

ASSESSING OF MGNERGA SCHEME IN EMPLOYMENT GENERATION, RURAL POVERTY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN MAHUADANR BLOCK (CHECHARI VALLEY) OF LATEHAR DISTRICT, JHARKHAND: AN ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

MGNREGA scheme is a revolutionary step for India's poor in alleviating their poverty. MGNREGA scheme is the biggest anti-poverty alleviation programme in the world. The act NREGA came into force in 2006 but on 2nd October 2009 it has changed into MGNREGA. Initially, 200 districts were selected for the enforcement of the scheme and in the year 2008, now it is implemented in all 734 districts of the country. The major aims and objective of MGNREGA scheme is to remove rural poverty through generating employment in rural areas, reducing rural-urban migration and to develop rural infrastructure. The main objective of this paper is to know the operational schemes and permissible works under this scheme and to examine the role of MGNREGA in generating employment opportunities in the study area. Mahuadanr region (Chechari Valley) is located at Chotanagpur plateau region. The study is based on mainly secondary sources of data. It is evident from the study that in total there are 39,231 persons working under the MGNREGA scheme in 2022-23 in Latehar district of Jharkhand. Balumath block has the highest rank (7849 person) working under the scheme whereas Saryu block has recorded lowest number (490 persons). The researcher suggested that Central Government should promote "One Nation- One Wage" rate for the MGNREGA workers of all the states of India. MGNREGA is considered as a "silver bullet" and a promising boon for improving the standard of living of rural poor peoples. Thus in this 21st century this wonderful flagship scheme become as "backbone of new rural India". The World Bank considered that MGNREGA scheme as a stellar example of rural development and praises it's as world largest public programme as Policy barrier to economic development and poverty alleviation. Thus there is no doubt that MGNREGA scheme play a positive significant role in reducing rural-urban migration, ample employment generation, improving the rural infrastructure and alleviating rural poverty in the study area. In 21st century now MGNREGA scheme become Digital MGNREGA because every work perform through Digital platform.

Key Words (Index Term): MGNREGA, Livelihood Security, Rural Poverty, Inclusive Growth, Employment Generation.

1. INTRODUCTION

India is a country where majority of its population live in rural areas (almost 68.8 per cent, 2011 Census). The concentration of people living in rural areas has found to have correlation with poverty. Keeping in view the National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill which was passed by Parliament on 7 September, 2005. The act NREGA came into force from 2 February 2006, Initially 200 districts were selected for the enforcement of the scheme with a total budget of 11,300 crore rupees (Ministry of Rural development, Government of India). The NREGA scheme was first started at Bandlapalli village in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. But in the year 2008, it was implemented in all 640 district of the country. On 2nd October 2009, the Government of India renamed the NREGA as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wages (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India). Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, mal-nourished children, anemic pregnant women, farmer suicides, starvation deaths, migration etc. resulting of inadequate in employment, poverty, and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. This minimum wage varies from state to state, in some states it is Rs. 80 whereas in other it is Rs. 125 or Rs. 120. According to the Act the minimum wage cannot be less than Rs. 60. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year. The objective of MGNREGA scheme is to reduce rural poverty and generate huge employment and improve rural infrastructure. The MGNERGA is a revolutionary step for India's poor. It is the biggest anti-poverty alleviation programme in the world. Thus

MGNREGA is considered as a “silver bullet” for alleviating rural poverty and generating huge employment (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India). In general, poverty can be defined as a situation when people are unable to satisfy the basic needs of life. It may be also analyzed by low per capita income and low per capita energy consumption, housing condition, availability of basic amenities and facilities (drinking water, sanitation etc.). MGNREGA is considered as the most significant act in the history of the Indian polity in many ways like grass root level participation of every citizen and beneficiary through democratic process, multilayered social audit and transparency mechanism by involvement of civil society, comprehensive planning at village level towards sustainable and equitable development etc. MGNREGA is considered as a Growth Engine as it brings prosperity in rural economy via increased consumption and demand. The rural people considered MGNREGA as a promising boon for improving their standard of living.

