Chapter - 2

ORIGIN AND GROWTH
OF MGNREGS
"The villagers want bread not butter and disciplined work, some work that will supplement their agricultural avocations which do not go on for all the 12 months" – Mahathma Gandhi.

After the formation of the Government by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in 2004, an agenda for governance was set through the National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) with regard to poverty alleviation and rural prosperity / development. It is envisaged in the NCMP that the UPA’s economic reforms will be oriented primarily to spreading and deepening rural prosperity, to significantly improving the quality of public systems and delivery of public services to bring about a visible and tangible difference in the quality of life of ordinary citizens of the country. To achieve the objectives of spreading and developing of rural prosperity, generation of employment, augmenting and modernization of rural infrastructure, including roads, housing for the weaker sections in the rural areas and providing drinking water to all sections and strengthening of livelihood in rural areas were highlighted. With this agenda, a conference of Chief Ministers was convened by the ministry of Rural Development on 29-30\textsuperscript{th} June 2004, so that a collective effort is made to achieve the objectives for which a road map was outlined in the NCMP. The theme of the conference was “Poverty alleviation and rural prosperity though Panchayat Raj.”

In accordance with the priorities set in the NCMP the programmes of Ministry of Rural Development were reviewed. A new ambitious programme like National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was initiated and other programmes of Ministry of Rural Development were consolidated, modified and restructured. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was
notified in September 2005. The programme was launched on February 2nd 2006 in 200 districts in the first phase all over India. In this chapter an attempt is made to examine the causes for the origin of MGNREGS and its growth.

**Origin of MGNREGS**

The launch of MGNREGS by the Union Government is guided by the successful implementation of the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme (MEGS), which has been implemented for three decades in Maharashtra, where the demand for unskilled wage work is not declined. The MGNREGS is not a new wage employment programme. There are several such programmes before this Scheme. But the previous employment programmes were not adequate in fulfilling the demands of rural poor. The experiences gained in implementation of different wage employment programmes like National Rural Employment Programme (NREP: 1980), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP: 1983), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY: 1989), Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS: 1993), Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (1999), Sampooran Grameen Rozgar Yojana (2001) and National Food. For Work Programme (NFFWP 2004) during the past three decades, were also taken into account while formulating the Act. With the launch of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) on 2nd February 2006, entire NFWP programme was subsumed into it. SGRY programme in 200 districts was also subsumed into NREGA in the first phase in 2006-07. SGRY programme in additional 130 districts was subsumed into NREGA in the second phase in 2007-08. The entire SGRY programme was subsumed into NREGA with effect from 1st April, 2008.
Need for MGNREGS

The centrally sponsored employment generation programmes have suffered from serious irregularities in implementation besides providing opportunities to unscrupulous politicians and their allies in the bureaucracy for illegal gratification. The evaluation of various wage employment schemes suffered due to several anomalies, which are common as well as different for various programmes. They are:

1. The previous wage employment Programmes provided employment for a short duration and are unable to improve the lot of rural downtrodden of the society. Thus they are vulnerable and are only temporary.

2. The crash scheme for Rural Employment failed due to non-following of norms by the contractors.

3. The delivery system has also been defective and ineffective under Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Projects (PIREP). It is one of the defective of almost all wage employment programmes.

4. Under, Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) the unskilled workers could not get higher wages. Under this scheme there is a sub-optimal use of the potential created.

5. Under the Food for Work Programme, there are number of deficiencies. These included erratic disbursement of food grains, delay in measurement of earthwork, non-durability of assets, inadequate technical support and lack of supervision. Moreover, the programme was implemented on an ad-hoc basis. No attempt was made by the states to prepare shelf of projects taking into account the local needs.
6. The NREP suffered due to local pulls and pressures geared to a desire for a very wide range of coverage. Under the scheme, many states were not able to spend the earmarked outlays. It is true with regard to other wage employment programmes also. Moreover, sufficient details of the types of works taken up in under the programme are not clear.

7. The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) became ineffective due to diversion of the rice (meant for a part of wages to workers) to public distribution system by State Governments.

8. In Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, nearly 50 percent of the Indian villages did not get the benefits of any work under this programme.

9. Many erstwhile employment generation programmes involving substantial investments have run into rough weather because of flaws reported in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such programmes.

