CHAPTER – II
MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter is intended to discuss in detail relating to the evolution of MNREGA in India and Karnataka. It is pertinent to note here that three Articles of the Constitution of India have bearing on the right to work and these are listed in the Directive Principles of State Policy. These three Articles are: (i) Article 39 calls upon the State to direct its policy towards securing for all its citizens, men and women, the right to an adequate means of livelihood. (ii) Article 41 enjoins the state to make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in any other case of undeserved want, all within the economic capacity of the state. (iii) Article 43 directs the State to secure to all its citizens, work, living wage conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities.

India is predominantly an agrarian country with 72 per cent (about 80 crores) of its population living in more than five lakh villages. Agriculture is the predominant livelihood occupation and the rural population largely consists of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. A large part of this rural population (more than 200 million) is still living below the poverty line and is the focus of rural development programmes. From the
pre-independence era of Mahatma Gandhi, every government after the Independence of the country in 1947 has committed itself to rural development with an intention to eradicate poverty by providing an employment.

Before going to elaborate the historical perspective of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, it is more relevant to examine the evolutions of the concept of rural development and rural development programmes in India.

As per the Webster’s dictionary rural means “open land” and according to the United States census rural includes all persons living outside urban area and who live on farm. Agriculture is generally the main occupation in rural areas. Development refers to growth, evolution, and stage of inducement or progress.

According to Ensminger (1974) rural development is a process of transformation from traditionally oriented rural culture towards an acceptance and reliance on science and technology. Lela (1975) defined rural development as an improvement in the living standard of the masses of low-income population residing in rural areas and making the process of self-sustaining.

According to Agarwal (1989) rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor. Rural development can be defined in several ways but for all practical purposes it means helping the poor people living in the
villages in their economic development. The major objectives of the rural development programs are:

- To achieve enhanced production and productivity in the rural areas
- To bring about a greater socio-economic equity
- To bring about a spatial balance in social and economic development
- To bring about improvement in the ecological environment so that it may be conducive to growth and happiness, and
- To develop broad based community participation in the process of development

**Main Lines of Activity**

The activities considered important for rural development can be divided into the Agriculture and related matters, Irrigation, Communications, Education, Health, Supplementary employment, Housing, Training and Social Welfare.

1. **Agriculture and related matters:** The programme includes reclamation of available virgin and waste land, provision of commercial fertilizers and improved seeds, promotion of fruit and vegetable cultivation, improved agricultural technique, supply of technical information, improved agricultural implements, improved marketing and credit facilities, provision of soil surveys and prevention of soil erosion, encouragement of the use of natural and compost manures and improvement of livestock.
2. **Irrigation:** The programme include provision of water for agriculture through minor irrigation works, e.g., tanks, canals, surface wells, tube-wells, etc., the intention being that the agricultural lands be served with irrigation facilities.

3. **Communications:** The road system on the countryside to be developed to link every village up to a maximum distance of half a mile by feeder roads through voluntary labour of the villagers themselves. The main roads to be provided for and maintained by the State or other public agencies.

4. **Education:** The community projects to provide for social education, expansion and improvement of primary and secondary education. Vocational and technical training to be emphasized in all the stages of the educational programme.

5. **Health:** The Health Organization to provide primary health in the Development Blocks and a secondary health unit equipped with a hospital and a mobile dispensary at the headquarters of the Project area and serving the area as a whole.

6. **Supplementary Employment:** The unemployed and the under-employed persons in the village community be provided with gainful employment to such extent as is possible, by the development of cottage and small-scale industries, construction of brick kilns and saw mills and encouragement of employment through participation in the tertiary sector of the economy.
7. **Housing:** Apart from the provision of housing under various schemes, provide demonstration and training in improved techniques and designs for rural housing.

8. **Training:** The training of farmers, village level workers, project supervisors and other personnel to be carried out for skill upgradation and enhanced efficiencies.

9. **Social welfare:** Make provision for audio-visual aid for instruction and recreation, for organizations of community entertainment, sports activities and Melas.

**Pre-Independence Experiments in Rural development:**

Prior to the independence in 1947, various individuals and institutions made experiments in rural development from time to time. The model village in Sunderban (Bengal) by Sir Daniel Hamilton in 1903, the Sriniketan experiment of Thakur Rabindranath Tagore in 1920, Brayne’s Gurgaon experiment in 1921, Krishnamachari’s Baroda Reconstruction Movement in early 1930s, Gandhiji’s experiment in Champaran (1971) and Sevagram in 1936, and The Firka Development Scheme in madras State in 1946 are a few prominent initiatives that had substantive bearing on the future rural development programmes. The information available on these early projects is scanty and is mostly based on the recollections of the social workers involved in these experiments.
Post-Independence Rural Development Programme:

*Etawah Project (1948-52)*

Several experiments in rural reconstruction undertaken by official and nonofficial agencies in the past contributed towards new thinking about reorganizing the setup for rural development. Albert Mayer’s Etawah project of 1947-48 for Rural Planning and Development played a key-role and can be regarded as a forerunner of the Community Development Projects in India. After an initial period of trial and error lasting over a year and a half, an administrative pattern was evolved which, for the first time facilitated extension activities to percolate to the village level. The activities of different development departments were channelized through one common agency and the concept of a multipurpose Village Level Worker emerged.

