**The Process of Policy formulation and Implementation of MGNREGA**

**Abstract**

The approval of National Rural Employment Guarantee act was on 5th September, 2005 in both houses of the parliament of India and notified in the Gazette of India on 7th September, 2005. On 2nd February, 2006, act was started in its first phase in 200 most backward districts of India. In 2007 in its second phase, act was additional extended to 130 India districts and all the remaining districts of India was covered on 1st April 2008. On 2nd October, 2009 on Mahatma Gandhi birth anniversary NAREGA was retitled as MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act). This scheme works as most practical approach to the problem of rural indigent and unemployment. Act ensure the economic security of rural poor by providing the guarantee of 100 days employment per annum to every household of rural areas and MGNREGA ensure the economic security for them. It is a considerably social safety net program and first act of its sort in the world wherein an economic safety net is providing through the right to work and provide the sustenance security to every family of rural region. The key purpose of the act is providing employment and to provide inclusive and sustainable development by building roads, canals, bridges, dames etc. with the help of unskilled laborer’s and guarantee them wage for work. The main purpose of this paper is examining the process of policy planning, policy implementation and policy formulation of MGNREGA in India. This study is descriptive in nature which have been used only secondary sources like books, journals, articles and government reports, websites etc.

Keywords: Policy formulation, Employment scheme, MGNREGA, Government policy.

**Introduction**

In the world India, is one of the major economies. The mainstream inhabitant of the county is poor, and their livelihood still depends on the daily labor wages. Finding work on a regular basis in the rural remote area is very difficult. Therefore, migration happens to urban areas (**Tabassum 2020**).Thegovernment of India had introduced the many programs and policies for the upliftment of the rural indigent and ensure the work for them.

**Employment schemes**

Since 1980, some of important programs were NREP-1980-89(National Rural Employment Program) RLEGP-1983-89(Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program) JRY-1989-99(Jawahar Rojgar Yojana), EAS-1993-99(Employment Assurance Scheme) JGSY-1997-2002(Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana), SGRY-2001(Sampoorn Grameen Rozgar Yojana) NFFWP-2004 (National Food for Work Program). SGRY and SFFWP both programs were merged with NREGA in 2006 **(Pankaj 2012).** In 1970's onwards, food for work program and public work had worked as a major part of India's SafetyNet program. Maharashtra employment guarantee act was enacted in 1977 by the Maharashtra government. It was the first mainspring of the idea of the state which ensure the employment as a legal guarantee. It was the first example which ensure the employment security to the poor people in rural India.

**About MGNREGA**

The base of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, was inspired from Maharashtra employment model. After many debates and discussion, first approval of draft was in August 2005 as a national right based program that represents a significant step towards legal actuation of the right to work. MGNREGA is a national wide public work program that offers 100 days of paid employment per annum to each rural family. The obvious outgrowth of this scheme is an opportunity that offers to bridge periods of unemployment or work near to home. This scheme benefits the marginalized household, Dalits and woman. The prime purpose of the scheme was to develop livelihood security of rural poor and providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a every financial year to each household whose adult member is willing to do unskilled manual work. This act guaranteed 100 days of employment to every household to ensure a basic level of economic security (**Carswell and Neve, 2014).**  The parliament of India approved the NAREGA on 5th September 2005 and notified on 7th September 2005, but Act came into force in the year of 2006, on 2nd February and implemented in its first phase in 200 most backward districts of India. In second phase scheme was implemented in 130 districts on 1st April 2007 and all the rest districts of India was included in its third phase on 1st April 2008. On 2nd October 2009 this scheme was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (**Ranjan ,2015**). MGREGA is a revolutionary program of central government of India which has dreadful capacity of eradicating unemployment in the rural area. The ministry of rural development of India was implemented NAREGA, as a flagship program that touches the lives of the poor or marginalized. It was the first of its kind in the world. MGNREGA is considered as a significant means of strengthening decentralized the process of democracy by contributing a staple performance concerning planning, monitoring and implementation to the Panchayat Raj institution’s. The unique features of the act are time bond employment guarantee within 15 days and in case of not providing work then state government gives the unemployment allowance **(Das, 2013).** MGNREGA works as one of the most effective programs in India undertaken for transformation of rural livelihood in India (**Ambasta et al**, **2008)**. Over the last decades in India many programs and social protection policies have been roll out including pension scheme, employment guarantee scheme and unorganized sector insurance schemes etc. which demanded to basic social security entitlements to the poor and vulnerable. MGNREGA as employment scheme providing the basic security to rural poor and guaranteed 100 days of employment to every household (**Carwell and neve, 2013**) The legislation of Indian parliament comprised the true spirit of the directive principles of state policy enshrined in the Indian constitution under the article 41 by providing the right to work to the marginalized poor and rural section of India.