10. The State Governments have been working on strategies to collect Central funds for various employment schemes and diverting them for various other unintended purposes.

11. The canon of accountability is skirted in all employment programmes.

**Salient Features of the MGNREG Act**

The responsibility of implementation of the scheme lies with the states as the states have been given the responsibility to prepare, finalize and approve the schemes of ‘shelf of projects’ (annual action plans) which ensure 100 days of guaranteed manual unskilled employment to every rural
household who is willing to work. The plan prepared will be given wide publicity through local newspapers for the generation of awareness among the people. Following are the salient features of the MGNREGS.²

1. **Registration of Employment seekers:** The registration of employment seekers will be made at the Gram Panchayat level along with their full particulars. After a proper enquiry for a period of at least five years. A job card will be issued with photograph. The employment seekers will submit their applications to the Sarpanch of the Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer at the block level.

2. **Availability of Employment opportunities:** At least 100 days of employment in financial year will be provided to all adult members of a registered family taken together in a financial year, who are willing to do unskilled manual work in such a manner that one-third opportunities are available to women. However, there is no upper ceiling on the number of days of employment. The programme officer at the block level will be responsible for making available the manual work within 15 days of the application. The job seeker will have to work together for not less than a fortnight thereby that he/she will continuously work for at least 15 days at a given point of time. An advance application can also be made for the employment. The intimation for offering employment shall be given in writing and through public notice.

3. **Minimum requirement for starting a new work:** If the job seekers cannot be absorbed on the ongoing work, minimum 50 applicants are required for starting a new work. There has to be perfect liaison between Gram Panchayat and Programme Officer for success of the scheme.

47
4. **Provision of wage:** At the national level average minimum wage rate will be Rs.60/- per man-day though it has been left to the State Governments to fix wage rates in the state, which shall be equal to seven hours of working. The disbursement of wage shall be made weekly but not later than a fortnight. In case the work site is beyond 5 km of radius, then the applicant will be entitled to 10 percent extra wages for travelling allowance.

5. **Wage-material ratio:** The cost of material component of works including wage to skilled and semi-skilled workers will be restricted to 40 percent of the total project cost.

6. **Institutional Mechanism:** The MGNREG Act envisages separate mechanism for the proper implementation of the scheme. For this purpose a separate mechanism from Central level to village level is arranged.

**Objectives of The programme**

The following are the important objectives of the MGNREGS.³

(1) The primary objective of the Scheme is to provide livelihood security to the households in rural areas, in notified districts by providing not less than 100 (one hundred) days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled and manual work.

(2) Creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor.

(3) If an applicant is not provided with such employment within 15 days of receipt of his/ her application seeking employment or from the date on which the employment has been sought in the case of an advance application whichever is later, he/ she shall be entitled to daily...
unemployment allowance subject to the entitlement of the household at the rate which shall not be less than one fourth of the wage rate for the first 30 (thirty) days of the financial year and not less than one half of the wage rate for the remaining period of the financial year.

(4) As far as possible the applicant shall be provided work within the village. If an applicant is provided employment outside a radius of five kilometers of the village where he/she resides at the time of applying he/she should be paid an extra 10% of the prevailing wage rate to meet additional transportation and living expenses.

(5) Priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the wage seekers shall be women who have registered themselves and requested for work.

(6) In case the payment of wages is not made within a fortnight, the workers shall be entitled to receive payment of compensation as per the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act 1936 (Act 4 of 1936).

(7) There shall be no discrimination solely on the ground of gender and the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (Act 25 of 1976) shall be complied with.

(8) Workers are entitled for work site amenities like safe drinking water, shade for children and periods of rest, first-aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment of minor injuries and other health and occupational hazards.

(9) If the number of children below the age of six years accompanying the women, working at any site is five or more, one woman worker shall be engaged to look after such children and she shall be paid wage rate.
(10) Any injury caused to a person employed under the Scheme by accident arising out of and in the course of his/her employment, such person is entitled to medical treatment free of charge.

(11) Where hospitalization of the injured worker at the worksite is necessary, such arrangements shall be made including accommodation, treatment and medicines. The injured worker shall be paid daily allowance not less than half of the wage rate required to be paid had the injured been engaged in the work.

(12) If the person employed dies or becomes permanently disabled by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, he/she shall be paid an ex-gratia at the rate of Rs. 25,000 or such amount as may be notified by the Central Government, and the amount shall be paid to the disabled or legal heirs of the deceased, as the case may be.

