

The Policy Impasse in MNREGA: A Study of Namkum, Ranchi

A Thesis submitted to the University of Hyderabad in partial fulfilment of the requirement for
the award of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Farah Naz hereby declare that this thesis entitled “**The Policy Impasse of MNREGA: A Study of Namkum, Ranchi**” submitted by me under the guidance and supervision of Dr. D. Veerababu is a bonafide research work which is also free from plagiarism. I also declare that it has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this University or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma. I hereby agree that my thesis can be deposited in Shodganga/INFLIBNET.

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The thesis is free from plagiarism and has not been submitted previously in part or in full to this or any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma.

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DEDICATION

This Research Work is Dedicated to my Parents

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
IAY	Indira Awas Yojana
SGSY	Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana
SGRY	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana
NSAP	National Social Assistance Programme
IWMP	Integrated Watershed Management Programme
NRDWM	National Rural Drinking Water Mission
UPA	United Progressive Alliance
MWA	Minimum Wages Act
BPL	Below Poverty Line
NREGP	National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme
CIT	Communication and Information Technology
IHO	Institute of Human Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
NSS	National Sample Survey
CAGR	Controller and Auditor General Report
IITM	Indian Institute of Technology Madras
CCS	Centre for Civil Society
MIS	Management Information System
CSE	Centre for Science and Environment
NFWP	National Food for Work Programme

IT	Information Technology
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
AERC	Agro – Economic Research
NIRD	National Institute of Rural Development
CERP	Centre for Eradication of Rural Poverty
GP	Gram Panchayat
GS	Gram Sabha
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institution
PO	Programme Officer
DPC	District Programme Coordinator
DP	District Panchayat
SEGC	State Employment Guarantee Council
CEGC	Central Employment Guarantee Council
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
SHG	Self – Help Groups
JC	Job Cards
MR	Muster Roll
WS	Ward Sabha
SAU	Social Audit Unit
CFTs	Cluster Level Facilitation Teams
FIR	First Information Report
PIAs	Project Implementation Agencies

IEC	Information Education and Communication
ABP	Annual Block Plans
NMT	National Management Team
NEGF	National Employment Guarantee Fund
RSBY	Rashtriya Swastha Bima Yojana
CSC	Community Service Centre
GRS	Gram Rozgar Sahayak (Sevak)
EGD	Employment Guarantee Day
TA	Technical Assistant
BDO	Block Development Officer
BRC	Block Resource Centre
SEGM	State Employment Guarantee Mission
NRM	National Resource Management
DTC	District – Technical Committee
VTC	Voluntary Technical Corps
COO	Chief Operating Officer
SMT	State Management Team
MED	Monitoring and Evaluation Division
PIM	Project Initiation Meetings
LB	Labour Budget
RBI	Reserve Bank of India
KYC	Know Your (Participants) Customer
e-FMS	Electronic Funds Management System

NEFT	National Electronic Funds Transfer
RTGS	Real Time Gross Settlement
JBY	Janashree Bima Yojana
RSBY	Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana
PVTGs	Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
HH	House Hold
DP	Disabled Person
BRGF	Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme
MP	Mandal Parishad
ZP	Zilla Parishas
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
OC	Other Caste
BC	Backward Caste
SC	Schedule Caste
ST	Schedule Tribe
DF	Degree of Freedom
AM	Anti Meridian
PM	Post Meridian
WMQ	Work Motivation Questionnaire
HGS	Head Gram Sabha
PO	Programme Officer (Project Officer)/Post Office
WGC	Workers Group Committee

FA	Field Assistants
PEs	Programme Executors
ADO	Additional Programme Officer
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
FTO	Funds Transfer Order
WH & C	Water Harvesting & Conservation
PD	Person Days
DP	Drought Proofing
IP	Irrigation Provision
RN	Renovation
FW	Flood Control Works
WR	Wage Amount Rural
WO	Wage Amount for Others
DC	District Collector
TR	Telangana Region
AR	Andhra Region
RR	Rayalaseema Region

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is a novel act in our country's history. It has been promulgated after many deliberations and discussions in the Parliament by the Government of India on 23rd August 2005. The Act, named initially as the NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act), was informed in the Gazette of India on 7th September 2005 and was brought into force on 2nd February 2006. The MGNREGA¹ assures a guarantee 100 days of employment to the rural unemployed, unskilled labor force in the country. The MGNREGA covers a total of 701 Districts, 7,080 Blocks, and 2,68,702 Gram Panchayats.

TABLE 1.1
EMPLOYMENT GENERATION BY MGNREGA IN THE COUNTRY

Total Number of Job Cards issued (in crores)	14.59
Total Number of Worker (in crores)	28.34
Total Number of Active Job Cards (in crores)	8.99
Total Number of Active Workers (in crores)	13.99

Source: Official Website of the MGNREGA²

The table above indicates that the amount of active cards and workers covered by the MGNREGA is almost half the overall number of jobs cards and workers registered under it. The Act's performance has been plummeting over the years of its implementation and administration (it has been discussed in detail in further chapters).

1.1 THE POLICY IMPASSE IN MGNREGA

An impasse is a French word that is used to describe a standstill or deadlock in any situation. This state of stagnancy in MGNREGA is based on the observer's impression of the locale in the preliminary field study. It was observed in the locale that the policy had come to a standstill, workers were seeking lesser work or working less under it, and the administration seemed to be non-zealous in the administration of the MGNREGS. A policy that provides employment guarantee for 100 days for the unskilled workforce was operating in a very lackadaisical manner in the locale. The region has a huge or significant rural workforce that could seek employment under the MGNREGA, but the stagnancy in its operationalisation completely discomfited its objective. Therefore, it was felt necessary to explore this situation.

The status and fate of MGNREGA as a public policy mainly depends on the Government's stance towards it and the participation of the workers under it. The study takes into consideration these two critical factors to locate a Policy impasse in MGNREGA and discusses these simultaneously in the succeeding chapters.

To give a brief preceding view of this Impasse, we can see that on the one hand, in current times, the MGNREGA has been facing neglect and negation by policymakers or the country's decision-makers. Implementational and administrative issues such as low awareness levels, lower minimum wages, delay in payments, etc., are continually ignored by local and district level administration in most states across the country. Furthermore, the Government's continuous claims that the MGNREGA is no longer needed or the purpose of MGNREGA, which is majorly is employment generation, is no longer served by the Act anymore. Since the MGNREGA is majorly a Central Sponsored Scheme and the center decides the most crucial aspects of the Act, the Central Government's stance becomes essential to the Act's functioning across the States in the country. Despite the vast potential to transform rural livelihoods in the

country, the current Government's attitude has not favored strengthening the MGNREGA. Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said that the Prime Minister Narendra Modi Government's bigger goal is to eradicate poverty. Therefore, a scheme like MGNREGA that is for the poor has no use anymore.³ The country's rural unemployment rate is 6.90 (as of October 2020), and MGNREGA can be highly instrumental in improving the rural areas' unemployment scenario, so the policymakers' attitude becomes critical. The stance of the Government has been discussed in detail later in the study.

On the other hand, the workers who form the base of the schemes under the MGNREGA seem to have been drifting away from it⁴. Evidence from the data indicates a decrement in the participation of the workers under the MGNREGS. Many causes make the workers not seek much work under the MGNREGS and move away from it. Either the workers are not seeking work or are dropping out of work under the MGNREGS (the cause is discussed in the primary data chapter, later in the study).

Many questions arise about the MGNREGA and its role pertaining to the rural unemployment and livelihood sustenance as conceived originally by the policymakers in the country, and to locate and understand the Policy Impasse in MGNREGA, it becomes essential to understand the MGNREGA as a Public Policy and MGNREGA as an Act, simultaneously, which have been discussed and explained in the later chapters, but, here, let us see both of these aspects briefly.

1.2 MGNREGA AS A PUBLIC POLICY

To understand MGNREGA as a Public Policy, we need to understand the perception of Public Policy.

1.3.1 PUBLIC POLICY

Harold Lasswell and **Abraham Kaplan (1970)** held; "public strategy for broad-scale programmes and are a projected programme with priorities, principles, and tactics."⁵ to be public policy.

Thomas R. Dye (1987) held, "Anything that the Government does or does not"⁶; as a public policy. Dye considers the Government's "to do" and the "not to do" the characteristics of the public policy and making it a practical subject.

Prabir Kumar De, 2012, in his book 'Public Policy and Systems,' discusses that Policy Sciences provide for enhancement inefficiency of public policy and their aids in the process of implementation and evaluation. It also provides opportunities and Governments worldwide to deal with the ever-increasing number of problems pertaining to public policies.⁷

The need to revive and revamp the public policies for faster growth in the sense of developing countries such as India and its growth can be addressed by analyzing policies systematically.

Policy analysis provides answers to questions that are designative, evaluative, and advocative⁸.

These can be understood as:

- Designative: Question the cause and consequence of policymaking.
- Evaluative: Asks questions related to the value of the policies being made from time to time by the Executive.
- Advocative: Asks questions referring to the adoption of the policies.

1.3.2 Need and Importance of Public Policies

The state is an abstract institution that gets its structural mechanism in the form of a government. Now, the state's government has to work for its people, mainly when the state is a developing nation, it has to undertake numerous activities for its people, be it economic,

social, or cultural, or others. Public policies are the course of action or programmes devised to fulfill public goals and aspirations; it becomes imperative to understand public policy in developing countries. A Government does a lot in developing nations. It regulates disputes; public policies provide solutions and resort to ways intended for the citizens' growth and development. Moreover, Government also depends on the concerned communities to accept the policies and programmes to get social legitimacy.

Robert Vaion, in his paper, "Note to Public Policy,"⁹ explains and explores how the idea of public policy impacts culture. In the later years, a lot of study in the field of public policy has been done to make it more pragmatic and relevant to the needs of the people, it is generated for, and in analysis, public policy can be described as the 'analytical work to track the implications of following a particular policy.'¹⁰

After independence, India started with a paradigm of growth and development, which was tilted towards socialism. Seeking to achieve developmental goals through centralised planning, India adopted the five-year plan's strategy, synonymous with public policy.

The country was faced with challenging, urgent and compelling issues of agricultural crisis, hunger, poverty, and unemployment.

Francine R Frankel (2004), in her book *"India's Political Economy-2004": The Gradual Revolution*, has analysed the post-independent Indian economy and the challenges before the Government to overcome rising unemployment. The growing rural population had become a significant concern despite the extensive planning and efforts made by the country's Planning Commission. After independence, India had a deep commitment towards the principle of parliamentary democracy having socialistic strains where two opposing ideologies, capitalism, and socialism, would converge to give a third way that, according to the Jawaharlal Nehru, then Prime Minister of India would solve problems of production and distribution, and bring

about democratic social transformation. However, years later, this optimism dimmed as "the third way did not solve India's problem, whether of production or distribution. In the mid-1970s, on the opposite, only a tiny community minority could get integrated in high-performance, high-wage economic enterprises. While industrial productivity and overhead social capital grew greatly, the conventional sector had no impact on the development of further employment.¹¹ 80 percent of the populace lived in rural areas and directly obtained their subsistence from cultivation. The rural industry could only achieve limited pockets of fast growth.

The Government, further to boost the agricultural sector, initiated the Green Revolution (1965), which meant rapid agricultural growth through mechanization and high-yielding varieties of seed. Though the Green Revolution succeeded in boosting the agricultural produce, it could do so in mainly a few areas of Punjab, Haryana, etc. Moreover, the job trend in rural areas was substantially and adversely affected. The labor-intensive agricultural sector was replaced by lesser labor engaged in agriculture. Thus it added to the unemployment problem in rural areas.

1.3.4 Public Policies and Welfare Programmes of the Government of India after Independence

The Government made many efforts in terms of programmes and policy intervention to boost the country's agricultural sector by the onset of the 1950s. The primary five programmes (1950-51 to 1955-56) for the transformation of fiscal, social, and cultural life in the villages were launched on 2nd October 1952¹². In 1959, the Ford Foundation's Agricultural Production Team, USA, highly proposed the Intensive Agricultural District Program as a kit programme. The Fifth Five-Year Strategy for the "Food Crisis" of India was introduced during 1960-61 after a deception in the success of the Cluster Development Programmed (CDP) in increasing agricultural production. The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) was founded in 1970-71 rural work programmes. The goal was to produce permanent assets that could reduce the

extreme drought everywhere and provide the impacted people with salaries. The idea of coordinated rural growth was first adopted in 1976 centered on local demands, opportunities, and prospects. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was built to counter poverty, in particular rural poverty. The DDP¹³ in 1977–78, the cold desert was taken into the hot desert on the advice of the National Agriculture Committee. Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) is part of the IRDP support.¹⁴ It began on 15th August 1979 as one of the core sponsors of IRDP's operations through learning or improving expertise from the main and tertiary sectors.

By the onset of 1980, the GOI launched the NREP¹⁵ in its 6th Five-Year Plan; it was continuous in the "7th Five-Year Plan". Simultaneously, the Government launched the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee (RLEG) plan in 1983, in the 6th year plan, which was also continued in the 7th year plan. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)¹⁶ was launched in 1989, combination of the NREP and RLEG, in the 7th Five-Year Plan, which remained until the 8th Five-Year Plan. In the year 1993, the Government launched the Employment Assistance Scheme (EAS)¹⁷ in the 9th five-year plan, along with Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY). "Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana"¹⁸ was brought in the 9th Five-Year Plan merging the EAS and SGSY in 2001. In the year 2004, the Government brought in the National Food for Work Program (NFFWP).¹⁹ The tenth Five-Year Plan saw the coming of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)²⁰ giving way to the implementation of the NREGS in all the rural areas of the country. This Act was a very audacious attempt by the Government of India to render the right to work as a civil right for the people of rural areas who died of starvation for jobs. The Act provided a guarantee for 100 days of employment for the unemployed, untrained and unskilled rural population.

Thus, we can see that the Government of India has promulgated several rural development policies since independence and deprived the population in the country out of which the NREGA stands out the most, the distinguishing feature being it backed by the force of law.

1.3.5 National Rural Employment Guarantee Act or now the Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (Renamed in 2009)²¹

The United Nations Development Programme, in its Conversation Paper, states that 'Mahatma Gandhi NREGA belongs to a long tradition of salary job programmes. Mahatma Gandhi MGNREGA is distinguished by its development of a system focused on rights and its rules.'²² "MGNREGA verily has the potential to transform rural India into a more creative, just and associated society," the paper continues, "in the Indian Government's policy response to poverty and inequality, Mahatma Gandhi NREGA focuses on inclusive growth."²³

The Act's main objective is: "Empower households' livelihoods in rural areas by providing each household whose adult associates volunteer to operate without expertise in a lowest of 100 days of assured wage jobs in any financial year".²⁴

1.3.6 Need of MGNREGA as a Public Policy

The Suresh Tendulkar Committee Report²⁵ (November 2009) suggests that 37.2 percent of the population lives below India's poverty line. Census (June 2010) data suggested that 859 lakh families were living under BPL. During the 11th Plan, the number of people of working age was projected to rise by 520 lakhs, and more females finding employment in rural areas were seen to increase. It was indicated that if more women seeking jobs continue, the labor force would be around 650 lakhs. This increase would further add to the 350-lakh unemployed. Thus, India would have to employ around 1000 lakhs of people, mostly in rural areas.

However, to fix the issues of unemployment, underemployment, and rural poverty, it should be noted that several policies and acts have been implemented by the Government of India.

However, they have not been able to either decrease the poverty levels sustainably, nor have they been able to absorb the increasing labor force in the mainstream economy. After the 1970s, these initiatives have been focused on two separate methods, one promoting a strategic asset-based strategy for private firms aimed at raising the occurrence of autonomous jobs by schemes such as IRDP, ITDP, TRYSEM, and SGSY, and the other focused on the wage strategies through hiring rural citizens in need for publicly-owned output properties. This group contains schemes such as NREP, RLEGP, JRY, EAS, SGRY, etc. However, unfortunately, both these asset-based and employment-based interventionists efforts failed due to extensive scale corruption, leakage of resources, administrative inefficiencies, and lack of large-scale awareness and participation²⁶.

To overcome the previous failures, the Government of India enacted the NREGA, now referred to as the MGNREGA.

1.4 CURRENT PREMISE FOR THE MGNREGA IN THE COUNTRY

The Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS) of the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) reported that in the Financial Year 2018 unemployment rate of the country was 5.3 percent in rural India and 7.8 percent in urban India contributing to a combined rate of 6.1 percent.²⁷ The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy known as the CMIE, 2019, states that the country's unemployment rate is on a constant rise as in the year it went up to 7.5 percent where the urban unemployment rate is 9.3 percent, and the rural unemployment rate is 6.7 percent.²⁸

Taking into account the country's severe unemployment problem, a strong basis is formed for the guarantee that the rural worker community will have a minimum of 100 days' work.

1.4.1 MGNREGA and Rural Employment in India

The Act has provided 2,99,736 crore days in the country's rural areas since it was first

implemented and has had 93,95,851 active workers on 13,14,986 rural worksites.²⁹

During the fiscal year 2019-2020, the MGNREGA was able to have 197,22 lakh individual days, a total of 6,75 crores employed under the Act, and 14,06,447 worked 100 days in the same year.³⁰

Thus, MGNREGA emerges as a striking public policy promulgated by India's Government, keeping in view the employment starved unskilled and unemployed workers in the rural areas. We see how the Act emerges as a savior for India's employment starved population, who now has the freedom to work after a long fight to get guaranteed jobs. Apart from the direct benefits of employment and income, the scheme has numerous indirect benefits, including seasonal benefits, an impact on agricultural wages, an increase in female employment, a reduction in rural-urban migration, and the development of rural poor as a political force organizing the unorganized.

1.4.2 MGNREGA and Rural Employment in Jharkhand

Jharkhand battles an ever-increasing unemployment rate, it being 7.5 percent in Financial Year 2017-2018, 2.5 percent in Financial Year 2015-2016, 1.8 percent in Financial Year 2013-2014.³¹ Jharkhand has a total of 84,28,994 workers, out of which only 31,33,093 are active³². Due to the issues of out-migration and unemployment on the rise, the Jharkhand Government has coined "*Har haath ko kaam* (Give every handwork)" as its new slogan for emphasizing its commitment provision of employment to people of the state. This slogan has underlying significance in Jharkhand, owing to the ratio of working-age population migrating to other states being the highest in 2015-16, as per the Economic Survey 2016-17³³.

Against this scenario of widespread unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities in the state, it is notable that MGNREGA accounts for providing work for 33.71 lakhs active workers in the state and has generated 519.01 lakhs persondays.³⁴ In the Financial Year 2019-2020. The

Act has completed 100 days of work for 18,869 lakh families. The total number of works done is 2,17,969 showing the sum of assets generated under the MGNREGS in the State.³⁵

Jean Dreze, while explaining the significance of MGNREGA in Jharkhand, stressed that the region has a lot of potential for performance under the Act. It is very productive in rural areas and has an active rural workforce.³⁶

1.5 CRUCIAL STUDIES ABOUT AND ON MGNREGA

As we have seen above, MGNREGA being one of a kind social security net floated by India's Government for the welfare of the rural unemployed and the poor workforce of the country, has started to hold a significant position in the history of welfare or development efforts made by any nation in the world. Although the Act has been discussed at length in the following chapters, it has been studied extensively by various researchers, social scientists, social science research organisations, Government, non-government bodies inside and outside the country. Some of the notable studies and reports have been discussed below.

Amit Bhaduri (2005), in his book "Development with Dignity: A Full Employment Case," clarified the principle of inclusive, sustainable development, which recognises the central importance of employment in our politics and our economy. The development method to be followed should be of a higher pace of inflation, which should not necessarily entail an elaborate institutional system for distributing wealth to increase the allocation of income to the needy.

The book emphasizes on three central and interrelated arguments which are: (i) "India needs to grow as quickly as possible... [but] we must stop disguising GDP growth from its distributional consequences for the poor," says the Honorable Member of the Commission³⁷, and distribution does not imply redistribution of wealth. (ii) The 'participatory political mechanisms of economic growth' must be broadened and deepened in the course of development (iii) 'the

reciprocity of responsibility and the opportunity for each person to engage in and benefit from development.¹³⁸

This contributes to growth with dignity," the Amit Bhaduri argues is not a utopia but the only "reasonable economics" which is supported by most Indians and therefore part of the "realm of feasible politics."

The Battle for Employment Guarantee revised by Reetika Khera, 2011, Oxford University Press (New Delhi). The book is mostly focused on work previously conducted in many chapters that have first appeared in EPW and *Frontline*, which are lengthy analytical pieces based on findings from the various (mostly survey-based) investigate schemes overseen by Reetika Khera and the other volume's main authors, economist Jean Dreze.

Part One of the book ("Early Days") comprises of two chapters. The first chapter discusses the origins of the Act, while the second chapter analyzes official statistics. They presented fundamental facts about NREGA, as well as the mechanisms for implementing and operationalizing it. Dreze begins with an illuminating account of how NREGA came to be, involving an enumeration of the incredible array of allowing factors that came together in 2004-05 to facilitate the law's passage. Dreze believes that if Congress believed it had even a remote chance of winning the 2004 general election, it would never have pledged in its election manifesto to pass employment-guarantee legislation with such far-reaching political (and fiscal) implications. When Congress suddenly took power as a result of an election result widely attributed to a rural poor revolt against the National Democratic Alliance government's callous economic policies, it had no choice but to honor this commitment.

The book's second section is titled "Ground Reality." Seven chapters address critical aspects of the NREGA's design: women's involvement (e.g., a quota of at least 30 percent of employment days established), mandatory worksite circumstances (e.g., water supply, childcare

accommodations), and payment modalities (e.g., bank account transfers). The title of the chapter that establishes the scene, Dreze and Khera's 'Fight for Job Guarantee', applies to the ongoing campaign to carry its pledge to the needy. Here – as from the 2008 survey again – 81 percent of workers under NREGA reside in *kaccha* houses; 73 percent are Scheduled Castes or Tribal Groups; 61 percent are analphabets; 72 percent do not have electrical energy at home. More than 2/3rd of employees state that NREGA income helps them escape hunger; over 57 percent tell the same regarding preventing seasonal migration triggered by distress. These bleak numbers are a good reminder that NREGA hits large recipients.

In the chapter Empowerment Guarantee Act, Khera analyses the actions of Jagruk Adiwasi Dal Sangathan (JADS), a people's organization that has had to organise people in the area for several years to preserve the interests and rights of their land. In terms of greater visibility, JADS's decision of 2006 to extend its policy to cover the rights of NREGA employees has paid off well. The findings of the 2006 and 2008 Khera analysis show that NREGA employees in the JADS catchment region are acquainted with general privileges and basic procedures. This resulted in calls for more timely employment and payment of NREGA-mandated unemployment stipends. An extended period of agitation and negotiation resulted in increased employment days, increased wages, and improved working conditions in the Pati block. These positive results stood in stark contrast to the poor NREGA performing in the adjacent block, which lacked a JADS-like force for social and political transformation.

Four state case study chapters – on Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Tamil Nadu – make up Part Three of the book ("Contrasting Experiences"). Even in this small sample, the vast differences in NREGA experiences between states are evident.

Six chapters titled "Trouble Spots" make up Part Four of the book. The chapters are all written or co-written by members of the core group of Khera, Dreze, Roy, and Dey, and they provide

more examples of NREGA "in action," as well as "inaction" on the part of the officials in charge of its implementation.

Pramatesh Ambasta, P. S. Vijay Shankar, and Mihir Shah (2007)³⁹, in a research article titled "Two Years of NREGA: The Road Ahead," conducted a study in 30 Districts of 4 States, namely – Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Gujarat. The study's purpose was to show the uniqueness of NREGA among many more rural development programmes to remove poverty and unemployment to such a large scale. The study aimed to understand the unrealized potential of NREGA and make it more useful to the rural poor. After its first two years, the writers also stated that major changes need to be implemented in the application of NREGA to increase competitiveness and strengthen successful social transparency.

They felt that the NREGA project, which, if reformed, will contribute to the possibility of reforming our country's poorest people's lives and pushing about a rural governance movement in India.

Amir-Ullah Khan and M.R.Saluja (2008)⁴⁰ of India Development Foundation (IDF), New Delhi, conducted an evaluation study on the brunt of NREGP on rural livelihood. The report shows that certain persons may not have links to the service because they have not learned about it. They want the Panchayat to take a more constructive part in the development of infrastructure. Nearly everyone would want more jobs and more office services. There is ample proof that documents are being fudged and mismanaged. Many research studies have been showed in the area of water management. Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan record the widespread presence of women in the system. The job, period, and motion studies of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Tamil Nadu were performed, and wages were accordingly set. Karnataka copied the Andhra Pradesh model, but the majority of the states keep paying their salaries based on old irrigation requirements. Inaccurate job calculation contributes to reduced salary payment. In certain states, minimum salaries remain unpaid. The migration of distress due to NREGA in

Andhra Pradesh was partly affected. Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar are yet to be adopted. There is a lot of money invested in road development in Bihar and UP for rural connectivity. It is crucial to determine the effect of mountain rainfall on these works. The implementation in NREGA is sluggish with the implementation of Uttar Pradesh (39 districts / Rs 76 Crore) and Bihar (37 districts/Rs 32 Crore).

Based on the built-in requirements for accountability, recipients are charged, but payment delay remains a key concern. The assertion that the pattern roll tampers with is rampant. It is still not thought about the preservation of systems produced under NREGA. Gram Panchayat's workload is larger. There was a mistake (64 percent of the works are implemented by Panchayat against a norm of 50 percent). The Rural Development Ministry estimates that NREGA needs approximately Rs. 20,000 crore per year to cover all the 595 rural districts in the country. The 2006-2007 total of Rs 11,300 crore (200 districts) and Rs 12,000 crore for 2007-2008 was allocated to NREGA (330 districts). A fast estimate reveals that the project will require a combined Rs 36,500 crore throughout the country.

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) (2009)⁴¹, in its NREGA review report, found that although there was no data on the number of persons who requested employment and were gaining from the manifesto of the Congress claiming to have given "many lacs" to NREGS and pledging to expand the scheme much more.

The CAG analysis revealed that no adequate records of the number of families who sought employment and the number of people who directly gained from the work guarantee system were identified in 70 percent of the villages reviewed. In 2006, the survey started and concluded in 2009. It has been undertaken to validate the progress of their NREGS programme by the Rural Development Ministry. The survey included 68 districts and 141 blocks listed 558 Village Panchayats in 26 States.

In several ways, the study noticed the function was "verbal basis," and the village authority could not collect paperwork. The regulations stipulate that households must declare themselves and receive a work card before applying for jobs under NREGA. To recognise individuals, a door-to-door survey can be carried out. Simultaneously, pictures should be put on the work cards of adult applicants after a Gram Sabha introductory meeting at the outset.

The truth findings found, however, that no such meetings were organised in 340 villages in 24 states, and there was no photographic documentation available. In these villages, no door-to-door surveys were done to classify residents.

The Government began a campaign to grant specific identification numbers to jobseekers to deter leakages from occurring. However, it was pointed out from the 558 Grams tested that 331 of them do not assign specific identification numbers.

The research in Orissa is one of the poorest corners in the world, showed that while applications had been made, 670 households in 16 towns had not been recorded because their names had not been included in the BPL 2002 survey list.

PIF (2009)⁴², in association with the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), released an evaluation study on NREGA. The aim of the analysis was to highlight facts of NREGA implementation and its accomplishments up to now. The PIF results indicate that the NREGA prescribes an unnecessarily formal execution structure and that the protocols are complicated as well. The entire method of adoption is quite bureaucratic, including substantial red-tapism in creating needless delays. This study also highlights understanding of the requirements of the Act, provides dedicated workers, maintains a fair and authentic mechanism for issuing job cards, fills in workstation cards, and develops the redress framework for grievances.

The World Bank (2009) identified the highly-recognized United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government's NREGA Scheme as a policy obstacle to economic growth and poverty alleviation in its World Development Report. The study maintains that domestic mobility is expected because "lifting people out of poverty requires shifting population from villages to cities." It claimed that lawmakers did not often understand the economic advantages of migration and that a campaign against migration has been tried in India. The first response was to raise rural jobs to avoid rural movement. The newly implemented National Guaranteed Policy for Rural Jobs. Due to the MGNREGA, the workers in the rural areas have begun migrating in lesser numbers and for fewer days hoping that MGNREGS would provide income-earning opportunities in their areas. Thus, while MGNREGA has curbed the process of migration, it has not provided for a better and reliable income-earning opportunity.

Jailam Roy Chowdhury (2010)⁴³, in his study on "Right to Information and Rural Employment Guarantee Act," suggested that the clauses of the Act to guarantee employment and the Act on information guaranteed are also valuable accomplishments. These actions give the people of India a full variety of democratic rights to form their own culture. Considering the low level of awareness and poor participation in social, political, or economic development, these acts require more than some liberal provision. Civil society and grassroots-level organizations have an essential role in ensuring the proper implementation of these acts. Their active participation is essential to ensure that the fruits of these acts reached the needy population. A comparative study confirms that NREGA has been more successful in Rajasthan, where civil society involvement is extensive, starting from implementation to monitoring and evaluating the employment guarantee act. Their participation has resulted in a higher rate of proactive disclosure, which raised the level of accountability in implementation. Whereas NREGS's very bad success in the states of Orissa and West Bengal is evident in the sense of increased corruption and massive wasting of public investment. To fulfill the goals of the two Acts,

Panchayati Raj Institutions and the other grassroots organisations must therefore play a larger part in raising people's consciousness and education.

Jairaj Singh Rathore (2010)⁴⁴, in an evaluation study on NREGA, concluded that a critical move in the achievement of the freedom to work is the NREGA-2005 Act. The growth of economic and social substructure in rural areas is also required to improve the welfare of citizens on a sustainable basis. Works to fight extreme hunger such as famine, deforestation, and land degradation are selected. Successful employment under the Act can change the geography of poverty. For the people, it is critical that this mechanism can last well in rural growth and economic and social stability and that MGNREGS functions well in the places where it does well. Any suggestions for the productive running of MGNREGS were placed out. These are a few of the following:

1. MGNREGS workers should be provided an appropriate training format.
2. Jobs should be sensitised since the staff was unconscious to any errors.
3. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan can connect these awareness initiatives, and night schools can play an important role in this initiative.
4. Transparency and obligations should be defined in all MGNREGS levels.
5. At the stage of the Panchayat Council, it should form an auditing body and include not only government officials but other bodies and non-governmental organisations.
6. The Government officials must stop their percentage in the schemes instantly.
7. The block offices should also be closed, and the district headquarters and Gram Sabhas should be explicitly linked to each other. The Gram Sabhas must be permitted to issue work cards, prepare sample rolls, schedule, execute, and track the plans.
8. Effective laws, such as expulsion from the operation, jail, and the return of money earned at ten times penalty, can be brought with serious punishment. A special court may therefore be set up to deal with issues in time.

Action for Food Production (AFPRO) (2009) conducted a study, 'Sustainable Living Scope for NREGA Help Infrastructure Growth and More.' The aim was to identify the need to learn from MGNREGA's work and its usefulness for sustainable community-level support; AFPRO analyzed Chainpur Block in Gumla District, Jharkhand. 37 works in 28 villages were assessed, and the Chainpur Block was 10 Gram of Panchayats (GP). The works included: lagoons and wells, highways, bridges, dump sites, and guard walls. Their works were covered. Works from numerous years of MGNREGA implementation after 2006 were chosen on a random basis.

The study indicated that changes in the areas inside the community were connected to successful village/beneficiary engagement in decision making, the selection of necessity-based systems, and the growth in control of the facilities generated under the scheme. It was proposed that preference be assigned to choosing smaller soil and water management systems. Some other steps have been recommended that better resources should be provided to staff, the orientation of officials, and collaboration between agencies.

Ambasta, P., "MGNREGA and Rural Governance Reform: Growth, inclusion, and integration in Panchayats," Paper on Foreign Rural Transition Dynamics in Emerging Economies (2010)⁴⁵. Against the context of the Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act and the development of a local form of governance in India through three-tier PRIs, a new chapter in the history of Indian democratic decentralisation. The study argues that inclusion obstacles are daunting, as these city government entities would be the pivotal forces for inclusion at a period of strong economic increase. The wasteful movement of funds, roles, and functionaries to the PRIs has hindered this vision's articulation. It explores the perspectives of the MGNREGA in this relation to seeing if its effects have fallen short of their capacity because of insufficient grassroots support systems. It then seeks to establish a reform strategy needed to understand MGNREGA's true potential. Since PRI financing is not so necessary after MGNREGA, the real bottleneck needs to be looked after by reviewing the cutting edge of the Act.

The research also discusses MGNREGA's IT implementation and how it can be reinforced. It proposes that a National MGNREGA Authority is required to anchor and endorse the implementation to ensure the appropriate supervision, assessment, usage of human capital and their growth, IT innovations, and grievances redress. It further argues that while this assistance and mobilisation of capital are essential conditions, rural growth and empowerment of the poor can not only be accomplished by technological support but must be organised from the ground up.

The study states that in MGNREGA, civil society is essential for mobilisation, and that this position needs to be merged into and support GSs and PRIs. Such changes in MGNREGA will change grassroots governance and motivate rural communities effectively. With time, such changes will be the path forward for all rural poor action.

Science and the Environment Center, Ecological Act: A History to the National Assurance of Rural Jobs (2009)⁴⁶. The paper demonstrates that MGNREGA is a valuable tool for growth. MGNREGA can be used in the sense of rural poverty and as a subsistence initiative than as a wage-earning programme. It presents a rare platform for rural poverty to be turned around. The idea of public works development is not new. However, since the 1970s, there has been a Maharashtra Rural Labour Model. The big change now is that NREGA mandates people's freedom to work for the whole year by statute. However, in the last thirty or so years, nothing has improved in the shape and content of public service programmes. NREGA substituted in letter and spirit for prior programmes in certain cases, albeit with legal assurance. NREGA has haunted past shortcomings, such as the absence of satisfactory preparation, the emphasis on local interests, and mostly bureaucratic functions.

The study shows that NREGA will restore local ecology and cause real economic development if applied effectively. The Act's attention on irrigation, soil, and plantation enables it to save rural India from its disaster.

C. P. Chandrashekar and J.Ghosh, 'Public Works and Wages in Rural India,'⁴⁷ research was carried out to clarify the effect of the NREGS focused on the NSSO 64th Round Review. After the implementation of the system, real salaries, especially for women, were seen to be higher in rural areas. Incidental incomes stay stable in agriculture relative to 2004-05. Labor costs account for less than half of overall farm costs and typically around a third. In rural labour markets, MGNREGS has had good results on women population as workers. The study also pointed out that gender gaps tend to come down as a result of MGNREGA.

Jean Dreze (2011)⁴⁸ (who drafted the original versions of the NREGA) has assessed the potential NREGA prospectus when the scheme is facing a growing period of vulnerability, is in advance as workers' organisations, though aggressive powers are also gathering momentum. Employer lobbies, which are obsessed with the growing or supposedly rising labour rates, are among the aggressive groups. In certain states, the Government is still aggressive, so NREGA means additional effort, greater transparency, and no simple mission. This emerged as the corruption divide was strengthened during the switch to banking salary transfers. The lack of confidence in many NREGA employees owing to longer payment delays is possibly the most important weakness. NREGA remains a big presence in millions of people. However, if the initiative is to succeed and grow, it must be transformed into coordinated social control.

P. Dutta, Murgai, M. Ravallion, and W. V. Dominique, 'Does India's Employment Guarantee Scheme Guarantee Employment?' (2012)⁴⁹, research evaluating the 2009-2010 National Sample Survey results from India showed substantial unsatisfactory demand for employment in all the states was performed. It showed that while wealthier families seem to need more effort on the system, the self-targeting mechanism helps them to meet comparatively low-income families and backward castes (despite unsatisfactory demand). In the worst states, paradoxically, where the system is much required, unmet demand is considerably higher.

Responses from the labour force to the system are presumably poor. While local rationing processes benefit males, the system draws poor people to the workforce.

A discussion paper entitled 'MGNREGA Implementation Reforms,' published by the Rural Development Minister on 1st September 2011, listed nine major MGNREGA problems and recommended steps to resolve them effectively. The following were the suggested measures: ensuring legitimate entitlements depending on demand; reducing the hardship of relocation from the rural areas; decrease the delay in salaries to workers; determining the number of working days needed as per request; improving the standard of MGNREGA-created assets and their importance to poor livelihoods; ensuring maximum pay for MGNREGA wages.