Review of Literature:

The review highlights the distinction areas covered by the many researchers and academicians which may be helpful to understand the issues relating to the present study and it also helps to find out the research gap. The basic sources of literature review of my study areas are- published research papers, articles in the journal of national and international repute, books, Government reports, Research agencies reports etc.

Khan, Ullah and Salluja (2007),

have discussed the direct and indirect effects of NREGA on employment generation and poverty reduction in local area. For this, a detailed survey was done in a poor agricultural village with 400 households, consisting nearly 2500 people. The survey recorded income and expenditure levels by type of household including large, small and marginal farmers, agricultural labour etc. The study reveals that most of the people do not access the scheme, as they haven't heard of the programme. Almost everyone wants more work from the scheme and better facilities at the work place.

Dey and Bedi (2010),

studied the functioning of the NREGA between 2006 to 2009 in Birbhum district of West Bengal. Their study reveals that in order to serve as an effective “employment of all last resort” the programme should provide more job during lean season and wages should be paid in timely manner. This study shows that there is universal awareness about NREGA job card have been made available to all those who have applied and NREGA in Birbhum district related information is well maintained and relatively accessible. But there are long delays in wage payments during the first year of the programme, since then the payment lag has declined and is now in the range of 20 days.

Taufique and Areful (2017)

expressed their view that MGNREGA scheme is the only guarantee wage employment scheme in Malda district of West Bengal. Their study shows that MGNREGA scheme play an important role in alleviating the rural poverty in different block of the district. The researchers suggest that the co-ordination of various segments is very much necessary for successfully implementation of the scheme in Malda district of West Bengal.

Taufique, Areful and Reza Kaushar (2022)

examine the status and performance of MGENREGA scheme in employment generation, reducing rural-urban migration, alleviating rural poverty in India. Their study reveals that during the financial year 2022-23, the Central Government has allocated INR 61000 Crores. It is evident from the study that Uttar Pradesh has maximum number of workers and Goa state has lowest numbers of workers. The study also reveals that under the MGNREGA scheme Sikkim has pay highest wage INR 381 to the workers and Chhattisgarh state has pay lowest wage INR 193 to the workers. The researcher suggested that Central Government should promote “One Nation- One Wage” rate for the MGNREGA workers of all the states of India. MGNREGA is considered as a “silver bullet” and a promising boon for improving the standard of living of rural poor peoples. Thus in this 21st century this wonderful flagship scheme become as “backbone of new rural India”. History of MGNREGA Scheme NREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Government. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana 2 (SGRY) from 2001; National Food For Work Programme (NFFWP) from 2004 were national rural employment schemes. Among these, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

Time-line of MGNREGA Scheme-

The time line of MGNREGA the scheme got its modifications from the time since the time of its final implementation.

Table 1. 1 : Time line of MGNREGA Programme

August 2005	February 2006	April 2007	April 2008	October 2008	16 February 2009	2 nd October 2009
NREGA legalized	Came into force, initially 200 Districts were selected	130 more Districts included	Universalized the scheme to all over India	Wage transaction through banks/post offices	with the postal department MoU	Name of Scheme changed (NREGA to MGNREGA)

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 2012-13

The Act got first introduced in 200 most backward districts of the country in Feb 2006. Subsequently, it was proposed to extend to the remaining districts only after 5 years. Later, looking at the popularity of the Act, was extended further to 130 more districts & within a year after the Act got universalized by bringing the entire country under its horizon with the exception of districts that have a hundred per cent urban population & got soon named after Mahatma Gandhi (on October the 2nd 2009) to make the Act more reachable to the masses and thus it became Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). In the context of Odisha all the tribal dominated districts were covered from the very beginning (Table 1.1).