**Literature review**

**Ambasta et al** (2008) the most important change which MNGREGA brought is that it legalizes the right to work and makes it as legal right. It is a developmental initiative which creates lasting possessions without which the growth process will not get the expected speed in the major backward areas of rural India. The complete ban on the use of contractors is the most novel and noticeable feature of MGNREGA. The most of government programs in a rural region even the last 70 years have been enforced through the modality of local contractors who have emerged as main source of exploitation of the rural indigent and backward people. MGNREGA bans use of any kinds of machinery in the works which provides under the scheme and endowing legal privileges to the workers on working hours, rest, medical aid, drinking water, and creche facility. If the state is incapable to provide the guaranteed days of work, then there is also regulation for unemployment allowance being paid to workers. MGNREGA envisages a employment scheme where the local people are mainly engaged at planning all stages of implementation and social audit.

**Sadana and Rath** (2011) Impecuniosity are highly concentrated in the Indian rural region. A broader commitment of the government of India is to provide employment is MGNREGA, which address the economic, social and government underpinning of baldness. Many rural poor are landless, and they rely on daily wage labor. Over recent years the agricultural sector of India is declining which effect on the more than half of the rural inhabitant that depend on farming. Social inequalities like caste, ethnicity in gender, age religion is the important factor of poverty in India. For reduction the poverty and empower the rural people many steps have taken by the government, or many legislations made in this regard.

**Farooque** (2013) under this scheme state governments are responsible for providing the work for MGNREGA beneficiaries. 75 percent of stuff costs, which include payment to skilled and semi-skilled workers and 100% funds for the labor charges of unskilled manual workers is provided by the central government. Employment must be provided within 15 days of application, if state government is unable to provide the work, then unemployment allowance is paid to the person seeking work and by the state government 100 percent of the cost of unemployment allowance is paid. For the purpose of leading to great transparency wage payments of the MGNREGA workers are made by means of bank accounts or post office saving accounts. On MGNREGA work site utilization of machinery and contractors is prohibited. The act provides for an additional allowance if work is not provided within the 5 km of the residency of the household. The act also has provision of at least one third of the laborer’s of MGNREGA should be women. Only job card holders can avail the employment under the MGNREGA.

**Xavier and Mari** (2014) his study find that this scheme increased income and the expenditure of the household as compared to the pre-MGNREGA period.

**Fernandes** (2015) the implementation of the MGNREGA in the first phase was began in 2006 covering 200 most backward districts of India. It was extended to all the remaining districts of the country in 2008. According to the government's statistics the all-India performance of MGNREGA is impressive. Since the inception of MGNREGA more than 1200 crore person days have been produced and more than 100000 crore of wage payments were made to the beneficiaries of MGNREGA. Since 2008 on average 5 crore households are getting employment per annum under this scheme. Since MGNREGA labor payments are made by the means of bank/ post office accounts more than 10 crore new office accounts were opened. Increasing the rural wage rates are announcing rural poor household income, particularly those who belonging to marginalized segment of the rural society such as Schedule caste and Schedule tribe. The works under this scheme resulted in the headway of rural possessions such as roads and irrigation canals besides water conservation and harvesting, drought proofing, flood protection, and renovation and traditional water bodies.