We may also see that a great number of studies at the national and state-level have investigated the MGNREGA since 2006. Most of the research studies that have been done are implementation or impact studies. They have assessed the implementation and administration of the schemes. They have also attempted to analyze the administration of the schemes at various levels. Other studies have significantly tried to assess the MGNREGA in delivering its basic expected outcome. There have been other studies that have made a comparative analysis of the MGNREGA between different states.

Although there are regular articles on the MGNREGA in Jharkhand, not many specific research studies have been done on the state's participation of workers under the MGNREGA.

Jyoti Prakash⁵⁰ (2015), in the research paper titled "A study of the effects of MGNREGA on sample lending in Jharkhand district of Ranchi" has shown that MGNREGA had a little influence on rural households and observed that income in the beneficiaries was 29 percent higher than that in the Ranchi District of Jharkhand, and the influence of MGNREGA on the rural credit was reduced by 50 percent.

On 13th October 2015, PACS (Primary Agriculture Credit Society) conducted a state-level dissemination workshop in Jharkhand to share learning and experiences from carrying out inclusive, participating planning and social audits under the MGNREGS⁵¹. Action to properly enforce the MGNREGS was thoroughly debated with grassroots officials interested in the introduction of the system. Measures like removing the backlogs in payment, checking delays in payment, and ensuring timely payment of material costs were discussed. The launching of the MGNREGA livelihood network was also proposed in the event.

According to another study by "NREGA Watch," income generation in the State under the MGNREGA has been falling every year. It also points out that only 20,000 people have got employment for 100 days in the current financial year. This study was reported in a news article⁵².

Thus, we see that most of the studies are impact and implementation related. They either assess the performance or draw out the weakness or faults in the implementation of the MGNREGS. We know that demand for work by the workers and their participation in the MGNREGS forms the base of this Act. The causes impacting the involvement of rural workforce in the MGNREGS must be known. The study, therefore, aims to examine this aspect with the help of the primary data gathered in Namkum in Ranchi, Jharkhand.

As we move further in the chapters, we will be able to see that there is a gradual decrease in the participation of workers under the Act or more and more workers are moving away from seeking work under the Act, so the question arises that whether the MGNREGA is not needed anymore as claimed by our present-day policymakers or there are factors responsible for lower participation in the MGNREGA workers. If there are causes contributing to the movement of workforce away from the Act, these causes must be recognised and acted on, to enforce and operationalise the MGNREGA properly.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study takes into account the prejudication about MGNREGA in the scenario painted by the Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, who said that the "Modi government's" larger goal is to eradicate poverty. Therefore, a scheme like MGNREGA that is for the poor has no use anymore.⁵³

With open statements like, "the Government does not want the MGNREGA forever to proceed,⁵⁴" the Government has mainly discouraged the workers from participating in the scheme. These kinds of statements mar the confidence of the workers in the scheme. The workers become skeptical about seeking employment under the Act as they fear that it can be revoked anytime. They start looking for other employment opportunities, which are scanty or nil in many rural areas, especially in the lean agricultural season. This can also deter the workers' zeal to make use of the MGNREGA in bringing about development and growth in the village with respect to the creation of worthwhile assets in the villages, part of the Act's key goals.

On a larger scale, the Central Government has had an apparent negative attitude towards MGNREGA. There have been time and time to budget cuts and other political actions that have triggered delays in the successful implementation and enforcement of the Act. There have been many changes in the implementation mechanism of the Act like changes in Management Information System (MIS) reporting, linkage of beneficiaries' accounts with Aadhaar, the introduction of geo MGNREGA, implementation geo-tagging, etc., which supposedly have been done to facilitate the workers availing work under the Act. It becomes a matter of contention whether these have facilitated or lead to the decline of worker's participation under the Act. Moreover, the "Minister of Rural Development" has often been putting across the argument of scrapping the whole Act altogether, exhibiting the current Government's intention towards the Act.

Data and research studies have shown that MGNREGA has proven to be a useful tool to address rural unemployment scenario in the country. While several states have shown better and productive execution of the Act, Jharkhand stands in the line of the dismal performance of the MGNREGS despite the glaring state of unemployment and lack of livelihood opportunities. The rate of unemployment provided, person-days generated and works completed keep on declining with every financial year, and the Government and Administration claim it is unaffected by their efforts. The claim that they make is that MGNREGA is losing its potential to perform in the state, and workers do no longer want to work under the MGNREGS.

Although in its 2014 World Development Study, the World Bank named MGNREGA "a stellar illustration of rural growth," politicians in our country are continually undermining rural development by making comments like "MGNREGA cannot be continued forever: "Narendra Singh Tomar. In this context, a very significant question of understanding MGNREGA as a public policy aiming to assist the rural workforce arises. There also arises the need to understand the phenomena of stagnancy or decline in participation by workers under this Act. Thus, the question about MGNREGA as a Public Policy facing an existential crisis becomes very important to answer.

The whole idea of MGNREGA emanates from the "bottom-up" policy approach, where the people for whom the policy is made become the decision-makers in the policy process. An inherent question arises in this scenario, "should the workers not be consulted when deciding about the Act?"

MGNREGA being a demand-driven programme is witnessing an effect on its demand-driven mechanism due to the decreasing participation by the workers in seeking work or continuing to work (under the MGNREGS). The decrement in participation will always and essentially be affected by many factors influencing the workers to make their decisions. The study will shed light on the worker's participation under the Act in the locale of the primary data survey, which

is Namkum, Ranchi, Jharkhand, and thus, pave the way for understanding the worker's perspective under the Act in other parts of the country.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

- To understand MGNREGA in the theoretical framework of public policy.
- To construct an MGNREGA model of public policy.
- To explore the Policy Impasse in MGNREGA, effectuated by stance of Government towards it and worker's participation under it.
- To find evidence from secondary and primary data to support the continuation of MGNREGA in the country.

LEAD QUESTION

- What are the causes influencing the participation of workers under the Act?

1.8 DATA AND METHODOLOGY

At the onset, the study takes into account contextual literature for understanding the concept of Public Policy, MGNREGA, its need, design, implementation, administration, and gaps in implementation. The need for understanding the worker's participation was also largely due to the lack of more number of studies and research in the concerned area. This has also helped in the framing of the research objective and the lead question. The contextual literature has been discussed in the introductory chapter as well as in the chapter that follow, wherever relevant. The research considers inferences and findings from a preliminary field study and, second, first field study and then a final field study of all 23 Gram Panchayats of Block Namkum in the capital of Jharkhand, Ranchi. Both primary and secondary and qualitative and quantitative data have been used in the study. The qualitative data includes in-depth interviews and focused group discussions with Bloc, Panchayat, and the Village Level Officials. It also includes

participatory rural exercises, observations, and other important aspects that come into light while being on the field and visiting the worksites.

Quantitative data makes use of the data collected from the field with the help of questionnaire designed for the survey.

Locale

Namkum was chosen as the locale of the study because it is one of the "biggest blocks" in the State's capital, consisting of 23 Gram Panchayats. The block is a rural block as the total area of Namkum is 496 km², including 482.66 km² rural area and 13.70 km² semi-urban area. As per the operational guidelines of the Act, it can be implemented in all blocks across the country except for blocks that have a 100 percent urban population. According to the Census 2011, the population in the rural areas of the block is 80.9 percent, whereas the population in urban areas is 19.1 percent⁵⁵. The population is dominated by Scheduled Tribes that mostly engage in subsistence agriculture and daily wage workers, where MGNREGA has a very strong presence ever since its implementation in the State.

1.8.1 Sampling

Purposive sampling is done as the respondents are homogenous (all the respondents either earn their livelihood by small-scale agriculture, wage employment seekers, or both.)

The sample size is 230 as 10 MGNREGA workers each from 23 villages, where one village each was selected from every Gram Panchayat in the Block.

Methods

The methods for obtaining knowledge on different study needs are primarily tools, including interviews, findings, community conversations, casual discussions, and samples. The field study consisted of continuous visits to the District and Block Offices like the MGNREGA

Bhawan Vikas Bhawan, District Development Office, Block Development Office, Panchayat Bhawan, Village Head Centers and focused discussions with the concerned officials about the administration of the Act and also about the measures they undertake to ensure better participation of the workers. The MGNREGA worksites have also been visited to observe the actual working conditions and provisions of the workers. Qualitative research included many groups of individuals, including local/tribal populations and MGNREGA staff, as soon as they were available. Focused group discussions with the workers and the officials like the Rozgar Sevaks, the mates, the CFTs (Cluster Facilitation Team members) involved in the schemes have also been a source of information and understanding about the administration of the Act. Quantitative research included personal interviews and focus group discussions with beneficiaries and other important officials involved in implementing the Act were organized to generate information and understand the problems that the workers were facing in availing work under the MGNREGS and various confronting issues regarding the implementation of these schemes.

1.8.2 Methodology

To have an actual picture of the status of MGNREGA, administration of MGNREGS, workers and their issues, and understanding the causes influencing their participation under the MGNREGS, the process of simple interaction and semi open-ended interviews have been used. The workers are mostly daily wage workers, and matching up to their availability and work schedule has been difficult, so, effort has been made to make the data collection and survey process convenient, simple, and comfortable. There were many questions that needed answers in the form of direct and exact numerical figures, but, since workers could not recall exact values or numbers, the respective questions in the questionnaire have been amended or omitted. The study has been conducted in phases of preliminary fieldwork, first fieldwork, and second fieldwork. The preliminary fieldwork helped clarify the research objectives and formulation of

the lead question for the study. The first fieldwork helped in recording the responses and making changes in the questions following the locale situation. The second or final fieldwork made it possible to record responses crucial to the study and making conclusive observations and inferences. It can also be noted that the fieldwork was disrupted due to long strikes happening in the region among the MGNREGA workers owing to their demands from the administration. These circumstances and demands have been discussed in detail in the chapters later.

1.9 CHAPTERISATION

1. **Introduction:** Discusses the research topic, contextual literature, area of the study, the objectives of the study, and data and methodology employed in the study.
2. **Public Policy: Evolution in India:** Deals with public policy, its important aspects, its approaches, and its significance as a growing area of discussion and research in the world (especially developing nations). It also discusses the evolution and cruciality of public policy and its process in the country.
3. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: Inception, Implementation, and Significance:** It discusses MGNREGA in the light of Public Policy discourse, establishes its convergence to related public policy models, and explains it as policy embodiment the right to work. The chapter also deals with the background, inception, implementation, and significance of the Act and substantiates the need for the continuation of the MGNREGS in the country. It also discusses the stance of the Government towards the Act.
4. **MGNREGA in Jharkhand:** It highlights the presence and significance of MGNREGA in the State. It brings out the evidence in support of the continuation of the Act in the State. It discusses Government's stance towards the Act in the state. It also paves the way towards the need to understand the worker's participation under Act.

5. **MGNREGA in Namkum: Socio-Economic Demographics:** It discusses the presence and significance of MGNREGA in the locale of the study and establishes the necessity to research in the same.
6. **MGNREGA in Namkum: Primary Data and Inferences:** It deals with the primary data collected from the locale and inferences to answer the lead question of the study about the participation of workers under the Act.
7. **Conclusions and Suggestions:** It concludes the study by substantiating the research objectives and finding the answer to the lead question. It includes the construction of the MGNREGA policy model. It also discusses policy implications and suggestions with a theoretical explanation of the implementation mechanism. It also contains propositions to bring about effective implementation of the Act by taking into account the worker's perspective into the whole policy process.

CHAPTER II

PUBLIC POLICY: EVOLUTION IN INDIA

*"A public policy is an activity that uses authorities to devote money to promote preferential benefit."*⁵⁶

As discussed earlier, to understand the MGNREGA as an act or policy of the Government for the welfare of the rural, poor, unemployed labor force in the country, understanding the concept of Public Policy becomes a prerequisite. Thus, the present chapter discusses the concept of Public Policy and its evolution in the country.

Public Policy is significant in any nation's context. However, it occupies a much more important place in the context of a developing nation where the Government has to undertake ever-increasing tasks of social welfare and economic development. In a developing nation like India, the Government has been making continuous efforts to bring about development with many programmes and policies. The independence of the country in 1947 gave way to the Government of the newly independent India, a broad variety of strategy development and preparation execution. Policy formulation in the country had become synonymous with centralised planning in the country. The Government floated policies for the masses, but it continued to suffer implementational and administrative failures and expected policy outcomes continued to get marred, but, with the evolution of the concept of public policy and studies on its various aspects as academic content, on a growing understanding of why the policies of Government succeed or fail, how the Governments could design policies for the masses, India has come a far way in its planning and policies and has also evolved over the years. MGNREGA is one such policy of India's Government, which can be termed as a public policy for grassroots level development in the country due to the changing approach of the Indian

state in policy making and development planning. To understand MGNREGA, public policy and its development in India are necessary to understand.

This chapter, therefore, describes public policy, the growth of public policy as an analytical material, and the emergence of Indian public policy.

2.1 PUBLIC POLICY

William N Dunn, 1981, explains how 'Public Policy' as a concept stems from a broader concept of '**Policy**.' The term "policy," etymologically, originates from Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. Polis (city-state), originating in Sanskrit Greek and Pur (city), transformed into the Latin word "political," meaning state. The Government's attempts to meet public requirements and desires are the product of a public agenda. After assessing the value of these requirements and efforts are made for them to be successfully enforced, in line with society's norms and regulations. A line of action is intended to produce any effect that may be detrimental or optimistic and not function on a particular problem or issue.⁵⁷ In theory, each strategy is the outcome of a comprehensive review and a thorough examination of evidence and knowledge accessible. It is also assumed to be a higher feature restricted to the top management tier.⁵⁸

According to Webster's unabridged, 'A definite course of action undertaken in the name of expediency, facility and enforced by the administration, governors, political parties, action or procedures following or in the sense of prudence or appropriateness is a policy of the public.'⁵⁹ According to Merriam Webster's dictionary, "economic initiatives impacting the whole society"⁶⁰ is a public policy. Thus, a policy can be understood as a solution to any problem that it attempts to solve rationally.

2.1.1 Public Policy: Evolution of Policy Sciences

Lasswell, 1971, opened the way for the development of policy studies and enlisted three distinct features that could render it distinctive from other areas of a) of policy studies, and b)

of problem-solving, and c) of normative multidisciplinary policy and held that Policy science would be to explain more as⁶¹:

- **multi-disciplinary**—Political science can break from the limited analysis of political systems and organisations and pick up work and observations in areas such as sociology, finance, law, and politics.
- **Problem-solving**—A strict canon of interest must stick to Political Science, which would concentrate on addressing practical issues and would not participate in strictly theoretical and sometimes sterile discussions.
- **Normative**—Political Science should not be veiled as 'scientific objectivity,' but accept the inability, in the analysis of Government behavior, to distinguish aims and means or principles and techniques.

Lasswell intended to derive assumptions and suggestions for the political sciences to resolve current societal issues and called for the political sciences to be purely prescriptive or normative.⁶²

2.1.2 Evolution of Public Policy as an Academic Content

Harold Lasswell and **Abraham Kaplan** held, "Public policy is the expected priorities, principles initiative, and strategy for large-scale projects⁶³" This definition considers the instrumental rationality, which is the strategy of "public policy" and the value and goals of the public policy. Public policy is equivalent to a scheme that is not desirable as plans can be policy; however, policies are not natural to plan, as they also include instructions, resolutions, laws, regulations, and other symbol systems issued by the Government. Lasswell also advocated for the cruciality of the quantitative analysis and scientific method as elements of any policy science, but he acknowledged that one must combine quantitative and qualitative

information.⁶⁴ Lasswell's recommended an empirically driven, methodologically rigorous, yet flexible policy research style driven by the desire to solve problems served as the basis for policy studies in the late 20th century.

Thomas. Dye held, "No matter what the Government does or does not do"⁶⁵; as public policy. Dye considers the Government's "to do" and the "not to do," which highlights the characteristics of the public policy as a practical subject.

For example, when a Government follows a laissez-faire (non-interference) principle and abstains from taking any action in the economy of the state and lets the market alone operate it through forces of demand and supply, 'not' interfering here becomes a positive sign in an ideology which is adhered by the state and followed by the Government. Here, Dye makes a crucial distinction in public policy as Government action, either legislated or written into law, or public policy in un-codified, non-legislated actions of the Government. In other terms, the government's intention not to engage with a certain policy field is primarily public policy.⁶⁶

2.2 MODELS OF PUBLIC POLICY

Public policy models are different that conform to numerous public policy theories offered by various scholars.

According to Dye (Politica), models are useful as they: a) To recognise main facets of policy problems; b) To help us interact with each other by focusing on key elements of political life; and c) To allow us to truly interpret public policy, by recommending relevant, unimportant matters. These models are based upon theories which take into account certain aspect such as:

- a) Participants in policymaking;
- b) Process of making of policy decisions;
- c) the underlying assumptions of the theory/model and;

d) the consequences of the policy decisions for the general public.⁶⁷

2.3 POLICY ACTORS

The public policy formulation process takes place with the help of certain policy actors divided into formal and non-formal.⁶⁸

- **Formal Policy Actors:** the formal actors in policy formulation are Legislature, Non-Profit, Court, Advisor, Elites, and Bureaucracy Pressure Groups.
- **Non-formal Policy Actors:** the non-formal actors involved in the formulation of policies are Think Tanks, Public Administrations, Corporate People, and Newspapers. Policy Networks.

2.4 CONCERNS OF POLICY SCIENCES

Prabir Kumar De, 2012, in his book 'Public Policy and Systems',⁶⁹ has discussed the significant concerns of Policy Sciences given by Yehezkel Dror. These are:

- i. To define preferred policy alternatives by offering methods.
- ii. To help formulate master policies and mega policies for providing guidelines to formulate and follow certain specific policies.
- iii. To look for alternative innovations, new designs, and other important issues that could be considered for policymaking.
- iv. To aid in improved meta policy, which means the 'policy on policy-making,' since meta policy provides insights on public policy, it can be used to progress the structure of the public policy-making system and help strengthen it.
- v. It also helps in the selection and training of the personnel involved in policymaking and in establishing a better and efficient communication network.

Thus, policy sciences provide for enhancement inefficiency of public policy and their aids in implementation and evaluation. It also provides opportunities and governments across the world to deal with the ever-increasing number of problems about public policies.⁷⁰

2.4.1. William N Dunn

Dunn related Public Policy to the study of strategy as a science that fixes problems. It is a multidisciplinary investigation intended to develop, objectively analyze and distribute knowledge valuable to interpret, strengthen policy and identify answers to social problems. It is a proactive company, and it requires human awareness exercises to solve problems.⁷¹

Meta and Mega Policies

Dror, 1971, holds that Policy Sciences consist of two major meta and mega policies.⁷² According to Dror, the regulation is a kind of principal policy, 'mega policies entail defining the roles, assumptions and key rules to be implemented by particular policies. They are a kind of principal policy, distinctly distinct and comprehensive separate.⁷³ The term "meta-mega policies" is used by Dror to include both of them, where, "Meta" refers to the question of how to formulate policies and deals with different characteristic features of the policymaking system. For example, policy-making structures, policy processes, practices of the personnel, and inputs and outputs of the political system. This takes into account knowledge that pertains to the field of policymaking. Here, according to Dror, knowledge is divided into three levels: a) Information available for environmental control; b) information important to society's and people's power, and; c) Knowledge which is concerned with the control of controlling themselves. This is also defined as 'super regulation,' which applies to all those main policies concerned with general priorities, certain specific assumptions on policymaking, and study of policy instruments.

This definition of meta-mega policies may be used for defining and illustrating the phenomena of history, current and potential if the 'meta super policy' behavioral research is undertaken, it can lead to improved actual knowledge about actual policymaking by providing a better framework for their formulation. Different policy variables can be interrelated with the help of improved models that have relevant data.⁷⁴

The meta-mega policies are related to each other and ensure that the normative recommendations must be based on behavioral knowledge. Behavioral knowledge comes from behavioral information, and this behavioral information is collected based on the need of an individual concerning the aspects which one is interested in knowing.

2.5 APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF POLICY SCIENCES

Many scientists have added to the interpretation of research methods. The belief that social issues can be addressed through introducing human purpose and experience has contributed to policy methods or policy research.

The idea of creating a borderline around a fact that is shared or shared by a community of researchers or thinkers constitutes a paradigm of public policy. Four researchers - Harold Lasswell, David Easton, Charles Lindblom, and Herbert Simon - have made a important involvement towards the development of a political strategy.

2.5.1 Harold Lasswell's Policy Approach

Laswell, 1971, was the first person to come up with the notion of modeling the democratic process in phases. To achieve a multidisciplinary and prescriptive study of strategy, Lasswell⁷⁵ held for adoption policy method model in seven phases: intellect, advancement, recruiting, appeals, termination, and review. As a fundamental structure for policy research, the model itself was extremely influential and was the starting point for several policy process typologies. Lasswell was more prescriptive and normative than informative and empirical to the

interpretation of the model of a policy mechanism. His sequential series of stages was structured as a problem-solving model, which was compatible with other logical strategies and decision-making processes developed in philosophy and Government. In 1970, in the first issue of the Political Sciences Magazine, Lasswell's paper presented the condition of the Political Sciences, 18, and proposed the concept of expertise in the political process and policy processes. This paper focused on (a) multidisciplinary and (b) integration of ideas and techniques. The interdisciplinary design and sensitivity to the different technologies and methods selected for their suitability for a specific issue were some of the most distinctive virtues of this Political Science method. " Disciplines concerned with explaining the policymaking and policy implementation processes, as well as tracing data and providing interpretations relevant to current policy issues." describes Lasswell in the field of policy science.⁷⁶

2.5.2 Easton's Model of Policy Analysis

The work of David Easton was an important addition to policy-making. It has established a model Government structure that has profoundly affected governance, policy outcomes, and the broader world. Easton's model⁷⁷ views the policy mechanism of translating inputs into policy outputs and then performance. The democratic mechanism was called a "black box" that turns demands from society into policies. Easton,⁷⁸ in his study of the political system, claimed the portion of the community participating in the "authoritative allocation of values" was a political system and regarded as inputs factors generated in the world that influence the political system. The legislative structure is supported by all requests. Requests emerge as people or organisations act to influence policy in reaction to environmental factors. Any state beyond the borders of the political system is classified as climate. The help of a democratic structure of regulations, laws, and traditions is the foundation for politics and political culture. Help is given as the judgments or legislation is embraced by people or associations. The outputs are the

political system's definitive importance distributions, and they represent public policies. System theory defines public policy as a production (public decisions), which may change the climate and its demands and therefore influence the structure of the political system; input plays a key role in developing an environment suited to potential policies.⁷⁹

2.5.3 Lindblom's Incremental Model

Lindblom, in 1959 proposed an another solution to the so-called gradual approach to policymaking in the conventional logical models of decision making. He presented his paper in the Public Management Review in 1959 on the "Science of Muddling Through"⁸⁰ gained all potential alternative solution options, which in turn defined the optimal method, should be explored when designing a policy strategy for the "process" of policymaking. Lindblom claimed that politicians could not consider the full spectrum of policy options and their implications by knowledge, time, and expense constraints. The systematic method of Lindblom in decision-making takes account of the method of "constantly expanding from the current situation, step by step and to a small degree".⁸¹ Charles E. Lindblom introduced in 1979 his concept of a progressive study, "simple incremental analysis" in which "disjointed instrumentalism," with the fragmentation of the theoretical function by multiple actors and a set of mutually supportive simplifying and focusing strategies" will accept just incremental improvements in present circumstances and "strategic analysis."⁸²

In terms of "successive limited comparison," Lindblom said, "bounded rationality." Lindblom supported the advantages of 'non-complete analysis' in the quest for innovative techniques. He points out that in the method of continuing minimal scale judgements, interpretation is systemically done in two major respects. First of all, it is achieved by restricting policy comparisons to certain policies that are actually in place in comparatively small degrees of shape.⁸³

In his article, "Still Muddling Not Yet Through," in an incrementalism strategy, Lindblom specifically points out that he is persuaded that he has the potential to address difficult challenges and that he is dedicated to suggesting "new and better" forms of "muddling finished. To do this, he distinguishes (a) incrementalism as a policy pattern, including phase by step improvements, (b) incrementalism as a policy study.⁸⁴ It also claims that there are three key types of incremental analysis, namely (i) plain incremental analysis, (ii) policy analysis, and (iii) incrementalism disjointed. In his job, democracy intelligence⁸⁵. He believes that decision-making is an adjusting and consensus mechanism that promotes cooperation and agreement. The egalitarian and realistic solution to authoritarian, bureaucratic reviews is a partisan collective adjustment, she agrees. "Politics progress through dynamic and mutual ties between the police, elected leaders, delegates from an interesting community and other participants," argues Lindblom in his 1993 work".⁸⁶

Critical Evaluation of Lindblom Approach

Since 1959, Lindblom has defended such a gradual decision-maker and later attacked the concept of pluralism and radically criticized industry, and promoted the need for dramatic, fundamental reforms in a wide variety of policy fields, above and beyond mere incremental changes. He formed his theories on the method as it proceeded steadily but kept thinking it could be changed. Dror considers Lindblom's "incrementalist model" to be pragmatic and acceptable only in circumstances where strategies have been fulfilling and where challenges have been reasonably constant over time. He also states that the strategy defends the position quo and lacks the opportunity for structural reform.⁸⁷

2.5.4 Etzioni's Mixed Scanning Approach

Amitai Etzioni, in 1965, disapproved the logical method and suggested a third method that offered a practical paradigm refuting the Lindblom-articulated approach to the incrementalist

position, "A rationalist approach to the decision-making needs more energy than the leadership of decision-makers."⁸⁸

In 1968, Etzioni published "The Active Society," which introduced his concept for political analysis. Etzioni explored the social meaning of knowledge as well as the connection between power and knowledge and the dissemination of the knowledge as well as of the social consciousness. In his book "The Active Culture," Etzioni looked at the social context of knowledge, the power-knowledge relationship, the distribution of knowledge and the "societal consciousness." He proclaimed that citizens could not be liberated without applying the same liberation to their neighbour, and the transformation of society has its origins in the collective intervention of an emerging group.⁸⁹

To develop culture, Etzioni uses analysis. The role of information in society was crucial to achieving a more transparent and authentic public policy method⁹⁰. He also considered civic interest in the study to be essential to an active community. In an engaged community, however, informed elites in group truth tests can engage with the public.⁹¹

Therefore, developed a combined mixed scanning approach, having: (a) high-level, fundamental policy processes that set the fundamental direction; and b) gradual processes that plan and improve fundamental decisions until made.⁹² For Etzioni, the mixed scanning method offered a summary of the realities of decision-making strategies.⁹³

2.5.5 Rational Policy Making Model

Rational policymaking aims "to select the one best choice."⁹⁴ Dye equated rationality with effectiveness when he said, 'A strategy is rational when it is maximum effective if it is constructive, and higher than every other policy option, the ratio of benefit it gains and the value it loses.'⁹⁵ He proposed that lawmakers should be conscious of all the implications of each policy alternative, measure the cost-benefit rate for each policy another, and choose the most

effective policy alternative. Dror defined some criteria for policymakers in choosing a rational policy whereby policymakers should have all importance expectations and their relative weights in society.⁹⁶

Herbert Simon, in 1957, recommended that lawmakers in a reasonable judgments phase eliminate needless confusion and select one most satisfactory alternative to split a complicated issue into small and understandable pieces.⁹⁷ When explaining this, Laurence Lynn (1987) held that, while people are intensely rational, their rationality is limited by their cognitive and emotional capacities."⁹⁸

Once a strategy was introduced, the policymaker had to track the delivery systematically to evaluate the consistency of the evaluations and objectives. The politician was often required to fill or give up the policy gaps, if any, which became recognized as the "Input Process" of rational political growth.

2.5.6 Simon's Bounded Rationality

The managerial conduct of Herbert Simon's work is recognised as one of the leading contributors to policy-making. He offered the principle of 'restricted truth,' which was focused on a logical and restricted understanding of rationality. It was an attempt to merge rigid economic assumptions of total logic with the real decision-making illustrated in the empirical analysis by organisations. Because cognitive and emotional deficiencies clashed with desires and preferences, the decision-making method was solely logical. Thus, going from one judgment to another, bounded by corporate performance, maintained the features of a theoretical paradigm related to the human action of collaborative decision-making. He felt it was more necessary to make independent choices than relying on results. The collaborative decision-making process was not properly recognised, because the explanations for preferential creation and political behavior were as important as a result itself. "There is a profound distinction between the logic of material and procedures," Simon explained to deduce in a

particular case, in substance or logical, reasonable decision, we have to know the objectives of the organism and the objective features of the circumstances.⁹⁹ Simon claimed that a theoretical style of decision-making that is procedurally or limitingly logical would provide a more natural connection between a person and collective choice.

2.5.7 Normative Optimum Model of Policy Making

Dror did not consider the incremental model of Lindblom to be satisfactory¹⁰⁰, and the gradual solution was not simply that it contributed to a divide between the wealthy and the powerless citizens that had more influence and had more trouble in improving. R.K.Sapru addressed Dror's¹⁰¹ methodology and concluded that he offered an alternate model, accepting: i) that there was a need for rationality; ii) that management technologies would be needed to improve decision making rationality at lower levels; iii) that policy-science would be necessary to solve complex problems that involve higher-level decision-making¹⁰². He held that Dror's main aim was to boost government rationality and integrate the "extra rational" component of decision-making into his model¹⁰³. He emphasised that Dror had to provide a model that would fit into practice and change to build a strategy to reach better policies that would include optimal efforts¹⁰⁴.

Dror provides an 18-Stage Public Policy Model that is more nuanced¹⁰⁵ listed as follows:

2.5.7.1 Meta Policy-Making Stage

1. The principles of the processing;
2. Truth processing;
3. Issue processing;
4. Resource estimation, production, and development;
5. Creation, assessment, and overhaul of the policy system;
6. Assigning topics, principles, and resources;
7. Determination of plan for policy creation.

2.5.7.2 Policy-Making Stage

8. Resources that are sub-allocated;
9. Setting organisational targets with priority in any order;
10. They had several critical alternatives, including several "good policies";
11. Planning of a series and a variety of "nice alternative policies";
12. They prepared accurate estimates of the key advantages and costs of the different alternatives;
13. Compare and describe the "best" of the expected advantages and costs of different alternatives;
14. Assess the gains and costs of the right options and determine whether or not they are successful.

2.5.7.3 Post-Policy-Making Stage

15. Motivation for policy implementation;
16. Regulation implementation;
17. Evaluation of policymaking after policy implementation; and,
18. Channels of contact and input linking all phases.

2.5.8 Political Policy Process Approach

Laurence Lynn¹⁰⁶ and Peter de Leo¹⁰⁷ supported an approach that considered public policymaking a "political process" rather than a "technical process," emphasizing the policy-making interaction. Lynn saw political output as public policy. He explained that "Public policy can be defined as the product of a diffuse system comprised of individuals engaged in interaction with one another in a small group within a framework dominated by formal organizations. Institutions, rules, and practices in those organizations are all influenced by societal and cultural influences."¹⁰⁸

"To comprehend policymaking, it is necessary to comprehend the behavior of the structures that comprise it: individuals in particular positions, groups, organizations, the political system, and the larger society from which they all emerge," he said. Lynn said.¹⁰⁹

He illuminated the democratic mechanism to explain how proposals were created, crafted, and enforced. He assumed that policy-making involved defined priorities, decision-making, and policy strategic formulation and control of policy preparation, allocating money, organisational administration, programme review, and outreach efforts, arguments, and convincing.¹¹⁰ For Lynn, 'public policy administrators' who have employed under diverse influences could help meet the aims of their external politics under three categories of constraints set by their organizations and their attitudes and cognitive styles.¹¹¹

He needed successful public policy managers who could; a) create an understandable premise for their organization's purposes; b) intellectual understanding of strategically relevant questions; define and concentrate attention on those actions which offer significance to the company's employees."¹¹²

2.5.9 Mixed Approach by Hogwood and Gunn

Hogwood and Gunn in 1984 called for a hybrid solution to "technical application and the political process."¹¹³ They presented a nine-step reform approach that could be used both for definition as well as for prescribing:

1. Decides (issue quest or timetable setting) to decide;
2. Determine how to make decisions;
3. Concept of subject matter;
4. Prediction;
5. Fixing targets and priorities;
6. Review of option;
7. Execution, control, and oversight of policies;

8. Appraisal and examination;
9. Implementation, estate, or termination of policies.

2.5.10 Anderson's Framework of Policy Process

Anderson, 1984, offered the policy mechanism a five-stage model¹¹⁴, which was:

- 1) Identifying issues and designing the agenda;
- 2) Formulation;
- 3) Approval;
- 4) Deployment and; implementation;
- 5) Evaluation.

This strategy takes into consideration government policymakers and others that are intended to enforce these policies.

To sum up, approaches to the study of policy sciences are mainly two: the Behavioral approach and the Systems approach. **The behavioural course** does not emphasize the policy's content but stresses the organizational structure under which the policy emanates. The emphasis of this strategy is the engagement of citizens in the formulation and execution of policy. The relationship between them also determines the success or failure of the policy. Attitudes, preferences, Value dispositions, etc., are significant factors that find relevance in this approach. **The systems approach**, however, takes into account inputs and outputs. Analyzation is based on feedback from the social system. It focuses on various aspects of public policymaking, defining a problem, criteria selection, chalking out alternative strategies from the fulfillment of objectives, costs and benefits identification, and reformation or re-evaluation of executed strategies. Nevertheless, these different approaches have always been complimenting and supplement each other.

2.6 PUBLIC POLICY TYPOLOGY

C. E. and L. Chochran. Malone, classify public policy of three styles¹¹⁵:

- a) **Patronage/Promotional Policies:** because certain acts by the Government which inspire individuals and companies to take on activities will, without the offer of an award, only reticently pursue them. This can be divided into three types: grants, contracts, and permits;
- b) **Regulatory Policies:** as the Government's power over the exercise of individual practices (negative modes of control). These involve contamination of the environment; civil and criminal sanctions; cigarette use, alcohol use; customer protection; health and safety at work and;
- c) **Redistributive Policies:** including those who run the economy as a whole and govern people. Regulation strategies include fiscal (tax) and monetary (supply) measures. To the detriment of other classes, they prefer to favour one party by reallocating resources¹¹⁶.

The following public policies are to be described by Joseph Stewart, David M. Hedge, and James P. Lester¹¹⁷:

- a) **Liberal or Conservative Policies:** The measures are those in which the Government is commonly used to achieve societal improvements, typically to maintain a higher degree of social equity. Conservative measures are usually resistant to the government's social reform usage but may approve government policy for protecting or fostering preferential interests. Such as the Community of the European Independent, Democracy, Reformist or Reform Party appears to support the accumulation of influence on higher levels of Government;
- b) **Substantive or Procedural Policies:** Substantial measures refer to Government behavior in solving substantive issues, such as road construction, preservation of the environment, social insurance payments. Procedural policies are those relating to how something can be accomplished or who can behave;

- c) **Material or Symbolic Policies:** Content programs provide recipients with clear services or tangible control or place actual drawbacks on all involved – welfare transfers, housing incentives, etc. Symbolic measures cater more for high-profile ideals than practical advantages, such as flagship national holidays, etc.;
- d) **Collective or Private Goods Policies:** Collective goods programme means some privileges that certain citizens cannot manage but some, such as civil security and public protection. Private products strategy implies goods that can be split into units that can be paid to customers, for example fruit, garbage collection, and home protection.

2.7 CONSTRUCTION OF A POLICY

To conclude, all the aspects of Public Policy, it can be said that the creation or construction of any policy that the Government undertakes for its people, known as the Public Policy, broadly, comprises of four stages, namely: Policy Formulation; Policy Implementation and Monitoring; Policy Education; Policy Evaluation and Review¹¹⁸. To explain further, these stages are:

- a) **Policy Formulation where** different sectors of society such as lobbyists, civil society, news media, foreign organisations, etc., as well as political parties put a matter to the Government. The agenda for action (lists of potential policy-making issues) is then established. The target and goal are then realistically planned. It is then implemented as a statute to obtain legal recognition and power to exercise its tasks or duties by Government legislative body. The deployment and procurement plan of deploying machinery is then established. This stage is confronted with issues like paucity of time with legislature, widespread corruption.
- Moreover, it is always not in session, and there can be situations which need to get addressed immediately as emergency needs to be addressed first¹¹⁹.