*Assessment of Early Efforts:*

Looking at the efforts made before World War II in individual Provinces and States and the experience gained in later years in Sevagram in Madhya Pradesh, in the Firka Development scheme in Madras, in the Sarvodaya centres in Bombay, in Etawah and Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh and other centers, which are perhaps less well known, certain broad conclusions emerged. These were:

i. When different departments of the Government approach the villager, each from the aspect of its own work, the effect on the villager is apt to be confusing and no permanent impression is
created. The peasant’s life is not cut into segments in the way the Government’s activities are apt to be; the approach to the villager has, therefore, to be a coordinated one and has to comprehend his whole life. Such an approach has to be made, not through a multiplicity of departmental officials, but through an agent common at least to the principal departments engaged in rural work, whom it is now customary to describe as the village level worker.

ii. Programmes that have been built on the cooperation of the people have more chances of abiding success than those, which are forced down on them.

iii. While the official machinery has to guide and assist, the principal responsibility for improving their own condition must rest with the people themselves. Unless they feel that a programme is theirs and value it as a practical contribution to their own welfare, no substantial results will be gained.

iv. Programmes largely dependent on expenditure by the Government, in which the elements of self-help and mutual cooperation on the part of villagers are present only in a nominal degree, are short lived. The essential idea should be the reduction of chronic unemployment, which is a feature of rural life—through the practice of scientific agriculture and cottage and small-scale industries.
v. Advice and precept are of no avail unless they are backed by practical aids—supplies of seed and fertilizer, finance and technical guidance for solving the farmer’s immediate problems.

vi. Whatever the measures of the effort which the Government wishes to make, the best results will be gained if the programmes are pursued intensively, and practically every agriculturist family has its own contribution to make through a village organization.

vii. The approach to the villager would be in terms of his own experience and problems, conceived on the pattern of simplicity, avoiding elaborate techniques and equipment until he is ready for them.

**Grow More Food Campaign**

An organized effort towards increasing the agricultural production was launched in the year 1947-48 and this was popularly known as the “Grow More Food Campaign”. Under this programme additional staff was provided at the District and Sub-divisional (Taluka) levels but after a few year’s experience it was observed that the system was not functioning properly and cultivators response towards the programme was very poor. Moreover, all the departments for rural development were working in isolation and reaching the people directly without any close coordination. The importance of coordinating the activities of the development departments was felt strongly. A committee was appointed to enquire about the working of this programme and suggest ways and means to
improve it. The G.M.F. Enquiry Committee Report (1952) recommendations were:

1. The administrative machinery of the Government should be reorganized and equipped for the efficient discharge of the duties imposed on it under the new concept of India as a welfare state.

2. The best non-official leadership available should be mobilized for guiding the 60 million farm families in the villages in their effort to improve their own condition.

3. An Extension organization should be set up for rural work, which would reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of all aspects of rural life.

4. The pattern of staffing should consist of a B.D.O., four technical officers and twelve VLWs for a Tahsil or Taluk, with an average of 120 villages.

5. The development activities at the District level will be under the Collector assisted by Specialists. The non-official side will consist of a District Board to which MPs and MLAs should be added as members.

6. At the State level there should be a cabinet and a non-official board for facilitating joint action. The Development Commissioner should be in-charge of the entire rural development programme, and

7. The economic aspect of village life cannot be detached from broader social aspect.
Agricultural development is, in every respect linked up with a whole set of social problems. All aspects of life are inter-related and no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation.

**The Community Development Programme (1952)**

As a result of G.M.F. Enquiry Committee Report as well as of Etawah Pilot Project and financial assistance from the Ford Foundation, fifteen pilot projects were started for community development. Subsequently, the Indo-American Technical Cooperation Agreement was signed in January 1952 and Community Development Programmes were organized on October 2, of the same year in 55 districts, aiming at the socio-economic transformation of rural people.

**Community Development and N.E.S. Era (1953-60)**

The National Extension Service was inaugurated on October 2, 1953, with a view to provide necessary manpower for the implementation of the community development programme. However, by the year 1956-58, it was felt that people's participation was not forthcoming as desired. An in depth assessment of the past experience led to the recommendations of Balwant Rai Mehta committee and based on these recommendations democratic decentralization (Panchayati Raj) was introduced. The system consisted of three tiers of Zila Parishad at District level, Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Gram Panchayat at the village level. Thus, there were three constituents in the administrative system at this stage:
1. Panchayati Raj;

2. Direct line staff, such as Collector, Block Development Officer, and VLWs, and

3. Specialist staff, such as Extension Officers of different departments.

**National Extension Service**

The Grow More Food Enquiry Committee, after examining the results of the campaign for increased food production stated that "No plan can have any chance of success unless the millions of small farmers in the country accept its objective, share in its making, regard it as their own, and are prepared to make the sacrifices necessary for implementing it. The lesson to be derived from the working of the G. M. F. programmes thus were that all aspects of rural life are interrelated and that no lasting results can be achieved if individual aspects of it are dealt with in isolation". This analysis led the Committee to propose the establishment of a “National Extension Organization” for intensive rural work, which could reach every farmer and assist in the coordinated development of rural life as a whole.

Extension is a continuous process designed to make the rural people aware of their problems, and indicating to them ways and means by which they can solve them. It thus involves not only education of the rural people in determining their problems and the methods of solving them, but also inspiring them towards positive action in doing so.
Finally, it was pointed out that extension workers have to be supported effectively by research workers to whom they can bring their problems and whose results they carry to the people. Special arrangements are, therefore, needed to ensure the closest cooperation between extension and research.