**Pole** (2015) India's 65% of population is residing rural areas and agriculture is the main occupation of their livelihood. Mahatma Gandhi believed that village is the base, soul and backbone of India. For the requisite development of India, we must concentrate or focus on the village development. The Indian constitution has made some provisions in the part 4 in directive principles of state policies under the article 40 which is related to local self-government for the purpose to make each village self-reliant.

**Singh** (2017) MGNREGA presents to us a significant idea to look into the trajectories of ideas of governance in contemporary India when the capitalism was going into a crisis period and people across the world struggling to retain their employment in the jobless world. MGNREGA was one of the most radical and welfare initiatives for the government of India. In 1972-73 Maharashtra experienced a massive drought in three districts, nimbly Ahmednagar, Sholapur and Beed which brought many people out looking for employment and resources. Maharashtra Government had launched Maharashtra Employment guarantee act in 1977**,** where policy-makers found that wage employment is the best way to strengthen people against drought. In the 1990's program followed the same explanation paradigm.

**Das** (2020) MGNREGA a landmark legislation and flagship program the government of India. It was expended to an additional 130 rural districts. Remaining districts were covered under this scheme on the 1st April 2008. MGNREGA has different perspective from earlier wage employment programs in terms of its right-based and demand driven viewpoint to public work. MGNREGA recognized the legal right to work.

**Vasudevan et al** (2020) MGNREGA was introduced by the government of Indian 2005 to target the longstanding poverty through the works that are undertaken under this scheme MGNREGA is the largest program in the world which the primary aim of guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment per year to rural household. This program is strengthening the decentralization. This scheme is giving the significance role to the panchayats institutions for the planning and implementing works under this scheme and it is strengthening the process of decentralization in India.

**Discussion on various aspects of policy**

**Employment generation and financial security**

In order to boost the economic growth of rural poor and reduce rural unemployment this act aims at providing guarantee of gainful employment with a statutory minimum wage and creation of durable assets of rural poor (**Fernandes, 2015**). People who work under this scheme are entitled to obtain their wages within a week or 14 days from the working day for at least 14 days. The wages payable under this scheme must be at least equal to the minimum wages fixed by the central Government or the State Government under the Agricultural Labor Minimum Wages Act, 1948. and it must be paid on piece rate or daily basis. It also cleared that minimum wages under this scheme could not be less than 60 rupees per day and equal pay should be mandate for both men and women. This scheme stimulates sustenance security for the rural poor by mandating a wage to stuff ratio of 60/40. The act prohibits the utilization of machinery and contractors. The funds for MGNREGA works are financed by both Central as well as the state governments. The central government delivers its share of funds by the means of National Employment Guaranteed Fund, directly to the districts. center government share the 100 percent cost of unskilled manual workers of MGNREGA. 75% of fund are providing by the union government for the material and wage expenses of semiskilled and skilled workers and remaining 25% of expenses as well as the funds for the unemployment allowance payments are mandated to state government (**Shekhar** **et al,** 2010). MGNREGA is in crisis these years. Workers under this scheme are hardly getting mandate 100 days of work per year or wages are also getting late. Most of the workers are not getting their other entitlements such worksite facilities such as drinking water, first aid kit, sheltered daycare children under the age of six years and unemployment allowance when work is not provided. As per official data 70% of wages were paid with delays more than 15 days after the completion of the work (**Aggarwal**, 2023).

**Policies for implementation of schemes**

As a major social program of India, NAREGA has been sustained despite mounting concerns about the country’s fiscal deficit and criticism from those who favor urban migration. MGNREGA is the volumetric social initiative of its sort anywhere in the world. In just the fiscal year 2012-13 over 48 million people earned work benefits through this program. While the program has produced favorable outgrowth in several regions of India. It is not without its share of difficulties on the political, administrative and economic front (**Farooque**,2013).