- b) Policy Implementation and Monitoring Stage** where the production and the planning for introducing of machinery and bureaucratic framework is done. At each point, the administrators make the appropriate decisions to choose the best option and to execute the tasks assigned to each of them. Mid-term strategy formulation reviews are done, and senior officials track and guide juniors at all times to get rid of failures and future wrists. The absence of know-how and experience, a shortage of money and facilities, or a future non-cooperative mentality generate barriers to the execution and monitoring of policies through bureaucratic incompetence like nepotism, red-tapism, etcetera¹²⁰.
- c) Policy Education** when individuals/target audiences are informed of policies priorities and the areas in which they can ensure successful delivery, it often improves people's involvement in the policy process, providing constructive input and helping control nepotism and corruption in the execution process. There is a lack of trust of people in the bureaucracy, and there is antipathy between the people and the bureaucrats, which acts as a barrier in this stage, and;
- d) Policy Evaluation and Review** were determining the success and failure of any policy is done becomes very crucial as evaluation of a policy when the cost savings are measured in various forms, people's health, meeting defined deadlines, etc., is achieved. The actors at this level include the Parliament, Administration, the Judiciary by judicial advocacy or its judicial review rights, and voluntary NGOs, non-profit organisations, and associations. Thus, Policy studies are indispensable in understanding and reviewing any policy, sketch ways for better and effective implementation, and let the public policy achieve its ascertained goals.

After understanding the concept of public policy, its various other aspects, and its significance in better and effective governance of state for its people, the origin of public policy in India and its evolution in the country is becoming really necessary to

meet the desires and expectations of the country's population. MGNREGA is one such move in the area of the government's public policy to cope with rural unemployment. The objective of rural development and one needs to understand how the state of India arrived at a juncture where it departed from centralised, top-down planning approach to decentralized, bottom-up, democratic policymaking. Policies for the people and the workers under the MGNREG Act it has a long history of the government of India's welfare and development policies.

2.8 PUBLIC POLICY IN INDIA AND POLICY-MAKING PROCESS IN INDIA

Explained literally, 'policy' refers to a rule guide to decision making. Hence, any rule that affects the public at large, or people, or all community members is the subject matter of public policy¹²¹. Policymaking is a vital function of Government, and this process commences with the opinions and demands of people; the Government has the authority to act on the demands of the people. So it begins to make necessary policy decisions for the people¹²². A policy judgment needs any official line or entity to refuse, change or approve a desired alternative policy. When it is optimistic, the statute or the question of an executive order takes form.

The rule of law is the pillar of Indian democracy. High-level policymaking must be converted into comprehensive and explicit rules, legislation, and legal procedure in the country. As the State takes the approach in healthcare, finance, commerce, and business, public policy has become critical in the political field. The Indian Constitution enables a State to practice monopoly in many commerce and trade sectors; the State owns a significant part of banks that influence private businesses¹²³. Decisions in this sector rest to a large degree, with top bureaucrats subject to only wide policies defined by the administration. The development challenge and the social welfare solution in a big country like India are multifaceted and need coordination from different authorities. The planner must perceive organised reform

approaches in the welfare state that cover all elements of the initiative and encourage social justice. A trained strategy coordinator is a government official with a transitional period when carrying out all such activities.¹²⁴

The Government has defined the Law of Business for its actions in compliance with Article 77(3) of the Indian Constitution (Government of India [GOI]). In the framework of these laws, the Law of Business regulates the decision-making procedure; the Council of Ministers, especially the Cabinet, adopts a political decision. Policies and management are strongly connected and are an important aspect of the executive Government. Political decision-making can be considered to be decisions taken by elected authorities that permit or control public policy acts and the material. If it is to be followed, a judgment may be reached officially or informally. On 3 October 2008, the Union Cabinet gave the qualifying railway workers non-gasette for the 2007-2008 financial year node to offer a Productivity Related Bonus (PLB), which was comparable to a 73-day salary. It also authorised the increasing of the ICMR scientists' superannuation age from 60 to 62 to allow the Council to sustain the facility of professional scientists and recruit brilliant scientists, thereby enhancing medical research operation in the region.¹²⁵ It was not before Parliament to accept this policy position of the Union Cabinet. In reality, certain important policy choices are also made informally.

In some places, such as cabinet committees on foreign relations, economic matters, welfare of minorities, trade and investments and adhoc committees, Cabinet uses the mechanism to allow decision-making on particular problems. It is formed to examine and report upon when appropriate. V K Agnihotri clarified the position of a cabinet in India, that the true functioning of the cabinet structure was heavily dependent on the Prime Minister's management style, and that individual ministers made leadership decisions within the framework of the government's business laws¹²⁶. The National Development Council is chaired by the Prime Minister and comprises of inter alia, Ministers of the Central Government and Chief Ministers of State, is in

certain respects the country's top policy entity. It is, in essence, a platform for arriving at an agreement on main policy matters. The Development Committee, headed by the Prime Minister, is the other super-political body¹²⁷. Administrative Secretaries or Secretaries' Commissions take strategic positions on moderately critical topics¹²⁸. The Government departments are led by the Secretary of Government along with other subordinate officials and have assigned authority and governance, particularly with respect to matters of government, and are directed by a wide number of departmental procedure laws¹²⁹. In India, the structures of decision making within the constitutional field often play a significant role in the development of every strategy. Also, they have profound impact on different social, economic and political influences, the political party's electoral manifestation of power, and pledges of political power to gain power for the forming of a Government¹³⁰. It allows for Parliament to serve the people who entrust it with the duty of policymaking by law enactment. In India, through the law, all basic policies take effect. This legislation is expressly conferred on a government administrative branch, and the judiciary of the nation undergoes judicial oversight to maintain its conformity with the country's Constitution. The Cabinet members who formulate the legislation in conjunction with the Secretariat and the department involved are accountable for much of the policies placed into the Parliament¹³¹.

2.9 MAJOR POLICY DEBATES IN INDIA

Rajesh Chakraborty and Kaushiki Sanyal, in their book 'public policy in India,'¹³² explain the major debates concerning public policy with the help of Harold's Lasswell basic definition of public policy as 'who gets, what, when and how?' They demonstrate that each policy choice generates winners and losers and their backers and detractors. Keeping in mind the principle of individual rights or collective welfare, the Government tries to balance the interests of various competing groups. In India, the famous talisman about recalling the face of the poorest person given by Mahatma Gandhi has been the guiding principle. "Justice," civil, economic

and political; "freedom" of appearance, values, religion, and worship; "equality" of position, opportunity; and the promotion of "fraternity," among them all, who embrace the dignity of the person as well as solidarity or integrity of the nation.

The major debates can be characterized with the help of two principles, namely: a) Resource/ Rights allocation between competing groups and; b) Balancing individual rights with collective/ national interest¹³³.

2.9.1 Issues Concerning These Debates

There are issues of distributive justice, balancing the individual rights with national/ collective interest, and the process and making of policy which are ascertained with these debates.

Distributive Justice¹³⁴

Rajesh Chakraborty and Kaushiki Sanyal try to answer the question of distributive justice in the context of resource allocation with the help of taking many examples, one of them being the issue of food security and the precautionary question of a majority population should be supported by the Government; does that have an efficient use of limited resources; does that remove from the allocation of resources other competing requirements, such as education, health, and safety?; is subsidizing the right population?; will there be externalities such as detrimental environmental and water-resistant environmental impacts?; have the Government officials the courage to execute the scheme?; and so on and so forth. These questions draw our attention towards the issue of ambiguity and uncertainty that exists in deciding about the allocation of resources in a just manner (with regard to an individual or a community. There are important questions as to who will benefit from the developmental policies or welfare activities of the government and who will pay the price for it.

2.9.2 Balancing the Individual Rights with National/Collective Interest

There is a huge dilemma surrounding the question of individual interest and that of national interest, and also exists a need to strike a balance between these two. The authors, Chakrabarti and Sanyal,¹³⁵ explain this by taking the much-contested provision of free speech, which the constitution of our country guarantees that freedom of expression to its citizens along with imposing certain reasonable restrictions. There have been many instances wherein this particular provision has been contested for being opposed to the national interest. Speech threatening the security of the state, public order, morality, and relation with other foreign states can be disallowed wherein technically the individual right or freedom is transgressed upon.

Governments across the world cannot take a rigid and consistent stance on the matter of free speech and censorship. Along with the political expediency or suitability, the citizens themselves are divided on this issue. Thus, the governments start taking matters on a case-by-case basis. Questions like, who is being criticized? For whom would it be offending? If the speech is just provocative, or does it incites violence against a group? Does the curtailing of the offensive material serve the larger public interest and also if this adds to the knowledge base of the country.

2.9.3 The Balanced Procedure for Policy Making¹³⁶

One of the most important questions with consider to the procedure of policy making is, 'how does the allocation of values distribution of resources is done? Under the influence of various groups (political/apolitical), other influential individuals, or interest groups, for example, we have seen that many times Ministers of the Government in power can be found in taking unfair favour or advantage under the so-called phenomena of 'pork barrel' politics¹³⁷.

In India, a democracy, the authority of policy making rests in the elected legislatures, which are the Union Parliament and the State Legislature. These authorize and monitor the Executive,

which is the Council of Ministers from among themselves, and this Executive governs the country and controls the bureaucracy as well. Part of the decision, which is concerned with the creation of monetary policy, keeping in mind the technicalities of the financial system, etc., is carried out by independent regulators. The rules that govern politicians themselves, like election, division of fiscal powers among the Centre and the State, are carried out through constitutionally mandated commissions like Election Commission and Finance Commission. Various other committees are constituted and consulted by the Government on technical and contentious issues. The authority of the legislature is in accordance with the constitution, of which the judiciary is the ultimate interpreter. As response to various public interest litigations, the judiciary has held many decisions of the government as unconstitutional. It has also made the bureaucracy work in accordance with its duties whenever it has seen or has been approached about the improper functioning of the bureaucracy. However, this process which is known as 'judicial activism,' leads to counter-productivity with regard to the process of implementation and challenges involved in it.

Moreover, there are voices that do not get heard many times. Elected representatives have to deliver services with help bureaucracy and also have to have political endurance in this process. Even the bureaucracy has to endure political interference in its duties. There is need to improvise both bureaucracy and the elected representatives in a way where they are able to deliver the citizens in the needful manner¹³⁸. The relationship between the judiciary and the legislature also has to be brought in terms of neutrality, whereby the interests of the citizens do not suffer owing to the clashes between them. Thus, we see that public policy in a developing country like India, which is the largest democracy, is a grave challenge, as changing times keep throwing new challenges now and then.

2.9.4 Types of Public Policies in India¹³⁹:

1. Welfare and Development of Public Policies
2. Regulatory Public Policies
3. Distributive and Re-Distributive Policies

Institutions that play an important role in policymaking include Legislature, Executive comprised of the Cabinet and Cabinet Secretariat and Prime Minister and Prime Minister's Office, the former Planning Commission and National Development Council (NDC), Indian Administrative Services (IAS), Indian Police Services (IPS) and Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers, Local level administration (Village Panchayats, Block Level Offices), the Civil Society Organizations (NGO) and the Niti Ayog (formed in 2015, replacing the Planning Commission).

S.R. Maheshwari, 1987, discussed broad themes underlying the formulation of public policy and the ideology behind the Normative Framework of Policy Making in India had been discussed India in the Article "*Public Policy Making in India*." He states that Indian public policies ought to be formed by a legislative framework that has three key characteristics: the Parliamentary Governmental Structure, Federalism and a large variety of Social, Economic and Political Theory outlined in the Preamble; and the State Policy Directive and the Human Rights Directive. He then discusses the manner in which the above three factors have played a very crucial role in the formulation of policies which is as follows:

- **The Parliamentary form of Government:** India has embraced as its constitutional order the legislative system of Government and Federalism, but every parliamentarian is strongly founded on two characteristics. The parliamentary leadership, broadly formed according to the Westminster paradigm, is composed and responsible to the latter, the parliament's administrative arm being only subject to the Constitution.

Parliament has a position in national policymaking, and it is only after ratification by Parliament that the country's five-year strategy is completed. Over the years, the legislative leadership has moved into the Executive without camouflage.

- **Federalism:** It is not an unknown fact that even after passing so many years, the Centre still exercises control over social and economic planning.
- The “**Directive Principles**” of the “**State Policy and Fundamental Rights**” also form an extremely important backdrop of India's policy formulation. The DPSP is prescribed as "do's" to the Government, where the state shall strive to promote just socio-economic order for all. The fundamental rights are prescribed as "do not's" to the Government, wherein no policy of the state can run against or infringe these basic rights given to the country's citizens by the Constitution of India.

While attempting to write a critique of the policy-making process in India, the author has pointed out some hindrances or difficulties that stand in the way of the effective realization of public policy goals. These are: **a)** Absence of a systematic study and research of public policy in India; **b)** Acute departmentalism which obstructs the effective implementation of policies; **c)** Information gaps resulting in the poor base of data required for the formulation of effective policies; **d)** Centralism in policymaking and; **e)** Poor implementation¹⁴⁰.

Dolly Arora¹⁴¹, 1993 “*State, Society and Public Policy in India*” explains how the formulation of public policies has also been an outcome of the ever-dynamic relationship among the state and the society and the governmental regimes, their leaders, their ideologies have a very instrumental role in India. She further explains how state and society have co-existed and have impacted the Public Policy that has been promulgated in India after Independence. In this case, one of its ideational contents includes embracing or not adopting such political proposals as authoritative decisions by the authority of the State behind it suggests that two components of public policy truth may be noted in that respect. Second, the arena of its context, which means

public policy facts, and which approved proposals may alter their meaning considerably and differentiate themselves as something very distinct from the sanctioned policy¹⁴².

In the context of India, the democratic framework enables the society to influence the actions of the State quite considerably; its federal and parliamentary structure places significant limits on the power of its various constituents; the historical patterns of association and disassociation in society as also, the extent and patterns of state actions shape the patterns of participation; and the existing state of relations between the constituents of state and society reflect the patterns characterizing their actual role in relation to public policy.

There are four important factors that condition the framing of public policy in India¹⁴³:

- (1) **The extent of commitment or rigidity characterising the outlook and attitudes of those in positions of authority in a given context.** This is affected by the personality structure and motivational concerns that dominate their actions, which, in turn, are influenced by their historico-cultural context, on the one hand, and their analysis of the existing possibilities and constraints, on the other;
- (2) **The extent and patterns of participation in society.** This bears the impact of the extent and patterns of organization of interest in society, as affected by their historico-cultural evolution or shaped by the imperatives coming out from the existing policy and polity framework and the possibilities that emerge from the context.
- (3) **The patterns of interrelationships, in particular the extent of alignment or conflicts among and between policymakers and others in state or the society,** which also, are shaped by the above-mentioned factors, though their specific manifestation does vary in specific locations.
- (4) **The scope and constraint involved in deciding or effecting its execution** as embodied in the structural or non-structural dimensions of a given situational context.

Although none of the factors mentioned above is autonomous or dominant in all situations, some may be so in specific policy contexts. She has explained how these factors have resulted in the promulgation of public policies over the years. They are as follows¹⁴⁴:

- **Policymakers' initiatives and promotional strategies:** Policymaking on color transmission. It was in April 1982 that the Information and Broadcasting Minister Vasant Sathe announced the decision of his Government to allow for the introduction of color TV. The decision was taken entirely outside the Plan's framework. It could not be explained in ways of any situational contingencies or terms of some long-existing problems facing the country. Instead, it implied turning the country's relatively scarce resources away from the more severe problems affecting the basic needs of the people at large. However, the policy was adopted.
- **Institutional conflicts and policy evasion:** Sales Tax Abolition, despite expressing its commitment to abolish sales tax in its 1977 election manifesto, the Janata Party failed to make any headway in this direction when it came to power. The Centre-State conflict assumed far greater importance, and because of pressures against such a policy from state governments, for whom sales tax provides an essential source of revenue, even the Central Government gave up the idea of pushing it further.
- **Participatory Pressures and Policy Change:** The Gold Control Policy, to deal with the long-existing problem of smuggling in gold, the Government of India announced, in January 1963, the Gold Control Rules, 1963. The rules aimed to manage the problem from the demand side by launching a massive attack on the demand for gold. The crucial and most controversial provision of the rules was the quality control clause, implying prohibition against the manufacture and sale of gold ornaments of purity greater than fourteen carats. Under this rule, smiths were to stop producing high purity gold jewelry immediately, and jewelers were given thirty days to clear their stocks of such

ornaments. The policy was conceived by Morarji Desai, then Finance Minister, and was promoted by him without any public discussions on it taking place at all. The policy was announced with suddenness through an ordinance, which was to take the shape of legislation after the policy became effective. However, the policy could not be pursued for long. Resistance did build up in its wake. Coming from goldsmiths, who lost their livelihood (one of the least expected consequences of the policy), it generated a wave of sympathy and active support among the erstwhile non-committed or reluctant supporters, in various political groups as well as the public at large, making it difficult for the Government to stick to its stance for long.

- **New Analyses, Beliefs and Policy Change:** The Case of Silent Valley Project, a hydroelectric project of the Kerala Government, once approved by the Central Government, was abandoned at a later date due to the growing awareness regarding its implications for the eco-system.
- **Situational Constraints and Policy Change:** If we take into the instance the takeover of wholesale Trade in Wheat, some interests could have forced the policymakers to retreat because of their capacity to influence the very context of implementation scope of policy attaining its goals. This is what happened regarding the policy adopted in 1973 to take over the wholesale trade in wheat. As a result of this policy, a ban was imposed on the private wholesale dealers in the area. The objectives were: eliminating speculation, ensuring remunerative prices to growers, providing assured availability to the consumers, and ensuring the economy costs by eliminating unnecessary intermediaries. The decision was taken unanimously at the Conference of Chief Ministers of States. However, the very next year, the policy was reversed. The major reason lay in the government's inability to obtain the willing cooperation of those on

whom its implementation depended, on the one hand, and its unwillingness to use coercion against them, on the other, in March 1974.

Thus, we can see from the examples above that public policy formulation in India has been influenced by various actors who are interrelated and cannot be seen in a vacuum. The author points out that a total picture of public policy reality would emerge only when one takes into account the fact that despite enormous participatory influences shaping the taking of decisions, there exists, at one end of the policy spectrum, a small elite that invariably manages to turn the meaning of policy so framed in its own favor, and, at the other end, a large mass of unorganized and powerless people in the society who remain either excluded from its purview or suffer its costs and biases in silence, without even attempting to exert themselves in the realms where it is worked out. Without taking them into account, one can never hope to capture the overall thrust and reach of the public policy reality in the system¹⁴⁵.

2.9.5 Evolution in Policy Making

The public policy in India has undergone several ideological, functional. Structural changes at the onset Public policy began to be formulated with centralised Planning under the Planning Commission, which emerged as supreme policymaking over the years, but later with the recurring not so successful attempts of the policies to provide to the requirements of the people, change in the approach and understanding towards making of policies, identification of implementation issues to understanding basic flaws in the agenda-setting, formulation approach, changing strategies and programmes for implementation, allowing to the changing dynamics of State and society, public policy has evolved in India. This evolution can be understood better in the light of the article by Navdeep Mathur and Kuldeep Mathur in “*Policy Analysis In India: Research Bases And Discursive Practices*”¹⁴⁶.

Navdeep Mathur and Kuldeep Mathur point out that the orientation, the policymaking, and the policy analysis in India have been enclosed by the words "development" and "planning" as a concern of post-colonial development countries. Therefore, policy research and studies invariably concentrate on development policy, which is applicable to different sectors like poverty, industrialisation, schooling, and employment. The large methodological approach implemented for the economic growth of India was the Soviet-style central planning. Economics as a discipline has always had hegemony over the planning of political matters and the founding of a particular design of policies in India¹⁴⁷. In the first place, the paradigm for growth was dominated by the Nehruvian consensus, the key instrument of development policy analysis which relied heavily on economic expert institutions. A static economy has been developed with governmental agencies, topics experts (in India and abroad), technocrats, academics, etc., and an agreement among Indian political leaders, Industrial establishment, and intellectuals in the civil service has been the key development goals (which formed the first democratic regime in India later in the 1950s). Stress was laid on the development of certain policies that would help attain India's quality of life which western developing nations had already reached their standard of living. Broad poverty, malnutrition, and analphabetism were seen as essential hurdles, and policies were, therefore, designed to overcome these obstacles in India's path to development. Political growth in India then implied centralized economic planning, accompanied by an overall social planning policy¹⁴⁸.

The evolution of public policy in India can be traced back right from the setting up of a Planning Commission in which policies were made inside closed doors in the executive level of the Government following a "top-down approach" to the framing of policies on much more open and democratic framework where all-state as well non-state actors are playing roles in policy formulation, creating a "bottom-up" approach pertaining to the idea that let the people for whom the policies have to be made play an instrumental role in deciding their policies. Below

are the three basic broad heads under which this evolution can be located; **1)** Policy analysis: from fiscal preparation to inability to execute; **2)** Social and political studies and; **3)** Non-governmental organisations and the democratization of policy analysis¹⁴⁹.

2.9.5.1 Policy Analysis: From Economic Planning to Implementation Failure

The Planning Commission in India was formed in March 1950 by a resolve of the Government of India, was set up as a central policy agency aiming at achieving political leadership's socio-economic goals. Planning was therefore associated with political decision-making. Its scope of work was as follows: The Constitution of India has definite certain Fundamental Rights to Indian citizens and stated, in particular, the State Guidelines on State policy, which seek to foster growth and facilitate the welfare of the people, by ensuring and protecting as efficiently as thinkable a social order in which justice and justice, social, economic and politics are guaranteed; **(a)** citizens, men, and women alike are entitled to an adequate livelihood and; **(b)** ownership and control of the community's material resources are so distributed that they are best distributed to the mutual good and that economic system process does not lead to the concentration in wealth and production means to the common detriment" (Directive Principles)¹⁵⁰:

- a)** assess the human resources and also the material, capital resources of the Government, including technical staff, and examine the possibility of expanding such of these resources which are found to be insufficient in relation to the nation's requirements;
- b)** develop a plan for the maximum, effective and equitable use of resources of the country;
- c)** identify the points at which strategy should be executed in order to establish goals and recommend the distribution of resources at each point for proper completion;

- d)** recognise variables that are likely to hinder economic growth and determine the requirements to be developed for the successful completion of the Strategy in view of the existing social and political situation;
- e)** decide the design of the machinery which will be essential for securing the effective execution of each phase of the Strategy in all its features;
- f)** evaluate success in implementing and phase of the Strategy from time to time and suggest policy changes and steps that might be appropriate for such an assessment;
- g)** make such interim or auxiliary suggestions, in the light of the current economic circumstances, laws, initiatives, and development programmes, or a review of any particular issue referred to in it for the guidance of Central and State Governments, when it appeared necessary to assist with the fulfillment of the tasks entrusted to it¹⁵¹.

The Planning Commission discussed the policy issues of soil, food, financing for livestock, standard development projects for large-scale and small-scale manufacturing, the selection and management of irrigation and power systems for mineral resources, etc. It had technical policy experts that would design plans for the achievement of some fixed goals. These plans were deconstructed with the help of theoretical exercises, and econometric modeling based on intensely searched and collected quantitative data that were thought to reflect reality more closely. "In making its recommendations, the Commission is aware that the development of social and economic policies in the various areas is an ongoing process and that any changes that might need to be made in the interests of national development within the context of priorities and targets now formulated will be made," he notes. The study (Government of India, Planning commission report on 1st five-year plans) argues that in the policy sector, the Central and State Governments must work closely with each other."¹⁵² The National Development Council was then formed in August 1952, which included the Prime Minister of India and Chief Ministers of all States. Later, the Planning Commission founded public research institutions by

foreign funding, such as the United Nations, Ford Foundation, or the USAID, to improve external capabilities and externalise knowledge-gathering, data collection, and provision.

Over time, economists of national and foreign reputation have also begun to acquire experience. Both the bloc economists, including Harvard University J. K. Galbraith, the Western Bloc, Jan Tinbergen, and Oskar Lange of Eastern Bloc, came from Hungary to India. They belonged to the expert committees that addressed the patterns to be adopted in India to achieve its growth goals. Thus, the Planning Commission became the investigational school for the democratic economists who questioned and addressed social and economic growth frameworks for emerging countries and underdeveloped countries in the run-up to the second (1956-61) and third (1961-66) five-year plans¹⁵³. However, the growth and sustainability target could not be reached in the first three five-year plans. Leading to low economic performance, even larger population growth, and rise an acute food shortage. In order to consider and address the deficiency of the previous versions of the plan, the fourth five-year plan was delayed in 1966. This postponement signaled the culmination of a 15-year domination era of a model of technocratic study of policies in India. This indicates a lack of power over public policies and decision-making in India through the Planning Board. In the area of decision-making and policy-making in India, the whole jurisdiction of the Planning Committee was diluted. It also moved a lot to political leadership and civil leadership in Indian Government administrative departments. The Cabinet Ministers started to address the strategies of Parliament that have comparatively greater access and transparency, and thus growing public exposure to strategy and preparation. The planning situation began to escalate, and public policy evaluations were widespread and appeared, which led to the growing political review of policies¹⁵⁴.

A 'wrong execution' has been suspected of lack of Strategy goals since the late 1960s. This has been projected in the public domain as the "application crisis." The econometric modeling or planning approaches have not been objectively reflected, and therefore, strategy errors were

not critical of policy processes. They began concentrating more on changes in institutional systems and procedures and gradually becoming a concern with the management of the goals of the programme. For example US and UK public administration experts were invited to advise on developing and changing institutional processes and procedures. It was considered that effective management of the programme could be accomplished by utilising the ideas of productivity and efficiency of western bureaucracies in the Indian case.

The growth of political science organisations was thus even less than the development of public administration as a field and its mechanisms as a consequence of this closed policy analysis model. Due to a lack of proper and reliable details, the failure of the policies has contributed to the creation of early policy institutes to provide evidence. In addition, various divisions of public administration and similar institutes have been formed to resolve the accusation of administrative incompetence. Consequently, the focus was diverted towards Government, and the public policy or research was not known. The policy mechanism was planned to be developed and enforced in two consecutive steps. Important challenges have also been described as implementation delays, lack of communication, and badly trained politicians and practitioners. In order to standardize and simplify rules and administrative decisions on decision-taking and actions, decision-making units were formed within ministries and departments. The United States Zero-Base budgeting (ZBB) Performance-Based Budgeting (PBB) came out from the United States via the Ford Foundation and USAID, which played an important role in supplying technological knowledge and funds for adapting Indian institutions and bureaucratic processes. Subsequently, it created a heavy impact on planning in India.

India's Government invited Paul Appleby to research and recommend change for the Indian Administration at the Maxwell School of Singapore University. One of his main ideas originated from his conviction in the absence of an autonomous Government of India in the service of the colonial representatives. Due to a commonly held assumption that the dichotomy

of governmental will and construction needs persisted, all the change was under American control. Two types of changes prevailed, namely the professionalization of the administrative structure by strengthening the technical decision-making mechanism and imbuing the managers with a formal viewpoint. The IIPA (Indian Institute of Public Administration) started to emphasise the role played by individual activities and ties between bureaucrats and policymakers in achieving development goals through a graduate thesis in the administration.

With the exception of just minor rebels, the domination of the execution breakdown strategy on preparation and policy-making persists.¹⁵⁵ B. R. Shenoy, who believed in "Laissez-Faire" ideology, was one of the leading advocates for the opposition of the economy (and its methods). So he focused on more free market and less regulation over states, not advocates for alternate policy-making analyses and planning strategies, and thought that centralized planning could never promote or contribute to economic development in India. These papers, however, did not seriously question India's model of growth¹⁵⁶. We see that the study of strategy originated out of the technical necessity to establish five-year planning and was assisted by growth consultants from abroad. In Indian politics, the prevailing ideology was technocratic, economics was science and practice, and indigenous tradition for public policy analysis was not available (which was primarily influenced by the U.S). The independent policy field of study has long been disregarded. The curricula of university colleges and institutes can also be seen. Nevertheless, in the 1970s, policy reviews started evolving as a criticism of the existing model due to the multidisciplinary existence of social science studies and beyond the participatory imperatives in the policy.

2.9.5.2 Social Science Research and Policy Studies

Political theory has already emerged in the 1970s, focused on the constitutional and legal systems of the Government. Empirical political science was particularly developed as

psephology, which concentrated on the effect on electoral actions of different social classes. His concerns were limited to political actions, the social base, and economically marginalised classes.¹⁵⁷

Later, the policy science studied the execution of the village self-governance project (Panchayati Raj) with the approval of its central planning priorities and targets and thus based their attention on executing studies. It could not theorise nor appreciate how decentralisation could respond to the different settings of local contexts, and could not research unforeseen consequences such as decision fragmentation or responsibility for Panchayati institutions. Political scientists have stressed their success with regard to operational problems in creating and running Panchayats rather than challenging the underlying policy or planning priorities. Political discussions were mainly initiated and guided by economists, as the most advanced and developed discipline of Indian Universities was economics. There were so many economists in academic organisations. The prevailing model was an economic strategy.

As a consequence, economists have had to limit political discussions to an area in which only a few opposing voices have come and in which even economists mostly have silenced or dismissed these voices. A classical economist, A. D Shroff, for instance, founded a free enterprise forum in which he tried to provide market alternatives to central planning. While the Forum could not control the prevailing ideology, it introduced a political party focused on the theory of freedom of enterprise and suggested elections in 1961.¹⁵⁸

The key focus was, therefore, on social institutions, which form the stage for the political conflict between groups, from Government institutions per se. Several kinds of research, which affected the change, were carried out and considered. This is how it was:

- An analysis of the philosophy of pluralism has been carried out by Dahl (1961), and Krueger (1974) has undertaken a study that indicates that a Government strategy arising

from such contests better represents a public concern. Consequently, the causes and background for economic changes have been more recently discussed as a consequence of the policy ties.

- Jenkins (1999) explored rewards, structural structures, and skills to illustrate the interplay between the élite classes to understand policy changes recognised as liberalization through an institutionalistic approach to understanding democratic mechanisms that shaped India's reform processes.
- A combination of pluralistic-institutional methods used to model the actions of persons and communities through institutional incentives for the achievement of valuable results (Kohli 1989; Varshney 1999);
- Furthermore, Varshney (1995) studied the idea of India's 'modern' agriculture policy (1966-68) that inspired elements of the neo-institutional study of March and Olsen (1989). He defined institutional incentives specifically involved in implementing the agricultural policy by utilising a neo-institutionalized view of institutes as dynamic routines, laws, and comprehensions in the three Ministries of Agriculture, Planning, and Finance. He claims that the Planning Commission was motivated by a dual competitor motivation that tried to offset, on the one side and the other, a rise in agricultural output, resisting increasing food prices and subsidies by stressing that the micro-production institutional agents sought to growth while making a political effort. The food department actors in control of feeding citizens, though, would lobby for a cut in costs and would operate on another collection of benefits.
- Furthermore, the institutional method is used by Mathur and Bjorkman (1994) to define positions of important persons through an emphasis on Cabinet Ministries and officials. Their review examines variables that relate to the policies making by the Indian elite policymakers, such as the situational-institutional background of the actor, the essence

of the job, recruiting, and features of technical competence. They stressed the prevalence of political over administrative interventions to the policy process. They proposed that a more complex relationship of values and principles among key players and the system of institutional restraints that they place on policy matters weaken the prevailing picture of objective decision-making expressed by value efficiency and technological optimality.

- During an inquiry into the Indian drought policy mechanism, Ben, Mathur, and Jayal (1997) performed a crucial study of state interventions owing to the concept of 'dry as a crisis' and how the affected community was relieved of only short periods or remedies for long-term infrastructural agricultural facilities that would be given in the drought-principality. As if the electoral milestones may have been extracted from successful drought control, this approach amplified the societal effects of the drought. This indicates that the disappointment to explore policy solutions is the direct product of the supremacy of crisis-related debate and the resulting reluctance of other discourse to emerge and reach deliberative space (where dramatically different strategies arise from alternate issue definitions).
- The thesis by T E Guha (1973) was a key factor in the opening up of environmental dialogue among the early research studies. In the North Indian Himalayan area of Garhwal. He researched the Chipko (Tree Hugging/Conservation) campaign. He stressed the needs of the local population and answered in the sense of commercial and national deforestations to their lack of subsistence and power over local forest resources. This campaign was described as a threat to India's national forest politics and shaped future popular dialogue and political thought through Guha's study.
- Several further experiments have been carried out concurrently on the climate policy of the Government prompted by numerous environmental protests. A big occurrence was

the Bachao Campaign for the Sardar Sarovar dam on the River Narmada, which was extremely contentious and disputed. It responded sharply to both opponents and advocates and contributed to various reports. On the one side, the technical narrative of development was endorsed by government-oriented and international economists that justified the building of another broad dam on strategic and technological features and its relation to an abstract notion of universal social change. On the other side, there were grounded causes that centered on migration and lack of livelihoods in the river systems concerned.

- Other scientists such as Deepak Nayyar (1991) indicate that such economic reforms were a normal/fire-fought reaction to the 1991 economic crisis and a government-management mechanism provided a neo-liberal international context.

2.9.5.3 NGOs and the Democratization of Policy Analysis

In the last 15 years, India has experienced market-oriented changes with a Government modernization programme. These governments' reforms have slowly led to expanding the democratic space in which dominant social and political ideas could be contested.¹⁵⁹ In order to improve decentralization and capacity-building commissions, constitutional reforms were also tabled (Panchayats). The State has earned a mixed overall response to "deepening democracy" requests, as cooperation and debate in some places, whereas, in other places, these have just been ignored.¹⁶⁰ The NGOs have also become a space or platform for policy research and advice as they represent the civil society in this democratic expansion. In this way, they also altered their relationship with the state. NGOs have also become catalytic agents that have helped foster the movement for deeper democracy in India as their call is generally from the grassroots to the upwards. The NGOs have also been performing research, advocacy, mobilizations and empowerment, awareness, and education campaigns. The NGOs also receive many grants and aids from within the country and abroad to carry out their development

functions. The NGOs have grown to co-produce and co-deliver services and have also helped the people and communities organize themselves to avail these services and entitlements. NGOs see development as an alternate, democratic instrument that promotes a nationwide reform of the development plan phase to extend positive results for more citizens at the local level.¹⁶¹

In order to foster alternative and participatory developmental dialogue, NGOs have built partnerships with other non-state organisations. These institutes were instrumental in serving as nodal institutions advising policy networks and coalitions between the provision of resources and direct support for reform in the policy. Specifically, NGOs have established ties with academic organisations aiming at a more progressive approach to politics. The authors have taken the help of studies (and scholarly articles) done by various scholars to show how the NGOs have helped effect or impact making many policies in the country.¹⁶² Some of them are as follows:

- Alternate draught of the Indian Social Institute's national rehabilitation policy, which uses this institutionalized research basis, to encourage a procedure of information and debate among national NGOs via a wide spectrum of discussions, this network of NGOs—activists—researchers developed a series of abstract concepts to promote internal refurbishment initiatives and specific policy goals and methods to achieve them.
- National Centre for Women's Studies (CWDS) has promoted the establishment of a women's rights network, which is the autonomous legislative committee and study institute. As a medium for studying and shaping public policy, outside its "pure academic research" remits, their position was sponsored by NGOs as umbrella organisations.

- Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, a grassroots group in the western state of Rajasthan, led a war against injustice, requested transparency from the Government, genuine décentralization, and create true participatory democracies. This war has become a campaign in the world and has contributed to a law on the right to know.

Political organisations of the NGO form reflected a significant change in political science, study, and conflict. Early political analysis institutes mainly served as repositories of knowledge to match Government policies and only partially were autonomous, powerful, and interdisciplinary in subsequent organisations. The creation of NGOs thus represents a multi-layered transition, not just to fill holes in the failure of the state but to express and function by alternate political dialogue and alternative analyses of policies. The cross-fertilization of ideas and solutions has taken place between NGOs and research institutes, which have been a critical momentum for developing a coherent range of alternate policy priorities and strategies to pursue an alternative political order. Governments were often affected in several places by their experiences with NGOs to respond and alter. Statutory limits, however, and sometimes narrow goals suggest restrictions on the reach of NGOs to have a substantial effect on the current technological discourse of growth.