Significance of MGNREGA Scheme

MGNREGA aims to achieve the objective as enunciated in the Article: 41 of the Indian Constitution- “giving citizens the right to work”. The Act is significant due to the following reasons that is earlier wage employment programmes (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India) did not provide any guarantee of job, this Act provided guaranteed job. This guarantee for wage employment is now uniformed all over the country like never before.

The other key attributes of this Act are labour intensive work, decentralized participatory planning, women’s empowerment, work-site facilities and above all transparency and accountability through the provision of social audits and right to information. The use of information technology in this programme is considered to bring about greater transparency through intensive monitoring and faster execution. The payment of wages through bank and post office accounts is other innovative step that is likely to reduce fudging of muster rolls on the part of the implementing agencies since the actual payments are beyond their reach. Thus MGNREGA is not only a welfare initiative but also a development effort that can take the Indian economy to a new prosperity.

Goals of MGNREGA Scheme

Long-term objectives of the Act include:

- Enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of guarantee wage employment in a financial year to every registered household.
- Creating productive assets
- Protecting the environment
- Reducing rural to urban migration
- Empowering rural women and the poor through the provision of a right-based law.
- Fostering social equity.
- To create strong social safety net for the vulnerable groups by providing employment source, when other alternative are inadequate.
- Community participation
- Creating and maintenance rural infrastructure

Thus MGNREGA has three distinct goals:

- ❖ Huge Employment Generation
- ❖ Alleviating Rural Poverty
- ❖ Reducing Rural-Urban Migration

It protects the rural poor from vulnerabilities by providing them demand based employment. It prevents risk associated with agricultural investment and forced migration of rural poor. It brings prosperity in rural economy via increased consumption demand. Thus MGNREGA can be considered as a growth engine.

2. STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

There are various problems related with the MGNREGA scheme at Mahuadanr region of Latehar district of Jharkhand. The MGNREGA scheme was implemented first time in the year 2008. The main problems of MGNREGA scheme in this region are lack of awareness of rural people relating to aims and objective of MGNREGA scheme. The other problems are irregularities and delay of payment to the workers, discrimination against STs and SCs and women for work, lack of co-ordination among within the various segment of Panchyat and administrative set up, delays by the bank Manager to allows the job card holder to open the bank account, corruption and malpractices at block and Panchyat level (District Rural Development Agency).

Looking all the problems of MGNREGA scheme and its malpractices in implementation, the current study will concentrate together the information on success and failure of MGNREGA in alleviating rural poverty and status of MGNREGA schemes in employment generation Mahuadanr region of Latehar district of Jharkhand. The outcomes or findings from this study will be very helpful for Administrators, Policymakers, Economists, Sociologists, Researchers, Academicians, Journalists, NGO workers, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Government of Jharkhand as well as the Central Government of India for their policy making.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The present study has been undertaken with the following objectives-

1. To know the operational mechanism and scheme of the works introduced by MGNREGA programme in the study area.
2. To find out the role of MGNREGA in generating employment opportunities in Mahuadanr region (Chechari Valley).
3. To know the weak and strength features of MGNREGA schemes in Mahuadanr region of Latehar district, Jharkhand.

A Geographical Outlook of the Study Area- Mahuadanr is one of the backward in terms of Educational level, health and infrastructure development and tribal dominants habitats (ST community) block of Latehar district in Jharkhand state. The latitudinal extent of Mahuadanr is 23.3965° North and 84.1066° East longitude. There are many tourist places in this areas such as Lodh waterfall, Mirchia waterfall, Netarhat hills station and forest area etc. There are a total numbers of 106 villages are situated in this block. There are various rivers such as Koel river, Burha river, Kanhar river Aksi river are flowing. In this block Hindi, Kurukh, Nagpuri, Santhali are major language of peoples. According to 2011 census total 74,732 populations are found among them 37,915 males and 36,817 females and literacy rate is 69.62 percent and sex ratio is 971.