In the second Five Year Plan document it was stated that the activities comprised within the community development and national extension service should be regarded as an integral part of a programme for improving all aspects of rural life. In the second place, the essence of the approach is that villagers come together for bringing about social change are assisted in building up a new life for themselves and participate with increasing awareness and responsibility in the planning and implementation of projects which are material to their well being. If the programme provides them with new opportunities, in turn, through their active participation in its execution, they give it a distinctive quality and enlarge its scope and influence. Self-help and cooperation are the principles on which the movement rests. Thirdly, the movement should bring within its scope all rural families, especially those who are "under-privileged", and enable them to take their place in the cooperative movement and other spheres in their own right. It is on account of these features that, national extension service and community development projects are regarded as the normal pattern of the welfare state in action.
It is necessary to stress that while the material conditions have to be assured, transformation of the social and economic life of rural areas is essentially a human problem. It is a problem, briefly, of changing the outlook of 100 million families living in the countryside, arousing in them enthusiasm for new knowledge and new ways of life and filling them with the ambition and the will to live and work for a better life. Extension services and community organizations are among the principal sources of vitality in democratic planning, and rural development projects are the means by which, through cooperative self-help and local effort, villages and groups of villages can achieve in increasing measure both social change and economic progress and become partners in the national plan.

**The Nalagarh Committee Report (1958)**

At the initial stage there was considerable confusion and conflict about the roles and responsibilities of the three units of the programme implementation set-up. An Agricultural Administrative Committee (Nalagarh Committee) was set-up in 1958 and it reported that technical departments like agriculture have not been developed to the extent they were required and, therefore, have not been able to deliver the goods as they existed under unsatisfactory conditions of work. The committee concluded that a streamlined agricultural administration is an urgent necessity and the food situation of the country can be appreciably eased if positive steps are taken to achieve this objective.
Intensive Agricultural Development Era (1960 onwards)

A Ford Foundation Team (1959) in its report titled “India’s Food Crisis and Steps to Meet It” urged selection of certain crops in certain areas for more intensive efforts. The team also recommended that the agricultural extension programmes should be based on local conditions, village production system and problems, and village potentials.

The I.A.D.P.

Though the Community Development Programme created conditions for socio-economic transformation of rural people and adoption of modern practices for improving their farms, home and communities in an integrated manner, its impact on agricultural production was not felt. Under the Community Development Programme the production efforts and available resources were widely diffused over the entire country. It was, therefore, agreed that in the interest of increasing agricultural production quickly, pilot projects should be initiated in selected areas having favorable conditions for maximizing food production. In 1960-61, seven districts were selected for this and the programme was popularly known as ‘Package Programme’.

The Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (1964)

The mid-term appraisal of the Third Five Year Plan emphasized that much greater emphasis should be given to the development of scientific and progressive agriculture in an intensive manner and 20-25 per cent of the cultivated area of the country should be selected for intensive
agricultural development. The IAAP, which came into operation in March 1964, also followed the package approach.

**The High Yielding Varieties Programme and Multiple Cropping Programme (1966-67)**

These two programmes constituted the two major planks of the new agricultural strategy under the Fourth Five year plan, which aimed at attaining self-sufficiency in food by the end of 1970-71. The Programmes were initiated in areas having necessary organization and facilities, which were considered essential pre-requisites to rapid agricultural growth.

**Hill and Tribal Area Development**

With a view to removing regional disparities, particularly in less endowed or disadvantaged areas like the hill and tribal areas, special sub-plans of development were introduced in the mid seventies. Special financial and fiscal concessions, credit on softer terms and subsidies were made available to under-developed areas to attract increased industrial investment. A Minimum Needs Programme was designed to secure to the rural areas within a reasonable time frame certain basic amenities in the field of education, health, drinking water, electrification, roads and house-sites.

**Small Farmers Development Agencies (1971)**

The Small Farmers Development Agencies (SFDA) programme, aimed at the target group of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labourers, began in 1971 to assist persons specifically identified from this
target group in raising their income level by helping them to adopt improved agricultural technology and acquiring means of increasing agricultural production like minor irrigation sources, and on the other hand, to diversify their farm economy through subsidiary activities like animal husbandry, dairying, horticulture etc.

**Integrated Rural Development Programme (1976)**

The concept of an Integrated Rural Development Programme was first proposed in the Central budget of 1976-77. This programme was intended to 'assist the rural population to derive economic benefits from the developmental assets of each area. Though conceptually this programme was comprehensive in scope and sought to secure, through a process of block level planning, fuller exploitation of the local growth potential with a view to making an optimum impact on the local poverty situation.

A number of programmes have been operating in the country aimed at improving the economic conditions of the rural poor. None of these programmes covered the whole country, though a large number of blocks in the country had more than one of these programmes operating simultaneously in the same area for the same target group. This territorial overlap combined with the different funding patterns of these programmes, not only created considerable difficulties in effective monitoring and accounting, it often blurred the programme objectives. In practice, therefore, these programmes were reduced to mere subsidy
giving programmes shorn of any planned approach to the development of
the rural poor as an inbuilt process in the development of the area and its
resources. It was, therefore, proposed that such multiplicity of
programmes for the rural poor operated through a multiplicity of agencies
should be ended and be replaced by one single integrand programme
operative throughout the country. The programme was to be called the
Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). Of the 350 million
people below the poverty line in the country, around 300 million lived in
the rural areas, possessing little or virtually no assets.

They needed to be enabled to acquire productive assets and/or
appropriate skills and vocational opportunities and then backed effectively
with services to increase production and productivity. If through special
programmes of specific beneficiary oriented assistance this group could be
brought above the poverty line a major impact would be secured on the
overall economic levels of the country.

**Drought Prone Area Programme**

The need for a Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP) was felt in
mid seventies, from several considerations. The drought prone areas
accounted for nearly 19 percent of the total area of the country and 12
percent of the population. Their overall productivity was low. There was
frequent migration of the inhabitants along with their livestock. These
areas are considered to be a continuing source of strain on the financial
resources of the nation, by way of drought relief etc. The main thrust of the
DPAP in the fifth Plan was to restore a proper ecological balance in the drought prone areas. The important elements constituting the strategy for such ecologically integrated development are listed below:

i) Development and management of irrigation resources;
ii) Soil and moisture conservation and afforestation;
iii) Re-structuring of cropping pattern and pasture development;
iv) Changes in agronomic practices;
v) Livestock development;
vi) Development of small and marginal farmers and agricultural labour through subsidiary vocations.