Thus, we see that policy research in India was narrow and had an institutionalist approach. Later with the coming of various research organizations, the analysis developed a more interdisciplinary approach. The policy research in India is still economics driven where knowledge and expertise are employed in the preparation of public policy. However, the public policy study has begun to transition from the rigids of positivism to a more democratic post-positive strategy by putting together civil society groups and their engagement with the public, spreading knowledge, and informing people regarding their interests. The public policy now intends to encourage the public to take part in decision-making and to engage in a more inclusive way in which the services and the qualification of legislators and bureaucrats will

turn into a more meaningful participatory democracy, where people can participate in meaningful conversations and challenge political matters that profoundly concern them.

A recent development in the advanced by the changed regime of government in India is the Planning Commission's dismantling, which is crucial to policymaking. A new institution in the name of the NITI has been set up for bringing about more profound democratic practices and larger participation.

"The substitution of Niti Aayog by the Planning Committee would help to turn the focus from initiatives and services to strategy and institutions, from budget contributions to the actual performance by strengthened governance and political conflicts over expanded distributions to new problems and opportunities"¹⁶³ The Niti Aayog means a clear split from "Niti" to "Politics" and the institutional changes of "Transformation of India" inspired by the Soviet Union's National Development Plan (Five Year's)." Paragraph three of the cabinet determination notes that we need institutional reform and dynamic policy changes that can lead to and foster major change."¹⁶⁴ The first is the statement that "our objectives are rising and today we want the elimination of poverty rather than alleviation." The next is the main role of government in delivering social results: "The people of India greatly expect progress and improvements at all stages." Three other points in the initial section of the Niti Aayog Cabinet Declaration are noteworthy. It calls for structural governance improvements and complex policy adjustments which can bring in and maintain significant changes."¹⁶⁵

"Democracy and governance can be practiced in an atmosphere of complete openness – leveraging technologies to minimise opacity and therefore the capacity for misadventures to rule. There are examples of how structural changes of governance may be brought about The official booklet (in the form of an e-book) of the Niti Aayog explains the need for change from Planning Commission to Niti Aayog; it enlists the factors triggering this change as follows: **a)** Demography; **b)** Economy; **c)** Private Enterprise; **d)** Globalization; **e)** States and; **f)**

Technology. It emphasizes taking lessons learned from the institutional loopholes, implementation failures, and challenges faced and failed for the promulgation of better and more feasible policies for the citizens of the country and emphasize on the need for change in the institutions by chalking out functions of the NITI Ayog, which are:¹⁶⁶

a) Cooperative and Competitive Federalism; **b)** Shared National Agenda; **c)** State's Best Friend at the Centre; **d)** Decentralized Planning; **e)** Vision and Scenario Planning; **f)** Domain Strategies; **g)** Sounding Board; **h)** Network of Expertise; **i)** Knowledge and Innovation Hub; **j)** Harmonization; **k)** Conflict Resolution; **l)** Coordinating Interface with World; **m)** Internal Consultancy; **n)** Capacity building and; **o)** Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Niti Ayog is conceived as a vehicle for good governance running on the principles of inclusion from the villages, people's participation, demographic dividend, and sustainability. Although it has been formed recently and assessing performance of the NITI Ayog will be too early, it has attracted deliberations and discussions from scholars, readers, etc., from all over.

Shiv Vishwanathan¹⁶⁷ explains why India needs a new public policy for itself. He begins the article by saying that "The divisive aspect of the public domain is what keeps public policy fascinating and probably innovative. It is rooted in a plurality of viewpoints that question one subject's superiority."¹⁶⁸ He stresses the intelligence element of our nation and our wisdom society never separates knowledge from facts and says that we are still trying to fix our problems by helping information mistake knowledge. The elite understands that the need for re-skilling in our country is forward-looking. Simultaneously, they still have an approach where they look back to the outdated institutions and have never been effective in delivering the policy goals. Contemporary India has never understood the genealogy of knowledge, although it has had many institutions, for example, the Planning Commission, the Knowledge Commission, the D. S. Kothari Commission, which has collected knowledge (pertaining to information) for the preparation and implementation of policies.¹⁶⁹

Public policy emerges from the area of information and influence, producing academics of two kinds: intellectual strategy and intellectual policy¹⁷⁰. It is imperative to discriminate between these two since the intellectual strategy is an extension of the state and a consequence of thought tanks, of organisations which are purely in line with the desires of the state or the organisation. A public intellectual, by comparison, is a number who criticises policies more generally and explores the link between information and power more creatively. He emphasises the need for all kinds of academics in a science society. The economist late Sukhamoy Chakravarty was a big academic decision maker. Rajni Kothari, and Ashis Nandy, and U.R. Ananthamurthy fall in the public intellectual category. While the academic policy generally considers his experience as a matter of practice, the public intellectual challenges the essence of knowledge and discusses the ethics and genealogy of concepts more closely. India has seen more policies than public intellectuals in the post-liberalisation age.

He also points out that India has changed over the years since independence, and democracy has extended its base wherein there is more and more participation from citizens all over the country as democracy is more proactive today, and it is just not about periodic elections.¹⁷¹

2.10 POLICY IMPLEMENTATION AND BUREAUCRACY IN INDIA

In decisions and execution in multiple structures, bureaucracy occupies diverse positions. As Wallace Sayre in 1964 points out, “administration is the impartial executor of other plans, rather than an individual brain of its own.”¹⁷² However, not all structures are real, as in certain countries; bureaucracy is a big player in government policy decision-making where much of the existing systems are growing their decision-making power; thus, bureaucracy in some countries play a role in political proposals and takes the initiative whereas in some countries it merely waits for some recommendations from their political superiors.¹⁷³

Bureaucracy's position in developing countries¹⁷⁴ becomes crucial after independence from colonial rule. These countries are made up of developing societies which are traditional and are not up to date with modern technologies advancements and, thus, require special assistance in order to get over ignorance, awareness, and underdevelopment using science and technology.¹⁷⁵ Functions of the Government in such states increase numerous as the policies or programs undertaken by the Government are intended for the people, especially at the grassroots levels; participation and people and the involvement of their legislatures become pre-requisite for the determination of needs or priorities of programs, formulation of policies, and devising of implementation of strategies.¹⁷⁶ For the governments to function effectively for the people, bureaucracies of developing societies have to undertake a large number of roles and responsibilities, which are: Firstly, by responding to the new demands, desires, and pictures of the new regimes; secondly, by training itself for new problems and addressing them by using some manpower.¹⁷⁷

In a developing country like India, the bureaucracy that has been trained for the expertise and possessing knowledge of rules and procedures has a near-monopoly in the policymaking and implementation process. They are responsible for advising, guiding, and counseling the political executives in the process of policy formulation process also. The highest civil service sacrifices to the world, however, have been tremendous since it held the country in the first sixty years following independence and made it the 'higher civil service' and has much of its growth and innovations.¹⁷⁸

The administration is part of the government's administrative branch, with much of the government's day-to-day work. It rules the Government, personnel, materials, and legal powers and applies many of the compliance orders of the executive, legislative and judicial authorities.¹⁷⁹

V. A. Pai Panandikar writes that four crucial policy and decision-making parameters have been identified by individual researchers in the management.¹⁸⁰ Firstly, predicting and defining policy needs; secondly, designing a structured and alternate path and an evaluation of possibilities, backed in the sense of value premises; thirdly, recommending a particular option of alternatives based upon the examination of the course of action to accomplish the objectives optimally; fourthly, agreeing on the execution instruments.¹⁸¹

In reality, bureaucracy is responsible for executing policies and plans drawn up by the leaders and for doing things in compliance with the policy guidelines, even though it is a political machine which sets national goals and objectives, decides on important policies, adopts development plans, and provides resources and red tape.¹⁸² This allows the interchange of bureaucracy with politician's key to determining administrative power in the democratic process. The victorious party in the election or polls forms the political executive in a democratic state like India. In contrast, in non-democratic countries, the political executives are represented by ruling canons that decide the destiny of the people and the State.

In addition, the challenge of ensuring a stable equilibrium between lawmakers and career officials in both democratic and non-democratic countries tends to find government reform challenging to frame.¹⁸³ In some structures, however, there is a simpler and more rigid political-administrative separation of the two participant classes and a definite, understandable distinction between the positions of the two groups.

Merilee S. Grindle claimed that the general administrative action process is enforced and measures programme performance against policy targets by evaluating them.¹⁸⁴ As the central role of management in any given environment is the enforcement of the public policy, the public administration focuses mainly on the processes for implementing Government policies as a practice and as a functional system, rather than on executing them.¹⁸⁵

A. D. Jain, 1997, writes: it is the bureaucracy's task to ensure that initiatives are planned and enforced with patience and beliefs to satisfy prevailing circumstances.¹⁸⁶

Kenneth Culp Davis outlined the position of bureaucracy, and illustrates why the law would not automatically extend, since it still needs delegation to the applicable organisation and employees. The first job is to bring a scheme into context and the second is to execute the work of the developed programme's day-to-day operations. It plays an important and deciding position in the power system and network of policymaking and policy intervention. As a delegate and discretionary execution by bureaucracy.¹⁸⁷

Keeping into consideration the significant role that an administrator plays in policy implementation, specific attributes or qualities become essential for him to imbibe where it becomes really necessary to thoroughly grasp the essence and value of policies established by the upper levels of administration. The bureaucrats advise in designing policies to accomplish defined objectives, mobilize, arrange and maintain the tools required for these policies. They should work as policymakers and help them to avoid ambiguities and also make them understand the importance of accepting policies which could be executed. They are often required to convert their general strategies and goals into practical objectives, where an estimate of the possible expense and advantages of each alternative can be rendered to accomplish the operational objectives. They must therefore lead to the creation of the respective strategies and policy instruments. They must strive to deliver better outcomes in policy by evaluating this policy in comparison to other policies and see if there are contradictions and whether they complement or override other policies. They should seek to obtain improved results.¹⁸⁸

"In 1997, the Supreme Court of India felt encouraged to offer an opinion about the regulatory functions to be done by the bureaucracy; 'Every public employee is a representative of society, and every public servant must display fairness, dignity, sincerity, and truthfulness, in all facets

of the administration, in order to incorporate political, social, economic and constitutional politics.’ An officer with the responsibility, the authority, and all of the concepts of the interrelated directive to enact constitutional policies under Article 16(4), 16(4A), 15(4), 335, should demonstrate accountability and be liable; for properly enforcing the constitutional objectives.”¹⁸⁹

Developing nations have bureaucracies that are actively involved in politics as the complexity of political positions and their increasingly dynamic existence expand. Delegation in sub-political areas is required, and the political manager is obliged to assign his authority to the administrative structure. Moreover, no official imposes policies and decisions without his presence in those decisions and policies in the majority of cases. Practical and political considerations become indistinguishable for the administrator as practical implications of the policy are always in the line of the advice tendered by him and at times.¹⁹⁰

The supervisors are liable for enforcing policy where they should have their own judgment since policies under various cases can be viewed differently. Policies must be updated and changed after policy assessment during their introduction because policy making and policy assessment often have an impact on each other and are interrelated phenomena. Implementing them also ensures that elected leaders are discreet and optimistic. Although a person may underline a superior authority's wishes to exercise categorical requirements, he said: "When the thinking process is invoked, when a discretionary element is involved, it is against human nature to suppose that he is able to additional his own thought for the thinking of the leaders and to exercise his discretion in complete harmony with all other people. But such independence is necessary for civil servants employed at the highest levels, since no policy order may encompass all the situations that can occur every day based on various decisions.”¹⁹¹

Therefore, we see how the modern state, especially in the developing stage, like in our country, depends heavily on bureaucracy for policy development and policy delivery.

Thus, to sum up, the chapter shows how Public Policy has evolved in our country according to the change of needs and time. It has also been a subject of discussion as to why policies of the government succeeded or could not succeed while understanding the evolution of Public Policy in India; we have also seen that the rest of the world was also going through ideological, theoretical, practical, and structural changes in the concept of Public Policy and process of policymaking. India also saw a shift in focus from one aspect of policymaking to the other, witnessed a shift in approaches in its formulation, promulgation, and evaluation. It has also been discussed how the bureaucracy plays an important role in the implementation of the policy and attainment of the policy objective. As we know, India has had a robust bureaucratic structure that has always been very instrumental in public policy processes in the country. The Indian state, being a developing nation, has always depended heavily on the public servants for the delivery of policy goals, as it forms a link between the people and government. The perception of the position of bureaucracy becomes unavoidable to recognise the effectiveness or failure of any policy. In the next part, the role assigned to bureaucracy in the implementation of the MGNREGA has been addressed, and MGNREGA has been debated as a public policy network established under the Government of India social security policies to encourage rural unemployed workers and provide jobs.

To conclude, we see how public policy has evolved in India, from central planning to decentralised planning, from planning to be synonymous to policy-making to policies being discerningly designed and promulgated for the development and welfare of the people in the country and from having an inherent top-down approach in the policy making process to realization of criticality and adoption of the bottom-up approach. Furthermore, MGNREGA serves as a classic example of the evolved policymaking approach in the country, for being a policy wherein the workers for whom the Act has been brought into force, occupy the important

role in the implementation of the MGNREGS by demanding work and planning their schemes for work according to the needs and requirements of their village.

Therefore, the next chapter deals with MGNREGA, its inception, its background, and its implementation in the country. It discusses the significance of the Act in the country and deals with the government's stance towards it.

CHAPTER III

MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT: INCEPTION, IMPLEMENTATION, AND SIGNIFICANCE

The present chapter deals with the background of the Act, of it coming into being, its implementation mechanism, an overview of its implementation, and its significance in the country. The chapter enlists features and provisions of the Act and discusses each of these in-depth and explores the status of MGNREGA in the country, and tries to establish a ground for accepting the need for its continuation and better implementation in the country. It also attempts to locate MGNREGA in the theoretical framework of various suitable public policy models and policymaking and implementation approaches and create an MGNREGA public policy model. The chapter also discusses the stance of the government towards the Act, leading to the Policy Impasse under the Act.

3.1 MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT

The 2005 National Rural Employment G-uarantee Act (NREGA) is a partial triumph for a complete right to work in our country, owing to successful struggles to guarantee work in the rural areas of the country. This Act's critical trait that distinguishes it from every other public service system is its promulgation by the Indian Parliament.

The World Bank (2005) estimates indicate a poverty line of 2\$ a day for 80 percent of the people in India. The rural masses in India lack the necessary infrastructure facilities to sustain their lives, and rural India constitutes about 72 percent of the total population. Their small and inadequate landholdings provide them with minimum and low yields to support their livelihood and existence. With such dismal livelihood circumstances, the rural Indian population has minimal opportunities to improve their standard of living.

The Suresh Tendulkar Committee Report (November 2009) suggests that 37.2 percent of the population lives below India's poverty line. Census (June 2010) data indicated that 859 lakh families were living Below Poverty Line (BPL). The 11th Program was projected to raise the number of employees by 520 lakhs on the grounds of an increase in working age, and there was an improvement in the number of women searching for employment in rural areas. It was seen that if the existing pattern persists with more women searching for work, the labour force would be around 650 lakhs. This increase would further add to the 350-lakh unemployed. Thus, India would have to employ about 1000 lakhs of people who mostly live in rural areas.

Thus the Government of India has promulgated NREGA to address the challenge of rising rural unemployment in India, with the key objective of the Act: "To improve the livelihood protection of households in rural areas by providing each household whose adult members volunteer in every financial year with at least 100 days of guaranteeing a paid employment".¹⁹²

The Indian Government has brought NREGA with the objective of growing the protection and security of livelihoods in rural areas by providing every household with at least 100 days of assured wage jobs over the fiscal year. The key aim of the programme is to provide the citizens with jobs and livelihood protection alongside the creation of rural infrastructure. While dealing with the concept of the NREGA (2005), the Annual Report of Ministry of Rural Development, 2008- 2009, it becomes essential to take into account:

The MGNREGA is an illustrious initiative that has been rolled out by the Government in 2005, which hits the heart of the basic wants of the poor and raises the condition of the poor in developing and ensuring work also for the family elderly. This eradicates the hand-to-mouth life, paving the way for an improved future.

3.2 INCEPTION OF MGNREGA

MGNREGA comes in the line of social welfare and economic security schemes, programmes, and policies undertaken by the Government in order to address the issues confronting the nation after independence.

3.2.1 Background of the Act

Francine R Frankel, in her book *India's Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution*,¹⁹³ has analysed the post-independent Indian economy and the challenges before the Government to overcome rising unemployment. The growing rural population had become a significant concern despite the extensive planning and efforts made by it. After independence, India had a deep commitment towards the principle of parliamentary democracy having socialistic strains where two opposing ideologies of capitalism and socialism would converge to give a third way that Jawaharlal Nehru, that envisioned by the then Prime Minister of India, would solve the problems of production and distribution and bring about democratic social transformation.

However, years later, this optimism dimmed as “the third way did not solve India’s problem, whether of production or distribution. On the contrary, in the mid-1970s, the high-productivity, high-income manufacturing field of the economy had absorbed just a tiny fraction of the workforce. While industrial production and social overhead resources have increased dramatically, the conventional sector has had little impact on work growth.”¹⁹⁴ 80 percent of the populace already remained in rural areas and directly benefited from the farming industry. Only small pockets of rapid growth could be achieved in the rural sector.

The Government, further to boost the agricultural sector, initiated the Green Revolution, which meant rapid agricultural growth through mechanisation and the use of high-yielding varieties of seed. Though the Green Revolution succeeded in boosting the agricultural produce, it could

do so in mainly a few areas of Punjab, Haryana, etc. Furthermore, the labour-intensive agricultural field was substituted by the smaller works in agriculture with major negative effects on the trend in rural employment; thus, it added to the unemployment problem in rural areas.

3.2.2 History of Government's Programmes for Targeting Poverty, Unemployment and Securing Livelihood for the Poor and Deprived in the Country

The programmes for poverty alleviation and efforts for solving the socio-economic issues that have been prevailing in the country, such as widespread unemployment, have come through the "Planning Commission," founded in 1950. The Indian Government has initiated a variety of agricultural health and development welfare schemes. Some of them are:

3.2.2.1 *The Community Development Programme*

The Community Development Programme (CDP) opened in the first five plans (1950-51 to 1955-56), on 2 October 1952, primarily aimed at transforming the villages' commercial, social and cultural existence. The programme illustrated the impact of a thorough and inclusive rural life programme, including agriculture, rural industries, schooling, accommodation, health, leisure, facilities, etc.

It was implemented as a pilot programme in designated blocks in the State of Orissa. In the second five-year plan, the CDP earned its impetus. The CDP had been initiated and incorporated as a people's initiative by local self-government and farming.

Both the public and the Government had to obtain the money for the CDP. As a people's programme, it stipulated the qualifying amount of volunteer service as well as resources by the people.

3.2.2.2 Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP)

The Ford Foundation Agricultural Manufacturing Team (USA) highly advocated the Intense Agricultural District Programme as a "Package Programme" in 1959. This policy was initiated in 1960-61 following the deceptions of CDP's successes in increasing agricultural development, through the Third Five Year Plan (1960-55) for the Indian "Food Crisis." The program's key goal was to increase organised and intensified agricultural production. In selected districts around the nation, this initiative was launched. The selection for these districts was focused on **a)** The district should have to the greatest extent possible, certain water supply; **(b)** it should present a least natural hazard; **(c)** its village institutions should be well-developed, such as co-operative and Panchayat Organisations;

For a good application, the IADP is considered a "Path-Finder." The programme was essentially aimed at enhancing farmers' incomes and improving the village's economic capital to provide a sound farming basis to increase speed the total economic and social growth of the region.

The initiative was launched in 15 chosen municipalities and was expanded across the country in 1964. In the construction sector, hydroelectric dams, highways, and connectivity, among others, heavy investments have been made. They helped to construct some of the essential development infrastructures. While food grain output has increased significantly, farmers with larger holdings and irrigation systems have gained immediate benefits under IADP, and it has been stated. As a consequence, the IADP began developing inter- and intra-regional inequalities to do this. A major policy drive from 1970, marked by a frontal assault on poverty across numerous priority groups and regional-focused programmes, emerged from a recognition of the pervasive inequalities. In the Fourth Five Year Plan, the idea of social justice was expressed.

3.2.2.3 Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP)

The Third Five Year Plan (1960-61) aimed at maintaining food grain autonomy and increasing farm production to fulfill industry and export requirements. Furthermore, the mid-term review of the Third Five Year Plan noticed that the growth of scientific and incremental agriculture in areas where agricultural output capacity is large could receive a far higher priority.

For the intensive growth of the import crops such as wheat, paddy, melts, cotton, sugar cane, potato, pulse, etc., an IAAP (Intensive Agricultural Area Production) was devised, intended to cover at least 20 to 25 percent of the country's cultivated area. It was initiated between 1964 and 1965.

By utilising an enhanced package strategy, i.e. by using intertwined variables – such as the spatial, social, and institutional combinations – the IAAP was intended to gradually improve main crops production in selected areas, and this possibly will have had an effect on agricultural production.

In selected blocks in the nation as well as in the province, it was agreed to introduce this programme. Blocks with a minimal irrigated region of 5000 acres were picked. During the time of the fourth Five Year Plan, Orissa protected a total of 86 blocks under IAAP, introducing a further 46 blocks to the scheme, covering blocks up to 132 total. The funds required for the programme have been met from the farming and related activities' programme and non-plan spending. It paved the way for the Green Revolution Movement to be developed in India.

3.2.2.4 Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA)

The All India Rural Credit Check Committee was created by the Reserve Bank of India in 1969. The Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) is the first rural development programme in the world where Central Government, State Authorities, or Financial Institutions maintained an appropriate connection to the program's achievement. The study by the planning

commission for it proposed that the Agency for Small Farmers' Development be set up. The framework was funded on a concurrent basis by State and Central government. The organisation supported the non-tribal small farmers with subsidies at a pace of 25 percent and for all farmers of no more than Rs. 3000 and Rs. 5000, of 33.3 percent, of non-tribal disadvantaged farmers, of 50 percent, and of Rs. 5000.

3.2.2.5 Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

The idea of coordinated rural growth was first adopted in 1976, focused on local demands, opportunities and prospects. The IRDP is the key mechanism for addressing the consequences of poverty, in particular rural poverty. Initially, the programme was developed in 120 districts in the nation. The IRDP was introduced as the leading credit-linked independent jobs programme for poverty alleviation in all parts of the world on 2 October 1980.

The goal of IRDP was to empower rural poor families defined through obtaining credit-based beneficial assets that offer them with self-employment on a sustainable basis to increase their earnings and cross the poverty line. They were offered support in the form of government subsidies Financial institutions promote term credit for the primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors of the rural economy. (commercial banks, cooperative and provincial rural banks).

In 1978-79, IRDP had been updated for the purposes of alignment of the technique and strategy with the three key existing SFDA special programmes, Community Area Development (CAD) and Dry Prone Area (DPAP) projects until 1978-79. The IRDP was introduced as a regional programme with its established goals of **a)** Output and growth; **b)** Profits for the focus communities established who reside below the rural neighbourhood poverty line; and **c)** Full job time framework software and Timeframe programmes.

The initiative covered 2000 blocks of neighbourhood growth in the initial years. The policy was updated and applied it to all 5011 blocks of the world by October 2, 1980 with the change

of Government in the middle. The key goal of the programme was to create additional work and raise the wages of target classes, including limited, marginal, agricultural, and non-farm fishermen, farmers, rural craftsmen, and women in proposed castles and scheduled tribes. Significant development schemes have been established under the Initiative, including the development of minor irrigation property, soil protection, restoration and improved soil, milk and other livestock delivery, plough bullocks, planting, sericulture, and so on. It also facilitated projects for rural craftsmen and the promotion of self-employment in service and industries operations.

The program's methodology was focused on decentralised block-level micro-planning. In addition, only one department named the District Rural Development Agency was assigned to the development of schemes and the execution of rural development programmes (DRDA). The policy also stressed the inclusion of cooperative banks and nationalised commercial banks. At the IRDP, beneficiaries must be from the arranged castes and planned tribes at least 30 percent, according to the Indian Government guidelines. The Sixth Plan Era (1980-1985) had a cumulative number of 10.3 lakh beneficiaries, with Rs. 232.6 crores of investing.

3.2.2.6 Desert Development Programme (DDP)

In 1977-78, on the suggestion of the National Agriculture Committee, the Hot Desert and Cold Desert Program was initiated. The DDP's very first aim was to reduce the detrimental impact of drought on the population of food, human beings, and livestock. The second goal of the programme was central desertification, while the third was to restore ecological equilibrium in the region over the long term by maintaining, improving, and utilising soil, water, and other natural resources.

3.2.2.7 Training of Rural Youth for Self –Employment (TRYSEM)

Training of Rural Youth for Self –Employment (TRYSEM) programme was introduced on 15 August 1979 as the supporting portion of IRDP. It was established as a center-sponsored scheme to promote the diversification of the IRDP operations from primary to secondary and tertiary industries through the acquisition/enhancement of skills. For this, according to the programme's guidelines:

a) At least 50 percent should be cast and planned, and at least 40 percent should be female, 3 percent should be physically disabled, and **b)** trainees should earn a grant through school, and fees often charged to educational establishments and master artisans.

3.2.2.8 Food for Work Programme

The key goal was to generate profitable prospects for the idle workers in plan and non-planning schemes to create viable community assets or increase development through the use of surplus food grain capital, which the Indian Government has made accessible free of charge.

3.2.2.9 National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)

In October 1980, the 'Food for Jobs' initiative became the NREP. This was carried out as a centrally funded initiative, with the State and the Centre contributing 50 percent. Further jobs for working individuals and employed persons were envisaged under the NREP for the order of 300-400 million mandays each year.

The programme aimed to develop community assets such as water sources, irrigation water supplies, village tanks, small irrigation works, rural highways, colleges, panchayats, etc.

3.2.2.10 Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

In 1982-83, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) began. The primary goal of the project was to reach the rural women who are below the poverty line —

this initiative, by training in home-based development and on a sustainable basis, aimed to create opportunities for self-employment. The system helped 10-15 women from under income families to join a DWCRA. These organisations were to be supplied with a rotating Rs. 25000 fund to carry on the Government of India's income-generating operations. In line with the new plans, the Centre, State and UNICEF agreed to finance the 40:40:20 district groups established in such a way. However, on 1 January 1996, UNICEF funding was discontinued. DWCRA was often introduced by the DRDA, along with other systems.

During 1995-96 in order to provide treatment, immunisation, schooling, feeding, childcare, etc., for children aged up to six who were under DWCRA women, a new aspect was added in the DWCRA scheme, named Child Care Activities (CCA). For this reason, per district had to supply Rs. 1,50 lakh per year. In 1995-96, the DWCRA Program also implemented another component, namely information, education, and communication, in order to raise knowledge of the benefits of different rural development programmes among women, especially those living under the poverty line. For the purposes of each district, Rs. 1,50 lakh was to be given each year. Hyderabad has been designed as a nodal agency for organising DWCRA training requirements National Rural Development Institute (NIRD).

3.2.2.11 Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)

On 15 August 1983, the Rural Landless Job Guarantee (RLEGP) policy was carried out to generate incomes, create competitiveness in rural areas and ensure the overall quality of life in rural areas. This policy was centrally funded and 100 percent subsidised by the Central Government. The remaining 50 percent weighted the rate of poverty to distribute 50 percent of resources to the agriculturist, marginal farmers, and marginal employees.

- a) The development of rural linking roads;

- b) The core aspect of the plan digging of channels to maximize the capacity of major irrigation systems and;
- c) Forestry Social.

3.2.2.12 Million Wells Scheme (MWS)

During 1988-89, the Million Wells System was introduced to provide open irrigating wells free of charge for small- and marginal producers, SC and ST employees as part of the National Rural Jobs Program (NREP)/Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program (RTEGP) and FRTWP (Free Bonded Labor Worker Program). The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) system became an autonomous scheme successful from 1 January 1996.

3.2.2.13 Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

On 28 April 1989, the business began up with Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The JRY was collected of all rural job programmes such as the NREP and the Rural Employment Program (RLEGP). The JRY was initiated and implemented across the country by local panchayats, and the program's spending was 80:20 between the Centre and Legislature. This scheme has granted priority to planned castes, and planned tribes, and free work, and 30 percent of the positions are reserved for women.

JRY was considered to attain adequate physical and financial success in India, as its physical accomplishment was over 75 percent at all levels of India.

3.2.2.14 Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

The Employment Assurance System (EAS) began with the introduction of the revised State Public Distribution Scheme (SPDS) in the rural areas of 1778 acres in 261 district's area. The goal was to provide the rural poor who wanted and were searching for such opportunities with 100 days of unskilled manual labour. 100-day insurance applied to anyone in villages protected

by the Job Guarantee Program, aged 18 years and beyond the age of 60 (EAS). Up to two adults were to be hired by the scheme per household.

The key aim of the scheme was to provide profitable jobs for non-disabled rural adults who are in need and who want to work but who might find it difficult during the lean agriculture season in manual labour. At the same period, the scheme's secondary goal was to build economic infrastructure and Community Assets for sustainable jobs and growth.

3.2.2.15 Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

On April 1, 1999, the Indian Government and the Reserve Bank of India unveiled the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), a single integrated rural development agenda. The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) came into practice in conjunction with the merger of previous rural growth and poverty alleviation programmes, including Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), Rural Women and Kindergarten Development Program (DWCRA), Rural Youth Self Employment Training Program (TRYSEM) and the Million Wells Scheme (MWS). The pattern of support between the Centre and the State was 75:25.

The aim of the programme was the setting up of a wide variety of rural micro-enterprises, drawing on rural poor capacity and skills. The important feature of the programme, by providing new income benefits, was to allow recipients to meet the poverty line within three years. The aided families below the yojana were to be named 'Swarozgaris.' However, it highlighted the community strategy, which was dubbed the "Self-Help Group." The "Swarozgaris" had to answer for at least 50 percent of the program's inclusion of the planned castes and scheduled tribes.

3.2.2.16 Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)

The EAS was the first extra wage pay system in remote regions. The EAS was the only one. Similarly, a rural development infrastructure scheme was developed under the Jawahar Gram

of Samriddhi Yojana (JGSY). However, the Ministry of Rural Development revamped these schemes to give more focus to additional wage employment, infrastructural development, and food protection in rural areas. Based on the conclusions of the study, it was determined that on September 25th, 2001, a new scheme named the Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) will be merged with the Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (JGSY).

The farmers' wages for non-farming wages, disadvantaged farmers, women, SC/ST participants, parents of child labourers, disabled children, and adult children of disabling parents should be favoured under the Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY). The Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) also provided the poorest industries and women with unique protections.

The SGRY was a majorly centrally sponsored scheme, and the expense of the complete scheme was split into 75:25 cash elements by the Centre and the States. The payment was partially rendered in foodstuffs and currency. But it was appropriate to pay at least 25 percent of the salaries in currency. In addition, the Centre supplied all States as well as the Union territories with food grains without expense. The Panchayati Raj Institutions adopted the Sampoorna Gram Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) (PRIs). The minimum salaries set by the State Authorities were charged under the SGRY by both professional and unskilled employees. More specifically, the same salaries were to be charged to men and women employees. The work to be done in conjunction with the RMSS was **(a)** soil and moisture conservation; **(b)** minor irrigation; **(c)** drinking-water supply rejuvenation; **(d)** drainage; **(e)** forestation and;

The SGRY was formed at village level via the Panchayat Village. The task was issued to prepare and enforce the programme for the Panchayats of the area, and with the permission of the Gram Sabha, they are allowed to conduct works/programmes up to Rs. 1 lakh. There was no requirement for more administrative/technical authorisation.

TABLE 3.1

RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES IN INDIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE

Year	Name	Aim	Plan Period and Allocation		
1980	National Rural Employment Program	Launched to use unemployed and underemployed worker to build a community asset	6th Plan	1980-1985	Rs. 980 Crore
	NREP		7th Plan	1985-1990	Rs. 1682 Crore
1983	Rural Landless Employment Guarantee	Launched in order to provide 100 days of Guaranteed employment to one member from each rural landless household	6th Plan	1983-1985	Rs. 500 Crore
	RLEG		7th Plan	1985-1989	Rs. 2412 Crore
1989	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana	Launched combining NREP and RLEG	7th Plan	1985 -1990	Rs. 2100 Crore
	JRY		8th Plan	1992-1993	Rs. 2546 Crore
				1993-1994	Rs. 3306 Crore
				1994-1995	Rs. 3885 Crore
				1995-1996	Rs. 3862 Crore
				1996-1997	Rs. 1865 Crore
1993	Employment Assurance Scheme	Launched to provide employment during lean agriculture season	8th Plan	1993-1994	Rs. 600 Crore
	EAS			1994-1995	Rs. 1200 Crore
				1995-1996	Rs. 1570 Crore
				1996-1997	Rs. 1970 Crore
			9th Plan	1997-1998	Rs. 1970 Crore
				1998-1999	Rs. 1990 Crore
				1999-2000	Rs. 1700 Crore
1999	Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana	Launched as dedicated to development of demand-driven rural infrastructure	9th Plan	1997-1998	Rs. 2077 Crore
	JGSY			1998-1999	Rs. 2095 Crore
				1999-2000	Rs. 2095 Crore

2001	SampoornaGramin Rozgar Yojana	Launched merging EAS and JGSY	9th Plan	2000-2001	Rs. 2095 Crore
	SGRY			2001-2002	Rs. 3250 Crore
				2002-2003	Rs. 4440 Crore
				2003-2004	Rs. 4900 Crore
				2004-2005	Rs. 5100 Crore
				2005-2006	Rs. 4000 Crore
				2006-2007	Rs. 3000 Crore
2004	National Food for Work Programme	Launched in order to generate additional supplementary wage employment and create assets	10th Plan	2005-2006	Rs. 6000 Crore
	NFFWP				
2006	National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)	Launched in order to provide 100 days of Guaranteed employment to one member from each rural household and create community assets	10th Plan	2006-2007	Rs. 11300 Crore

Source: Compiled from the reports and documents of the Planning Commission.

3.3 NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT

The Parliament enacted the Act in 2006 to provide rural unemployed and non-skilled employees with 100 days of assured mandays of work. It aimed to create employment opportunities and create a worthwhile asset for the villages by works undertaken by the NREGS.

3.3.1 Political Background of the MGNREGA

The United Nations Development Programme in its Discussion Paper states that "Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is part of a long history of salary employment programs; Mahatma Gandhi NREGA creates a rights-based framework and is an Act."¹⁹⁵ The Act is sponsored by the Government of India's political will and sufficient budgetary tools and, amid inconsistent

performance throughout the region, the Act's execution has achieved positive results. Initial studies affirm its impact on increased jobs, increased wage earnings, reduced migration of suffering, improved competitiveness, and equality promotion, especially gender equity. This Unqualified Manual Labor Act is moving to a new age for rural communities' financial inclusion. The paper says, "MGNREGA can turn rural India into a prosperous, equal, and integrated community." The paper stressing the significance of MGNREGA points out that MGNREGA focuses on sustainable development as policy response of the Indian Government to poverty and injustice."¹⁹⁶

The actual adoption of this act could be briefly seen from the capturing of the mandate by the United Progressive Alliance at the Centre, which looked at this most pressing political concern of employment generation, which was the principal cause of the previous government's failure and its general discontent with the economic policies of the previous government and the utter breakdown of the production of rural jobs. This is why the question of the generation of employment is an essential issue for all the political sections which the then ruling United Progressive Alliance took into consideration and to which the Left Parties provided external help. The electorate showed resonance to this promise of rural employment generation, and when the party came to power, it found expression through the public work programme of the new Government. The UPA promulgated immediately a National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which vowed to give every rural household a legal guarantee for at least 100 days.

However, this was not quite a novel concept since the 1990 alliance United Front Government had already established such a programme and sought the introduction across many decades in several states of governments, including the Maharashtra Government. However, this was a new policy since it promised that the legislation would extend to any individual who would demand work under the Act for a guaranteed 100 days and also ensure unemployment

allowance in case of work not being provided within the stipulated time (15days) under the same.

3.3.2 MGNREGA in the Theoretical Framework of Public Policy

We have seen that the Government has undertaken many steps in the line of welfare and development policies and programmes where MGNREGA holds an important place as it gave the rural unemployed workers the right to work for at least 100 days whenever they demanded work from the administration. MGNREGA made working a public work programme floated by the State very lucrative as work was provided in their own neighbourhood under 15 days of application, and the works undertaken in this added to the asset of their own village. MGNREGA essentially embodies the right to work and is the first policy promulgated ever by any developing country all over the world.

