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## **A study of MNREGA with Special Reference to District Baramulla**

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### **Introduction**

Our country is the land of rural area where 70 percent of the India's population lives in villages. The people in rural area face many problems such as poverty, illiteracy, low level of income, unemployment, poor food and health standard. To tackle these problems, various programmes were started by the government of India for improving the quality of rural life and created a historic act, by enacting the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the largest employment generating programme in the world, ensuring the right to work in a country. The Act is considered as most effective approach with an intention to develop the quality of rural life by providing a legal guarantee of one hundred days of wage employment to every rural household to do unskilled manual work. The scheme was initially implemented in February 2006 in the 200 backward districts of the country under Phase- 1 and was extended to another 130 districts of the country under phase- 2 in April 2007 and in April 2008 under Phase- 3 the Act was implemented in the remaining districts of the country. However in the State Jammu and Kashmir MGNREGA was extended in the year 2007 and the implementation was carried out phase wise and ultimately covered all the districts of the state in the year 2008.

### **Objective of the study**

1. To study the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme in district Baramulla.
2. To explore the performance of the scheme in the district.
3. To study the impact of the scheme on rural employment in the district.

### **Research Methodology**

An attempt is made to study the performance of MGNREGA in rural development, and its impact on creating employment in district baramulla of J&K state. Data has been collected both from primary as well as secondary source. Primary data had been collected through various group discussions, personal interviews, worksite visits etc. while as secondary data has been collected from various reports, journals, books and also from MGNREGA website. For the collection of primary data a total sample of 200 MGNREGA workers (100 beneficiaries from block Dangiwachha & 100 workers from block Rohama) were selected for the study.

## **Implementation of MGNREGA**

Poverty and rural unemployment are the two acute problems facing India and act as a drag on economic and social development. After years of planning the Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was a well thought of measure to make a dent in poverty on our villages by delivering cash in hands of workers for work done under various heads to improve rural infrastructure. MGNREGA, the largest poverty alleviation programme initiated by the Government of India in the year 2005 has a significant objective to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days of employment to every rural household, whose adult members are willing to do unskilled labour at minimum wage rate. Programme also envisages the creation of sustainable community assets besides protecting environment, reducing migration & empowering rural women. **Guidelines of the MGNREGA Act, 2005**

The main characteristics of the scheme are as under:

1. To ensure livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity.
2. Strengthening drought-proofing and flood management in rural India.
3. Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.
4. Strengthening decentralized and participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives.
5. Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, scheduled castes and schedule tribes through the process of a rights-based legislation.
6. To provide social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities. At least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year.
7. An annual shelf of works to be prepared in advance for each year.
8. A ratio of 60:40 for wage and material costs should be maintained at Gram Panchayat level.
9. No contractors/and no labor-displacing machinery shall be used in execution of works.
10. At least one-third of the workers should be women.

## **Permissible works under the MGNREGA**

Various types of works permissible under the scheme are:

1. Water conservation and water harvesting including contour trenches, contour bunds,

- boulder checks, gabion structures, underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams and spring shed development;
2. Drought proofing including forestation and tree plantation;
  3. Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;
  4. Provision of irrigation facility, dug out farm pond, horticulture, plantation, farm bonding and land development;
  5. Renovation of traditional water bodies including desalting of tanks;
  6. Land development;
  7. Flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas including deepening and repairing of flood channels, construction of storm water drains for coastal protection;
  8. Rural connectivity to provide all weather access, including culverts and roads within a village, wherever necessary;
  9. Construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra as Knowledge Resource Centre at the Block level and as Gram Panchayat Bhawan at the Gram Panchayat level;
  10. Agriculture related works, such as, NADEP composting, vermi-composting, liquid bio-manures;
  11. Livestock related works, such as, poultry shelter, goat shelter, construction of pucca floor, urine tank and fodder trough for cattle, azolla as cattle-feed supplement;
  12. Fisheries related works, such as, fisheries in seasonal water bodies on public land;
  13. Works in coastal areas, such as, fish drying yards, belt vegetation;
  14. Rural drinking water related works, such as, soak pits, recharge pits;
  15. Rural sanitation related works, such as, individual household latrines, school toilet units, Anganwadi toilets, solid and liquid waste management;
  16. Construction of Anganwadi centers
  17. Construction of play fields.

### **Implementation of MGNREGA in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir**

MGNREGA came into existence in 2005 but was extended to Jammu and Kashmir in fifteenth of May 2007. The districts namely erstwhile Doda, Kupwara, Poonch, Anantnag and Jammu were notified for coverage under the scheme with effect from sixth of June 2007. All the rest of districts in the state were covered consequently under the scheme in 2008. The main objective of this scheme is to provide 100 days of guaranteed unskilled wage employment to each rural

household opting for it. Theoretically, scheme is demand driven and envisages coverage of not only below poverty level (BPL) families but also the families from above poverty line (APL) willing to do manual work on minimum wages notified by the state under Minimum Wages Act. The scheme aims to create visible impact, which must result in the transformation of rural economy of the state. The Act formulated by the state government with confirmation to section 4 and the legally non-negotiable parameters laid down in the schedules I and II of the Act. Implementation of the scheme in the state has to be made consistent with the operational parameters determined in the guidelines under the Act.

**Key findings of the study: -**

The main findings of study are

1. Lack of awareness among majority of respondents about minimum wage rate in all four Panchayats was noticed;
2. There was delay in disbursing the payment and incompetency in providing complete wages;
3. High priority/ preference to rural connectivity in all Panchayats was noticed;
4. There were very less works completed as compare to works ongoing and
5. Very less respondents could be seen who have completed their 100 days during all covered financial years in majority cases.

**Conclusion:**

MGNREGA programme has been implemented with the purpose of providing relief to the rural poor as it is an additional source of employment & income in the study area. The act has played a vital role in providing the employment generating the person's days in thousands to secure the livelihood in selected rural area. It has also emphasized on creating certain assets to develop the rural infrastructure. Thus it becomes significant that more awareness should be provided to local people about various entitlements of the MGNREGA act so that they may participate fully in this scheme. On the basis of above discussions it can be concluded that the implementation of the scheme in the study area has covered all the sections of society and community (as the case may be) so far as providing of job cards or employment generation is concerned. But there is a low awareness among the workers on NREGA in general and minimum wage rate in particular in the area that has affected the accessibility, completion of 100 days by an employee. The further obstacles in the way of achieving such a goal are delayed payments, incomplete wages and disobedience towards 2005 guidelines- continuously updated by the government from time to

time. Hence, there is a growing concern among the workers to know and become more aware of NREGS. The workers need to get empowered through NREGS as prescribed in the Act. The awareness among the workers can play a significant role in addressing all the issues viz. delay in payments, incomplete wages, non-allocation of extra compensation and unemployment allowance and above all in implementing the scheme in all aspects.

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