The main elements of the strategy of integrated agricultural development in drought prone areas are not the concern of one single existing department of Government but concern at least five main Departments namely, Agriculture, Irrigation, Animal Husbandry, Forestry and Cooperation. There was a real danger that any integrated plan of development of a drought prone area may flounder on the rock of departmentalism. To get over these problems it seemed necessary to opt for an organizational innovation.

**Desert Development Programme**

The Desert Development Programme aimed at checking further desertification of the desert areas and raising productivity of the local resources to raise the income and employment levels of the local inhabitants. The programme was implemented both in the hot and cold
arid zones of the country. The emphasis was on arresting desertification through activities, which restore ecological balance, stabilizes sand dunes, and facilitate soil and water conservation. Plantation of shelterbelts, adoption of water harvesting measures and development of pastures to sustain the livestock economy was to be vigorously pursued. Exploitation of the natural resources of these areas has to be closely linked to replenishment of these resources.

**Watershed Development Programmes**

The Ministry of Rural Development is administering the watershed programme to check the diminishing productivity and loss of natural resources. Projects are implemented by District Rural Development Agencies/Zilla Parishads (DRDA/ZP) through Project Implementing Agencies (PIA). PIAs could be a Line Department (of the State Government), Panchayati Raj Institutions or a reputed NGO. One PIA normally handles 10-12 watershed projects covering an area of about 5000-6000 hectares. The PIA is required to maintain a technical team of 4 experts called Watershed Development Team (WDT) and individual projects (500 hectares) are planned and executed by the local people living in the watershed area called the Watershed Association (WA) through an elected body called Watershed Committee (WC).

The Ministry has brought out a new initiative called Hariyali with an objective of empowering PRI’s both financially and administratively in implementation of Watershed Development Programmes. Under this
initiative, all ongoing area development programmes namely, Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) are to be implemented through the PRIs. New projects under the aforesaid area development programmes are being implemented in accordance with the Guidelines for Hariyali from 1 April 2003.

In the new arrangement, Gram Panchayats shall implement projects under overall supervision and guidance of Project Implementation Agencies (PIA). An intermediate panchayat may be the PIA for all the projects sanctioned to a particular Block/Taluka. In case, these Panchayats are not adequately empowered, then the Zilla Panchayat can either act as PIA itself or may appoint a suitable Line Department like Agriculture, Forestry /Social Forestry, Soil Conservation, etc., or an Agency of the State Government/ University/Institute as PIA. Failing these options, the ZP/DRDA may consider appointing a reputed Non-Government Organization (NGO) in the district with adequate experience and expertise in the implementation of watershed projects or related area development works as the PIA after thoroughly examining their credentials.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) (1979)

With the objective of providing technical skills to rural youths to enable them to take up self-employment in the broad fields of agriculture and allied activities, industries, services, and business activities, the
scheme of Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment was started on 15th August 1979.

**National Social Assistance Programme and Annapurna (2002-03)**

The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) consisting of National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS) and National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) was being administered by Ministry of Rural Development till the programme was transferred to the State Plan along with the Annapurna Scheme from 2002-03. The scale of central assistance under NOAPS is Rs. 75 per month for providing pension to a destitute-aged 65 years and above. Under NFBS Rs. 10,000 is being provided in the event of death of the primary bread winner of a family and under Annapurna Scheme 10 kg of food grains per month per person is provided free of cost to the beneficiaries. Number of persons to be benefited from the Scheme would be in the first instance, 20 per cent of the persons eligible to receive pension under NOAPS.

**Land Reforms**

In an economy where over 60 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture, the structure of land ownership is central to the well being of the people. The government has strived to change the ownership pattern of cultivable land, but has had limited success. The abolition of intermediaries immediately after Independence, in spite of its many well documented shortcomings and lack of implementation in certain parts of the country, was a significant achievement and covered
close to 40 per cent of the cultivated area. These achievements notwithstanding, the lack of progress in the other components of the land reforms programme, viz., implementation of land ceiling laws, security of tenure to tenants and consolidation of land holdings, remains a matter of serious concern. Agricultural workers did not benefit from the abolition of zamindari. The SC/STs, who constitute the bulk of the labour force, do not have either the assets or the skills to participate in the limited but emerging employment opportunities in different sectors of the economy. The problem is further compounded by the fact that though the contribution of agriculture to GDP has nearly halved from over 50 per cent in 1951 to around 25 per cent in 2000-01, a similar transformation of employment opportunities has not taken place. The number of people dependent on agriculture and allied activities has fallen only 12 percentage from 71 per cent of the population in 1951 to 59 per cent in 2001.

The progress in tenancy reforms is still unsatisfactory. Tenancy laws in the states follow different patterns, as land is a state subject. Several states, including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa have either banned tenancy completely or have imposed such restrictive conditions that land leases are virtually impossible. Studies by the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration indicate that this has only resulted in concealed tenancy. It is estimated that over 34 per cent of land is operated under concealed tenancy in Bihar. The ban on tenancy, which was meant
to protect tenants, has only ended up hurting the economic interests of the
tenants, as they are not even recognized as tenants. As a result, they are
denied the benefits of laws that provide security of tenure and regulate
rent. Since migration and feminization are increasing trends, land reforms
that make tenancy legal and give well defined rights to tenants and to
women are now more necessary than ever not only to reduce distress but
also to increase agricultural growth.