3.3.3 MGNREGA as an Embodiment of Right to Work

The MGNREGA can also be envisioned as a step towards legal implementation of the right to work. The growing rural population and rising unemployment created a need to ensure employment and provision of minimum assistance in terms of wages or food grains by the Government to the unemployed rural population. This responsibility of the Government comes from the Right to Work, an essential socialistic principle which was accepted as a Gandhian principle in the constitution the country incorporated. State Policy Concepts of the Directive emphasised the value of maintaining the "decent work" of all. In compliance with Article 41 of the Directive Principles, 'the State must make productive arrangements for protecting the right to jobs, schooling and public assistance in cases of unemployment, ageing, disease, and injury and other circumstances of unwarranted disability within the limits of its economic potential and growth.'¹⁹⁷

Similarly, it is stated that Articles 42 and 43 of the European Parliament include the State shall provide for equal and humane standards of employment and pregnancy relief. The State shall strive to ensure for all workers, agricultural employees, factories or otherwise, through effective legislation or by an economic organisation, work on a life waggon, or by way of some other method."¹⁹⁸

Jayati Ghosh describes the idea of the right to work as one of the State's fundamental obligations behind the adoption of the MGNREGA by the Government of India in her essay 'Right to Work.' "In India, or indeed in other parts of the world, the idea of a right to work is not new."¹⁹⁹ She states, though, that in various countries, the term took different meanings. The Legislation on Working Conditions, for example, specifically requires us to earn living wages in a healthy working atmosphere in the US as well as providing for mutual organisation and negotiation. This legislation does not ensure that everyone has a career; rather, it ensures that states must take appropriate measures in time to do the best thing. States are found to be breaching the right whether they default or exacerbate the case. Similar significant declarations on labour rights are rendered under the United Nations Fiscal, Social and Cultural Rights Pact ratified by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966, to which India was a Signatory.

According to Ghosh, the Indian state has not especially succeeded in fostering the freedom to work, notwithstanding these declarations and indeed in terms of the guarantees of its Constitution. Low levels of generating output of employment, the prevalence of poverty and low levels of schooling are possibly the key shortcomings in the Indian growth strategy so far"²⁰⁰; she further states that the problem as far as employment goes has probably intensified rather than ameliorated in the recent past. "The reality regarding employment prospects for most people in our country is alarming. For some time now it has become evident that rural employment generation has been one of the critical casualties of the neoliberal economic reforms in the country over the past decade".²⁰¹

3.4 EVOLUTION OF POLICYMAKING IN THE COUNTRY AND MGNREGA

In reaction to the needs of the society and people, the Government of a State adopts numerous public policies. As a consequence of the post-colonial orientation of the developed world, the formulation and preparation of policy and public policy study in India is framed. As a result, growth policy, as it is extended to different fields, including insecurity, industrialization, education, and job creation, has inevitably been transformed into an economic structure in our region. The Nehruvian Consensus controlled the growth model initially, depending heavily on the institutions of economic analysts as the key instrument of development policy analysis. A rigid economic system was created, which had Government institutions, subject matter experts (from India and abroad), technocrats, academic experts, etc. The key development targets were the outcome of unity among Indian political leaders, the economic establishment, and academics of the Government (which formed the first democratic regime in India later in the 1950s). Stress was laid on the formulation of such policies which would help achieve India the quality of life which western developed nations had also met their standard of living. Widespread poverty, hunger, and illiteracy were seen as major obstacles. Thus, policies aiming to target these obstacles in India's path of growth were formulated. Political planning in India thus meant central economic planning that adopted a global economic and social planning approach.

3.4.1 MGNREGA and the Bottom-up Policy Approach

Public policy in India has undergone several ideological, functional, and structural changes. At the onset, Public policy began to be formulated with centralised Planning under the Planning Commission, which emerged as a supreme policymaking over the years, but later with the recurring not so successful attempts of the policies to cater to the needs of the people, change in the approach and understanding towards making of policies, identification of

implementation issues to understanding basic flaws in the agenda-setting, formulation approach, changing strategies and programmes for implementation, all owing to the changing dynamics of state and society, public policy has evolved in India. This evolution can be understood better in the light of the article by Navdeep Mathur and Kuldeep Mathur in “*Policy Analysis in India: Research Bases and Discursive Practices.*”²⁰²

The orientation, policymaking, and policy analysis in India, as a product of post-colonial developed countries, has been structured by 'growth' and 'planning.' Accordingly, policy-making and development policy strategies in different sectors, including inflation, industrialisation, education, and jobs have been invariably addressed in economic perspectives. The large methodological approach to Indian economic growth was the central planning of the Soviet-style. A rigid economic system was created which had government institutions, subject matter experts (from India and abroad), technocrats, academic experts, etc. consequently; the major development goals were a result of the consensus between Indian Governments, the economic elite, and intellectuals of civil service (which formed the first democratic regime in India later in the 1950s). Stress was laid on the formulation of such policies which would help achieve India the quality of life which western developed nations had also met their standard of living. Widespread poverty, hunger, and illiteracy were seen as major obstacles. Thus, policies aiming to target these obstacles in India's path of growth were formulated. Thus, policymaking in India meant the presence of centralized economic planning, which followed an overarching strategy of social and economic planning.

Evolution of public policy in India can be traced back right from the setting up of a Planning commission in which policies were made inside closed doors in the executive level of the Government following a “top-down approach” to the framing of policies on much more open and democratic framework where all-state as well non-state actors are playing roles in policy formulation, creating a “bottom-up” approach pertaining to the idea that let the people for

whom the policies have to be made play an instrumental role in deciding their policies. Below are the three basic broad heads under which this evolution can be located;

1. Policy Analysis: From Economic Planning to Implementation Failure
2. Social Research and Policy Studies.
3. Non-governmental Organisations and the Democratization of Policy Analysis

Thus, under the light of this evolution of public policy analysis and making, the Government of India enacted MGNREGA, the promulgation of which was entrusted to the grassroots of the nation and the people for whom it was brought into existence. The act empowers the workers to choose work suitable to their village's needs and requirements from the list of the permissible works (that again have been well thought and enlisted, possession in consideration the wants of the people). The Panchayats are entrusted with floating and facilitation of works. The act aims to strengthen the grass root level organisation to make possible progress that comes from and within the roots of the country and then spreads to the whole nation. This is contrary to the earlier efforts of the Government for development of the country where welfare programmes were floated, and the effects were expected to trickle down to the larger sections of the society. Thus, MGNREGA follows the top-down public policy mechanism.

The MGNREGA promulgated by the Government of India comes under the category of 'welfare and development policies,' and there are certain public policy models which this Act complies to.

3.5 MGNREGA AND ITS CONVERGENCE TO THE VARIOUS MODELS OF PUBLIC POLICY

3.5.1 MGNREGA and the Institutional Model of Public Policy

We have also seen that every legislation is not a public policy unless any political agency has accepted, enacted, and implemented it, and Government and State agencies are creating, executing, and applying public policies with authority. It relies on the conventional

Government organisation and acts on the activities and structures of the agencies and divisions within the different agencies of Government. It also requires into consideration statutory provisions, traditional and regulatory law, and judicial rulings.

So we see that public policy is the structural model that keeps the administrative, legislative and judicial divisions of public policy as an institutional production. These organisations conform to the values of authority, universality, and coercion and enforce the policies in this respect. The Government, after legitimizing these policies to cover all people, extends universally in society and creates a monopoly over the power to coerce obedience to policy and issue sanctions against those who violate these policies. Thus, we see that in the institutional approach, the focus is laid on institutional structures, organizations, duties, and functions.

Now, if we consider the case of MGNREGA, we know that the Government of India has enacted it as a law for employment generation and the creation of livelihood supporting assets. As mentioned above, the Centre, Federal, City, Building, and Village Department is responsible for assisting in the execution of various schemes under this Act. In order to enforce the Act, bureaucrats have important duties to fulfill. The Act constitutes legal protection of the freedom to work, and in all instances of a challenge to workers' privileges under this act, the judicial authorities have indeed a vital position to play.

Thus, by way of institutions acting as the origin of the policy and also playing an inherent role in the promulgation of the act and carrying out of the policy, MGNREGA can be said to have compliance with the institutional model of public policymaking.

3.5.2 MGNREGA and the Systems Model of Public Policy Making

It concerns public policy as regards politics and brings the analytical principles of knowledge such as input, performance, and suggestions into consideration. The policy mechanism is cyclical in this model. It deals with the creation of a set of policy processes which mostly

express demands for Governments and helps in deciding what issues to decide and which of them to address. It also plays an instrumental role in developing policy proposals to resolve issues and problems in which selection of a proposal is made, and then political support is built for it. It is then followed by its enactment as a law. After this, there is the implementation of policies which involves the organizing of bureaucracies. The programmes are studied, and evaluation of policies is done while reporting of outputs of Government programmes. Later, the impact of programmes on target and non-target groups present in the society is evaluated for suggesting changes and making necessary adjustments.

The political system comprises groups of structures and processes that are interrelated to each other and which authoritatively allocate values in any society. The legislature, executive, administrative agencies, judicial courts, political parties, interest groups, citizens, etc., are the various actors that participate in this process.

The political structure and the decision-making mechanism is a system of structures and processes that transforms inputs into outputs of the entire society, action or course of action adopted by this system is its output and is known as the public policy.

Voters, interest groups, legislators, bureaucrats, judges, etc. are the actors involved in this model of public policymaking, and it takes place with the identification of the problem, setting of agenda, formulation of policy proposals, the legitimization of policies, implementation of policies and their subsequent evaluation.

Now, we know that after independence, India has been struggling with the issues of widespread poverty, food security, unemployment, so on and so forth. It has tried to address these concerns with the help of various programmes owing to its welfare and developmental policies. These concerns of the country can be understood as demands of the population which goes inside the political system for being met. The political system takes into account these inputs, which is

the demand, and then with the help of its institutions, converts them into an output which is the policy outcome. The Government of India can be understood as the political system that has been trying to solve the issues of the nation with policies as output. Regular evaluation of these policies has been going on in order to make them more effective and successful in addressing these issues. This continues in a cyclical manner as demands get converted into policy outcomes, policy outcomes goes into the environment from where the demand had been generated. The loopholes or lacunae gets addressed becoming a demand again and going into the system and coming out as policy outcomes which become more suited to the changing needs of the environment. This process of input in the system and output from the system is dynamic and cyclical.

Thus in the framework model of public policy making, we can even trace MGNREGA.

3.5.3 MGNREGA and the Rational Choice Model of Public Policy

As we know that maximum social gain is the focal point of public policy under this model. The policy actors are the decision-makers which make an effort to include all social, political, economic, and cultural values which should be taken into account by the policy choice. They select a policy alternative which enables the society to enjoy the maximum amount of benefits or gains.

We know that larger part of India lives in rural areas and faces various issues such as food security, water security, unemployment, lack of education opportunities, so on and so forth. MGNREGA as a policy to address widespread unemployment of the rural and unskilled manual labour force can be seen as an effort to create a maximum social gain. The country cannot progress with such vast parts of its labour force being unemployed or non-productive. MGNREGA, along with generating employment in these sections of the country, aims to create worthwhile assets for their long-term livelihood sustenance.

Thus, MGNREGA leads to the hope of larger social gains, causing it to comply with the rational choice model of public policy.

3.5.4 MGNREGA and the Incremental Approach to Policy Analysis

The MGNREGA can be said to have similarities with the Incremental Public Policy Model. This model tries to improve the acceptability of public policy.

India, since independence, has made public policies concerning the growth and welfare of the nation as a whole; MGNREGA is also preceded by many development and employment generating programmes of the country conceptualised and implemented through centralised planning. All the programmes have similarities to each other in the design and framework of schemes and have tended to serve goals interrelated to each other.

For the fact that Policy-makers suffer from a paucity of time and resources to make entirely new policies and past policies are believed to have some legitimacy, this type of public policy stems from organizational drift, bounded rationality, and so on are examples of incremental decision-making concepts.

Strategic incremental analysis can be seen to have played an instrumental role in the promulgation of this Act (MGNREGA) as in this, and an analyst follows a middle position to overcome the various difficulties and constraints in order to carry out a complete analysis. The analyst makes use of informed and contextual information to make the problems simple to comprehend and accordingly makes better policy choices. The methods could include systems analysis, operation research, and management by objective and program evaluation techniques. MGNREGA is also in line of the many welfare-related activities of the Government where the policymakers have made necessary improvisations to make the Act more effective than its predecessors. For example; from providing 33 percent reservations to women workers under it providing child care facilities for their children, making work available within reach, promising

unemployment allowance to those who apply but are provided jobs, creating assets for livelihood through the works permitted under the schemes that follow the action, the policy makers have definitely taken into account, the incremental analysis of previous developmental policies and have tried to make MGNREGA, an act, more viable, practical and successful in addressing the needs of the larger sections of the society.

3.6 THE SCOPE AND ENACTMENT OF MGNREGA

The MGNREGA is the product of a dynamic mechanism of bargaining and political advocacy that offers us an overview of both the Maharashtra experience' achievements and shortcomings. The Act proposed by UPA is comparatively more restrictive since it provides only 100 days per rural household instead of an unrestricted number of days per adult as per MEGS.²⁰³ These restrictions, though, have certain challenges, both with regard to operating expenditures relating to just 100 days and more specifically with regard to household concepts.

It is also known that the MGNREGA addressed many features in the specification to several of the shortcomings in previous programmes²⁰⁴:

- (i) A rights-based system was developed by MGNREGA;
- (ii) It provided, as opposed to a policy of government removal, a legal promise of work;
- (iii) Prompt intervention to conform with job promise within 15 days of the job application;
- (iv) Success incentives framework (the Central Government Finances 90 percent of job creation costs); disincentive for non-performance (a state government obligation for unemployment allowance received within 15 working days not given within 15 days);
- (v) Supply of demand-based resources;
- (vi) civic delivery mechanism responsibilities by social audits.

3.7 FEATURES OF MGNREGA

The MGNREGA is a holistic move to satisfy at least one member of the family, one of the most basic privileges in work. Many of MGNREGA's positive characteristics are²⁰⁵:

1. A hundred-day assured job: MGNREGA provides rural areas of India with a great opportunity. This act offers rural households with adults without jobs able to conduct non-qualified manual labour at a mandatory minimum wage for a hundred days each financial year. In compliance with this act, a person who wants work is registered with Gram Panchayat by their relatives.
2. The advantages are expressed in greater economic stability, improved farm incomes, decreased migration, and infrastructure development (Jha and Others, 2008)
3. All residents live in rural areas, whether below the Poverty Line (BPL) or Above Poverty Line (APL).
4. The Act empowers women as its implementation is brought about the PRIs, and there is a provision of a minimum 1/3rd reservation for women in these Panchayati Raj bodies. It also guarantees equal pay for equal work and incorporates provisions such as the creation of crèches on worksites.
5. As far as practical, physical labour and not computers are required to conduct work supported by MGNREGA.
6. There is an appropriate degree of openness and responsibility for each scheme through social audits.
7. The Act specifies that the Gram Panchayats are assigned to be implemented at least 50 percent of the function in cost terms. This act describes Panchayats in the administration of MGNREGA as prime authorities. The project shall be

finalised, approved, rolled out, and supervised by Panchayats. The system would not enable any contractor to engage in project execution.

8. If anyone working by MGNREGA is hurt, he/she would have the right to free health care.
9. If a person who is working in the scheme dies or becomes permanently disabled by accident resulting from or after his/her work, the implementation entity shall compensate him/her for the ex gratia pay at a rate of 25,000 rupees.

3.7.1 Provision of Job Card²⁰⁶

Employment Card is a valid job law document. The details of the candidates, like name, age, sex, family head name, number of adult family members ready to work, etc., are included on a job card. It is a five-year career card valid. In addition, MGNREGA employees are mainly expected to check their own positions and pay information by means of the employment card. An individual must register for work for a certain amount of time after registering and obtaining a job card. The Gram Panchayat can even be extended orally.

3.7.2 Provision of Muster Roll²⁰⁷

Muster Roll is the name chart of the MGNREGA employees. There is a pattern roll on each worksite bearing workers' names. It is a kind of log for attendance. MGNREGA's pattern roll is also a special function.

3.7.3 Provision of Worksite Facilities²⁰⁸

The installations will be provided with clean portable water, rest shelter, crèche for children under the age of six, and a first-aid box with suitable supplies for the immediate care of minor accidents and other health risks relevant to the activities carried out.

3.7.4 Selection of Work Location

In addition, work is offered in a radius of five kilometers, and wherever employment is provided beyond the radius of five kilometers, the extra travel and living costs are often compensated by a clause for a payout of 10 percent of additional wages.²⁰⁹

3.7.5 Determining and Provision of Wage Rates²¹⁰

Under the MGNREGA, salaries, as informed from time to time by the State Government, shall be charged at the minimum agricultural wages. Section 6(1) of MGNREGA specifies that the Central Government can, by notification, determine the rate of pay for the purposes of the Act, notwithstanding everything found in the Minimum Wages Act 1948.

There must be two fundamental concepts in the setting of pay rates: firstly, since the aim is to guarantee the minimum income from employment to guaranteed livelihoods, the salaries must be sufficiently large as to satisfy the dailies' living needs; and secondly, so that the needs of the workers and the supply of work guaranteed and no diversion of workers are induced by other works that are frequently produced.

The essential conditions could, in theory, be fulfilled by minimum salaries set by the Minimum Wage Act of 1948, and thus the wages to be charged in compliance with the Job Guarantee Scheme. The payment of mandatory minimum salaries under the Minimum Wage Act of 1948 cannot be undermined.

3.7.6 Provision of Wage Payments

The salaries shall be charged to the employees per week or in certain conditions within 14 days. When employers are not compensated on schedule, they are entitled to obtain bonuses in compliance with the Salary Payment Act (1972).²¹¹

3.7.7 Mode of Wage Payments²¹²

Initially, the MGNREGA offered incentives to MGNREGA employees for transfers of salaries through banks or postal offices. Many analysts claimed that bank/ postal fees are the right approach to avoid bribes under MGNREGA. The key value of this method is that it decreases the risk of the applying entity fudging the pattern rolls (i.e., Gram Panchayats). As the actual payment of salaries is not open to them, it guards against the combining of MGNREGA wages.

The key attraction of MGNREGA salary transfers is the usage of bank or postal accounts²¹³; Firstly, to prevent some form of wrongdoing, the payout agency is separated from the implementing department; secondly, it guarantees that money sanctioned for payroll transfers cannot be entered into the list of employees on the sample rolls only. The task of confidentiality is often performed by bank transfers. They expand the road of openness to the money and hit employees' hands.²¹⁴

Later, the wage disbursement under the MGNREGS has been sought to be done as DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer) linkage and through Aadhaar Payment bridges.

3.7.8 Provision of Social Audit²¹⁵

Social audits are a complex instrument by which authorities will make their accomplishments in the enforcement of lawful rights accountable. Social audit is a participatory mechanism in which the findings under MGNREGA are checked both by local and Government authorities in order to assist with the establishment of accountability and obligation under MGNREGA at any level. A social audit is a mechanism to assess the report and enhance local resident's and elected leaders' efficiency and actions. This is also a peculiar attribute of MGNREGA.

3.7.9 Provision of Unemployment Allowance²¹⁶

The most appealing and motivating aspect of MGNREGA is the job allowance. The MGNREGA allows for a regular unemployment payment if the claimant is not allotted working within 15 days of obtaining his applications. This unemployment compensation represents one-fifth of the first 30 days of the prescribed income and is then half the prescribed salary. Furthermore, the State Government concerned shall pay this unemployment benefit and it is for that the officials responsible for the execution of the system.

However, under such cases a person does not compensated an unemployment allowance, as follows: **a)** if an individual already has 100 days working in a financial year; **b)** if the person ceases to work; and **c)** if a person is granted incessant leave for a period of 7 or more days from work without any prior information, he/she does not earn a three-month unemployment payment. However, he/she will still be fit for work under this programme.

3.7.10 The Goal of Reduction in Migration through MGNREGA²¹⁷

In several districts and counties, the shortage of jobs was the primary explanation for migration. Three principal results are projected to be a reduction in migration in MGNREGA; **a)** lean-season protection of work; **b)** profit/saving effects; and **c)** social (happiness).

As for the first, the migration pattern²¹⁸ suggests that seasonal movement is prevalent and primarily looked for everyday incomes. The MGNREGA provides a minimum of 100 days of work and takes care of the lean season at least. The second influence is that if a worker seeks jobs close to the location where he or she travels to urban centres and other areas, the difference between earnings and surplus is typically more widespread.

3.7.11 Provision of Insurance²¹⁹

There is an MGNREGA protection provision for employees in the event of an injury.

3.7.12 Grievance Redressal Mechanism²²⁰

For reception of complaints, the National Helpline was set up. In order to make grievances and inquiries for the privileges and rights of the security work under the Act, the MoRD has created a free national aid framework (1800110707).

3.7.13 Encouraging Effective Implementation and Workers Participation²²¹

Employment Guarantee Day (Rozgar Diwas): The Rozgar Diwas should be conducted at least once a month in every Gram Panchayat. The Gram Panchayat should be encouraging prospective employees to apply for jobs for the current and subsequent quarters pro-actively at this case. At this case, the applicants can collect date receipts. The 'Job Promise Day' would be used to process work applications and associated operations, such as knowledge disclosure, work delivery, and salary payments.

These practices can, however, not be exclusive to the 'Work Assurance Day.' Job applications, in particular, can often be approved. On the "Employment Guarantee Day" should be attended by the President of Gram Panchayat and all workers named at GP levels (Gram Rozgar Sevak) to support MGNREGS.

These are thus characteristics of MGNREGA which contribute to the successful implementation of MGNREGA and offer workers some of the key rights including the right to work.

3.8 FUNDING STRUCTURE OF THE MGNREGA²²²

3.8.1 The Central Government bears the costs on the following items:

1. The overall cost of unqualified manual workers' salaries (100 percent).
2. 75 percent of content, professional workers' and semi-qualified workers' salaries.

3. The Central Government's operating costs, including the compensation and benefits of the Program Officer, his supporting personnel, and work site amenities, shall include.

3.8.2 The State Government bears the costs on the following items:

1. 25 percent of material expense, professional and semi-qualified workers' salaries.
2. Unemployment compensation is payable if the State Government is unable to offer employment on schedule.
3. State Job Assurance Council's operating costs.
4. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA funds are dedicated to Districts. Proposals are submitted on the basis of specifically established criteria, in order to ensure effective delivery and ample funds to respond to demand at any stage. The fund releases under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA are based on an evaluation of performance both financially and physically.

3.8.3 Preparation of the Labour Budget²²³

The Supervisor for the District Program plans the Labor Budget every December for the subsequent financial year and submits it to the District of Panchayat with information of expected specifications for unskilled handling. In line with the forecasts in the Labor Budget, the Minister of Rural Development estimates the funding demand. Central funds are sanctioned after a labour expenditure analysis, and the usage of newly allocated funds has been taken into consideration.

3.9 CLASSIFICATION OF WORK UNDER THE MGNREGA SCHEMES²²⁴

The Act seeks to unlock the capacity of rural poor people to contribute to the restoration and development of their environment. It also stresses the growth of the villages' productive properties. Of nine chosen works, seven focuses on water development and soil protection

under the MGNREGA can be observed. In order to maintain its primary significance, the scheme relies on the following works.

The MGNREGA mentions nine particular forms of works²²⁵:

- (i) recycling and collection of water;
- (ii) evidence of drought and afforestation;
- (iii) outlets of irrigation;
- (iv) include irrigation for SC and ST ground, land of the land reform recipients, and Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) (the weak rural housing);
- (v) the renewal of common bodies of water;
- (vi) production of soil;
- (vii) focuses on disaster management;
- (viii) the link to all-weather rural connectivity;
- (ix) any other function which in consultation with the State Government, the Central Government can inform.

The government of India has revised the job types that may be carried out and extended the number of works authorised under MGNREGA²²⁶:

- Reinforce the beneficial synergy between MGNREGA and agriculture and rural partnerships
- to satisfy Policy requests for more versatility in permissible works in particular situations; and
- To boost rural India's ecological balance.

The extended works are described below²²⁷:

1. Contour trenches, contour bunds, boulder locks, field bunding, gabion systems and underwater decks, earthen barriers, dugout farm pools, and stop barriers. Watershed-related works.
2. Works in mountain regions connected to the watershed: Spring shed.

3. Works pertaining to agriculture: composting NADEP, vermi-composting, bio-manure liquid.
4. Cattle-related works: poultry shelter (cattle shelters) and goat shelter (continuous), installing a urine tank on the (permanent) level, and a fodder trough for cattle.
5. Services related to fisheries: fishing in public land seasonal watercraft.
6. Works in marine regions: fish drying areas, vegetation belt, development of coastal water drains.
7. Works relevant to rural drinking water: soak pits and refill pits.
8. Rural works linked to sanitation: person household latrines, toilet units, toilets in the Anganwadi, and maintenance of solid and liquid waste.
9. Job relevant to flood management: widening and remediation of flood drains, renovation of chaur.
10. Works relating to irrigation command: recovery of juveniles, minors, and field.

The list was created in reaction to State requests for a clear, more comprehensive, and clear list of works that could be taken into consideration in the presently permitted categories. The list was drawn up.

The following criteria must be met during the start of works under MGNREGA²²⁸:

- Only those works which lead to the development of sustainable assets,
- Gram Panchayat decides the order of importance of works,
- 60:40 jobs ratio: material expenditures at GP level should be preserved,
- No equipment to be used for contractors/work displacement.

3.10 BASIC EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF MGNREGA²²⁹

MGNREGA will guarantee the following findings if successfully applied;

- the assurance of jobs will be a measure toward long-term dryness and flood security for Indian agriculture, and it not only provide relief in times of need but;
- it will transition the economy to a more resilient, less prone course of development to natural disruptions;
- work progress would be a more powerful method for poverty reduction;
- the number of individuals who depend on a government-sponsored job guarantee would gradually decline over time, and citizens would no longer have to search for jobs under MGNREGA because their farms would have improved;
- the job guarantee spending will not be inflationary as it would boost agricultural development on the basis of which a number of viable livelihoods will be built;
- it would also generate a multiplier in secondary job prospects by facilitating consecutive private investment rounds. This will also be MGNREGA's fundamental findings.²³⁰

3.11 MAIN IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES OF MGNREGA

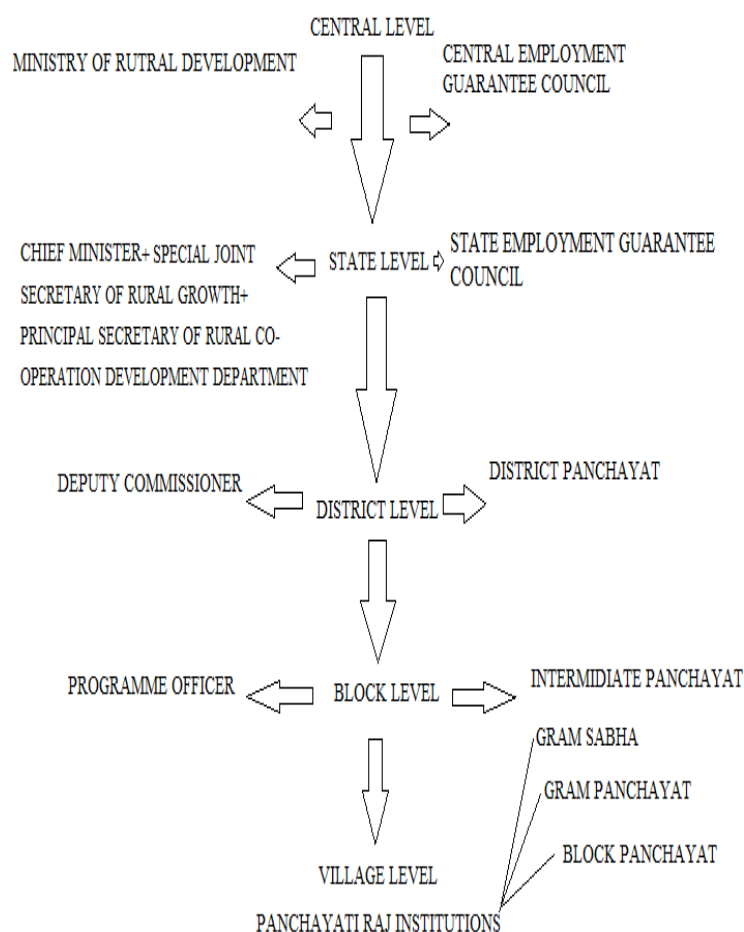


Figure 3.1: The Main Implementing Agencies of the MGNREGA

3.11.1 Central Level

Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD)²³¹

The nodal ministry of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA implementation is the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD). The Ministry is accountable in time for the prompt and effective assistance of the States and of the Central Council in terms of finances. It must perform routine procedures and results analysis, monitoring, and appraisal. The Rural Development Ministry (RDM) promotes technologies that lead to the advancement of procedures in order to meet the goals of the legislation. It would encourage the usage of Information Technology (IT) to

increase the quality and openness of procedures and improve the public interface. It also ensures that Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is enforced in a consistent and responsible way at all stages.

Central Employment Guarantee Council

A National Job Assurance Council (or "Central Council") has been set up under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Rural Development. The functions and tasks of the CEGC under the statute shall be²³²:

1. Develop a central appraisal and surveillance framework.
2. Makes laws, instructions and notifies the nature of the application according to the Act.
3. Consult the Central Government on all issues pertaining to the execution of the statute.
4. Examine from time to time the tracking and redress process and propose the required changes.
5. Encourage the largest practicable distribution of schemes information
6. It also means that the State and the Core have timely and sufficient funding.
7. Oversight on this Act's execution.
8. Preparation of the Central Government's annual accounts for the application of this Act before the Parliament.
9. Examine the list of approved MGNREGA works as a response to State Governments' requests
10. Configure NEGF.

11. Establish NMTs for the national roles of MGNREGA within the Department of Rural Growth.
12. Make the expenditure distribution and guarantee that the central share is issued promptly.
13. MGNREGA success tracking, evaluation, and research

3.11.2 State Level²³³

The **Chief Minister** of State is responsible for this programme, with the help of a **Special/Joint Secretary and Director of the Department for Rural Growth**, the Finance **Commissioner**, and the **Principal Secretary of the Rural Cooperation Development Department**. The State Government's duties include:

1. Making laws on State obligations in compliance with Article 32 of the Act.
2. Establish and advise the State of the scheme for rural jobs.
3. Create an MGNREGS state-level implementation department with an appropriate number of high-quality experts.
4. Create an MGNREGS State-level Social Auditing Organization with appropriate experience and dedication in the social auditing processes.
5. Ensure that at the beginning of the financial year, the State share of the MGNREGS budget is paid for and allocated as a revolving fund to the State Job Guarantee Fund.
6. Ensure that committed full-term staff is in a position to execute MGNREGA, in particular Gram Rozgar Sahayak, the PO, and State, District, and cluster personnel, where appropriate.
7. If considered appropriate for the successful execution of the scheme, the Financial and Administrative Delegate to the District Programme Supervisor and the Program Officer.

8. Establish a network of preparation, technological assistance, and quality-control measures specialist organisations.
9. MGNREGS procedures and findings are periodically checked, investigated, tracked, and measured.
10. Render the scheme accountable and open at all times.
11. Establish the largest available state-wide understanding of MGNREGA.
12. Ensure that MGNREGA employees' civil society groups will visit officials of federal district and block levels formally at least once a month.
13. Ensure that any procedure set down in statute, regulations, and instructions is complied with.
14. Create a State Guarantee Fund for jobs (SEGF).

State Employment Guarantee Council

Each State Government shall create a SEGC in compliance with Article 12 of the MGNREG Act²³⁴. In the application of the framework, the SEGC cell informs the national government. There is a state mission through this scheme for universalizing 100 percent employment in rural regions. The Director of Rural Development is responsible for efficient management and oversight of all operations pertaining to the State Scheme.

The SEGC is responsible for the following roles:

1. Advising the Government of the State on the Scheme's operation.
2. Study and propose changes to the oversight and remedy processes.
3. Assessing and controlling the State System.
4. Recommend the plans for works to be presented under subsection 1B(xvi) of Schedule I of the Act to the Central Government.
5. Encourage as much details as possible about this Act and its schemes.

6. Prepare the State Government's statistical audit to the State Legislature.

3.11.3 District Level

The **Deputy Commissioner** at the district level is the scheme's monitoring officer, and The Nodal Authority is the supplementary Deputy Commissioner. The MGNREGS-related operations at district level are the obligation for the project officer. The MGNREGS division of account is the responsibility of the accountant and assistant accountant.²³⁵

The State Government shall nominate a DPC, who may be either the District Collector (DP) or any other district-level official of the relevant rank. In compliance with the requirements in the MGNREGA 2005 and with the rules and guidelines drawn up thereunder, the DPC is liable for enforcing the scheme in this district.

The District Program Coordinator (DPC duties)'s and obligations in compliance with the Act are:

1. Enable Panchayat District perform its tasks.
2. Receive and integrate the Block Panchayat plans together with proposals obtained from other implementation entities for incorporation into the DPs' acceptance district plan.
3. Timely clearance of project shelter.
4. Ensure, before an administrative sanction is given, that all new ventures added at district and compound level have been submitted again for ratification and prioritisation by GS(s) concerned.
5. Make sure the funds are immediately published and utilized.
6. Ensure the employees are supported with jobs in compliance with their privileges according to this Act.
7. Check, track and control the efficiency of the MGNREGA operations offices and all implementing agencies.

8. Periodic review and evaluation of the works ongoing and the MGNREGA Operating Instructions for 2013 Samples Rolls.
9. Enforce that in all situations in which proof of misappropriation or financial irregularity occurs, First Information Report (FIR) is submitted.
10. Appoint PIAs throughout the District, bearing in mind that the PIAs must be GPs for at least 50 percent of the job value.
11. Conduct the dispute redress responsibilities outlined in Schedule II.
12. Education and Contact Coordination and Intelligence (IEC) MGNREGA Initiative within the Municipality.
13. Establish annual preparation and capacity development schemes with different district stakeholders.
14. Provide the State Government with daily development and notifications.
15. Make sure the social audits in all GPs are carried out once in six months and that social audit results are followed up,
16. Ensure that NREGASoft only provides for all transactions, including the question of job cards, registers of applicants for jobs, apportionment of works, generation of wage bills, and transfer orders for the fund.
17. Enter in NREGASoft at any step of the process some information related to works such as data on the configuration of works, coordinates, implementation status, pictures of works on three separate levels. The details on the completion of the task, but in any case no less than two months after the physical completion, should be entered as soon as possible.
18. Ensure the depositing of funds in NREGASoft not sooner than two days after such funds are collected by implementation agencies and District Level officials, including Panchayats.

19. Enforce that all appropriate NREGASoft entries are made by all the officials involved, including the district line departments

District Panchayats (DPs) are responsible for²³⁶:

1. Consolidate the City's annual block programmes into a District Schedule.
2. Any inter-block job to be a decent source of jobs according to them.
3. MGNREG schemes in the district oversight and control.
4. Perform the other functions that the State Council can delegate to it from time to time.

3.11.4 Block Level²³⁷

Assistant project manager named at block level to execute the scheme. Block and Panchayat Creation Officer is the system's leading implementing authority at the block level. ABPO works as the block scheme coordinator. ABPO/BDPO assures the daily conduct of the social audit by Gram Sabha. They are liable for recruiting all candidates in the programme and are responsible for ensuring the work is completed within 15 days of acceptance of an application. If Sarpanch cannot provide staff within five km of the village, it shall be the duty of ABPO/BDPO to provide jobs in the block.

3.11.4.1 Programme Officer (PO)²³⁸

On block stage, the Programme Officer (PO) serves as the MGNREGS coordinator. The PO is largely responsible for ensuring that someone looking for work gets a position within 15 days.

The Program Officer has other important roles²³⁹:

1. Consolidate, after review, all projects submitted by Gram Panchayat's in the Block Plan and forward them for scrutiny and consolidation to District Panchayat.
2. Matching job prospects resulting from the work of each Gram Panchayat block in the block plan with demand for work.