(13) Any personal injury caused by accident to a child accompanying any person employed under the Scheme, such person is entitled to free of charge medical treatment for the child and in case of death or disablement, an ex-gratia as determined by the Government.

Specifications of MGNREGS

MGNREG Scheme is the first of its kind as it is based on the law enacted by the Parliament of India. The following specifications are incorporated in the scheme.

1. Registration and issuance of Job Card

Under the MGNREGA there is a provision for the registration of households for demanding work. The following are the norms for the issuance of job cards.
(a) Any adult person of a household may on behalf of the members of the household apply to the Gram Panchayat, in the jurisdiction of which they reside, for registration of their household for issuance of a Job Card. The application can be in a printed form or on a plain paper containing the names of the adult members, their age, social status and address of the household. The Panchayat Secretary shall receive applications and issue dated receipt and enter the details in the Employment Guarantee Scheme Registration and Job Card Register. After that, he/she shall make due enquiry and issue the Job Card.

(b) A Job Card with unique ID number will be issued by the Gram Panchayat to the household that has been registered. The Panchayat Secretary shall also maintain these details in the 'Employment Guarantee Scheme Job Card Register'. The joint photograph of the adult members of the household must be affixed to the Job Card within three months from the date of issue of the Job Card.

(c) The Panchayat Secretary shall update the household Job Card at the time of payment of wages. The wage-days provided and the wages paid to the workers shall be reflected in the Job Card and the Employment Register.

(d) Addition or deletion of members eligible to seek work shall be carried out in the Job Card as and when required or at the beginning of the financial year. The updated list shall be sent to the Programme Officer.

(e) A cardholder may apply to the Gram Panchayat for a duplicate card if the original card is lost or damaged. The Panchayat Secretary shall verify the case and issue a duplicate card within seven working days of receipt of the application.
2. Application for work and work allotment

Individual/ Group of wage-seekers having Job Cards shall give
individual or group application as the case may be, on a plain paper or in a
printed form. Advance application giving details of the specific period of
employment sought in the year may also be submitted. Same person/ group
can submit multiple applications provided that the corresponding periods for
which employment is sought do not overlap.

The Secretary shall accept the applications for work. The applications
shall be valid if the wage employment sought by a household is at least for
fourteen days and the aggregate employment provided to the household is
not more than hundred days. List of all such applications shall be maintained
in the 'Applications for Work Register'.

The Gram Panchayat shall direct the applicant or group of applicants in
writing, to work in any ongoing work or by starting a new work, within fifteen
days of receiving applications seeking work or from the date of work being
sought in case of advance application, whichever is later. He/She shall make
necessary entries in the 'Applications for Work Register'.

Disabled persons may be provided wage-employment by entrusting
suitable works in the form of services that are identified as integral to the
programme. If it is not possible to provide work within the Gram Panchayat
area the Gram Panchayat Secretary shall forward the applications for work to
the Programme Officer. The Programme Officer shall coordinate with other
Gram Panchayats within the Mandal and issue letter of employment to the
applicant in the Gram Panchayat where work is available, by marking a copy
to both the Panchayat Secretaries concerned and the Mandal Parishad
Development Officer. 6
3. Unemployment Allowance

The MGNREGA specifies special provision for the payment of unemployment allowance in case, if an applicant is not provided employment within fifteen days of receipt of the application seeking work or from the date on which the employment has been sought, in case of advance application, whichever is later, he/ she can apply to the Panchayat Secretary for unemployment allowance. The Panchayat Secretary shall forward such applications to the Programme Officer who shall, after due enquiry, sanction the unemployment allowance or reject the application as the case may be.

The liability of the Panchayat to pay unemployment allowance to any household shall cease as soon as one or more of the following conditions are fulfilled:

1. The applicant is directed by the Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer to report for work either by himself/ herself or depute at least one adult member of his/her household;

2. Or the period for which employment is sought comes to an end and no member of the applicant’s household had turned up for employment;

3. Or the adult members of the household of the applicant have received in total at least one hundred days of work within the financial year;

4. Or the household of the applicant has earned as much from the wages and unemployment allowance taken together which is equal to the wages for one hundred days of work during the financial year.
4. Type of Works under Scheme

The focus of the Scheme shall be on the following works in the order of priority: 7

(a) Water conservation and water harvesting.
(b) Drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation).
(c) Irrigation canals, including micro and minor irrigation works;
(d) Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by households belonging to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or to land of beneficiaries of land reforms or that of the beneficiaries of Indira Awaas Yojana.
(e) Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks.
(f) Flood control and protection works, including drainage in water-logged areas.
(g) Rural connectivity to provide all-weather access.