The progress on the consolidation of land holdings has also been slow. Consolidation has to be a continuing process, but most states have stopped consolidation proceedings. As on 31 March 2002, consolidation of holdings has taken place only in an area of 66.10 million hectares against a total cultivable area of 142 million hectares. Land relations can have a major impact on agricultural productivity and production. Inequality in land distribution and insecurity of tenure etc., are often at the bottom of many forms of social discrimination and domination based on gender, caste, minority, and tribal affiliations. The National Commission on Farmers has placed the unfinished agenda in land reform first in its list of five factors central to the present agrarian crisis, and states “the first and foremost task of the National Policy for Farmers should be in the area of land reform with particular reference to tenancy laws, distribution of ceiling surplus land, attention to common property and wasteland resources and the consolidation of holdings. Following the conferment of land rights to women under the Hindu Succession Amendment Act (2005),
the provision of appropriate support services to women farmers has become urgent. Joint Pattas are essential for women to get access to credit. Also, there should be stringent restrictions on the diversion of prime farmland for non-farm purposes.”

More recently, initiatives of state governments have related to liberalization of land laws in order to promote large-scale corporate farming. This is in sharp contrast to the policy environment soon after independence when land reforms were meant to provide ownership rights to small and marginal farmers on equity considerations. Though the pressure of population has led to sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings, thereby considerably weakening the case for further lowering of land ceilings, the need for effective implementation of the existing land ceiling laws cannot be over-emphasized. The Ninth Plan had laid strong emphasis on agrarian restructuring to make agriculture more efficient leading to increased “output and employment”. However, progress on different components of the land reforms package during the Plan has been limited.

**Computerization of Land Records**

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Computerization of Land Records (CLR) was started in 1988-89 with 100 per cent financial assistance on a pilot project basis in eight Districts viz.; Rangareddy (A.P.), Sonitpur (Assam), Singhbhum (Jharkhand), Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Morena (M.P.) Wardha (Maharastra), Mayurbhanj (Orissa) and Dungarpur
(Rajasthan) to remove the problems inherent in the manual systems of maintenance and updating of land records and to meet the requirements of various groups of users. It was decided that efforts should be made to computerize CORE DATA contained in land records, so as to assist development planning and to make records accessible to peoples/planners and administrators. A decision was taken during 1997-98 for operation of the Scheme at the tehsil/taluk level for facilitating delivery of computerized land records to users and public at large. At present, the Scheme is being implemented in 582 Districts of the country leaving those Districts where there are no proper land records.

**Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25 December 2000 as a 100 per cent Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The prime objective of the PMGSY is to provide connectivity to all the eligible unconnected habitations of more than 500 persons in the rural areas (250 persons in the hilly and desert areas) by good quality all-weather roads.

**Rural Housing**

To meet the shortage of housing in rural areas, a programme called Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) was launched in May 1985 as a sub-scheme of Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). It was implemented as an independent scheme since 1 January 1996 and is the flagship programme for rural housing. The Indira Awaas Yojana aims at providing assistance to rural
people below the poverty-line belonging to Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers and non-scheduled castes/scheduled tribes categories for the construction of dwelling units and upgradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses by providing grants-in-aid. From 1995-96, IAY benefits have been extended to widows or next-of-kin of defense personnel killed in action. Benefits have also been extended to ex-servicemen and retired members of the paramilitary forces as long as they fulfill the normal eligibility conditions of IAY. Three per cent of funds are reserved for the disabled persons living below the poverty line in rural areas.

Under the Scheme, allotment of the house is done in the name of the female members of the households or in the joint names of husband and wife. A minimum of 60 per cent of funds is to be utilized for construction of houses for SCs/STs. The ceiling on assistance for construction of new houses has been increased from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 25,000 per unit for the plain areas and from Rs. 22,000 to Rs. 27,500 per unit for the hilly/difficult areas with effect from 1 April 2004. The upper limit in respect of conversion of kutcha houses into semi-pucca houses (upgradation) has also been increased from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,500 per unit from the same date and up to 20 per cent of IAY funds can be utilized for this purpose.

As construction of houses for the rural poor is a significant activity of asset creation in rural areas and contributes substantially towards the concept of Bharat Nirman, this has been included as one of the six components of
the ‘Bharat Nirman’ Programme. Under this programme sixty lakh houses are to be constructed for rural BPL families during a span of four years beginning from 2005-06.

**Rural Drinking Water Supply Programme**

Clean drinking water is a basic necessity of life. Supply of clean drinking water in the rural areas has always been one of the highest priorities of the government. A Technology Mission on drinking water named “National Drinking Water Mission” (NDWM) was launched in 1986, which subsequently was rechristened as “Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission” (RGNDWM) in 1991 with three key objectives:

1. Providing safe drinking water to all villages,
2. Assisting local communities to maintain sources of safe drinking water in good condition, and
3. Giving special attention for water supply to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) adopts an integrated approach so that conservation and augmentation of water sources is interrelated with rural water supply schemes to provide sustainable supply of safe drinking water to the rural population. The Mission seeks to provide supply of 40 liters of safe drinking water in rural areas.
**Food for Work Programme**

A Food for Work Programme was initiated in 1977-78, aimed at creation of additional employment in rural areas on works of durable utility to the community, with the use of surplus food grains available in the buffer stock for payment as wages. Beginning somewhat haltingly, the programme gained momentum in 1978-79 when over 12 lakh tonnes of food grains were utilized creating 372.8 million man-days of employment.