**Smith (1977) model of policy implementation process**

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| FEEDBACKTENSIONSINSTITUTIONS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORSTRANSATIONSIDEALISED POLICIESTARGET GROUPIMPLIMENTATION ORGANIZATION |

POLICYPOLICY MAKING PROCESS |

**The idealized policy**

 Means idealized patterns of interaction that the policymakers are attempting to stimulate.

**The Target groups.**

A group of people who are affected by the policy.

**The implementing organization**

 For the proper implementation of policies, this organization is responsible. In most cases, implementing organization is a unit of the state bureaucracy which is liable for the implementation of the policy.

**Environmental factors**

Those factors that influence the policy implementation process. Most of them factors include cultural, social, political and economic conditions.

**Tension**

It is necessary to learn more about the nature of tensions after defining the major component categories involved in the implementation of policy. Tensions may exist inside and between the idealized policy all component categories, implementing organization and factors related to environment and target group

 **Transaction patterns**

Transaction patterns are responsible for the tensions between and within all four component parts of policy implementation.

**Feedback**

Feedback alludes that policy process is a continuous unremitting process that may never have a last and fixed end. So, feedback stage is a significant segment of the model.

**Natesana, and Maratheb (2023) MGNREGA structure implementing organization process.**

|  |
| --- |
| Ministry of Rural DevelopmentCentral Employment Guarantee CouncilState employment guarantee councilState governmentDistrict programme officerDistrict officeProgram officerBlock officeGram panchayatGram Sabha |

***Source*** Natesana, and Maratheb (2023)

***Key Implementation organization of MGNREGA***

***Central level***

***Ministry of Rural Development***

***The*** *ministry of rural development is the nodal ministry for carrying out the MGNREGA programs. This ministry is responsible for issuing operational guidelines for the successful implementation of the act. It established a central employment guarantee council. It also ensures the timely released of central share.*

**Central employment guarantee council**

This council is Setup under the chairmanship of Union Rural Development Minister. This council established a central evaluation and monitoring system. This council counsel the union government on all affairs or issues related to the execution of the act.

***In State level***

* ***State government***

For the proper execution of the scheme state government established the several agencies such as the State Employment Guarantee Council, State level MGNREGA Social Audit Agency, State Employment Guarantee Fund etc. state government is liable for assures the accountability and limpidity in the scheme at all levels.

* ***State employment guarantee council***

Every State government established a State Employment Guarantee Council Under section 12 of NREGA act. The key function of the council is to recommend the state government on the implementation of the scheme to review the monitoring redressal system mechanism.

***District******level***

* ***District panchayat (Zila Parishad)***

This body consolidates the annual block plan into a district plan. This body is responsible to monitoring and supervision of the scheme at the district level.

* ***District******program******coordinator***

The district program coordinator consolidated the projects or plans which receive from block panchayat and ensure the timely released of funds and the approved projects and plans.

***Block level***

* ***Intermediate panchayat***

It sanctions the block level projects and plans and sends it for the final approval to the district Panchayat.

* ***Program officer***

Program officer works as coordinator for MGNREGA at the block level. Program official receives plan and proposals from gram panchayats and report it to the district for screening and review of the plans and proposals. To assess the work demand under this scheme program officer, ensure the baseline survey*.*

***Gram panchayat***

Gran panchayat is a Central body for planning and implementation. The main works of this body are for registration receiving applications, verifying registration applications, issue job card, receiving applications for work and allotments of the work.

* ***Gram Sabha***

Gram Sabha monitors the execution of the work and conducts social audit. (**MGNREGA REPORT**, 2013**)**

**MGNREGA implementation process**

* Adult members of the household apply for the registration
* The gram Sabha elects committee for vigilance and monitoring and verifies and mobilizes registration applications

* A household survey is carries out to identified households intending to register for job cards.
* Gram panchayat hand in a copy of registration to the block program officer
* Block program officer after receiving the copy from gran panchayat reports to zila parishad.
* To everybody registered household gram panchayat issued job cards
* Adult members of household apply for work at gram panchayat.
* Gran panchayat informs about the work, time frame and quality parameters to the vigilance and monitoring committee and it also inform to block program officer regarding new work application
* Gram panchayat and block program officer provide employments.
* Block program officer informed regarding the work allocation by the gram panchayat.
* Gran panchayat also informed the block program officer regarding the commencement of work and then program official provides registered muster roll to the gram panchayat.
* After the ending of the work, the vigilance and monitoring committee prepared a report and submit this report to Gram Panchayat, the block program officer and the district program coordinator receptively.

