rate should be enhanced.
- Some of the States including Karnataka have been badly affected either by the drought or by flood, so it is essential to provide 100 Days of work to all the Below Poverty Line families.

Conclusion,

Indian Constitution directs the Central and the State Governments to extend the Social, Economic and Political justice to the citizen of India. It is the bounding duty of the Government to eradicate poverty and unemployment. The MGNREGA ensures the 'Right to Work' to all the Citizens. The proper implementation is highly essential to enhance the quality of life of the poor people.

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