**Poverty Alleviation Programme**

The focus in the 6th Plan was on the alleviation of rural poverty and it was emphasized that an increase in the productive potential of the rural economy was an essential condition for finding effective solutions to the problems of rural poverty. At the same time, recognizing constraints that limit the scope for higher growth rate in medium-term, more direct means of reducing the incidence of poverty and destitution would have to be employed. The hard core of poverty is to be found in rural areas and the poorest sections belong to the families of landless labourers, small and marginal farmers, rural artisans, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and socially and economically backward classes. Households below the poverty line require to be assisted through an appropriate package of technologies, services and asset transfer programmes. The strategy and methodology for accelerated rural development to be followed was as follows:
• Increasing production and productivity of agriculture and allied sectors;
• Resource and income development of vulnerable section of the rural population through development of the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors;
• Skill formation and skill upgrading programmes to promote self and wage employment amongst the rural poor;
• Facilitating adequate availability of credit to support the programmes taken up for the rural poor;
• Promoting marketing support to ensure the viability of production programmes and to insulate the rural poor from exploitation in the marketing of their products;
• Provision of additional employment opportunities to the rural poor for gainful employment during the lean agricultural season through a national rural employment programme (NREP);
• Provision of essential minimum needs; and
• Involvement of universities, research and technical institutions in preparing a shelf of projects both for self-employment and NREP and in preparing strategies for the scientific utilization of local resources.

The 7th Plan viewed the poverty alleviation programmes in the wider perspective of socioeconomic transformation in the country. In view
of this it was felt that while the present strategy of direct attack on poverty through specific poverty alleviation programmes is justified on account of insufficient percolation of benefits to the poor from overall economic growth, it should be appreciated that the strategy of direct attack on poverty cannot be sustained and would not yield the desired results, if the overall growth of the economy itself is slow and the benefits of such growth are inequitably distributed. For one thing, the resources and the capabilities needed for running such programmes cannot be generated in the system unless the economy itself is buoyant and there is a sustained increase in output.

Secondly, the demand for goods and services produced by the poorer household enterprises rises significantly in response to the overall increase in incomes in the country so that the viability of these household enterprises depends critically on the sustained increase in national income. The programmes for poverty alleviation should thus be regarded as supplementing the basic plan for overall economic growth, in terms of generating productive assets and skills as well as incomes for the poor.

The success of the anti-poverty strategy can be gauged from the decline in poverty levels from 37.27 per cent in 1993-94 to 27.09 percent in 1999-2000 in the rural areas. This decline in poverty has, however, been uneven. Haryana, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Rajasthan experienced a sharp reduction in poverty levels (a drop of more than 12 percentage points between 1993-94 and 1999-2000). Uttar Pradesh,
West Bengal and Tamil Nadu also registered significant reduction in poverty (8-12 percentage). However, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh have shown virtually no reduction in poverty levels. In fact, these are the states where the absolute number of poor has actually gone up between 1993-94 and 1999-2000. At the beginning of the new millennium, 260 million people in the country did not have incomes to access a consumption basket, which defines the poverty line. Of these, 75 per cent were in the rural areas.

**National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)**

The problem of employment in rural areas is mainly of seasonal unemployment and underemployment. Fuller employment opportunities for the rural work force need to be found within the agricultural and allied sectors themselves, through intensification and diversification of agriculture based on expansion of irrigation and improved technology. However, the very dimensions of the problem called for a multi-pronged strategy aiming on the one hand at resource development of vulnerable sections of the population, and on the other, provides supplementary employment opportunities to the rural poor, particularly during lean periods, in a manner which at the same time contribute directly to the creation of durable assets for the community. It is necessary to view employment as an indivisible component of development and ensure that both in concept and implementation, employment and development
become catalysts of each other, and the benefits to the community from the limited resources available are maximized.

**Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)**

RLEGP was introduced from 15th August, 1983 with the objective of (a) improving and expanding employment opportunities for the rural landless with a view to providing guarantee of employment to at least one member of every landless household up to 100 days in a year and (b) creating durable assets for strengthening the infrastructure so as to meet the growing requirements of the rural economy. An outlay of Rs. 500 crores to be fully financed by the Central Government was provided under this programme in the Sixth Plan. The implementation of the programme was entrusted to the States/UTs, but they were required to prepare specific projects for approval by a Central Committee.

**People’s Participation—the Crux of the Programme**

The participation of the people in the planning and execution of rural schemes is an essential feature of the movement and it is observed that where a correct approach has been made on behalf of the administration the people have come forward readily to play their part. The importance of ensuring, right from the start, the people's participation, not merely in the execution of the Community Development Project but also in its planning was emphasized as this is the very essence of the programme. The Community Development Programme made a provision for the setting up of a Project Advisory Committee, which should
be as representative as possible of all the non-official elements within the project area.

The Planning process in a democratic country can acquire fuller meaning and depth if the people not only associate themselves in planning for their development but also participate consciously in plan implementation. Experience suggests that the task of educating and mobilizing the people in this direction is more effectively accomplished when it is institutionalized. Individual action though important can only be sporadic in nature, whereas institutionalized action can be distinctly more effective in mobilizing local resources, articulating needs and coordinating the developmental tasks which are undertaken by the people. The following are some of the forms of institutionalized action.

1. Youth and Women’s organizations operating at different spatial levels, particularly for promoting eco-development and environmental sanitation.

2. Voluntary organizations engaged in general developmental work in an area or on a specific activity like education or health or a combination of a few such activities.

3. Organizations of specific beneficiary or interest groups like self-employed women, or farmers or of people who have common economic interest such as marketing.

4. Organization of the farmers living in command area of irrigation project catchment areas in the hills and watershed areas in un-
irrigated regions into cooperatives for improving land and water management without affecting the individuality of holdings.

5. Religious, social or cultural organizations or clubs (Rotary, Jaycees, Lions etc.), which often undertake developmental activities in selected areas.