Any other work, which may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government.

Investing on Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribe lands for irrigation and land development duly fulfilling Special Component Plan / Tribal Sub-Plan norms in each Mandal.

In order to ensure that the adequate investments under Employment Guarantee Scheme are channelised for plantation programme, it is proposed that 20% of the value of works taken up in Village shall be on plantation programme. Roads can be taken up as last priority not exceeding 10% of the value of all types of works taken up.
5. Planning for Shelf of Works

There is a special planning for the implementation of above mentioned works in a shelf manner. They are:

(a) The annual planning process for the next financial year should be completed by the December end of every year, including approval of the plan by the Zilla Parishad. The District Programme Coordinator shall prepare a labour budget for the next financial year containing the details of the anticipated demand for unskilled manual work in the district, which shall be the basis for the planning.

(b) The District Programme Coordinator shall arrive at the value of all works that need to be taken up to meet the anticipated labour demand and communicate the proportionate value of works to be identified by the Panchayat Raj Institutions in the ratio of 75:15:10 among Gram Panchayats, Mandal Parishads and Zilla Parishad.

(c) The Panchayat Raj Institutions, i.e., Gram Panchayat, Mandal Parishad and Zilla Parishad, shall be the units for maintaining the proportion between wage and material component in the ratio of 60:40 in respect of the works proposed by them. The material component shall include material and skilled / semi-skilled labour.

(d) The Gram Panchayat shall facilitate conduct of Ward Sabha and Gram Sabha for identification and prioritization of works within the allocations indicated to it by the District Programme Coordinator.

(e) The Gram Panchayat shall approve it as the Gram Panchayat Employment Guarantee Scheme Plan duly showing the priority of the works.
(f) The Gram Panchayat shall forward its Employment Guarantee Scheme Plan to the Programme Officer along with the indication of works it proposes to execute by itself.

(g) If the identified works are not sufficient to meet the anticipated wage demand, the Assistant Programme Officer can call for additional proposals from the Gram Panchayat.

(h) The Assistant Programme Officer shall scrutinize the annual plan received from the Gram Panchayat for its technical feasibility and satisfy himself/herself that the plan meets the likely demand for employment based on the registrations and previous experience.

(i) The Assistant Programme Officer shall examine the proposals in the annual plan and record his/her observations on the proposals and submit a consolidated statement of proposals to the Mandal Parishad.

(j) The Mandal Parishad shall propose works that may involve more than one Gram Panchayat within the allocations indicated by the District Programme Coordinator. The Mandal Parishad shall assign priority to the works proposed by it. The Assistant Programme Officer shall consolidate the Employment Guarantee Scheme plans received from the Gram Panchayats along with the proposals from the Mandal Parishads. Then the Assistant Programme Officer shall submit the consolidated Employment Guarantee Scheme plan of the Mandal to the Mandal Parishad for its approval. The Mandal Parishad shall maintain the priority indicated by the Gram Panchayats. It shall not reject the work proposed by the Gram Panchayats, if it is within the parameters of the Act. If it is outside the parameters of the Act, then it will be returned to
the Gram Panchayats for replacing it with a valid proposal. The Mandal Parishad shall forward the approved Mandal Employment Guarantee Scheme plan to the District Programme Coordinator.

(k). The District Programme Coordinator shall scrutinize the plan proposals of all the Mandal Parishads examining the adequacy and appropriateness of works in terms of likely demand as well as their technical and financial feasibility. He/ she will also invite and examine work proposals from other executing agencies. He/ she will consolidate all these proposals and place before the Zilla Parishad. The Zilla Parishad shall not change the priorities indicated by the Gram Panchayats and the Mandal Parishads in their Employment Guarantee Scheme plans. The Zilla Parishad shall propose works that may involve more than one Mandal within its allocation and approve the District Employment Guarantee Scheme plan. The District Programme Coordinator shall accord administrative sanctions for all the works approved under the District Employment Guarantee Scheme plan. The administrative sanction proceedings of the District Programme Coordinator shall clearly show the priority number of the work as indicated by the Gram Panchayat / Mandal Parishad / Zilla Parishad and also the details of the executing agency.