4. DATABASE AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research work is analytical, descriptive and empirical type of research work. The study is based on **Secondary** sources of data. The secondary data has been collected from District Statistical Handbook, Latehar 2011-12, Census of India 2011, Block Development Office, Mahuadanr, Annual Report related to Demographic Statistics 2011-12, websites Ministry of Rural development, Ministry of Labour and Employment Government of India, MGNREGA Reports 2022-23, Books, Research Paper, Journals, Newspaper, Researchgate, Google Scholar etc. The data are represented through diagrams and tables with the help of MS Excel 2010 and computer cartography.

Operational Mechanism of MGNREGA Scheme- MGNREGA has a five-tier structure of implementation starting from Central Government at the top to the bottom level at Gram Panchyat.

Central Government (First Tier)- At the top of the hierarchy comes the Central Government. The Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi is the nodal agency for MGNREGA implementation. It has the responsibility to set up Central Employment Guarantee Council for receiving advice on MGNREGA implementation. It may also undertake independent evaluation and monitoring of the scheme. It has the responsibility to prepare the budget and disburse funds to all the states.

State Government (Second Tier)- Next in hierarchy is the state government which acts as a facilitator in the flow of MGNREGA funds and helping in preparation of manpower. It has the responsibility to set up the State Employment Guarantee Council. The latter has the role to advice the government from time to time on MGNREGA implementation in the state. Besides, the council is also entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring and evaluation of the MGNREGA in the state.

District Panchyat or Zila Parishad (Third Tier)- District Panchyat, in addition to implementing non-mandatory works, coordinates MGNREGA activities at the district level. Besides, it has the responsibility to prepare both the

district annual plan and the five-year perspective plan. These two plan documents are the bases which guide the implementation of MGNREGA at the village level. These documents are prepared at the district level in consultation with the GP and block Panchayat.

Block Panchayat or Panchayat Samiti (Fourth Tier)- The rest 50% may be undertaken either by the block Panchayat or the district Panchayat or both. Block Panchayat monitors and coordinates the plans and works at the block level. Computer updating of MGNREGA works, muster roll entries, etc. is done at the block level under the guidance of the MGNREGA programme officer.

Gram Panchayat at Village level (Fifth Tier) - Gram Panchayat is the nodal agency at the bottom level that has the authority to select, design and implement 50% of the works. Selection of works, monitoring and supervision are done by the Gram Sabha (village council). Gram Panchayat has the responsibility to register households, issue job cards, receive applications for employment, provide employment and monitor the NREGA works. It is the most important tier.

Major Permissible Works under MGNREGA Scheme:

The works under MGNREGA scheme are-

- Renovation of traditional water bodies and desalting (ponds, lakes, rivers, well etc.)
- Water conservation and water harvesting.
- Development of irrigational canals including micro and minor irrigation works.
- Land development, leveling of ground, dumping of ground holes.
- Flood control and protection works, drainage in water logged areas.
- Rural connectivity works (like construction roads, bridges).
- Massive Afforestation on public and community places, and river erosion areas.
- Any other works which may be notified by the Central Government and State Government (i.e. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Namami Ganga Clean programme, construction of house under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, construction of Toilets) with the consultation of the State Government.

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Role of MGNREGA Scheme in Employment Generation at Mahuadanr Block of Latehar district, Jharkhand

The MGNREGA scheme was first time introduced in Latehar district during the year 2008. In the year (2022-23) 39231 peoples are working under MGNREGA scheme in the study area. The primary aim of MGNREGA is to generate employment. There is different scenario in different blocks of the district in employment generation. Latehar district consists of 10 community development blocks. During the year 2022-23, Balumath block has maximum number of MGNREGA workers 7849 peoples and Mahuadanr block 5551 peoples are working (Table 1.3).