3. Ensure base surveys to determine the demand for jobs.
4. Track and monitor the execution of works carried out in the Block by Gram Panchayat and other implementing agencies.
5. Ensure that all employees earn timely and equal compensation and compensate the unemployment allowance in case of non-timing jobs.
6. Maintain accurate records of obtained, disclosed, and used capital.
7. Complaints inside the block are remedied. Any complaint is entered by the Program Officer, and a dated and numbered recognition is given. The PO shall, within seven days of the period prescribed under subsection 23(6) of the Act, dispose of any complains that come within the expertise of the Program Officer, including any complaint concerning compliance by the Gram Panchayat Act. If some other authority deals with a lawsuit, the PO shall, within seven days, perform a preliminary examination and send the matter to that authority in the light of intimation to the plaintiff.
8. Ensure the social audits are performed and track necessary behaviour.
9. Ensure that all the necessary documents and reports are given to all implementation agencies such as employment certificates, employment registers, register functions, copies of fines (administrative or technological or financial), labour estimates, work started the order, sample roll and receipt registers, sample rollers, wage payment information, supplies – bills and vouchers (for each function), sampling ledger.
10. Ensure that all other records needed by the Social Audit Unit (SAU) are correctly prepared in the required formats and copied by the SAU to enable social audits at least 15 days before the schedule of the meeting of the GS, along with photocopies.
11. Facilitation of Gram Panchayats technological assistance by CFTs.

12. Organize formal monthly meetings with the CSOs that promote the introduction of MGNREGS in the block at Block Level Executives such as the Tehsildar/Block Creation Officer are also assigned to act as PO. In addition to their usual roles, these officials must perform their obligations as POs. That would, in certain situations, prohibit them from successfully performing the MGNREGA obligations. It is therefore proposed that a PO for MGNREGA should be dedicated for blocks with a large concentration of SC/ST/landless staff and a higher requirement for MGNREGA jobs. The PO not explicitly affiliated with MGNREGA should be given liability. The PO is to the DPC liable. The PO and its employees shall be liable for their inability to meet their duties and acts according to Article 25 of the Act.²⁴⁰

3.11.4.2 *Intermediate Panchayat*

The intermediate stage of the Panchayat functions²⁴¹:

1. Approve the block design for transportation to the district of Panchayat for final approval.
2. Track and monitor Gram Panchayat and Block programmes.
3. Exercise from time to time certain other functions as the State Council can delegate to it.
4. When Part IX (Panchayats) does not apply, Local Councils/Authorities would be invested with these obligations as required by the State concerned.

3.11.5 Village Level²⁴²

The Panchayats at the village and middle levels are the primary planning and execution authority under this Act.

ROLE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIS) IN IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGA

"Indian independence must begin at ground level," according to Mahatma Gandhi. On 2 October 1959, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were adopted as a tool of democracy decentralisation, on the basis of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee's recommendations.

In 1993 a 73rd Constitutional Amendment created the hope to resolve the matter through the mobilisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions through the grassroots movement toward democracy (PRIs). These PRIs are responsible for the facilitation of agricultural production, rural employment generation, and the introduction of rural development programmes. Thus, they are responsible for rural development. Panchayati Raj (PRIs) was the permanent grassroots face of Indian democracy.

The institution of Panchayati Raj, its past and its planned role in the growth of the country, becomes extremely significant before it understands the role of PRI in enforcing MGNREGA.

3.11.5.1 The Panchayati Raj Institution and Development in the Rural Context

The Concept of Development and Rural Development

To understand the role of PRIs in the development in the rural context, the concept of development and rural development becomes essential to understand.

Multi-dimensional process of growth and progress is generally referred to as **development**. It is understood in terms of gradual change in economic, social, and political condition. The root of development process lies in progressive change, which is why it should be common with all the members of the community or society, and all should benefit from the development process.²⁴³ Development should make sense to the people and flow along with people's capacity and their values.²⁴⁴ Development should be suitable to the culture, society, economy, technological advancement, and advancement of society.²⁴⁵ Thus, equity and justice should be

the basis of development, and the fruit of the development process should reach all the people equally. According to Gunnar Myrdal, development means an upward movement of the entire social system.²⁴⁶ The development encompasses economic as well as non-economic aspects as the power-sharing in society and more general economic, social and political stratification in society as well as non-economic factors such as health and other social facilities.²⁴⁷

Both qualitative and quantitative change in human life come under real human development, and it becomes more complex, extending beyond the economic factor alone, aiming for the all-round development of the human being.²⁴⁸ Development cannot be calculated or evaluated by gross national product statistics; however, a transition mechanism that helps individuals to truly understand their ability and take control of their own destiny.²⁴⁹ It is only when people get involved in the development process and share its outcome; real development takes place. True development cannot be done to the people, but the people can only achieve it.²⁵⁰ People's involvement is instrumental in the phase of development, and the gains of progress will only be enjoyed fairly by all through this political engagement. The keys to development at the community and national level heavily depend on human relationship and cooperation, and factors such as power relation, ethnic relation, gender relation, etc., become major factors in shaping genuine development.²⁵¹ Thus, cooperative relationships and effective participation among the members of a community become the base of local community development.

In the period between the 1950s to 1960s, where most African and Asian nations gained political independence, the concept of development gained importance. Before independence, the colonial rulers drained the resources for the benefit of their own countries, which later became one of the main reasons for the under-development of these nations under colonial rule. It is only after their independence that these nations began their journey for development through suitable welfare programmes, in which India also adopted several development

initiatives under centralized planning through five-year plans in order to overcome its condition of underdevelopment.²⁵²

Rural growth, as reported by Katar Singh, indicates overall rural development aimed at improving the quality of life of rural citizens, including agricultural development and allied activities, village and village business, crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community facilities, and particularly rural human capital. "Rural development, therefore, constitutes a subset of the broader term."²⁵³ Therefore, rural development, in general, means a development process for the well-being of rural people under which there is the simultaneous development of a social, economic, and political aspect of rural environment and infrastructure.

The community development programme in India was introduced accordingly on 02nd October 1952 after independence, as discussed in the chapter before. This program aimed at the development of agriculture and agriculture allied activities such as irrigation, it also aimed in the advancement of rural communication, rural health, education in rural areas, provision of employment in rural areas, provision of housing facilities in rural areas, etcetera. The Government of India undertook several development initiatives under a five-year plan for rural development.

3.11.5.2 Panchayati Raj as Tool For People's Participation in the Process of Development

The relationship between human development and **people's participation** has existed since ancient Greek's time. Aristotle described citizenship as anyone entitled to take part, for the ultimate purpose of rendering the City sufficient, in an office requiring consultation or judgement. Participation has been used as a way of accessing telephones. The involvement of all residents is an important part of every political philosophy. "Democracy without citizen consultation and participation is ultimately an empty and meaningless concept," according to Michel Pimbert and Tom Wakeford.²⁵⁴

There are manifold **advantages of people's participation** in the process of development. Along with strengthening the motivation for development, growth, and progress, it plays an instrumental role in bringing about development in any society. It positively impacts the quality of decisions as people are intricate in the decision-making procedure and can identify the objectives or goals of any policy or program undertaken by the Government for their development. By taking into account the past success and failure of any program or policy and identifying their needs and aspiration, they effectively utilize a limited resource in a given time period.²⁵⁵ People's participation also enables effective management of cost and minimizes delay in the decision-making process, and it leads to better implementation of any programme. Participation of people also increases the easiness of implementation as ownership in decision-making vests with the people through which they want to fulfill their needs or aspiration. It also increases the scope for political support in implementation.²⁵⁶ Thus, we see that people's participation and grassroots development are indispensable to each other in a democracy. It becomes much more significant in the case of a developing nation.

3.11.5.3 The Case of Democratic Decentralisation and People's Participation in India

A major objective of the democratic decentralisation mechanism in India was to accomplish rural growth by including citizens at the local level in the decision-making process.²⁵⁷ Indian Government, after independence, cannot gain much impact through the multiple poverty alleviation and rural development initiatives and policies due to their failure to hit the national grassroots level. Hence, it was realized by the State that democratic decentralization could act as a key to enable these programmes or policies for making them reach the grassroots level of the country for which the state has incorporated them.

Thus, we see that Panchayati Raj Institutions are the vehicle of democratic decentralization in the country, enabling wider and effective political contribution of the people in the Government

institutions at the local level and involving common people in the local development process directly and much more meaningfully.

3.11.5.4 Implementation of Panchayati Raj Institution in India

The Directive Principles of State Policy, Constitution of India, in Article 40, prescribe that State shall take measures to organise the Village Panchayat and to grant them the powers and authority required to act as local Government units.²⁵⁸ This provision of Panchayati Raj emanates from Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of Gram Swaraj, which calls for a sufficient village republic. India is a country having more number of villages, and the majority of the population still lives in rural areas. After independence, the community development program was launched in the year 1952, keeping in view the decentralized principles focusing on people's participation in the process of development. This programme could not be implemented effectively due to the absence of meaningful and effective people's participation. Thus, the ardent vision of holistic development of the population living in rural areas in the country could not be realized. There was a lack of motivation among the people and negative bureaucratic influence in the implementation of the program, which led to its not-so-successful implementation.²⁵⁹

With the inefficient execution of the development plans undertaken by the Government of India in light of the hurdles created by democratic decentralisation, in 1956-57, Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was formed.²⁶⁰

3.11.5.4.1 Balwant Rai Mehta Committee

Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, in the late 1957, submitted its report and prescribed for Panchayati Raj for democratic decentralization. The committee suggested that popular interest among the people could be attained when elected representatives of the people effectively take part in the development machinery at the local level. It proposed that administrative machinery

be established and decentralised with a proper delegation of authority to institutions of Panchayati Raj. The committee suggested a three-tier structure of local self-government comprising of locally elected democratic bodies at the levels of the village, block, and districts. Planning of development activities was to be done at these three levels, and legitimate power and responsibility were to be transferred to the local self-government institutions alongwith adequate resources for enabling them to carry out these assigned responsibilities. The elected representatives at the grassroot or the local level in the Panchayati Raj were to decide policies and programmes concerning the needs and requirements of the village community.

3.11.5.4.2 Ashok Mehta Committee

This committee was formed and was to be chaired by Ashok Mehta in 1977 in the Janata Party Government. This committee recommended two tiers of Panchayati Raj system instead of three tiers of PRIs. These two tiers were namely Zila Parishad and Mandal Panchayat and did not concern Village Panchayat.²⁶¹ Under the recommendation of this committee, all functions related to development in a district were to be given to the Zila Parishad, and a term of four years was fixed for PRI that enabled direct participation of political parties in the Panchayati Raj election. It was also recommended that the SC and ST should get representation in the Panchayati Raj election according to the proportion of their population.²⁶²

3.11.5.4.3 G. V. K. Rao Committee

G. V. K. Rao Committee, 1985, looked into different aspects of Panchayati Raj institutions for the implementation of rural development initiatives. It stressed the importance of district-level institutions in rural development and suggested that Panchayati Raj institutions were essential to deal with people's problems. It upheld the three-tier system and suggested regular Panchayat election. The Panchayati Raj Institutions had to be allocated the work of planning,

implementing, and monitoring programmes for rural development, and the block development officer was expected to play the main role in this process.

3.11.5.4.4 L.M. Singhvi Committee

Under the Chairmanship of L. M. Singhvi, Rajiv Gandhi Government in 1986 constituted a committee for renewing Panchayati Raj Institution in order to deepen democracy and development. Constitutional reorganization and protection and preservation of Panchayati Raj Institution emerged as a major recommendation by this committee, and provision for free and fair election of Panchayati Raj bodies devoid of any political parties' involvement was advocated. Considering Gram Sabha as the base of direct democracy and Panchayati Raj Institution as units of self-government involving people's participation, the committee wanted the allocation of extended financial resources to the village Panchayat.²⁶³

The 64th Amendment Bill intending to provide constitutional status to local self-governments was introduced in the year 1989 by the late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi. However, it could not get passed in the Rajya Sabha. During this period, the movement for Panchayati Raj Institution lost momentum alongwith the defeat of Rajiv Gandhi in the general election. In the same year, i.e. 1989, another amendment bill for the constitutional status of Panchayati Raj was introduced, but it could not get passed owing to the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. Narsimha Rao in Lok Sabha in the year 1991 introduced a constitutional amendment bill, which was passed by the Lok Sabha on 22nd December 1992 and in Rajya Sabha on 23 December 1992. The President of India gave assent to it in April 1993 along with approval by the 17 State Assemblies.²⁶⁴

3.11.5.5 73rd Amendment Act

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act provides constitutional status to the PRIs in India and enables democratic decentralization in rural India. This Act enables people's participation in

the governmental process at the local level, that is, the grass-root level in a democratic setup in India. This Act aims to create a broader environment for participation of people at the local level through Gram Sabha and has certain important features such as²⁶⁵:

- Establishment of a universal three-tier system of Panchayati Raj Institutions consisting of Gram Panchayat at the village level, Intermediate Panchayat Samiti at Block level, and Zila Parishad at District level.
- Fixed-term of five years for Panchayati Raj body.
- Direct election at the Gram Panchayat level and indirect election at Block and District level Panchayati Raj institutions.
- Reservation of 1/3rd seats for women along with reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

3.11.5.6 Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act, 1996

The PESA Act came into existence for the promotion and protection of various socio-cultural rights and political rights of the tribal communities living in the scheduled areas notified under the fifth schedule. The PESA Act gave special powers and functions to Gram Sabha in these areas and entrusted them with three significant functions viz development functions, consulting functions, recommendary functions, and also gave statutory powers to the Gram Sabha.

3.11.5.7 Panchayati Raj Institution as Instrument of Effective and Meaningful Implementation of the MGNREGA

The above-mentioned PRI has long been accepted by the grassroots or local society as an instrument of civil, political, and economic reform. Under MGNREGA, the PRIs play a significant function. This act provides for local selection works where Panchayats take decisions regarding the selection and shortlisting of works, which meet the needs and requirements of their own surroundings or villages. The Panchayats will operate much quicker

and much cheaper than the governmental body, as they have greater capacities to leverage local capital for local projects. The Act entrusts the PRIs with decision-making, schemes collection, execution, and oversight, and more transparency to the PRIs than ever before. Since PRIs are the main planning and execution authority of the MGNREGA in their region, they are becoming a key agency in the Act to define, conduct, and supervise projects as per Gram and Ward Sabha's recommendations and hence to become the appointed agency in the sector. MGNREGA provides a chance to Panchayats in the execution of the schemes to have a crucial role. It is the dual duty of Gram and Ward Sabha not only to select the scheme project lists but also to have oversight. Gram Sabhas has been granted the authority to perform a routine social audit for this reason. Panchayati Raj Institutions have introduced more than 80 percent of function under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) (PRIs). The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), therefore under MGNREGA, play an important role. MGNREGA, therefore, visualises a programme that focuses on local residents across the whole phase: preparation, architecture, instruction, handling, execution, surveillance, and control and quality audit. There is also a lot more open to principles of accountability and citizen's empowerment when the Panchayati Rajs Institutions (PRIs) become the chiefly appointed implementing body.

3.11.5.8 Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) play an essential role in various stages:

3.11.5.8.1 Gram Sabha²⁶⁶:

- Propose Gram Panchayat Initiatives.
- Construction strategy recommendation.
- Future studies may be defined.
- Track and carry out Gram Panchayat works.
- Conduct routine social audits of all Gram Panchayat initiatives.

3.11.5.8.2 Gram Panchayat²⁶⁷:

- Pre-development preparation and preservation of future works according to Gram Sabha guidelines.
- Enroll and give a job card to all who are prepared to work under MGNREGA (applicants).
- Receive job inquiries and issue the applicants a dated receipt.
- Allow candidates to work and require them to register for work.
- Show a list of people on their notification board.
- Works approved by the programme officer shall be enforced.
- Render all Gram Sabha records accessible for social audit purposes.
- Retain a copy of the template rolls accessible at the Panchayat bureau for public inspection.
- Write the scheme implementation annual study.

3.11.5.8.3 Block Panchayat²⁶⁸:

- Give the Program Officer suggestions for works.
- Create programmes where the Program Officer has approved.
- Authorize and forward the block plan for final approval to the Panchayat District.
- Track and monitor the Gram Panchayat and Block initiatives.

3.11.6 Rights of the Labour Group

The foregoing protections refer to Trade Associations²⁶⁹:

- To grasp the specifics and measurements of their function in a language.
- Checking all MGNREGS documents.
- To comply with person and group concerns.
- Submit and receive detailed information on MGNREGS problems as well as written responses to the system doubts;

- To be periodically trained not only in MGNREGS application, but also in ability growth.

3.11.7 Maintenance of Records²⁷⁰

The Custodian of all documents at Gram Panchayat level, Block level, and District level would be the Panchayat Secretary, Program Agent, and District Program Organizer. In comparison to other implementation bodies, all documents shall be maintained by nodal offices. The following documents should be held under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA to promote comprehensive compilation at the different levels and ensure full openness and accountability.

3.11.7.1 Records to be Maintained by the Following Agencies

Name of Register and at which level is to be maintained²⁷¹

1. Register of Tenders and Contracts: Gram Panchayat/Block/District
2. Record: Gram Panchayat/Block/District Procurement Content
3. Register of the Roll Pattern: Stage of the Block
4. Sample Roll: Organizations introducing Gram Panchayat
5. Register: Panchayat/Block/District. Contract Register.
6. Register of Material Procurement: Panchayat/ District/Block.
7. Request for Work Card: Gram Panchayat/ Block
8. Record of Work Cards: Panchayat Gram/ Block
9. Register of Employment: Gram Panchayat/ Block
10. Register of Works: Gram Panchayat
11. Register of Assets: Gram Panchayat.
12. Register of Complaints: Gram Panchayats/Block
13. Records of Finance: Gram Panchayat/Block/District.

3.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF MGNREGA

This is the first-ever Indian legislation which provides wage jobs, particularly in rural areas, and primary objectives of NREGA, which is now called the MGNREGA (the Government of India 2009),²⁷² are:

- To define reliable approaches to be modified to prevent the full destruction of rural resources;
- Reduction from rural to metropolitan, rural and rural areas to the other half of rural areas of distressed migration;
- Building healthy village assets;
- Improve the civic and communitarian lives and stimulate the creation of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), which are tasked with formulation and monitoring of the scheme;
- Enable rural women to earn income and to engage in social groups by offering an autonomous opportunity;
- Overall rural economy development;
- Encouraging inclusive development and growth;
- Facilitation of economic benefit multiplier.

Within 15 days of entry, the adult rural households shall make a few basic agreements with the central Gram Panchayat. If you choose to operate, after authentication procedures, a work card is given free of charge to the household as a whole. Another significant characteristic of this legislation is that women should be at least a third of those looking for jobs. The implications of the process include improving the grassroots political processes and providing the government with openness and accountability.

Thus, the MGNREGA impacts the workers favourably²⁷³:

1. It will help crack the 'dictatorship' of the private employer by strengthening its negotiation leverage when these contractors operate for super pay owing to the fear that jobs would be refused. However, once they have the right to a minimum wage under the Act, they may otherwise seek the like salaries of the MGNREGA.
2. Enabling them to avoid exploitative working practises in the private sector would also allow assured jobs in public works.
3. Offer them the chance to mobilise and campaign for similar privileges, such as social security rights.
4. Enable women by offering them a chance to earn a wage. The act on job protection has a very significant role to play, particularly in States like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, to empower rural women and reduce gender discrimination.

3.13 MGNREGA: OVERVIEW, INDIA

At its 2005 monsoon session, the NREGA was accepted by the Parliament of India. It went into operation in 200 selected (backward) districts in the country on February 2, 2006 and was enlarged to another 130 districts from April 1, 2007, onward. The Act was authorised by the President on September 7, 2005. It was conveyed to the Indian Gazette on September 7, 2005. Since then, it has been expanded to all districts by three years since 1 April 2008. NREGA thus tries to eliminate in rural areas the insufficiency and adversity of the disadvantaged and encompasses the whole country with the exception of areas with a 100% metropolitan community.²⁷⁴

At present (FY 2019-2020), the MGNREGA has a total of 12.49 crores active workers across the States, the country.²⁷⁵

TABLE 3.2
NUMBER OF ACTIVE WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY, ACROSS THE STATES.

Sl.No.	State/UT	Active Workers	Total Workers	%
1	ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR	19,125	53,564	35.7
2	ANDHRA PRADESH	87,63,677	1,78,42,984	49.12
3	ARUNACHAL PRADESH	2,54,164	4,53,903	56
4	ASSAM	45,77,969	87,49,819	52.32
5	BIHAR	61,48,296	2,51,22,919	24.47
6	CHHATTISGARH	64,87,483	88,78,081	73.07
7	DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI	0	25,927	0
8	GOA	9,224	47,872	19.27
9	GUJARAT	27,16,337	88,43,670	30.72
10	HARYANA	6,97,252	17,41,115	40.05
11	HIMACHAL PRADESH	11,25,226	23,87,266	47.13
12	JAMMU AND KASHMIR	15,56,812	22,62,698	68.8
13	JHARKHAND	33,92,083	86,08,467	39.4
14	KARNATAKA	71,75,421	1,47,14,121	48.77
15	KERALA	23,85,552	56,14,114	42.49
16	LAKSHADWEEP	433	16,080	2.69
17	MADHYA PRADESH	96,50,758	1,55,74,273	61.97
18	MAHARASHTRA	59,40,872	2,21,20,528	26.86
19	MANIPUR	6,82,340	10,43,226	65.41
20	MEGHALAYA	8,18,148	11,62,405	70.38

21	MIZORAM	2,00,068	2,23,768	89.41
22	NAGALAND	5,44,602	7,26,362	74.98
23	ODISHA	64,33,558	1,69,27,465	38.01
24	PUDUCHERRY	57,605	1,45,255	39.66
25	PUNJAB	14,10,658	28,00,465	50.37
26	RAJASTHAN	1,11,68,613	2,39,63,260	46.61
27	SIKKIM	96,945	1,34,703	71.97
28	TAMIL NADU	88,32,583	1,22,96,764	71.83
29	TELANGANA	59,21,344	1,19,19,181	49.68
30	TRIPURA	9,68,240	10,76,165	89.97
31	UTTAR PRADESH	1,10,12,116	2,47,14,105	44.56
32	UTTARAKHAND	10,44,075	18,02,167	57.93
33	WEST BENGAL	1,47,86,460	2,81,79,038	52.47
	Total	12,48,78,039	27,01,71,730	

Source: https://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/mgnrega_new/Nrega_StateReport.aspx?typeN=1
(Accessed on 1st February 2020).

The above table shows that West Bengal (1,47,86,460), Uttar Pradesh (1,10,12,116), Rajasthan (1,11,68,613) have the highest number of active workers as against the total number of workers in the State. States like Bihar (61,48,296), Jharkhand (33,92,083), and Odisha (64,33,558) do not record a higher number of active workers as against the total number of workers in the state. Numerous studies which have tried to explain this disparity in workers' participation cross the states in the country. While doing a comparative study implementation of MGNREGA across the different states in the country, Jean Dreze and Reetika Khera, in their book, "The battle of Employment Guarantee" discusses how the role of non-state actors, presence of Self Help Groups, etc. in states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, etc. have facilitated ineffective implementation and larger participation workers under the Act.

A total of 4.77 crore assets²⁷⁶ have been created under the MGNREGS by the year 2020-21, by way of generation of 210.63 crore persondays.²⁷⁷ MGNREGA has benefitted a total of 4.95 crore households²⁷⁸ in the country.

3.14 IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGA IN INDIA

TABLE 3.3
COVERAGE OF THE ACT

Total No. of Districts	691
Total No. of Blocks	6,920
Total No. of Gram Panchayats (GPs)	2,62,630

Source: The Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development. Retrieved from http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 2nd February 2020).

In the table above, we can notice that a total of 691 districts are being covered under the MGNREGA in the country. This includes coverage in 6920 blocks, where, 2, 62, 630 Gram Panchayats are being covered under the Act.

TABLE 3.4
EMPLOYMENT PROVIDED BY THE ACT

Job Card	
Total No. of Job Cards issued [In Cr]	13.12
Total No. of Workers [In Cr]	25.76
Total No. of Active Job Cards [In Cr]	7.42
Total No. of Active Workers [In Cr]	11.46
(i) SC worker against active workers [%]	19.51
(ii) ST worker against active workers [%]	16.31

Source: The Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development. Retrieved from http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 2nd February 2020).

The above table shows that a total of 13.12 crores job cards have been issued under the Act, where the number of workers is 25.76 crores. This includes 7.42 crores of active job cards and 11.46 crores of active workers. The share of Scheduled Caste workers against the active workers is 19.51 percent, and Scheduled Tribes workers against active workers are 16.31 percent.

TABLE 3.5
PROGRESS OF WORK UNDER THE ACT

Progress	FY 2019-2020	FY 2018-2019	FY 2017-2018	FY 2016-2017	FY 2015-2016
Approved Labour Budget [In Cr]	270.43	256.56	231.31	220.9274	239.112
Persondays Generated so far [In Cr]	210.13	267.95	233.74	235.6458	235.1465
% of Total LB	77.7	104.44	101.05	106.66	98.34
% as per Proportionate LB	83.03	0	0	0	0
SC persondays % as of total persondays	19.88	20.67	21.56	21.32	22.29
ST persondays % as of total persondays	18.14	17.4	17.49	17.62	17.8
Women Persondays out of Total (%)	54.96	54.55	53.53	56.16	55.26
Average days of employment provided per Household	42.57	50.85	45.69	46	48.85
The Average Wage rate per day per person (Rs.)	181.66	179.12	169.44	161.65	154.08
Total No of HHs that completed 100 Days of Wage Employment	17,20,415	52,05,378	29,55,152	39,91,202	48,47,975
Total Households Worked [In Cr]	4.94	5.27	5.12	5.1224	4.8134
Total Individuals Worked [In Cr]	6.99	7.78	7.59	7.6693	7.2261
Differently abled persons worked	4,10,524	4,60,758	4,72,218	4,71,819	4,59,597

Source: The Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development, URL: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 4th February 2020).

The table above shows that the approved labour budget in the financial year 2019-2020 was 270.43 crores which were 13.187 crores more than the labour budget allocated in the year 2018-2019, which was 256.56 crores. 2018-2019 saw an increase in labour budget allocation by

25.25 crores as 231.31 crores were the labour budget in 2017-2018. This was an increase of 10.3826 crores from the labour budget in 2016-2017, as 220.9274 was the labour budget in 2016-2017. The financial year 2015-2016 had a labour budget of 239.112 crores. The person-days generated in 2015-2016 was 235.1465 crores; it became 235.6458 crores in 2016-2017 to 233.74 crores in 2017-2018, rose to 267.95 in 2018-2019, and dropped to 25.78 crores in 2019-2020. While the percentage of SC persondays out of total persondays in the year 2015-2016 was 22.29, it became 19.88 percent in 2019-20. ST persondays of total persondays were 18.14 in 2019-2020, whereas it was 17.8 in 2015-2016. Women person-days out of total person-days was 54.96 in 2019-20. The women's persondays declined from 48.85 percent in 2015-2016 to 42.57 in 2019-2020. The number of households that could complete 100 days of wage employment under the Act also decreased from 48, 47, 975 in FY 2015-2016 to 17, 20, 415 in FY 2019-2020.

TABLE 3.6
STATUS OF WORK UNDER THE ACT

WORK STATUS	FY 2019-2020	FY 2018-2019	FY 2017-2018	FY 2016-2017	FY 2015-2016
Number of GPs with NIL exp	10,529	10,449	11,789	19,451	39,469
Total No. of Works Taken up (New+Spill Over) [In Lakhs]	168.43	200.49	185.56	162.54	123.12
Number of Ongoing Works [In Lakhs]	109.53	112.31	122.93	97.08	86.94
Number of Completed Works [In Lakhs]	58.9	88.18	62.63	65.46	36.18
% of NRM Expenditure (Public+Individual)	66.08	58.75	55.01	60.1	59.71
% of Category B Works	67.85	65.98	55.58	51.41	33.8
% of Expenditure on Agriculture and Agriculture Allied work	70.4	63.39	66.07	66	62.85

Source: The Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development, URL: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 4th February 2020).

The table above shows that the number of Gram Panchayats with nil expenditure decreased from 39,469 in 2015-2016 to 10,529 in 2019-20. The total number of works taken up increased from 123.12 in 2015-2016 to 168.43 in 2019-2020. This number of works taken up includes new as well as spillover work from the past year, which means the number of spillover works also increased over the years. The number of ongoing works increased from 86.94 lacs in 2015-2016 to 109.53 lacs in 2019-2020. The number of completed works in 2015-2016 was 36.18 lacs, and it was 58.9 lacs in 2019-20, which means the total number of completed works also saw an increase. Percentage of NRM expenditure (Public + Individual) also increased from 59.71 in 2015-2016 to 66.08 in 2019-2020. Percentage of category – B (asset creation for the village) works also increased from 33.8 percent in 2015-2016 to 67.85 in 2019-20. Percentage of expenditure on agriculture and agriculture allied works also increased from 62.85 percent in 2015-2016 to 70.4 in 2019-2020, which means the contribution of MGNREGA in agriculture sector also increased over the years.

3.15 THE POLICY IMPASSE IN MGNREGA: THE STANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT

As discussed earlier, there are two factors that essentially effectuate the Impasse in the Public Policy of MGNREGA. The first is the government through which the policy comes into force, and therefore, its stance becomes critical in this regard. The second is the public part of the policy, wherein the workers and their participation becomes critical under the Act.

There have been many articles, reports, and studies that have pointed out towards the inadequate attention and response of the government towards the Act. The India Spend report analysis²⁷⁹ of the government data shows that despite the proclamation of the highest budget allocation at Rs. 48,000 crore, in 2017-2018, 56 percent of the wages were delayed, and 15 percent wage seekers did not find in the year 2016-2017. The report also points out that the

pending liabilities kept rising, and the amount of wages pending was more than 50 percent. It was also indicated that delayed wages went up from 39 percent in 2012-2013 and rose up to 56 percent of all MGNREGA payments in 2016-2017. It also brings into light that in 2016-2017, only 76 million workers found work out of 89 million wage seekers.

The Wire²⁸⁰ reported that wage payments had been frozen across 19 states in the country the NREGA Sangharsh Morcha holds responsible the Central government and institutions and procedures involved such as banks and DBT payments and Aadhaar linkage for this delay. They point out that these delays have made the clause of payment on time under the right to work under the Act a mere mockery. The Morcha said that there exists a recurring problem of pending wage payments due to the lapses by the Central and the state government. They pointed out that Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs) for these wage payments get approved by the first and the second signatories but became at the level of the Central government. It was also pointed out that the data reported by the Management Information Systems (MIS) was also lacking, incomplete, and was not capturing the real picture.

The NREGA Sangharsh Morcha started a five-day agitation in September 2017 at Jantar Mantar in Delhi. They held that the current government was “slow poisoning” the Act by not improving the accountability and removing the impediments in the way of effective implementation. It was also pointed out on the basis of actual oral testimonies that the rural households were getting lesser and lesser, in the form of 10-15 persondays per rural household. An independent researcher Sakina²⁸¹ indicated that only 21 percent of the payments were accomplished in the fixed period of the 15-day period, in a study of 90 lakh payments for over 3400-gram panchayats in 10 states, and only 4% cases of delay compensation were approved.

Jayati Ghosh²⁸², in her article, “India’s rural employment programme is disappearing a death of funding cuts,” explains how the Central government has been sabotaging the Act by starving

it of indispensable funds. The central government has ongoing putting caps on the money given to the states governments for running the programme. The funds released to the states have been controlled to a point where they have been unable to pay wages and have incurred huge amounts of arrears which keep growing. As a result, workers lose the will to demand work even when it is desperately needed, and the state and local authorities also do not persuade or push them to register for work because of the lesser availability of funds.

The Business Standard²⁸³ reported that there had been a slashing of 220 million persondays in the year 2017, compared to the previous year. The government allocated a budget of 2,391 million persondays in 2015-2016, and it was 2,170 million persondays in the year 2016-2017, indicating that it would lead to lesser work for wage seekers.

It also indicated that according to the government's guidelines, the release of funds that should happen in two tranches has not been happening appropriately for many years. For example, the April tranche in the year 2016 was just above Rs. 12,000 crore, and in the year 2015, it was Rs. 7,300 crore.

Thus, to sum up, let us briefly look into important indicators that clarify the stance of the Government towards the Act.

3.16 ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

MGNREGA is a demand-driven programme, and it should not be curtailed by budgetary constraints and non-provision of adequate funds as per demand. During the FY 2019-20, it was claimed that the allocation for the Scheme is the budget was highest, which could be considered as an eyewash as the allocation adjusted through inflation for each year during the last five years and also for 2019-2020 was lower than the allocation of 2010-2011. An average pending liability of the allocated budget of 23 percent has been around in the last five years under the current government. Owing to the pending liabilities at the starting of each Financial Year, the

government can be said to be having lesser intent and commitment to implement MGNREGA in its true spirit.

The report further points out that the allocation in the last 5 years has only been around 0.30 percent of the GDP, whereas the World Bank had estimated that 1.7 percent of the GDP should be allocated to implement the Act effectively. It further discusses that the projected labour budget, coming through a bottom-up participatory approach curtailed by employing an arbitrary “Agreed to Labour Budget.”

The national electronic funds management guidelines, 2016-17, directed that the MGNREGA Management Information System (MIS) “will not allow” States to “generate more employment above the limits set by Agreed to LB.” This also puts a limitation against the true spirit of the Act. It can be noted that Some state governments, such as the Government of Karnataka (GoK), paid wages to the labourers on their own in an upfront manner, and the Central government owes Rs 953 crores worth of arrears to GoK from 2015-16.

Thus, owing to such issues, it can be said that the government has made MGNREGA a supply-driven programme crumbling the core principle of the Act, which is being a demand-driven programme.

3.17 PAYMENT OF WAGES

According to the Act, wages have to be paid to labourers within 15 days of completion of work, failing which the workers have the entitlement to compensation for this delay.

The Jansarokar also conducts studies on MGNREGA, and on the basis of studies taking into account more than 90 lakh transactions over 10 states in two financial years, only around 25 percent of the payments were made on time²⁸⁴. Largely, the Centre alone has been responsible for the delay of more than 50 days in the release of wages. The report also suggested that the

Ministry of Finance accepted that the findings were correct and responded in a memorandum indicating infrastructural hurdles non availability of funds.

the study stated. In 2017-18, the BJP government did not even calculate 86 percent of delay compensation payable to workers, overlooking another responsibility under the Act, violating another provision in the Act. There is no scope of proper payment of these delay compensation in a situation wherein there has not been calculation at all.

There have been many queries in the form of RTI for the stage 2 delays which are the Centre's delay in releasing wages. In one anonymous response, it was reported that the delay is reported but is covered up to avoid paying delay compensation. The Supreme Court Order based on WRIT petition (CIVIL) NO. 857 OF 2015, dated 18th May 2018, says that wages that have to be paid to the worker, in this case, should be transferred instantly, and the compensation should be paid immediately. Therefore, we can see that there exist huge delays in payment of wages at the level of the central government.

3.18 WAGE RATE

In 2019-20, the notified wage rates have been very low as the hike ranges from Re 1 to Rs. 17 for different states and Union Territories (UTs). Moreover, there is no hike 6 states and UTs. MGNREGA workers in Bihar and Jharkhand have an increase of only Rs. 2 and Rs. 3 respectively. It can be noted that the just 2.16 percent is average increase in NREGA wage rate in the country. In more than half states and Union Territories in the country, including Jharkhand, minimum wage rate under MGNREGA is lesser than the corresponding minimum wage for agriculture.

Dr. Anoop Sathpathy committee made recommendations that on the floor of the nation that Rs. 375 should be fixed as the minimum wage rate. It held that the calculation of the MGNREGA wages should done in accordance with the CPI-RL (Consumer Price Index- Rural) and not on

the CPI-AL (Consumer Price Index- Agricultural Labours) in order to increase the wages, but the government has been continually ignoring this while calculating the wages rates. Thus, we see that the government has been curtailing the potential of the scheme through formidable low wages.

3.19 PROBLEMS RELATED TO DBT AND AADHAAR LINKAGE

As we have seen above, the MGNREGA has been already imperiled by the above issues of low wages rates, delay in payments, and others; the introduction of DBT payment and linkage with Aadhaar has further impacted the systems of payment negatively. Although Aadhaar is not required in DBT schemes, it is preferred because it provides a unique identity and is useful in targeting the intended beneficiaries. Beneficiaries are encouraged to have Aadhaar. The workers have inadequate knowledge on linking their bank accounts to Aadhaar and availing wages through DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer).