(l). Each work administratively sanctioned shall be assigned a unique identification number.

(m). The list of works administratively sanctioned should be forwarded to the Programme Officer who will send it to the concerned executing agencies for technical sanctions. The technically sanctioned works are sent back to the Programme Officer, who shall maintain these as Shelf of Works.⁹
6. Rural Standard Schedule of Rates

There shall be a separate Rural Standard Schedule of Rates prepared for the works taken up under the Scheme. The unit rates for different types of tasks shall be so fixed, that a worker-man or woman- will be able to earn Rs.80 per day through seven hours of work.

7. Estimation and Technical Sanctions

Under the scheme the following estimations shall be made for technical sanctions.¹⁰

(a) For all works of value up to Rs.2.00 lakh, the Technical Assistant shall prepare the estimates.

(b) Estimates for works of value above Rs.2.00 lakh shall be prepared by Mandal Assistant Engineer or any other Works department of the State Government.

(c) For all works up to Rs.2.00 lakh technical sanction shall be accorded by Mandal Assistant Engineer.

(d) Above Rs.2.00 lakh and up to Rs.5.00 lakh technical sanction shall be accorded by the Deputy Executive Engineers of Panchayat Raj or any other Works Department of the Government.

(e) Above Rs.5.00 lakh and up to Rs.20.00 lakh technical sanction shall be accorded by the Executive Engineer of Panchayat Raj or any other Works department of the Government.

8. Execution of Works

The MGNREGS specifies the ratio of works to be allotted for various agencies.¹¹
(a) At least 50% of the works in terms of cost will be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution. Based on the demand for employment from the wage seekers the Panchayat Secretary shall request Programme Officer to issue work commencement letter for opening of works. The Programme Officer shall issue work commencement letter to the Gram Panchayat or other line departments, strictly following the order of priority indicated in the administrative sanction proceedings issued by the District Programme Coordinator. Every Gram Panchayat shall maintain a Register of Works for which work-commencement letters are received, for the financial year. The copies of the work-commencement letter issued to the Gram Panchayat should also be sent to the Village Organization or Village Organizations concerned.

(b) On receiving the work-commencement letter, the executing agencies shall start the work immediately.

(c) While executing the works, the norms under the Scheme shall be followed.

(d) The Muster Rolls shall be supplied from District Employment Guarantee Scheme Cell to Programme Officer. Each Muster Roll shall be uniquely numbered. The Programme Officer will issue the duly numbered Muster Rolls to executing agencies, which shall maintain such Muster Rolls for every work. The executing departments shall maintain a stock register of the Muster Rolls. The Muster Rolls shall be closed once in a week.¹²

9. Wages

In rural India there is a wide discrimination in wages given to men and women. To avoid such discrimination the MGNREGA made the following provisions for the equal disbursement of the wages.
(a) Equal wage shall be paid to both men and women. The payment of wages shall be made at least once in a fortnight. The Programme Officer, the District Programme Coordinator and the State Programme Coordinator shall keep a watch on the average wages earned. If necessary, the schedule of rates may be revised to ensure that the wage per day is equal to the minimum wages notified by the Government under Minimum Wages Act, 1948. The district-wise average wage earned by the workers shall also be brought to the notice of the State Council every year. Gram Panchayat will be the single window for wage-payment, irrespective of the executing agency.

(b) The Field Assistant shall measure the work done and record in Measurement Book and close the Muster Roll at the end of each week. He/she shall read out the entries in the Measurement Book and Muster Roll to the workers at the worksite. The entries in the Muster Roll are to be attested by three representatives of the workers. The Panchayat Secretary shall submit the Measurement Book and closed Muster Rolls to the Mandal Parishad Development Officer within 24 hours of closure of the Muster Rolls. The Technical Assistant shall check and measure the work done and Muster Roll every alternate week. The Mandal Parishad Development Officer shall issue the pay order for payment of wages to the workers and send it to the Bank / Post Office or the Panchayat Secretary as the case may be. The Mandal Parishad Development Officer shall issue cheques to suppliers of material based on Measurement Book (M-Book). Where the Panchayat Secretary makes payment to the workers, it shall be ensured that it is done at a public place after reading out the Muster Roll. It shall be ensured that
the number of days of work and payment are entered in the household Job Card and the same shall also be entered in the Employment Register maintained at the Gram Panchayat level. In respect of all villages where there is a Bank branch or a Post Office within the village, the workers shall be assisted to open an account so that their wages can be adjusted to their accounts once a week.\textsuperscript{13}