6. Professional organizations or educational institutions, which take up study, research and social action programmes as part of their professional or social commitments.

**Involvement of Voluntary Agencies**

There is a good deal of voluntary effort in India, especially in the field of social welfare. The tendency so far has been to equate the work of voluntary agencies with only welfare activities and charity work. There has been inadequate recognition of their role in accelerating the process of social and economic development. These agencies have been known to play an important role by providing a basis for innovation with new models and approaches, ensuring feedback and securing the involvement of families living below the poverty line. Therefore, serious efforts have been made to involve voluntary agencies in various development programmes, particularly in the planning and implementation of programmes of rural development. Voluntary agencies have developed expertise and competence in many nontraditional areas to plan their own schemes instead of expecting Government to do so. More specifically, the
role of voluntary agencies in implementation of development programme is:

1. To supplement government effort so as to offer the rural poor choices and alternatives
2. To be the eyes and ears of the people at the village level
3. To set an example. It should be possible for the voluntary agency to adopt simple, innovative, flexible and inexpensive means with its limited resources to reach a larger number with lesser overheads and with greater community participation
4. To activate the delivery system and to make it effective at the village level to respond to the felt needs of the poorest of the poor
5. To disseminate information
6. To make communities as self-reliant as possible
7. To show how village and indigenous resources could be used, how human resources, rural skills and local knowledge, grossly underutilized at present, could be used for their own development
8. To demystify technology and bring it in a simpler form to the rural poor
9. To train a cadre of grassroots workers who believe in professionalizing volunteerism
10. To mobilize financial resources from within the community with a view to making communities stand on their own feet
11. To mobilize and organize the poor and generate awareness to demand quality services and impose a community system of accountability on the performance of village-level government functionaries.

The programmes and areas in which the participation of voluntary agencies can be of great help for better implementation of anti-poverty and minimum needs programmes are:

1. Integrated Rural Development/Landless Employment Guarantee Programme
2. Implementation of land ceiling and distribution of surplus land
3. Enforcement of minimum wages to agricultural labourers
4. Identification and rehabilitation of bonded labour
5. Development of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes
6. Supply of safe drinking water: repair and maintenance of water supply systems with community support
7. Afforestation social forestry, development of biogas and alternative energy sources (solar and wind energy, improved chulas)
8. Promotion of family planning
9. Primary health care; control of leprosy, TB, blindness; preventive health programmes using village resources
10. Programmes for women and children in rural areas
11. Innovative methods and low-cost alternatives in elementary, primary and middle school education for children, adult education and non-formal and informal education

12. Consumer protection: promotion of cooperatives

13. Promotion of handicrafts and village and cottage industries

14. Promotion of science and technology

15. Legal education

16. Rural housing: improvement of rural slums

17. Environmental and ecological improvement, and

18. Promotion and encouragement of traditional media for dissemination of information.

CAPART

The Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) is an autonomous organization under the Ministry of Rural Development, which was set up in September 1986, as a supporting and funding agency to the voluntary organizations. Its primary objective is to promote voluntary action through community participation and to propagate appropriate rural technologies for the benefit of rural masses.

In view of the above, the government of India introduced Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in 2005.
History of MNREGA

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 UPA Govt. has the prospective to increase the buying power of non-urban 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 2010–11, about 41 thousand houses were applied on NREGA worksites.

Political Background and The Plan

This job act was introduced by the UPA alliance government reinforced by the renowned economist Dr. J. Drèze, a Belgian created economist, at the Delhi University of Business economics, has been a significant impact on this venture. A wide range of individual’s motions and organizations definitely campaigned for this act. So, Political background of MGNREGA is influenced by UPA government.

The Plan

The act guides condition government authorities to apply MGNREGA "job plan". Under popular MGNREGA scheme, the Indian government satisfies the price towards the transaction of salary, 3/4 of
content price and some quantity of management price. State Governments fulfill the price of lack of career allocation, 1/4 of content price and management price of State authorities. Since the State Governments pay the lack of career allocation, they are intensely incentives to provide career to employees. The main Political background of MGNREGA has been decided by the UPA government.

However, it is up to the State Government to choose the quantity of lack of career allotment, great topic to the bad condition which need to be at least 1/4 the lowest salary for the first 1 month, and not less than 1/2 the lowest salary thereafter. 100 times of career (or lack of career allowance) per family must be offered to able and willing employees every economical season.

**Provisions under NREGA**

- Adult associates of a non-urban family, willing to do inexperienced guide perform, are needed to make signing up in composing or by mouth to the regional Gram Panchayat
- The Gram Panchayat after due confirmation will offer a Job Cards. The Job Cards will keep the picture of all mature associates of the family willing to perform under NREGA and is free.
- The Job Cards must be released within 15 times of program.
- A Job Cards owner may publish an itemized program for career to the Gram Panchayat, revealing the time and length for which perform is desired. The lowest times of career have to be at least 14.
• The Gram Panchayat will problem a old invoice of the published program for career, against which the assurance of offering career within 15 times operates

• Employment will be given within 15 times of program for perform, if it is not then everyday lack of career allocation as per the Act, has to be compensated responsibility of transaction of lack of career allocation is of the Declares.

• Work should normally be offered within 5 km distance of the town. In situation perform is offered beyond 5 km, additional income of 10% are due to fulfill additional transport and residing expenses

• Wages are to be compensated according to the Minimum Wages Act of 1948 for farming laborers in the State, unless the Center is aware a salary quantity which will not be less than about INR60 (around US$1.09) per day. Equivalent income will be offered to both men and women.