**Planning process**

* The priorities and developmental plan are sent by gram panchayat to block program officers.
* The block program officer approves and scrutinize the proposal and developmental plan of gram panchayat.
* Gram panchayat proposal is sent to the district program coordinator by block program coordinators.
* District program coordinator consolidated block plan and prepare budget.
* junior engineers assist the block program officer in develops and approves technical estimations. These are referred to zila Parishad which approves the block wise shelf of projects.
* Zila parishad intimate the district program coordinator about the approval.
* The district program coordinator informs the block program officer.
* Block program officer send a copy of the work plan to the concerned Gram panchayat.

***Funding pattern of MGNREGA***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Elements** | **Central Share** | **State Share** |
| Unskilled manual Labor  | 100% | - |
| payments of Skilled Labor and Semi-Skilled Labor  | 75% | 25% |
| Other elements  |  Administrative Expenses as may be decided by the center  | Unemployment Allowance to be paid if wages employment not providing within fortnight days of application  |
| Employment Guarantee council  | All the Administrative and other outlay of the central employment Guarantee councils | Administrative outlay of the State Employment Guarantee Council  |

 ***SOURCE: CAG Report***

***Achievements or success of the scheme***

* The scheme gives equal opportunities to work for everyone without discrimination based on cast gender etc.
* MGNREGA provides equal opportunity of work for men and women it also promised to equal pay for equal work to men as well as women without discrimination based on cast gender and religion. it promotes equality in the society.
* MGNREGA helped restoration of ponds by removing dreg. under this scheme, resurgence of water maintenance structure is one of the best works.
* MGNREGA created employment for large population of rural India who are mostly SC ST and women. it ensures women participation and make 33% of the beneficiaries’ women mandatory.
* Scheme provides the 100-day employment security to every household per annum.
* Scheme ensure the high level of participation of the backward and marginalized.
* securing rural household livelihoods and assuring widespread participation of women, SCs/STs, and other social groups that have historically been marginalized;
* enhancing the rural economy by establishing enabling sustainable growth, assets, and building up PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) by incorporating them in the planning and keeping an eye on the plan.

***Failures of the scheme***

* Low wage rates under this scheme, currently MGNREGA wage rates in 17 states are less than the corresponding state minimum labor charges. This resulted in scarcity of interest among laborer’s in working for scheme.
* Insufficient budget allocation
* Regular delay in payment andfailing to pay wages on time
* The unemployment allowance is not providing by the states in case of not providing employment.
* Falsifying job cards
* Created inferior asset quality
* Corruption and instances of several malpractices’ incidents

**Conclusion**

MGNREGA is an extensive and clamant program which has a positive efficacy on the social, economic and political conditions of the rural poor, especially, schedule caste, schedule tribe, and women. This scheme empowers the beneficiaries to enlarge their attitude, decrease the level of impecuniosity by providing employment and contribute to enlargement in the consumption expenditure. Under this scheme all the adult members of the rural family can apply for the work who are intending to do unskilled manual work. Under this scheme work should be provided within the 5 kilometer of the applicant dwelling place and within fortnight of the application, if state is incapable to provide the work within the fortnight of the application, then state is mandated to provide the unemployment allowances to the applicant. There is no doubt that MGNREGA is providing durable assets to the rural people and it is working as safety net for the marginalized section. Apart from the various advantages of the scheme there are many lacunas in the proper implementation of the scheme such as unemployment allowance is not providing, delaying in the wage payments, worksite facilities are not providing.

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