\textbf{10. Closing of Works and Data Management}

The work shall be closed by the executing agency with a completion report. Each Gram Panchayat and every executing agency shall maintain a register of all works sanctioned, executed and completed.

\textbf{11. Vigilance and Quality Assurance}

Independent Vigilance and Quality Assurance teams shall be engaged to monitor the implementation of Employment Guarantee Scheme.

\textbf{12. Social Audit and Right to Information}

To enhance the transparency in the implementation of the programme, 'social audit' was introduced.\textsuperscript{14}

(a) Social audit shall be taken up to make the planning, implementation and evaluation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme more participatory, transparent and accountable. Social audit shall not be retrospective but an ongoing process of participation to ensure that legal guarantees and entitlements flow to the workers in a legitimate way. Social audit shall be done in three stages - pre, during and post implementation. Social audit shall be integrated into the critical activities of Employment Guarantee Scheme.
(b) An information wall shall be built by the Gram Panchayat at Gram Panchayat headquarters. One side of the wall shall be painted with long-term information like task-wise wage rates to be adopted for the year, non-negotiable, important guidelines, shelf of works identified etc. The other side of the wall shall be updated with weekly information like work-wise number of labour working; materials procured and consumed expenditure etc.

(c) The Programme Officer shall be the Public Information Officer for the Scheme, under the Right to Information Act, 2005 at the Mandal level and the Panchayat Secretary shall be the Public Information Officer at the Gram Panchayat level. The District Programme Coordinator shall be the appellate authority under the Scheme. The Public Information Officer shall make available the copies of the documents/ registers for verification and sale on cost as per the provisions of the Right to Information Act, 2005. The Programme Officer shall make available to the Gram Panchayats and the Village Organizations, the estimates of the works commenced, copies of Muster Rolls, pay orders for facilitating public scrutiny. The Village Organizations and the Mandal Mahila Samakhya shall maintain registers containing information on Employment Guarantee Scheme and discuss in their monthly meetings to ensure transparency, accountability and facilitate social auditing. 

13. Monitoring and Evaluation

Keeping in view of previous wage employment programmes which suffered due to lack of proper monitoring and evaluation system, the MGNREGA specifies separate mechanism for monitoring and evaluating the scheme.
(a) At least 10% of the Employment Guarantee Scheme works shall be inspected by District level officers and at least 2% of the works by state level officers. The State Government shall designate Area Officers for each District for effective monitoring.

(b) The Panchayat Secretary shall fill the Management Information System format and send to Mandal Parishad Development Officer and Programme Officer. Programme Officer shall compile, analyse this data and take appropriate remedial actions. He/She shall forward the reports to District Programme Coordinator with specific remarks. The District Programme Coordinator shall send the reports to State Programme Coordinator at quarterly intervals. State Programme Coordinator shall also submit quarterly reports to the Government of Andhra Pradesh and Government of India. State Employment Guarantee Council shall submit an annual report to the State Legislature.

(c) State Programme Coordinator shall empanel reputed agencies to carry out impact assessment. The District Programme Coordinator shall engage agencies to carry out studies specific to district, which are not covered by the agencies employed by State Programme Coordinator. The Impact Assessment Reports shall be put before the State Employment Guarantee Council and also be submitted to Government of Andhra Pradesh and Government of India. State Programme Coordinator shall take appropriate remedial measures based on the reports of the above studies.

14. Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Any grievance shall be enquired and action initiated within seven days by the Panchayat Secretary at village level, Programme Officer at the Mandal
level and District Programme Coordinator at the district level. Details of all the grievances received and disposed at each level should be maintained in the Grievance Register. Acknowledgement shall be given for any grievance received.  