The Indian School of Business (ISB) conducted a study²⁸⁵ in Jharkhand based on an analysis of 10 million transactions through the Aadhaar Payment Bridge system. It was found that 38 percent of the Aadhaar based payments are misdirected to totally non-related bank accounts. It was also discovered that beneficiaries kept switching from Aadhaar-linked transactions to non-Aadhaar transactions. It was discovered that approximately 28 percent of all beneficiaries who transacted in Jharkhand during the period of analysis switched back and forth between APB and non-APB transactions.

To sum up, the present chapter deals with the objective to locate MGNREGA in the discourse of public policy. It finds MGNREGA as an embodiment of the right to work, coming out as incremental policy following the bottom-up approach, adopted by the Government of India, amalgamating previous related programmes for the provision of employment and livelihood

security and converging to the public policy models of the institutional model of policymaking, systems models of policymaking and rational choice model of policymaking.

The latter part of the chapter helps to conclude that MGNREGA has contributed significantly in providing income-earning opportunities to the rural unemployed poor workforce in the country along with the creation of worthwhile assets in the villages of the country. The Act has benefited rural household in manifold ways and has been able to establish itself as a viable employment opportunity to the employment starved unskilled rural workforce and therefore, the research objective to find evidence to support the continuation of MGNREGA finds its answer in the above discussion and analysis in the present chapter.

The chapter also looks into the stance of the government, which has been found to be curtailing the potential of the Act. This stance of the government has been taken as a factor leading to the Policy Impasse in the Act. The other factor, which is the participation of the workers under the Act, has been discussed in the next chapters.

Furthermore, where, many states have been able to perform satisfactorily under the Act, the state of Jharkhand has not been able to record effective implementation of the Act. Thus, to understand this, the next chapter deals with the implementation and significance of MGNREGA in Jharkhand.

CHAPTER IV

MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

The present chapter discusses MGNREGA in the state of Jharkhand. It probes the status of the MGNREGS in the state and discusses the need for MGNREGA in the State. It contains a cascading analysis of the administration and implementation of the MGNREGS in the State (Jharkhand), District (Ranchi), and the Block (Namkum) (which is the locale of the primary data research). In doing so, it also implores the need for the continuation of the MGNREGS in Jharkhand. It also looks into the stance of the government towards the MGNREGA in the state.

4.1 JHARKHAND

Jharkhand²⁸⁶ was formed on 15th November 2000 as the 28th State of the Indian Union on the birthday of the legendary Bhagwan Birsa Munda through the Bihar Reorganization Act. Its rich mineral wealth includes minerals and metals like Plutonium, Mica, Bauxite, Granite, Gold, Silver, Graphite, Magnate, Dolomite, Fireclay, Quartz, Feldspar, Coal, Iron, Copper, etc.²⁸⁷ Woodlands and forests occupy more than 29 percent of the state, which is amongst the highest in India²⁸⁸. The total geographical area is 79.70 lakh hectares, where there are 24 Districts, 45 Subdivisions, 260 blocks, 4423 Gram Panchayats, and 32,394 Villages in the state²⁸⁹. There are 62,548 lakhs households where the average household size is 5.1 (A.H.S 2010-2011).

According to 2010-11, Census of India, the Jharkhand population is 32,988,134, where the male population is 16,930,315, and the female population is 16,057,819. The rural population is 250.55 lakhs, and the urban population is 79.33 lakhs²⁹⁰. The total Scheduled Caste population is 39.856 lakhs, where S.C. males are 20.435 lakhs, and S.C. females are 19.422 lakhs.²⁹¹ The state has 86,450 lakhs Scheduled Tribe population, where the male population is 43.154 lakhs, and the female population is 43.296 lakhs²⁹². Jharkhand has a

literacy rate of 66.41 percent, where the male literacy rate is 76.84 percent, and the female literacy rate is 55.42 percent. The region is covered with hills and forests and is not very easily accessible to many people. The tribal population is living here for thousands of years, and the province stands with its histories of struggles and discourse of tribal awakening²⁹³.

Jharkhand is one of India's most prosperous states in terms²⁹⁴ of abundance of natural resources, but citizens living in abject poverty in the province, primarily tribal and oppressed. It is often recognised as the 'tribal homeland' and renowned for tribal identity and privileges. The Scheduled Tribes, who are more than three times that of India, form a substantial amount of the state's population. The other States of Odisha and Chhattisgarh have a large number of tribal communities. The 2001 census states that Jharkhand has a 26.3 percent S.T. population and an 11.8 percent S.C. population, making up 38.1 percent. The share of the Scheduled Tribes (S.T.s) and Scheduled Castes (S.C.s) who live in a given area reflects the percentage of backward sections of the community. Backward societies need specific services and legislation to allow them to integrate over time with the mainstream.

Hasrat Arjjumend Inquiry into tribal self-governance in Santhal Parganas, Jharkhand, March 2005²⁹⁵ explains the state's socio-cultural demography Jharkhand and the evolution of the institutions of Tribal Self Governance, their need, functions, and importance. Jharkhand holds the history and the battle for the identity and citizenship of tribal communities. Tribes in this 'Jungleland' live in varied ecosystems and have been active in building, modeling, and remodeling their structure of administration and Government in different ways. They have been adapting their technology, inventions, ways of living in group settings and engaging with various environmental, physical, social, fiscal, political, or cultural modes. Jharkhand's tribal communities have a clear concept of political engagement and administration in their conventional social structures. The conventional structures of Government were the consequence of a structure established by the tribals and updated over the years in the course

of natural evolution. This system of autonomy differs based on the tribe. The Traditional Self-Government (T.S.G.) method, widely recognised as the 'traditional self-governance of the tribes, has been acknowledged and supported by most people in the nation. However, Arjjumend also states that over time the T.S.G.s have experienced multiple shifts and transitions because of the complexities of the outer world and the rapid changes, outside and within the environment. With the arrival of the British in India and their search for colonisation of territory, capital, and human beings, the T.S.G. was destroyed and de-legitimized. Even after independence, not much has changed due to continuous interference and imposed alterations in the T.S.G. Along with the constant exploitation of the land's resources, the morale, effectiveness, and power of T.S.G. have diminished. Continuous dispossession, marginalization, exclusion, and disempowerment of the tribal population in India and Jharkhand have left the tribal population to settle down at the bottom of the contemporary developing societies.

If one looks at the open tribal area, the presence of a village is such that it has changed because of the relentless onslaught of the mainstream disposition of tribal men and women and their wealth.²⁹⁶

Over the years, with the Government's efforts to bring these marginalized sections of the country into the mainstream development process by strengthening the grassroots democratic processes and institutions, the Panchayati Raj under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was promulgated. Although it was enacted in 2001, it was only in the year 2010 that Panchayat body elections could take place. The entire condition seems to have improved in the last few years, with implementing the seventy-third Constitutional Amendment. Jharkhand, which incorporated strands of the PESA not so efficiently, implemented the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act in 2001, but the governing party did not dare to declare local authorities to have been elected owing to the electoral upswing among the powerful Jharkhand tribal communities.²⁹⁷

The department of rural development²⁹⁸, Jharkhand, emphasizes strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (P.R.I.s). The Department of Panchayati Raj has undertaken various steps such as the construction of Panchayat Bhawan (Buildings), construction of Dak Bungalows and other essential office buildings, bus stands in Zila Parishad areas. It has imparted training to P.R.I.s Officials and Staff, sanctioned grants to the Zila Parishad area, and given grants to Gram Sabha, etc., as per the spirit of the Constitution and the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act, 2001²⁹⁹.

4.1.1 Jharkhand: Socio-Economic Profile

According to Census 2011, the total population of the state amounted to 3,30 lakh, with population development decadal 22.42 percent. The Below Poverty Line (BPL) is 39.1 percent, relative to the State Rates of 29.8 percent. The most significant issue has been poverty in the population of S.T., which 49 percent, S.C. which is 40.4 percent, O.B.C. which is 34.6 percent, and others which 23.1 percent. The State rate of literacy is 66.4 percent, wherein for it is male 76.8 percent and for female, it is 52.0 percent. In 2011-2012, the rate of job inclusion was 35.1 percent. The unemployment rate of Jharkhand was 3.1 percent as compared to the national unemployment rate of 2.7 percent. The self-employed accounted for 64.2 percent, although just 10.2 percent of the population employed daily. Agriculture was the most significant, occupying 50.4 percent of the population, and the majority of the working population worked as miners, in services, in manufacturing, in finance, etc.

The total outlay plan³⁰⁰ (2012-2013) issued by the department of rural development outlines the rural areas' essential characteristics by stressing that many rural poor are still shelter-less or do not have houses that are fit for living. Many inhabitations/villages do not have proper connectivity. Further, it points out that the rural areas in the state have a high incidence of rural poverty, high prevalence of unemployment, low agricultural productivity, poor rural infrastructure and connectivity, homelessness, little skills and absence of markets, low Human

Development Index (15th rank) and there are 25.48 lakhs BPL families. The total rural population is 2,09,52,088 consisting of 3,73,6524 rural Households, where the total S.C. population is 25,88,094 (12.35 percent), and the total S.T. population is 65,00,014 (31.02 percent). The percentage of marginal workers is 16.23, the percentage of marginal cultivators is 43.54, and the percentage of rural agricultural labor is 32.79.

TABLE 4.1
LABOUR INDICATORS IN JHARKHAND

INDICATORS	TOTAL (in Lakhs)	MALE (in Lakhs)	FEMALE (in Lakhs)
WORKERS	13098274	8424769	4673505
MAIN WORKERS	6818595	5234442	1584153
MARGINAL	6279679	3190327	3089352
NON WORKER	19889860	8505546	11384314

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 2011.

TABLE 4.2
EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS IN JHARKHAND

INDICATORS	VALUE IN LAKHS
CULTIVATORS	3814832
AGRICULTURAL	4436052
HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRIES WORKERS	455162
OTHER WORKER	4392228
WORK PARTICIPATION RATE	39.7%

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 2011.

The table above shows that the majority of the working population in the state is engaged in agriculture and agricultural related activities, thus, proves the case for better and emphasized

implementation of the MGNREGS in the state, as the schemes under the MGNREGA have a lot of potential and scope for agricultural advancement in the rural areas. The ways in which MGNREGS can help in the state's agricultural sector have been explained later in the chapter.

TABLE 4.3
PERCENTAGE OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS IN JHARKHAND

INDICATORS	PERCENTAGE
MAIN WORKERS	20.66
MARGINAL WORKERS	19.03
NON WORKERS	60.29
CULTIVATORS	29.12
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS	33.86
HOUSEHOLD INDUSTRIES WORKERS	34.74
TOTAL WORKERS	33.53

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 2011.

The table above indicates that apart from the non-worker population of 60.29 percent, the state has a dominant population of agricultural workers (33.86 percent) and cultivators (29.12 percent).

Thus, since its creation, the state has been trying to develop itself mostly in rural areas by assisting the workers, facilitating the cultivators, and undertaking many other welfare and development projects and schemes.

4.1.2 Jharkhand: Rural Development, Employment Assistance, and Livelihood Sustenance Schemes

The Department for Rural Development, the Government of Jharkhand, looks into rural development issues in the state and is mainly responsible for implementing and monitoring the various schemes for developing the rural poor.

The Jharkhand Government has made efforts from time to time to boost the state's economy, and much investment has been made in the various sectors of the economy. The Jharkhand Department for Rural Development is undertaking a variety of programmes to mitigate rural poverty by infrastructure building, creating sustainable jobs for rural poor people. It offers funding for the acquisition of work creating assets to build prospects for self-employment for families below the poverty line. The banks send the beneficiaries the necessary loan.³⁰¹

Presently, various schemes are running in the state to develop the rural and tribal population. These are Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), District Water and Sanitation Mission (DWSM), Integrated Action Plan (I.A.P.), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Watershed, Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF), Housing Schemes, including Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), Deen Dayal, and Sidhu Kanho, Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) schemes, the rural sanitation facilitation schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission (S.B.M.) and employment assistance schemes under MGNREGA. Out of these, the MGNREGA stands out as a flagship employment guarantee program where the approach for formulation of strategies and planning of works has to be done at the grassroots level; the workers at the local level are entitled to identify the needs of their villages and take up schemes accordingly. The MGNREGA has twin objectives of generating employment opportunities and creating worthwhile assets in the town's assets. Irrespective of highly decentralized planning and implementation, the MGNREGA has not successfully achieved its concrete objectives, although having been created job opportunities.

4.2 IMPLEMENTATION OF MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

The MGNREGA which is the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act covers all the 24 districts of Jharkhand, 20 of which were covered in the First Phase, two are in the Second Phase, and the remaining two are in the Third Phase. It was launched as part of the previous National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), and was based on the Ministry of Rural Development's Operational Guidelines issued in January 2006.

Under MGNREGA, after forming a State Employment Guarantee Council, every state government has to launch a Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme within six months of the Act coming into force (MGNREGA).

Since the Gram Panchayats and the locally elected representatives from the villages play the most important in deciding the MGNREGS³⁰², Jharkhand suffered initial hurdles in successfully implementing the MGNREGS. The reason being the absence of Panchayati Raj Institutions (P.R.I.) bodies and functionaries in the state. No Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayat had crippled the scheme in many ways, "The absence of Gram Panchayats in Jharkhand has created an institutional vacuum at the village level."³⁰³

We have seen in the chapter before that the Panchayati Raj Institutions have been given the most significant Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas were not in place in Jharkhand and were not actively involved in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of NREGA works. So, the Act had become partially vague and dysfunctional in the state. Contractors who are not required in the provision of work under the MGNREGS apparatus had otherwise crept in and caused severe damage to rural employment guarantee and condition of minimum wages to all the workers equally. Bhatia and Dreze, 2017, point out that, "In Jharkhand, the contractors have taken the Panchayats as a substitute and exploit the scheme to accomplish

their own goals."³⁰⁴

Aster Peng conducted a study, namely "NREGA: Significance and Status, A Study" (2009) for Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development, which concentrated on macro analysis on the status and implementation of NREGA. The study points towards the following³⁰⁵:

1. **Awareness about the Act and the Schemes:** Even the Block and Panchayat Government and officials were not sufficiently informed of the schemes and their instructions.
2. **Payment of Minimum Wages:** The State Government raised the minimum wage from Rs.60 to Rs.73, but the salaries charged on workplaces in NREGA remained smaller than the old minimum wage.
3. **Applications for Work and their Receipt:** The research work relied on the concern of the official or on the Civil Society Organizations (C. S. O's) operations, in the absence of knowledge on job conditions. Research was undertaken in some areas by contractors.
4. **Registration of Job Cards:** It was noticed that Rs. 20-120 is being paid for employment in all NREGA districts. Most people were paid Rs. 30-60 for pictures (officials loathed that since no fund had been provided for photographs, it is being asked from the beneficiary). It was found that the time limits for applying for work cards were set in certain districts, and in some instances, the application for a job card was not approved beyond the due date.
5. **Unemployment Allowance:** People have little or even zero awareness or understanding of unemployment insurance. Contractors performed the job, and no specific unemployment allowance was then established or provided.

6. **Work Site Facilities:** Installations on the workplaces were utterly incomplete.

There was an inadequate understanding of the provisions surrounding workplace installations, which indicated absolutely insufficient workplace facilities.

In the later years and especially after the Panchayat polls in Jharkhand in the year 2010 and the Gram Sabha and Gram Panchayats' active role in implementing and monitoring the NREGS, the MGNREGA started making an impact, both in its short-term and long-term objectives.

However, with time passing by, MGNREGA got entrapped in faulty and patchy implementation, apathetic bureaucracy, and deceptive administrative practices in the state.

4.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

A significant part of the population is the poor farmer population practicing subsistence agriculture using traditional technology and family labor. The use of modern inputs like seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery is not done frequently, especially in the case of S.C.s/S.T.s farmers.

Jean Dreze, while explaining the significance of MGNREGA in Jharkhand³⁰⁶, stressed the fact that the state has much potential for performance under the Act as it is very productive in rural areas and has an active rural workforce; the MGNREGA becomes very helpful as it helps in the rural productivity.

The significance of MGNREGA in the State can be understood into two broad heads, namely; Wage Employment and Agriculture.

4.3.1 MGNREGA and Wage Employment

- Jharkhand has a total of 84,28,994 workers, out of which only 31,33,093 are active³⁰⁷.
- The fifth annual employment survey of 2015-16 shows that the state has an

unemployment rate of 7.7 percent, which was much higher than the average of all India's unemployment rate of 5 percent.

- Owing to the issues of out-migration and unemployment on the rise, the Jharkhand Government has coined "***Har Haath Ko Kaam (Give every hand, work)***" as its new slogan for emphasizing its commitment to a provision of employment to people of the state.
- This slogan has underlying significance in Jharkhand, owing to the ratio of working-age population migrating to other states being the highest in 2015-16, as per the Economic Survey 2016-17.
- MGNREGA assuring entitlement of 100 days of unskilled manual labour every year proves to be a lifeline for the state workers in the absence of adequate formal employment opportunities.

4.3.2 MGNREGA and Agriculture³⁰⁸

To understand the state's farming practices, one needs to understand the geographical structure of the region.

- Jharkhand has abundant upland terrain (60 percent).
- The annual average rainfall is sufficient (around 900-1300 mm) to grow any crop, but still, the state faces drought almost every alternative year.
- Only 11 percent of cultivable land comes under irrigation.
- The land area is 38 lakh hectares, but the net sown area is 18.04 lakh hectares only.
- The irony of Jharkhand is that that the Farmers have lands, but the majority of them are fallow uplands. There is no topsoil, high run-off, poor water retention capacity, and it is hard to plough even in monsoon.
- The soil mentioned above, water and land conditions in the state, can be made

better or changed by undertaking soil conservation measures, rainwater harvesting, water retention, groundwater conservation, and many other related works.

- MGNREGS could help groundwater conservation by increasing water retention and consecutively increasing the moisture in the soil.
- MGNREGS could undertake works for rainwater harvesting, building a watershed management system that could help prevent the washing off of the top layer of the soil and ripping off the soil's moisture content.
- MGNREGS could take on works that would help in increasing organic carbon in the soil, facilitate bacterial and other microorganismal activity in the soil, and make the soil alkaline.

4.3.3 Ways in Which MGNREGA Can Help

There are soil and water conservation techniques and works that could be undertaken or have been undertaken in this direction that involve the building of structures like³⁰⁹

- T.C.B.: Trench Cum Bund for water management issues and combat destructive weather conditions.
- Contour Trenches: useful in soil and water conservation, the crops cultivated between the trenches can benefit from rainwater in the rainy season.
- Staggered Trenches: useful in the management of uneven grooves.
- LBCD (Loose Boulder Check Dams).
- Gully plugging, Graded boulding, and Diversion channel.

Here, we see that the majority of the works mentioned above require unskilled manual labour. As we know, MGNREGA employs unskilled manual labour; it provides ample employment opportunities along with providing efficient soil, water, and other natural

resource management techniques. Apart from this, there are many more works like building wells, dobhas (water reservoir), small ponds, etc. Jharkhand Government allows these works to be taken upon private lands if proposed by any landowner; completing these schemes such as the building of wells includes employment of labour for as long as 3-4 months and these schemes. When completed, they serve as a resource for both the individual and the community. Projects like the introduction of mango plantation, an initiative by the State Government, have begun in many villages on public and private land. The method of alternative cropping is adopted wherein vegetables are sown in between the mango trees. When these trees bear fruits, the vegetable crops render sales and help the farmer financially. These schemes employ much labour, keep them employed, and later create worthwhile assets for them, which help livelihood sustenance in the long run.

Thus, we see that **where the workers need the MGNREGA, the state also needs it.**

After understanding the significance of MGNREGA in the State, it becomes essential to see the number of job cards provided, the status of employment provided, and the status of works under the MGNREGA in Jharkhand.

TABLE 4.4
STATUS OF JOBS PROVIDED UNDER MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

JHARKHAND	
Total No. of Districts	24
Total No. of Blocks	263
Total No. of GPs	4,403
STATUS OF JOB CARDS AND WORKERS	
Total No. of Job Cards issued (In Lakhs)	46.03
Total No. of Workers (In Lakhs)	82.46
Total No. of Active Job Cards (In Lakhs)	23.65
Total No. of Active Workers (In Lakhs)	30.34
Percentage of S.C. workers against active workers	11.17
Percentage of S.T. workers against active workers	31.21

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx. (Accessed on 14th May 2019).

In the table above, we can see that a total of 46.03 lakh job cards have been issued to 82.46 lakhs workers, where the active job cards are 23.65 lakhs and the number of active 30.34 lakhs. These numbers imply that 22.38 lakh job cards are not active, and 52.12 workers are not active in the state under the Act. It also means that either the workers are not taking the initiative to seek work, or the state is not able to provide work to them despite them seeking work. 31.21 percent of workers under the Act are S.T.s, which means the Act has provided employment opportunities to the S.T. workers in the state and employs more and more S.T. workers, which form the majority population in the state.

TABLE 4.5
STATUS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT PROVIDED UNDER MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

PROGRESS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS	FY 2019-2020	F.Y. 2018-2019	F.Y. 2017-2018	F.Y. 2016-2017	F.Y. 2015-2016
Persondays generated so far (In Lakhs)	92.87	536.66	592.74	707.44	585.61
S.C. persondays percentage as of total persondays	10.13	11.22	11.05	12.04	12.07
ST persondays percentage as of total persondays	25.2	26.68	28.68	32.42	38.95
Women Persondays out of total percentage	41.4	39.22	37.33	35.72	32.75
Average days of employment provided per household	17.51	42.17	41.03	40.6	52.01
Average wage rate provided per day per person in rupees	170.94	167.99	167.98	166.98	161.97
Total number of households completed 100 Days of Wage Employment	2	25,992	57,524	37,149	1,74,276
Total households Worked (In Lakhs)	5.3	12.73	14.45	17.42	11.26
Total Individuals Worked (In Lakhs)	6.39	16.24	19.08	24.7	15.68
Differently abled persons worked	2368	6226	7253	7857	5719

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 14th May 2019).

The table above indicates that except for the Financial Year 2016-2017, the persondays have been declining in the state. The S.C. persondays have also been dropping along with the S.T persondays. One significant indicator in the table is the small but steady increase in the state's women's persondays. The average employment provided per household has also not seen any

significant improvement over the years. The table shows an essential aspect of the work provided under the Act: the work provided to the differently-abled persons. These numbers present hope to the unskilled differently-abled unemployed rural worker seeking employment under the Act. One of the most contented and criticized aspects of the MGNREGA in the state is the meager wages and the negligible increase in the minimum wages under the Act. It has been widely reported and verified in the field visits (for primary data collection for the inquiry of factors that are discouraging the workers from seeking employment under the Act in the state) that this is acting as one of the biggest deterrents in the way of seeking work by the workers.

TABLE 4.6
STATUS OF WORKS UNDER MGNREGA IN JHARKHAND

STATUS OF WORKS	FY 2019- 2020	F.Y. 2018- 2019	F.Y. 2017- 2018	F.Y. 2016- 2017	F.Y. 2015- 2016
Number of Gram Panchayats with nil expenditure	308	146	127	104	133
Total number of works taken up (New + Spill Over) (In Lakhs)	4.04	8.07	9.04	6.25	2.56
Number of ongoing works (In Lakhs)	3.62	4.04	6.19	4.19	1.88
Number of completed works	42,673	4,03,106	2,84,997	2,05,942	68,378

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 14th May 2019).

The table above shows that the number of Gram Panchayats with nil expenditure has also been increasing. Not much new works are being taken up as the total number of works taken up includes the spill over work from the past financial year. Apart from this, the other aspects related to work status do not indicate significant development in the work status under the Act.

4.4 MGNREGA IN RANCHI

Ranchi, popularly known as the "City of Water Falls," is Jharkhand's capital and has a total area of 5,094 sq km. The city has a moderate climate, and it continued to be the summer capital of Bihar until the separation of Jharkhand in the year 2000.

The capital city is divided into two subdivisions, namely, Ranchi and Bundu, and these are further divided into 18 blocks, where the Ranchi subdivision has 14, and the Bundu subdivision has 4 blocks which consist of 305 Panchayats and 1311 (revenue) villages altogether³¹⁰.

According to the Provisional Census of 2011³¹¹, its total population is 29,14,253, and the percentage of the population to Jharkhand is 8.83 percent. The male population is 14,94,937, and the female population is 14,19,316, where the rural population is 16,56,918, and the urban population is 12,57,335. The total Scheduled Caste population is 1,52,943, and the total Scheduled Tribe population is 10,42,016³¹². The population growth rate is 23.9 percent (2001-2011). Ranchi's literacy rate is 65.59 percent, where male literacy is 84.2 percent, and female literacy is 67.44 percent³¹³. The work participation rate in Ranchi is 49.5 percent (A.H.S, 2012-2013).

TABLE 4.7
LABOUR INDICATORS IN RANCHI

INDICATORS	TOTAL (in Lakhs)	MALE (in Lakhs)	FEMALE (in Lakhs)
WORKERS	1142867	743967	398900
MAIN WORKERS	756176	553949	202227
MARGINAL	386691	190018	196673
NON WORKER	1771386	750970	1020416

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 2011.

There is a gap as massive as 628,519 lakhs between the non-worker and the worker population in the state in the table above. This also creates more scope for the MGNREGA to operate and

provide employment to the employment-deprived workers who might be willing to work but cannot work due to a lack of employment opportunities in the area.

TABLE 4.8
EMPLOYMENT INDICATOR IN RANCHI

INDICATORS	VALUE IN LAKHS
Total cultivators	317487
Total agricultural workers	267360
Total household industries workers	38452
Total other workers	519568
Work participation rate	39.21%

Source: Compiled from Census of India, 2011.

The table above shows that the state has a significant population engaged in the cultivation and agriculture sector—workers in other sectors would include daily wage workers, labours, etc.

TABLE 4.9
PERCENTAGE OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT INDICATORS IN RANCHI

INDICATORS	PERCENTAGE
Main workers	25.94
Marginal workers	13.26
Non-workers	60.78
Cultivators	27.77
Agricultural workers	23.39
Household industries workers	3.364
Workers	45.46

Source: Compiled from Census of India 2011.

The table above indicates the presence of a large number of non-workers compared to workers and more number of workers in the cultivation and agriculture sectors.

TABLE 4.10
STATUS OF JOBS PROVIDED UNDER MGNREGA IN RANCHI

DISTRICT: RANCHI	
Total number of blocks	18
Total number of Gram Panchayats	305
STATUS OF JOB CARDS	
Total number of Job Cards issued (In Lakhs)	3.36
Total number of workers (In Lakhs)	7.19
Total number of active job cards (In Lakhs)	1.55
Total number of active workers (In Lakhs)	2.1
Percentage of S.C. workers against active workers	5.08
Percentage of S.T. workers against active workers	46.03

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 16th May 2019).

We can see in the table above that a total of 3.36 lakh job cards have been issued to 7.19 lakhs workers, where the active job cards are 1.55 lakhs and the number of active workers 2.1 lakhs. These numbers imply that a total of 1.81 lakh job cards are not active, and 5.8 workers are not active in the state under the Act. This indicates the vast gap between the workers and the active

workers' category, which also means that either the workers are not taking the initiative to seek work or the state is unable to provide work to them despite their seeking of work. MGNREGA can play a critical role in converting these workers into active workers if work is easily accessible and readily available under the Act.

46.03 percent of workers under the Act are S.T.s, which means the Act has been providing employment opportunities to the S.T. workers in the state and that it can employ more and more S.T. workers, which form the majority population in the Block.

TABLE 4.11
STATUS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT PROVIDED UNDER MGNREGA IN RANCHI

PROGRESS OF WORKS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS	FY 2019-2020	F.Y. 2018-2019	F.Y. 2017-2018	F.Y. 2016-2017	F.Y. 2015-2016
Persondays Generated so far (In Lakhs)	4.79	29.95	42.01	39.63	39.01
S.C. persondays percentage as of total persondays	5.01	5.09	5.09	5.56	5.72
ST persondays percentage as of total persondays	38.54	42.96	43.69	50.96	53.81
Women persondays out of total percentage	43.13	43.08	41.44	39.65	37.02
Average days of employment provided per household	17.38	40.77	41.37	36.47	49.32
Average wage rate provided per day per person in Rupees	170.97	167.97	167.97	166.94	161.91
Total number of households completed 100 days of wage employment	1	1,912	5,821	2,699	11,145
Total households worked (In Lakhs)	0.28	0.73	1.02	1.09	0.79
Total individuals worked (In Lakhs)	0.34	0.98	1.41	1.51	1.05
Differently abled persons worked	69	252	310	258	128

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 16th May 2019).

The table above indicates that except for the F.Y. 2017-2018, no other F.Y. has seen an increase

in the persondays generated. The table also points out that where the S.C. persondays have remained similar over the various F.Y.s, the S.T persondays have been declining over the F.Y.s. It becomes critical to understand and resolve the hurdles whatsoever the workers face in seeking work and continuing to work under the Act.

TABLE 4.12
STATUS OF WORKS UNDER MGNREGA IN RANCHI

STATUS OF WORKS	FY 2019- 2020	F.Y. 2018- 2019	F.Y. 2017- 2018	F.Y. 2016- 2017	F.Y. 2015- 2016
Number of Gram Panchayats with nil exp	11	6	7	6	9
Total number of works taken up (New +Spill Over) (In Lakhs)	0.26	0.4	0.48	0.4	0.18
Number of ongoing works (In Lakhs)	0.24	0.26	0.32	0.27	0.12
Number of completed works	2,568	13,945	15,821	12,876	5,459

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 16th May 2019).

The table above shows that not many works are being taken up. The works that are being carried out include many spill-over works from the previous F.Y. Although the numbers of completed works have increased slowly, the status of MGNREGA works does not show any significant development here.

4.5 MGNREGA IN NAMKUM

Namkum is a Block in the Ranchi, Jharkhand. The Block Namkum is at 23°21'N 85°22'E location. The Block is considered rural as the majority of the total area under it; it is on the city's outskirts, where there are large areas of forests and arable lands. The sub-district code of the Namkum block is 02690, according to Census 2011. The total area of Namkum is 496 km², including 482.66 km² rural area and 13.70 km² urban area. Namkum has a population of

1,45,841 people. There are 28,756 houses in the sub-district. There are 23 Panchayats in the Block, having 109 villages, where 104 are inhabited, and the rest 5 are not.

TABLE 4.13
SOCIAL INDICATORS IN NAMKUM

INDICATORS	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Children (Age 0-6)	20,814 Lakhs	10,493 Lakhs	10,321 Lakhs
Literacy	73.72%	71.15%	54.97%
Scheduled Caste	7,496 Lakhs	3,867 Lakhs	3,629 Lakhs
Scheduled Tribe	87,472 Lakhs	43,506 Lakhs	43,966 Lakhs
Illiterate	53,675 Lakhs	21,391 Lakhs	32,284 Lakhs

Source: <https://www.censusindia.co.in/subdistrict/namkum-block-ranchi-jharkhand-2690>.

The table above shows that the Block consists of a significant population of Scheduled Tribes. The Block's literacy rate is 73.72 percent, where male literacy is 71.15 percent, and female literacy is 54.97 percent.

TABLE 4.14
RURAL AND URBAN POPULATION

INDICATORS	TOTAL (in Lakhs)	URBAN (in Lakhs)	RURAL (in Lakhs)
Population	145,841	27,839	118,002
Children (0 - 6 years)	20,814	3,351	17,463
Schedule Caste	7,496	994	6,502
Schedule Tribe	87,472	6,631	80,841
Literacy	73.72%	87.8%	70.29%
Sex Ratio	967	879	989

Source: <https://www.censusindia.co.in/subdistrict/namkum-block-ranchi-jharkhand-2690>.

The table above shows that the Block's total population is 145.841 lakhs, where the S.T.s being 87,472 lakhs, constitute the majority of it. The Block is a rural block as the majority of its population is rural (118,002 lakhs).

TABLE 4.15
WORKING POPULATION IN NAMKUM

INDICATORS	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE
Main Workers	34,350	24,363	9,987
Cultivators	7,438	4,900	2,538
Agriculture Labourer	4,541	2,504	2,037
Household Industries	1,319	771	548
Other Workers	21,052	16,188	4,864
Marginal Workers	28,712	13,762	14,950

Source: <https://www.censusindia.co.in/subdistrict/namkum-block-ranchi-jharkhand-2690>.

The state's main workers are 34,350 lakhs, and other workers are 21,052 lakhs. Marginal workers are 28,712 lakhs in numbers, cultivators are 7,438 lakhs, and agriculture labourers are 4,541 lakhs. These numbers indicate more scope of employment under MGNREGA in the Block, where it could absorb these workers and provide secure and meaningful employment in their surroundings and villages.

TABLE 4.16
STATUS OF JOBS PROVIDED UNDER MGNREGA IN NAMKUM

BLOCK: NAMKUM	
Total No. of G.P.s	23
STATUS OF JOB CARDS	
Total number of Job Cards issued	21,545
Total number of workers	50,180
Total number of active Job Cards	8,180
Total number of active Workers	12,244
Percentage of S.C. workers against active workers	3.74
Percentage of S.T. workers against active workers	68.45

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 25th December 2019).

The table above shows that 21,545 job cards have been issued to 50,180 workers, where the active job cards are 8,180 and the number of active workers 12,444. These numbers imply that 13,365 job cards are not active, and 37,936 workers are not active in the state under the Act. This indicates the vast gap between the workers and the active worker's category, which means that either the workers are not taking the initiative to seek work or the state cannot provide work to them despite their seeking of work. MGNREGA can play a critical role in converting these workers into active workers if work is easily accessible and readily available under the Act.

TABLE 4.17
STATUS OF WORK AND EMPLOYMENT PROVIDED UNDER MGNREGA IN NAMKUM

PROGRESS OF WORKS AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS	FY 2019- 2020	F.Y. 2018- 2019	F.Y. 2017- 2018	F.Y. 2016- 2017	F.Y. 2015- 2016
Persondays Generated so far (In Lakhs)	4.79	29.95	42.01	39.63	39.01
S.C. persondays percentage as of total persondays	5.01	5.09	5.09	5.56	5.72
ST persondays percentage as of total persondays	38.54	42.96	43.69	50.96	53.81
Women persondays out of total percentage	43.13	43.08	41.44	39.65	37.02
Average days of employment provided per household	17.38	40.77	41.37	36.47	49.32
Average wage rate provided per day per person in Rupees	170.97	167.97	167.97	166.94	161.91
Total number of households completed 100 days of wage employment	1	1,912	5,821	2,699	11,145
Total households worked (In Lakhs)	0.28	0.73	1.02	1.09	0.79
Total individuals worked (In Lakhs)	0.34	0.98	1.41	1.51	1.05
Differently abled persons worked	69	252	310	258	128

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 25th December 2019).

The table above shows that the Scheduled Tribes' percentage of work has decreased in most of the F.Y.s. The women's work participation has seen a slight increase over the various F.Y.s. The total number of Households that have completed 100 days' employment has also not increased, and it fluctuates here. It mostly goes down every F.Y. The total households that have worked under the Act also have decreased over the years, along with the decrease in the total number of individuals who have worked under the Act. Thus, we can see how the block has not been able to utilize the MGNREGA. The workers under the Act have not been able to

get employment as they should have, under inefficient implementation and administration of the Act in the Block.

TABLE 4.18
STATUS OF WORKS UNDER MGNREGA IN NAMKUM

STATUS OF WORKS	FY 2019- 2020	F.Y. 2018- 2019	F.Y. 2017- 2018	F.Y. 2016- 2017	F.Y. 2015- 2016
Number of Gram Panchayats with nil expenditure	11	6	7	6	9
Total number of works taken up (New + Spill Over) [In Lakhs]	0.26	0.4	0.48	0.4	0.18
Number of ongoing works [In Lakhs]	0.24	0.26	0.32	0.27	0.12
Number of completed works	2,568	13,945	15,821	12,876	5,459

Source: http://mnregaweb4.nic.in/netnrega/all_lvl_details_dashboard_new.aspx (Accessed on 25th December 2019).

The table above shows that there has not been any significant development in the status of works under the Act in the Block.

To have better and comparative understanding of the implementation and administration of MGNREGA in the state, district, and the block, composite tablets consisting of significant aspects of MGNREGA, have been provided below.