Table 1.2 : Status of MGNREGA Scheme in Jharkhand State 2022-23

Total Number of District	24
Total Number of Block	264
Total Number of Gram Panchayat	4,388
Total Number of Job Card Issues (In Lakhs)	95.98
Total Number of Workers (In Lakhs)	63.44
Total Number of Active Job Card (In Lakhs)	33.84
Total Number of Active Workers (In Lakhs)	42.62
SC Worker Against Active Workers (%)	10.26
ST Worker Against Active Workers (%)	26.644

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, MGNREGA, Government of India Report, 2022-23

Table 1.3: Employment Generation by MGNREGA at different block of Latehar district, 2022-23

Name of Community Development Block	Total Number of Workers
Balumath	7849
Bariyatu	3127
Barwadih	2798
Chandwa	4062

Garu	1815
Herhanj	2537
Latehar	6905
Mahuadanr	5551
Manika	4093
Saryu	490
Total	39231

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, MGNREGA, Government of India Report, 2022-23

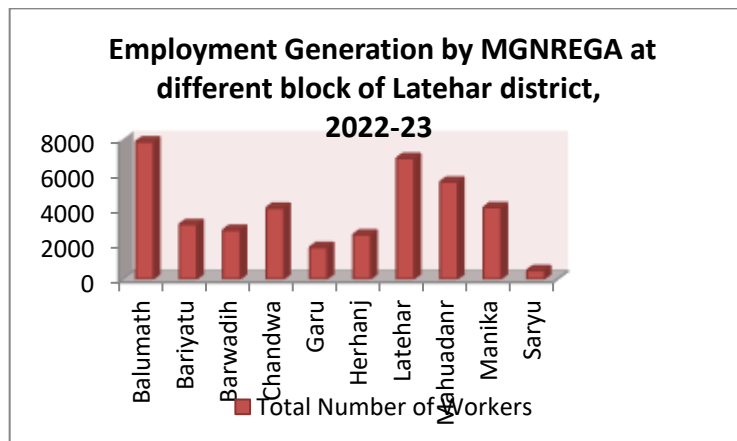


Table 1.4: Wages Rate of MGNREGA Workers in Jharkhand, 2008-09 to 2022-23

Financial Year	Wages rate MGNREGA Workers (In Rupees per day)	Financial Year	Wages rate MGNREGA Workers (In Rupees per day)
2008-09	123.90	2016-17	169.56
2009-10	130.34	2017-18	176.65
2010-11	135.42	2018-19	191.34
2011-12	148.78	2019-20	218.56
2012-13	153.05	2020-21	218.56
2013-14	145.07	2021-22	220.34
2014-15	159.60	2022-23	255.67
2015-16	169.29		

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, MGNREGA, Government of India Report, 2022-23

Table 1.4 depicted that during the year 2008-09 the MGNREGA workers wages rate per day was INR 123 Rupees, but in the year 2022-23 the wages rate are increases INR 255.50 Rupees per days works. The wages rate is totally depending upon the fund allocated by the central government.

Table 1.5: Employment Generation in Mahuadanr block through MGNREGA Scheme, 2022-23

Gram Panchyat (Mahuadanr)	Number of Registered		SCs		STs		Others		Male	Female
	Household	Persons	Household	Persons	Household	Persons	Household	Persons		
Aksi	2799	5928	39	77	2059	4083	701	1798	3357	2601
Amwatoli	2578	5013	20	30	107	1708	1484	3275	258	2425