**Expansion and Growth of MGNREGS in India**

The MGNREGS was initially extended to 200 drought prone districts of the country in February 2006. In the following year i.e., 2007-2008 the programme was further extended to another 130 districts. During 2008-2009 it was again extended to 285 districts. In all, the programme is now in operation in 619 districts of India. Table 2.1 gives the progress of the scheme during last four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table-2.1</th>
<th>Growth of MGNREGS in India during the year 2006-07-2009-10</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inspired Element Lengthen Rush</strong></td>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of Districts</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment provided to households (crore)</td>
<td>2.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Persondays (in Crore)</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCs</td>
<td>22.95(25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STs</td>
<td>32.98(36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>36.79(41%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>34.56(38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average personday per household (days)</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Works Detail</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total works taken up (In lakhs)</td>
<td>8.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works completed</td>
<td>3.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water conservation</td>
<td>4.51(54%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of irrigation facility to land owned by SC/ST/ BPL/s&amp; MF and IAY bene ciaries</td>
<td>0.81 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural connectivity</td>
<td>1.80(10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land development</td>
<td>0.89 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any other activity</td>
<td>0.34 (4%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident from the table 2.1 that the coverage of districts under the scheme is sharply increasing year by year. Initially 200 districts were covered by the scheme in 2006-07, in 2007-08 an addition of 130 districts, in 2008-09 285 districts and in 2009-10 4 districts were covered by the scheme. Except urban districts almost all rural districts were covered by the scheme. Within four years the number of households benefited by the scheme is more than double. To be more precise in 2006-07 2.10 crore households were benefited and by February 2009-10 it increased to 4.79 crore households. The man days are also doubled. The participation rate of Scheduled Castes ranges between 25 to 30 percent. On the other hand, the participation rate of Scheduled Tribes ranges from 21 to 36 percent. Comparing to above two social categories the participation rate of women is high, which ranges from 41 to 48 percent. The average man days are also growing positively. The total work undertaken under the scheme is increased nearly five times during four years of study. On the other hand, work completion rate increased nearly four times. The cause for poor work completion rate can be attributed to disputes with regard to some specific works, lack of coordination etc. Among the completed works high percentage of works are undertaken for water conservation. Around 10 to 20 percent of completed works, irrigation works for SCs and STs were taken up. Rural connectivity works and land development works ranges from 10 to 18 percent and 11 to 16 percent respectively.

MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh

The implementation of NREGA calls for the formulation of Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme by the State Governments. The Scheme so formulated would have to provide for the minimum features specified in
Schedule I of the Act and may prescribe conditions, which are without prejudice to the conditions specified in Schedule II of the Act. Accordingly, the Government of Andhra Pradesh has formulated the Scheme called Andhra Pradesh Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme MGNREGS-AP on 28th January 2006 to provide not less than one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas covered under the Scheme and whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work subject to the conditions stipulated in the Act and notified in the Scheme.

Growth of MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh

Table 2.2 gives the phase wise expansion of the programme in the state.

Table - 2.2

Phase wise Coverage of Districts under MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Month and Year</th>
<th>Districts Covered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Phase-I</td>
<td>February 2006</td>
<td>Adilabad, Anantapur, Chittoor, Kadapa, Karimnagar, Khamam, Mahaboob Nagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Nizamabad, Ranga Reddy, Vijayanagaram, Warangal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Phase-II</td>
<td>May 2007</td>
<td>East Godavari, Kurnool, Guntur, Nellore, Prakasam and Srikakuklam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Phase-III</td>
<td>April 2008</td>
<td>Krishna, Visakhapatnam, West Godavari</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The table 2.2 shows that during the first phase the MGNREGS was launched in 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh, out of which all nine districts are
from Telangana region of the state. In Rayalaseema region 3 districts and in coastal Andhra only one district was covered. The fundamental reason for the inclusion of large number of districts in Telangana and Rayalaseema region is that these districts are not well developed, when compared to other coastal districts of the state. During the second phase the scheme extended to 6 districts of the state, in which 5 districts are from coastal Andhra and one from Rayalaseema region. In the last phase 3 districts of coastal Andhra were covered under the scheme. In all 22 out of 23 districts were covered by the scheme. As this scheme is intended to provide employment for the rural poor the district of Hyderabad is not covered under this scheme.