• The unique edition of the Act was accepted with only Rs. 155/ day as the lowest salary that needs to be compensated under NREGA scheme. However, many states in Indian already have salary rules with lowest income set at more than INR100 (about US$1.81) per day. NREGA’s lowest salary has since been modified to around INR130 (about US$2.35) per day.
- Wages are to be compensated according to item quantity or everyday quantity. Payment of income has to be done on every week base and not beyond a couple weeks in any situation.
- At least one-third recipients shall be females who have authorized and asked for perform under the program.
- Work’s main features such as crèche, water, resources have to be provided
- The display of venture for a town will be suggested by the local gram sabha as well as accepted by the particular zilla panchayat.
- Minimum 50% of performs will be utilized local Gram Panchayats for execution
- Permissible performs primarily consist of water and ground preservation, a forestation and area growth works
- A 60:40 around salary and content rate has to be operated. No contractor’s organization and technical apparatus is allowed
- The Govt. of India holds the 100 % salary price of inexperienced guide labor and 75 % of the content price such as the income of experienced and partial experienced workers
- Social Review has to be done by local Gram Sabha
- Grievance redresser systems have to be put in place for guaranteeing a sensitive performance process
- All information and information about the Scheme should be available for community scrutiny.
SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ACT

The MGNREGA has given rise to the largest employment programme in human history and is unlike any other wage employment programme in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, people centred, demand-driven, self-selecting, rights-based design is distinct and unprecedented. The MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee for wage employment. It is a demand-driven programme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work by wage-seekers. There are legal provisions for allowances and compensation both in cases of failure to provide work on demand and delays in payment of wages for work undertaken. The MGNREGA overcomes problems of targeting through its self-targeting mechanism of beneficiary selection, that is, a large percentage of poorest of the poor and marginalized seek employment under the Scheme. The Act incentivizes States to provide employment, as 100 per cent of the unskilled labour cost and 75% of the material cost of the programme is borne by the Centre. Unlike the earlier wage employment programmes that were allocation-based, MGNREGA is demand driven and resource transfer from Centre to States is based on the demand for employment in each State. This provides an additional incentive for States to leverage the Act to meet the employment needs of the poor. There is also a concomitant disincentive for failing to provide work on time, as the States then bear the cost of the unemployment allowance. Gram Panchayats (GPs) are to implement at least 50 per cent of the works in terms of cost. This order of
devolution of financial resources to GPs is unprecedented. Plans and decisions regarding the nature and choice of works to be undertaken, the order in which each work is to be triggered, site selection etc. are all to be made in open assemblies of the Gram Sabha (GS) and ratified by the GP. Works that are inserted at Intermediate Panchayat (IP) and District Panchayat (DP) level 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. These decisions cannot be overturned by higher authorities, except to the extent of ensuring conformity with the provisions of the Act and its Operational Guidelines. This bottom-up, people-centred, demand-driven architecture also means that a great share of the responsibility for the success of the MGNREGA lies with wage-seekers, GSs and GPs. MGNREGA also marks a break from the relief programmes of the past towards an integrated natural resource management and livelihoods generation perspective. Social audit is a new feature that is an integral part of MGNREGA. Potentially, this creates unprecedented accountability of performance, especially towards immediate stakeholders. An Annual Report prepared by the Central Employment Guarantee Council (CEGC), on the outcomes of MGNREGA is required to be presented annually by the Central Government to Parliament. Likewise, the annual reports prepared by State Employment Guarantee Councils (SEGC) are to be presented to State Legislatures by the State Governments, facilitating oversight by elected representatives.
The radically new character of the programme, requires innovative approaches for effective implementation. This will ensure that the novel elements of the MGNREGA are realized appropriately on the ground; at the cutting-edge level of its implementation. These Operational Guidelines have been issued to facilitate this compliance.

Milestones of the Indian Journey towards MGNREGA
1952 Community Development Programme (CDP)
1960 Rural Manpower Programme (RMP).
1971 Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE).
1972 Intensive Rural Employment Programme (IREP) on Pilot basis.
1973 Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Scheme (MFAL).
1977 Food for Work Programme (FWP).
1980 National Rural Employment Programme (NREP).
1983 Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP).
1993 Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS).
1999 Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY).
2001 Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY).
2004 National Food for Work (NFFWP).
2005 Notification of NREGA.
2006 Implementation of Phase I- NREGA in 200 districts of India.
2007 Extension of Phase II- NREGA to additional 130 Districts.
2008 NREGA Phase III- Extended to cover all districts of India.
2009 NREGA renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) and extended whole country.

**Impact of NREGA on Rural Poor**

- Legitimacy to Rights based approach about challenge of poverty.
- Employment provided to 41m Households (Upto January, 2012)
- Reduction in Distress Migration
- Financial Inclusion, 100 million institutional accounts
- Higher participation by SCs and STs Poor.
- Insurance of Wage Earners
- Increased in average wages.
- Decline in outmigration of landless labour force.
- Reduction of hunger.
- Equal Wages for Men and Women
- Economic empowerment of poor women.
- Children in School.
- Accessing Medical facilities
- Relief from rural village moneylenders.
- Disengagement from hazardous work.
- Rural asset formation.
- Improvement in rural environment and sanitation.

**MGNREGS in Karnataka:**

The States of Karnataka and Puduchery have witnessed considerable achievements during the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). These achievements are linked with Ministry of Rural Development’s advice to all States for ensuring wage payment to NREGA workers through Bank and Post office accounts. So far 1.6 crore accounts have been opened across the country.

In Karnataka considerable achievements have been made in the financial inclusion of NREGA workers. Total number of households registered under NREGA in Karnataka are 15,65,679, the total number of Job Cards issued are 14,79,744. The number of bank accounts opened are 11,36,844, the total number of Post office accounts opened are 2,11,952.
References