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Chainpur	2574	6007	28	40	147 9	2723	1067	3244	357 8	2429
Champa	2226	5008	32	41	145 1	2669	743	2298	278 2	2226
Chatakpur	3540	7540	263	602	244 7	4982	830	1956	421 6	3324
Durup	3017	6654	138	351	184 9	4056	1030	2247	371 0	2944
Garbudhni	2858	6848	112	264	155 9	3742	1187	2842	375 4	3094
Hami	2420	5553	134	268	180 2	4253	484	1032	305 6	2497
Mahuadan r	3110	5424	251	394	109 7	2055	1762	2975	288 1	2543
Netarhat	2640	5714	24	63	218 4	4676	432	975	313 1	3404
Orsa	3764	8070	58	113	269 1	5252	1015	2705	466 6	2812
Parhatoli	2937	6277	237	435	168 6	3335	1014	2507	346 5	2545
Rengai	2672	5456	30	67	205 4	4048	588	1341	291 1	2542
Sohar	2153	4756	4	9	143 3	2804	716	1943	268 4	2072
Total	39288	84278	1370	2754	248 65	50386	13053	31138	467 79	3749 9

Source: Ministry of Rural Development, MGNREGA, Government of India Report, 2022-23

Table1. 5 shows that 39288 house hold and 84278 persons were registered for employment at different village Panchyat of Mahuadanr block of Latehar district during the year 2022/23. Moreover a total number of 1370 Scheduled Caste house hold and 2754 persons peoples are engaged, 24865 Scheduled Tribes house hold and 50386 persons are engaged, 46779 Males and 37499 Females are registered under MGNREGA Scheme at different village Panchyat of Mahuadanr block of Latehar district of Jharkhand state.

Challenges and Opportunities of MGNREGA Scheme at Mahuadanr block of Latehar district, Jharkhand:

These are the following challenges have been faced for ensuring successful implementation of MGNREGA Scheme in Mahuadanr region (Chechari Valley).

1. In Mahuadanr region, with more than 70 per cent of population belonging to deprive and marginalized, backward sections of the society i.e., STs, SCs, and minorities community. This along with the low literacy rate resulted people having little knowledge about the aims and objectives of MGNREGA programme in the study area.
2. The employment generation is not maintained properly. On the contrary, some people who are in need for employment are excluded in the study area.
3. Delay of the payment to the MGNREGA workers in the study area.
4. Failure of the authority to job provided to the MGNREGA job card holder.
5. Delay in opening of account in the banks to job card holder under the DBT (Direct Benefit transfer) for the payment of workers.
6. Most of the works are unskilled, arduous and monotonous and machines are not allowed in any works.
7. There is works discrimination with regard to provide employment among the SC, ST, OBC, minority and women's in the MGNREGA schemes in the study area.
8. The wages rate (per day) is very low, provided by MGNREGA scheme.

9. The unemployment allowance rate is not properly distributed to the workers under the MGNREGA Schemes in the study area.
10. The works site facility is very less attention. There is lack of drinking water facility, lacks of First -Aid box etc. under this scheme in the study area.

6. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

With the above forgoing discussion it is clear that MGNREGA is the only guarantee wage employment programme in our country. First time rural women's have got employment by MGNREGA scheme.

Central Government should be pay attention like "One Nation-One Wage" under MGNREGA scheme workers wage. The Central Government should increase the MGNREGA workers wage rate, provision of at least 200 days of work to the BPL (Below Poverty Line) and landless family and Women's as against 100 days of work. The Central Government should be appointing a Brand Ambassador of MGNREGA programme for better promotion of this scheme at mass level.

The Government should allow using Contractors and Machines in some cases at work site facilities areas. No doubt this world biggest Anti-poverty scheme (MGNREGA) plays a positive significant role in ample employment generation, alleviating rural poverty and developing rural infrastructure at Mahuadanr block of Latehar district of Jharkhand. In 21st century, MGNREGA scheme become Digital MGNREGA because every work is perform through digital platform. MGNREGA is not only a welfare initiative scheme but also a development effort that change the rural society into a new prosperity. Lastly we must have faith in our former Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh who describes it as "A landmark in our history in removing rural poverty from the face of the nation". Thus this wonderful flagship scheme become as "backbone of new rural India". The World Bank considered that MGNREGA scheme as a stellar example of rural development and praises it's as world largest public programme as Policy barrier to economic development and poverty alleviation.

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