The progress of MGNREGS in Andhra Pradesh since inception is presented in the tables 2.3 and 2.4

Table- 2.3
Caste-Wise House Hold Employment Analysis in Andhra Pradesh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No of HHs issued Job cards</td>
<td>11657038</td>
<td>11657038</td>
<td>11657038</td>
<td>11657038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No of HHs working</td>
<td>2174798</td>
<td>4684995</td>
<td>5703613</td>
<td>6071035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of HHs working</td>
<td>18.66</td>
<td>40.19</td>
<td>48.93</td>
<td>52.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SC HHs working</td>
<td>627622</td>
<td>1260578</td>
<td>1493618</td>
<td>1564347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of SC HHs working</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>43.05</td>
<td>51.01</td>
<td>53.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ST HHs working</td>
<td>289022</td>
<td>563417</td>
<td>700000</td>
<td>777406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of ST HHs working</td>
<td>21.53</td>
<td>41.98</td>
<td>52.15</td>
<td>57.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC HHs working</td>
<td>1012532</td>
<td>2245242</td>
<td>2742535</td>
<td>2967234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of BC HHs working</td>
<td>18.61</td>
<td>41.27</td>
<td>50.42</td>
<td>54.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others HHs working</td>
<td>245622</td>
<td>615758</td>
<td>767460</td>
<td>762048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Others HHs working</td>
<td>12.62</td>
<td>31.63</td>
<td>39.42</td>
<td>39.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in table 2.3 the number of households working under MGNREGS in the state has gradually increased over time. During the four years of its implementation the percentage of registered households also registered gradual increase. During the second year of study the percentage of SC households working under MGNREGS is more than double. On the other hand, during the last year of study they registered 2.41 percent growth. The percentage of working ST households has also registered upward growth. During the four years of study the STs participation rate increased more than two times. On the other hand the BC and others participation rate under MGNREGS works increased nearly three times.

Table-2.4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Particulars</th>
<th>2006-07</th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households registered</td>
<td>11657038</td>
<td>11657038</td>
<td>11657038</td>
<td>11657038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households working</td>
<td>2174798</td>
<td>4684995</td>
<td>5703613</td>
<td>6071035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households total days</td>
<td>65530084</td>
<td>199031184</td>
<td>225492530</td>
<td>386391458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households total wage</td>
<td>53140.13</td>
<td>163958.47</td>
<td>185909.63</td>
<td>347478.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(in Lakhs)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household avg. wage</td>
<td>81.09</td>
<td>82.38</td>
<td>82.45</td>
<td>89.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh.*

The Table 2.4 shows an increase in the total number of households year after year and also there is a corresponding increase in the total household man days, which also enhanced total wage amount. During four years of implementation, the total number of household days increased by 5.9 times, whereas wage amount increased by 6.4 times. As such the average household wages also registered positive growth in the state.
Conclusion

Since India’s Independence various measures have been taken up to create large scale employment opportunities in rural areas. But, these steps are mainly in the nature of relief works and not in the nature of permanent creation of job opportunities. These programmes failed to yield desired goals. As such the UPA government which came to power in 2004, in its Common Minimum Programme promised to provide guaranteed 100 days employment in a financial year to the unskilled rural poor. To keep up the promise the UPA government initiated and enacted Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in 2005, under which 100 days employment was guaranteed to the rural poor. The programme was formally launched on 2nd February 2006. Under the scheme there are provisions for average minimum wages, wage and material ratio. There is a specified institutional mechanism for the implementation of the scheme from Central level to Village level. Initially the scheme was launched in 200 districts of the country. At present the scheme covers 619 districts in the country. As per the provisions of the MGNREGA, the State of Andhra Pradesh prepared its own guidelines for the implementation of the scheme. All 22 rural districts in the state were covered by the scheme in a phased manner. Under the scheme any adult persons of a household may apply for the registration of works. In case if the registered person is not provided employment within fifteen days, he will get unemployment allowance. Under the scheme seven major works were identified. For the implementation of these works separate Rural Standard Scheduled Rates will be prepared. Under the scheme about 50 percent of the works shall be allotted to Gram Panchayat. There is a Provision for equal wages for both men and women. For proper vigilance and monitoring of works separate mechanism was introduced. For the transparency of scheme the concept of ‘Social Audit’ was introduced. The percentage of Households benefited by the scheme in the state is increasing year by year.
References


3. Ibid. p.45.


5. Ibid.


7. Ibid. p. 5.


14. Ibid.


17. Ibid.