TABLE 4.19

EMPLOYMENT PROVIDED: JHARKHAND, RANCHI, AND NAMKUM

Sr. No.	District	Total attendance equal to 100 days		Total attendance between (101-150) days		Total attendance	
		House Hold Employed	Persondays Generated	House Hold Employed	Persondays Generated	Household Employed	Persondays Generated
1	Jharkhand						
	FY 2016-2017	26774	2677400	10375	1070367	1742475	70743575
	FY 2017-2018	47893	4789300	9631	990843	1444548	59274361
	FY 2018-2019	20255	2025500	5736	598378	1272718	53664206
	FY 2019-2020	15424	1542400	71	8652	1173858	47229906
2	Ranchi						
	FY 2016-2017	2141	214100	558	57209	108654	3962507
	FY 2017-2018	4880	488000	941	96612	101537	4201019
	FY 2018-2019	1746	174600	166	17111	73440	2994582
	FY 2019-2020	1098	109800	0	0	61698	2302286
3	Namkum						
	FY 2016-2017	55	5500	19	1959	5774	3962507
	FY 2017-2018	106	10600	20	2073	4328	153872
	FY 2018-2019	51	5100	10	1014	2673	105814
	FY 2019-2020	25	2500	0	0	1498	59043

Source: M.I.S. Data

The table above shows the number of the household employed and amount of persondays generated from the financial year 2016-2017 to the financial year 2019-2020 for Jharkhand, Ranchi, and Namkum, respectively. The number of households generated by all three of them

has decreased over the years except for 2017-2018. Persondays generated also can be seen decreasing except for the financial year 2017-2018. The state has 10,375 households that got employment beyond 100 days; there is an absolute absence of any employment generation beyond 100 days. As seen in the above table, the financial year 2017-2018 has recorded higher numbers for employment generation and creation of persondays, so there was a question about the circumstances or factors that enabled such better implementation of the MGNREGS. Thus, during the field visits, in an attempt to understand it and discussion with the Cluster Facilitation Team members, Gram Panchayat officials, and the MGNREGA workers, it came to light that the Block Development Officer and the officers in the MGNREGA division in the block office had smooth and effective communication between the C.F.T.s (Cluster Facilitation Team) officials as well as the other personnel (like Rozgar Sevaks, Mates) involved in the administration of the Act. The C.F.T. members could reach out to the Block office in order to bring into notice the problems, issues, and grievances of the workers; it was also indicated that they carry out communication with the officials as well as the workers and could help the workers in availing more work and also assist the officials in understanding the workers' demands and working conditions. Later, it was indicated that with a change in the B.D.O., they could not carry out effective communication about the administration of the MGNREGS. Although, in meeting with the B.D.O., it was pointed by him that there was a shift of focus from wage employment schemes like MGNREGA, and higher officials were stressing on programmes (other than MGNREGA) like Swachh Bharat Mission, Indira Awas Yojana (now known as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana) and the office had strict deadlines about S.B.M. These PMAY projects lead to hampering the implementation of MGNREGA in the Block. Although the state has had merging of MGNREGA work with these projects, the workers' demand for work has been declining. He also indicated that workers had grown increasingly disappointed with lesser stipulated wages. It can be noted that the year following 2017-18, which is 2018-

19, the State of Jharkhand saw widespread strikes by the MGNREGA workers and officials, and their demand was higher wages and better work conditions. Later, the state had an increase in the minimum wage from Rs. 168 to Rs. 171, this three-rupee hike in wages, however, was highly condemned and criticised by the workers.

TABLE 4.20
WORK COMPLETION: JHARKHAND, RANCHI, NAMKUM

Sr. No.		F.Y. 2016-2017 and earlier				F.Y. 2017-2018				F.Y. 2018-2019				F.Y. 2019-2020			
		No. of works started	No. of works completed	No. of works not completed	Work completion rate	No. of works started	No. of works completed	No. of works not completed	Work completion rate	No. of works started	No. of works completed	No. of works not completed	Work completion rate	No. of works started	No. of works completed	No. of works not completed	Work completion rate
1	2	3	4	5=3-4	6= $\{(4) \times 100 / (3)\}$	7	8	9=7-8	10= $\{(8) \times 100 / (7)\}$	11	12	13=11-12	14= $\{(12) \times 100 / (13)\}$	15	16	17=15-16	18= $\{(16) \times 100 / (15)\}$
1.	State: Jharkhand	1065530	1024258	41272	96.13	509536	372284	137252	73.06	217844	109463	108381	50.25	195586	195586	168606	13.79
2.	District: Ranchi	62944	59933	3011	95.22	22522	14101	8421	62.61	9163	4378	4785	47.78	13160	1086	12074	8.25
3.	Block: Namkum	3952	3839	113	97.14	1562	927	635	59.35	449	261	188	58.13	342	30	312	8.77

Source: M.I.S. Data.

The table above shows the work completion rate for Jharkhand, district Ranchi, and Block Namkum. In the year 2016-2017, the work completion ratio for the state was 96.13 percent, but it kept on declining with each financial year, as in 2017-2018 it became 73.03 percent, in

2018-2109 it dropped to 50.25 percent, and in 2019-2020 (December 2019) it has come down to 13.79 percent. Ranchi's work completion ratio declined from 95.22 percent in 2016-2017 to 8.25 percent in 2019-2020 (December 2019). Namkum also has seen a similar pattern of decline in the work completion ratio, as in the year 2016-2017, it was 97.14 percent, but in the year 2019-2020 (December 2019), it dropped down to 8.77 percent. This decline in the work completion ratio is a clear indicator of stopping MGNREGS works due to various factors, and one of the most significant is dropping out of the workers from the MGNREGS in between.

4.6 POLICY IMPASSE IN MGNREGA: STANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE STATE

Tarique Anwar, in his article, "The right to work under MGNREGA in Jharkhand is mockery,"³¹⁴ explains how the right to work as promised by the Act has become a distant reality in the state. While 100 days being promised to the workers, the state has been able to provide only 40 days of work on an ordinary in 2019 and the last three years³¹⁵. He also points out that corresponding to Jharkhand NREGA Watch, the share of Adivasi and Dalit households in the MGNREGA has declined from 50 percent to 38 percent over the last three years. Incorrect entry in Aadhaar and bank account figures in Management Information System (M.I.S.), incorrect linking of Aadhaar to bank accounts, stopping of works due to lack of funds, work done without muster rolls, etc. are some of the issues that become a major hurdle in availing work under the MGNREGS. Rs. 170 crore wage payments were rejected in the past four years, and an amount of nearly Rs 100 crore or more as wage payments are pending to the workers. He also raises concern over the attitude of the Government towards the administration of the scheme in the state as the State Employment Guarantee Council headed by the Chief Minister has met just once from the year 2016. Action against officials violating the workers' rights reflected in the social audit reports mostly does not get taken up, and 19 districts in the state

have vacant offices as Lokpal. Furthermore, more than 40 percent of the posts of NREGA personnel are vacant.

James Herenj and Taramani Sahu³¹⁶, MGNREGA activists in the state, on the 13th anniversary of MGNREGA on 2nd February 2019 in a discussion in Counterview, have raised serious concerns over the hurdles that MGNREGA is facing in the way of effective implementation in the state. Deletion of 7 lakh job cards by the Jharkhand in the last three years has been a major question mark on the Government's intentions towards MGNREGA in the state, where all workers were registered under the MGNREGS and were unaware of this action of the Government. They claim, *"The Government had conducted the "Yojna Banao Abhiyan" with a lot of attention in 2015-16 Workers and Gram Panchayats had chosen approximately 10 lakh projects to implement in their respective Panchayats. Instead of taking these into account, the State Government has imposed schemes of their choosing on the people. Along with that, they have violated the NREG Act and undermined the Panchayati Raj system by forming Adivasi and Gram Vikas Samiti."*³¹⁷

In the discussion at Counterview³¹⁸, they point out that the Jharkhand Government boasts of timely payment of 99 percent payment within 15 days of work are an eyewash as mostly every payment is delayed. These delays are not even taken into account. There is hardly or no payment as compensation of delay in the payment of the wages the workers, let alone payment for not providing jobs as per demand known as unemployment allowance, there is practically an inadequate social audit system. The Act's whole essence is democratic decentralization by letting the workers at the village level participate in the planning and execution of works, but the administrative apathy is marring this. They allege that the MGNREGS is mostly planned at the level of higher administration and is enforced at the village level. The suggestions and demands of the workers at the village level are ignored by the officials.

Ankita Aggarwal, in her article "The tyranny of MGNREGA's monitoring system,"³¹⁹ discusses how the M.I.S. (Management Information System) is failing its very purpose of enhancing transparency and accountability and is now being used as a tool to centralize the programme by way of causing frequent interruption on the ground level and violating the rights and legal entitlements of the workers. She points out that, *"The excessive control wielded over MGNREGA through the M.I.S. is preventing States from executing the program as per their requirements and capabilities, but more worryingly, is also causing gross violations of worker's legal entitlements."*

Since 2011, complete dependence of MGNREGA's monitoring was laid M.I.S., which has been continuously marred by technical glitches, lack of computers, lack of technical know-how, computer shortage operators, and disruptive supply of electricity in the rural areas. The paper muster rolls were replaced by E.M.R.s (Electronic Muster Rolls), where each and every formality related to MGNREGA operation is carried out on these. For example, the attendance has to be started and maintained on an E.M.R., but most of the time, there is the unavailability of a printed E.M.R., which delays work. The worksite manager has to make a rough muster role that does not get copied correctly in the E.M.R. The E.M.R.s also do not make it possible to add more or new workers that turn up for work; these workers or worksites are ultimately turned down. In addition to the E.M.R.s, there has also been the introduction and application of E-FMS (Electronic Fund Management System), which has caused a decline in the interaction of the Gram Panchayats with the workers. Previously, the funds were transferred to the Gram Panchayats. Then suitable works were planned accordingly, but, with E-FMS, money is being transferred to the worker's account; the scope of involvement of the Gram Panchayats has shrunk, therefore.

Moreover, making the linkage of workers' accounts to Aadhaar has made work payment, and funds transfer faultier and more vulnerable to mistakes. Most workers are not technically

sound; many do not have Aadhaar; some do not even have bank accounts; making them comply with all these technicalities is very tiresome and confusing. Even a digit in the linkage of a bank account can lead to wrong linkage and wrong payment. Often, the officials create faulty E.M.R.s, E-FMS, etc. To escape real-time monitoring of the worksites, there are also linkage issues with either fake Aadhaar or fake bank account.

The M.I.S. brought in for better implementation causes patchy, faulty, and inadequate implementation. Thus, the workers, mostly lacking in technical know-how, end up being the worst sufferers even after working under the MGNREGS, which is why they tend to be drifting apart from it.

In October 2013, the Ministry of Rural Development constituted a committee headed by Prof. Mahendra Dev to work on the wage rate indexation of the MGNREGA in the states. The report³²⁰ of which recommends that the MGNREGA wages should be linked to the Consumer Price Index- Rural, for shielding the workers against inflation. The report also suggested that the wages should be not be lower than the minimum wage for rural labourers or the minimum agricultural wage, whichever is higher, in the states. The Government, however, continues to ignore this as in the case of Jharkhand, the minimum wage for agriculture was Rs. 239 in 2018-2019, but the minimum wage for MGNREGA was 168 in the same year. Even in the next year, the wage increased by just Rs. 3, indicating the glaring difference between minimum wages in other sectors vis-a-vis minimum wages offered under the Act. During the field visits, this problem was indicated repeatedly, and strikes demanding a hike in the minimum wage under the MGNREGA were also happening.

Thus, as observed above, the government's stance towards the MGNREGA has not been favorable in the state also and it cannot be an overstatement to say that apathy of the government has discouraged the workers more and more and lead them to work less under the MGNREGS.

To conclude, the above analysis and discussion in the chapter point out that MGNREGA has its share of impact in the State of Jharkhand; it also has huge potential to transform rural livelihood and create meaningful employment opportunities for the workers, and, so, the objective of the research to find evidence for continuation of MGNREGA in the region gets substantiated by all the above. Along with this, we are also able to see a decrement in the participation of workers under the MGNREGS with time. The government's stance has also been discussed in this and the chapter before, indicating apathy imperiling the Act. This is also causing the workers to work less under the Act and their participation keeps on decreasing irrespective of asserted efforts of the state and the district administration to spread awareness about MGNREGA. MGNREGA is a demand-driven programme. This decline in participation in work is marring the very essence of the Act. Thus, owing to the above circumstances, a Policy Impasse can be observed in the MGNREGA.

To address this, there arises a need to find the causes of this phenomenon of decrement in worker's participation. By spotting and understanding the causes behind declining worker's participation, better and targeted solutions can be provided for the workers' issues (which are driving the workers away from the MGNREGS)

Thus, the subsequent chapters deal with this concern and try to answer the lead question of the study: To understand the participation of the workers under the MGNREGA with the help of primary data collected in the block Namkum state's capital, Ranchi.

CHAPTER V

MGNREGA IN NAMKUM: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHICS

The present chapter deals with the primary data collected from the study's locale, the Namkum Block in the Ranchi district of Jharkhand.

5.1 THE BLOCK NAMKUM OF RANCHI JHARKHAND

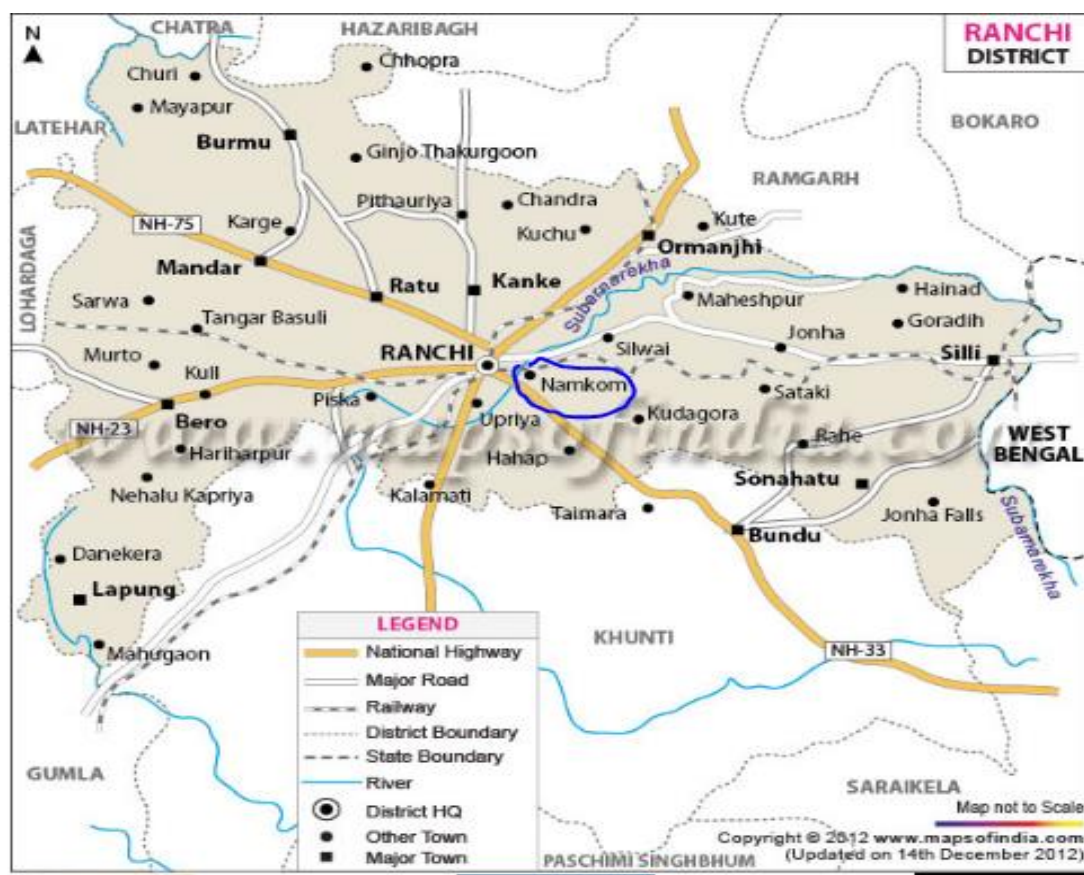
Namkum is one of the twenty Administrative Blocks of the city of Ranchi in the State of Jharkhand. It belongs to Khijri Assembly Constituency. It has a total area of 415.57 km² (160.45 sq. mi). There are 23 Panchayats and 109 villages, out of which 104 are inhabited, and the rest are not.

TABLE 5.1
NAMKUM BLOCK AT A GLANCE

Profile of Namkum	
Total Area (in sq km)	497.05
Total Urban Area (in sq km)	81.48
Total Rural Area (in sq km)	415.57
Total Households (in numbers)	21156
Total Population (in numbers)	114397
Total Male Population (in numbers)	58968
Total Female Population (in numbers)	55429
Total Literates (in numbers)	58018
Total Male Literates (in numbers)	36632
Total Female Literates (in numbers)	21386
Important Crops	Paddy, Wheat

Average annual rainfall (in mm)	1300
* 2011 Census (Provisional Data)	

Source: <http://ranchi.nic.in/block.htm> (Accessed on 05 June 2019).



Source: <https://ranchi.nic.in/map-of-district/>.

5.2 PRELIMINARY FIELD STUDY: IMPRESSIONS AND INFERENCES

The preliminary field study was conducted in November 2018. It started with visits to the concerned Block Offices and meetings with the officials involved in administering the schemes' Act and implementation. It came into notice that the MGNREGA workers and the officials are on strike demanding better work conditions and a hike in the minimum wages. It can be noted that the minimum wage in Jharkhand was Rs.168 at that time, and it had continued to this low for over 5-6 years, three years before the Government raised the wage

from Rs.167 to Rs.168 after a long period of protest and demand (as informed by the workers). Not much work was happening under the scheme in that period, other than the previously taken up work, which was being carried out with much persuasion by the Block and Panchayat level officials. The workers were being called out and persuaded to continue working on completing previously taken up work.

It is to be noted that the area is primarily dominated by subsistence agriculture farmers and daily wage seekers. They argued that the wages being paid to them were so low that they could hardly manage their daily affairs; also, the payment of wages takes much time, which makes working under the scheme futile as they do not have anything in their hand for their livelihood at the end of the day. They say that when they go to the cities, they get at least double the amount of the wage provided under MGNREGA and that too on the same day by the end of the day to carry out their living in a satisfactory manner. It was enquired from them to explain whether they understood the process of creating man-days and the payment after that and whether they knew that the amount has to be paid within 15 days of completion of work. They said that there is no limit for them to wait for the wages, and there have not been many times when the wages were paid on time. The issue they stressed most was the meagre wages that make working under MGNREGA futile.

Despite these grievances, they expressed their interest in working under the MGNREGA schemes due to many reasons: getting work closer to their homes, working in the village and creating assets for their own village, and interaction with the other workers leading to a sense of community and community development. They said working under MGNREGA keeps them connected to their surroundings and their land. They expressed their hope that the State or the Central Government takes notice of their circumstances and demands and helps make MGNREGA better and conducive for their work. Thus, the status of MGNREGA was observed as:

- The average level of awareness among the workers about the Act and the underlying schemes as clarity in availing jobs and planning works to be undertaken in the villages.
- Fewer works are being taken up mainly due to non-timely payment and lesser wages.

The Block Development Officer enumerated his personal and official efforts to encourage more and more demand for work under the Act. He showed many worksites and a new type of work undertaken to make work more appealing to the workers, e.g., plantation of Mango orchard in a village in Laalkhatanga (a village in the Block, Namkum). The Mango Orchard was suggested and planned by the Block and the C.F.T. officials. It was planted on a privately owned piece of land by one worker; it also had alternative cropping of vegetables done on the farm that could provide income while mango trees took their time to yield the produce. The scheme mentioned above is one of the novel schemes that could help the workers sustainably. However, it still failed to attract more demand due to the fundamental issue of daily wage-based livelihood, as most workers cannot wait long for vegetable or fruit produce. They need daily income from working under the Act.

Thus, we see that the very essence of the Act to provide income-earning opportunities and create worthwhile assets in the village is getting marred by low wages and delays in payment.

Moreover, the **B.D.O** pointed out a few **critical factors that were creating gaps in the implementation of the Act**, these were;

- **Generation of the F.T.O. (Fund Transfer Order):** Of late, faulty and overlapping F.T.O.s have been generated that caused delay and other payment problems.
- **Pending Muster Rolls:** The muster rolls are pending, leading to payment-related

problems related to D.B.T. (Direct Benefit Transfer) and linkage to the Aadhaar card.

- **Mandays:** Creating significantly fewer mandays as the minimum fixed number for mandays is 30, but not even 30 are generated. The reason underlying this is lesser wages and delay in payment affecting demand for work.
- **Demand Generation:** It is an interlinked problem with the above, where the officials indicate that although there is sufficient material, no new works are being taken up.
- **Geo-tagging:** The works are now required to be geo-tagged, but the schemes' workers are not technically sound to do so. Also, they do not have advanced mobile handsets with the help of which they can do it. Even if everything is available, an inherent mobile network and internet connectivity issue make geo tagging an impossible task for the locals and the workers.
- **Pending Schemes:** Old schemes are pending and being dragged from one financial year to the next one. This is also hindering the initiative of Yojana Banao Abhiyaan.
- **Lack of Communication between Officials:** There is a severe lack of communication between the officials responsible for carrying out the various functions under the Act; this leads to an ideational and technical deadlock in the schemes' administration.

The above-listed factors can also be included in the stance of the government towards the Act and the schemes under it in the block. They can be seen creating stagnancy in the implementation of the Act and the execution of the schemes under it. These are also discouraging the workers from seeking more work or continue working under it.

Thus, to comprehensively understand the various other underlying causes for the decrease

in participation of workers under the MGNREGA, the final fieldwork was conducted comprehensively.

5.3 FINAL FIELD STUDY: DATA INTERPRETATION, IMPRESSIONS, AND INFERENCES

NAMKUM BLOCK, RANCHI DISTRICT, JHARKHAND

As mentioned earlier, all the 23 Gram Panchayats in the Block have been surveyed, and the sample has been collected from one village from each of these Gram Panchayats. Ten workers from each Gram Panchayat have been interviewed and interacted to understand the administration of the MGNREGA and their participation in the MGNREGS. The Gram Panchayats (G.P.) and their corresponding villages are as follows:

5.4 INTRODUCTION OF THE GRAM PANCHAYAT (G.P.) AND THE CORRESPONDING VILLAGE

5.4.1 Gram Panchayat and Village: Chene, MahuaToli

TABLE 5.2
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: CHENE MAHUA TOLI

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	20
Adult Female	18
Children	18
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	11
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	
Wet	1
Subsistence	12
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	8
Agriculture Labour	1
Non-Agriculture Labour	3
Artisan	3
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	8

Source: Primary Data.

5.4.2 Gram Panchayat and Village: Torar

TABLE 5.3

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: TORAR

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	16
Adult Female	18
Children	19
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	10
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	1
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	1
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	1

Source: Primary Data

5.4.3 Gram Panchayat and Village: Karkatta

TABLE 5.4

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: KARKATTA

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	13
Adult Female	11
Children	26
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	12
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	7
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	3
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	7

Source: Primary Data

5.4.4 Gram Panchayat and Village: Baraguttu

TABLE 5.5

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: BARAGUTTU

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	12
Children	26
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	10
Adult Female	8
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) landholding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	7
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
Business	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	9

Source: Primary Data

5.4.5 Gram Panchayat and Village: Kochbong

TABLE 5.6

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: KOCHBONG

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	12
Adult Female	16
Children	24
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) landholding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	5
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	3

Source: Primary Data

5.4.6 Gram Panchayat and Village: Nachaldaag

TABLE 5.7

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: NACHALDAAG

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	13
Adult Female	13
Children	28
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	8
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) landholding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	5
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	6

Source: Primary Data

5.4.7 Gram Panchayat and Village: Churu

TABLE 5.8
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: CHURU

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	12
Children	13
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	8
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	N.A
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	1
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	8

Source: Primary Data

5.4.8 Gram Panchayat and Village: Malti

TABLE 5.9
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: MALTI

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	13
Adult Female	16
Children	17
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	8
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	1
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	3

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.9 Gram Panchayat and Village: Chitwadag

TABLE 5.10
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: CHITWADAG

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	18
Adult Female	16
Children	17
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	15
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	6

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.10 Gram Panchayat and Village: Chand

TABLE 5.11
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: CHAND

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	12
Children	27
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	10
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
Business	2
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	6

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.11 Gram Panchayat and Village: Aara

TABLE 5.12
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: AARA

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	19
Adult Female	26
Children	25
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	13
Adult Female	12
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	N.A

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.12 Gram Panchayat and Village: Badaam

TABLE 5.13
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: BADAAM

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult male	14
Adult female	17
Children	16
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	10
Adult Female	8
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) landholding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	9
Agriculture Labour	N.
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	3
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	3

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.13 Gram Panchayat and Village: Barganwa

TABLE 5.14
SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: BARGANWA

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult male	19
Adult female	20
Children	17
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	12
Adult Female	10
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	3
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	3

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.14 Gram Panchayat and Village: Huanghatu

TABLE 5.15

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: HUANGHATU

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	17
Adult female	21
Children	19
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	9
Adult Female	7
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	9
Nil	1
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	9
Agriculture Labour	1
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	1
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	6

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.15 Gram Panchayat and Village: Khijri
TABLE 5.16

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: KHIJRI

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	14
Adult Female	19
Children	15
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	11
Adult Female	11
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	8
Nil	2
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	8
Agriculture Labour	2
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	2
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	N.A

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.16 Gram Panchayat and Village: Lali

TABLE 5.17

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: LALI

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	21
Adult Female	21
Children	13
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	12
Adult Female	11
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) landholding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	9
Nil	1
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	9
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A1
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	4

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.17 Gram Panchayat and Village: Hahaap

TABLE 5.18

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: HAHAAP

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	17
Adult Female	23
Children	21
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	10
Adult Female	10
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Substance	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non- Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	3
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	7

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.18 Gram Panchayat and Village: Horhap

TABLE 5.19

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: HORHAP

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult male	16
Adult female	23
Children	14
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	10
Adult Female	12
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	8
Nil	2
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	8
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non-Agriculture Labour	2
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	2
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	2

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.19 Gram Panchayat and Village: Rajaulatu

TABLE 5.20

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: RAJAU LATU

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	18
Adult Female	21
Children	16
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	8
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non-Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	6

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.20 GramPanchayat and Village: Gadke

TABLE 5.21

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: GADKE

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult male	20
Adult female	22
Children	18
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	10
Adult Female	9
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non-Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	N.A

Source: Primary Source

5.4.21 Gram Panchayat and Village: Haratu

TABLE 5.22

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: HARATU

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	20
Adult Female	27
Children	18
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	13
Adult Female	12
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	10
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non-Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	4

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.22 Gram Panchayat and Village: Hulhundo

TABLE 5.23

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: HULHUNDO

Size of the Household:	
Adult Male	20
Adult Female	22
Children	17
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	12
Adult Female	12
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) land holding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	8
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	10
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non-Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	1
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	4

Source: Primary Source.

5.4.23 Gram Panchayat and Village: Tati

TABLE 5.24

SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE OF SAMPLE HOUSEHOLDS: TATI

Size of the Household:	No.
Adult Male	21
Adult Female	22
Children	18
No. of earning members in the Household:	
Adult Male	12
Adult Female	12
Children	N.A
Size of (operational) landholding (acres):	
Dry	N.A
Wet	N.A
Subsistence	N.A
Nil	N.A
Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)	
Cultivator	N.A
Agriculture Labour	N.A
Non-Agriculture Labour	N.A
Artisan	N.A
MGNREGA	N.A
Services	N.A
Wage Employment	10

Source: Primary Source.

The above-listed Gram Panchayats are situated at a minimum distance of 20-25 km between each other, covering major parts of the Block Namkum. The population mainly comprises scheduled tribes followed by other backward classes and scheduled castes. All the villages come under rural areas, and all the workers engage in subsistence agriculture wherein they consume what they produce, or their produce barely meets their livelihood sustenance requirements. The population mainly engages in small-scale agricultural activities and wage employment wherever possible within or outside their villages. All the villages have the administration and implementation of the MGNREGA.

Conclusively, this locale serves as a pivotal ground to record and account interaction with the workers and find the answer to the lead question of the study, which is to understand the participation of the workers under the Act.

CHAPTER VI

MGNREGA IN NAMKUM: PRIMARY DATA AND INFERENCES

The present chapter deals with the primary data collected as responses to the field survey and interviews with the workers to enquire about and understand their participation under the Act.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a total of 230 respondents were interviewed. Their response was recorded to enlist and understand the causes of decreasing the workers' participation under the Act in the State. The primary data collected and interpreted has been divided into five parts, which are:

1. Socio-economic background of the respondents.
2. Awareness about the MGNREGA.
3. Awareness about the rights and entitlements under the MGNREGS.
4. MGNREGS participation.
5. Causes of decreasing participation under the MGNREGS.

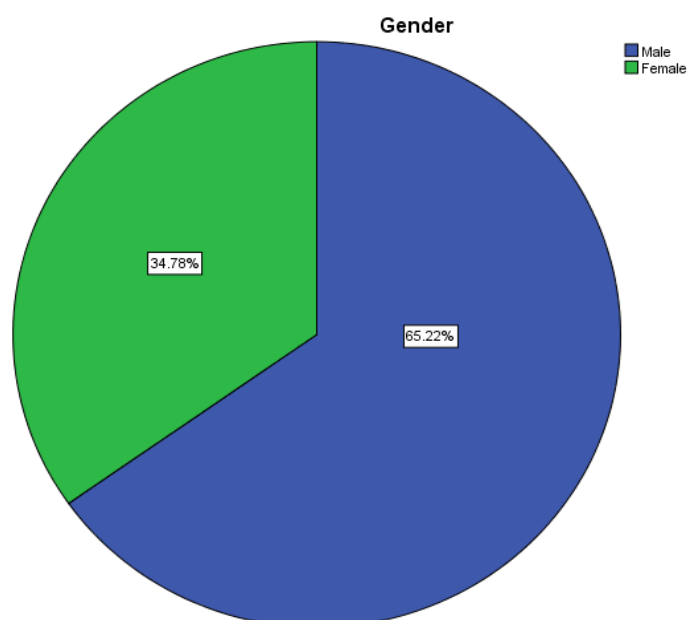
PART I

6.1 SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

Understanding the respondents' socio-economic background is essential to understand their need to seek livelihood sustenance and employment opportunities from the Government and its welfare programmes, of which MGNREGA is a significant one.

TABLE 6.1
GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	150	65.2	65.2	65.2
	Female	80	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	



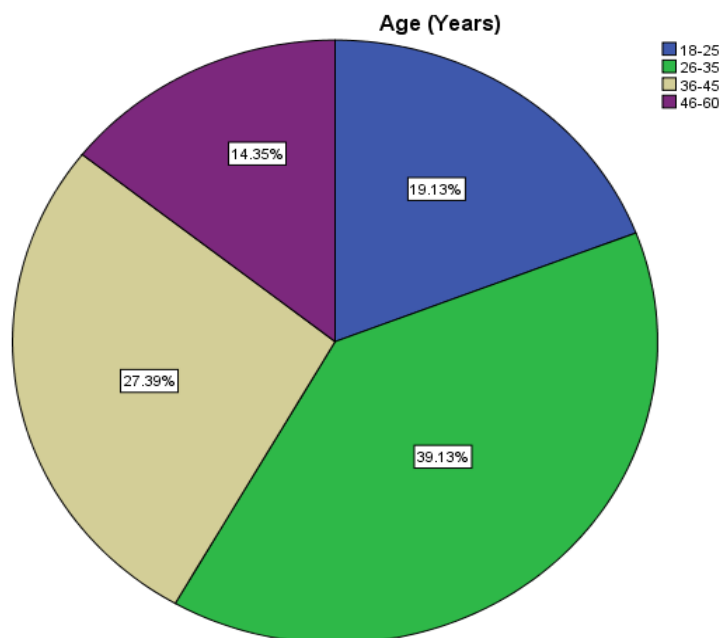
The above chart and number show that in the sample of 230 respondents, 65 percent are male and 35 percent are female. This implies that the male workers dominate the working population under the Act. This also indicates that the area has been lagging in women's participation under the Act. The Act provides for many women-centric work facilities to encourage more participation from women but, are the women in this area aware of it, let alone be able to avail it? It remains a question. Is the non-availability of these provisions not encouraging them

enough to come forward and work under the Act? We will be able to see this aspect in the preceding sections.

TABLE 6.2

AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age (Years)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-25	44	19.1	19.1	19.1
	26-35	90	39.1	39.1	58.3
	36-45	63	27.4	27.4	85.7
	46-60	33	14.3	14.3	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	



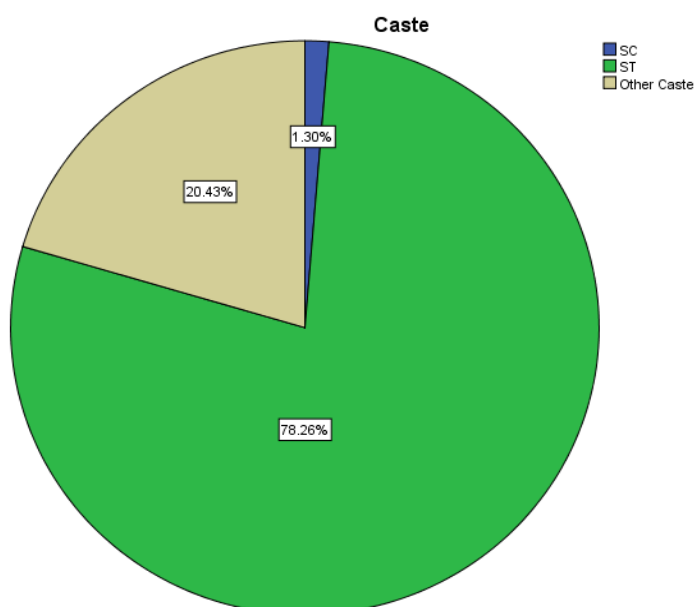
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 19 percent of respondents belong to the 18-35 age group, 39 percent of respondents belong to the 26-35

age group, 27 percent of respondents belongs to 36-45 age group and 15 percent respondents belong to 46-60 age group. This means that workers falling in the younger population brackets participate more in the MGNREGS. This also means that there is a lack of employment opportunities for the young workforce in the area, to which the MGNREGA is catering.

TABLE 6.3

CASTE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Caste					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	SC	3	1.3	1.3	1.3
	ST	180	78.3	78.3	79.6
	Other Caste	47	20.4	20.4	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

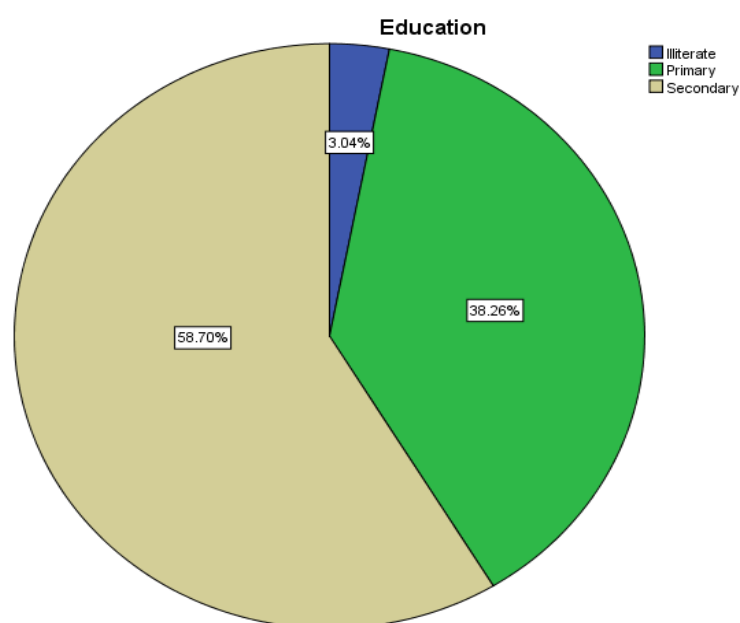


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 2 percent respondents belong to SC, 78 percent respondents belong to S.T., and 20 percent respondents belong to other castes. Since Jharkhand is a result of a long battle fought by the tribal population for their own land and the tribes dominate its population, it is a relief to see that the tribal workers are getting their due in terms of participation in work under the MGNREGS since S.T.s occupy the significant share in working population.

TABLE 6.4

LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Education					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Illiterate	7	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Primary	88	38.3	38.3	41.3
	Secondary	135	58.7	58.7	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

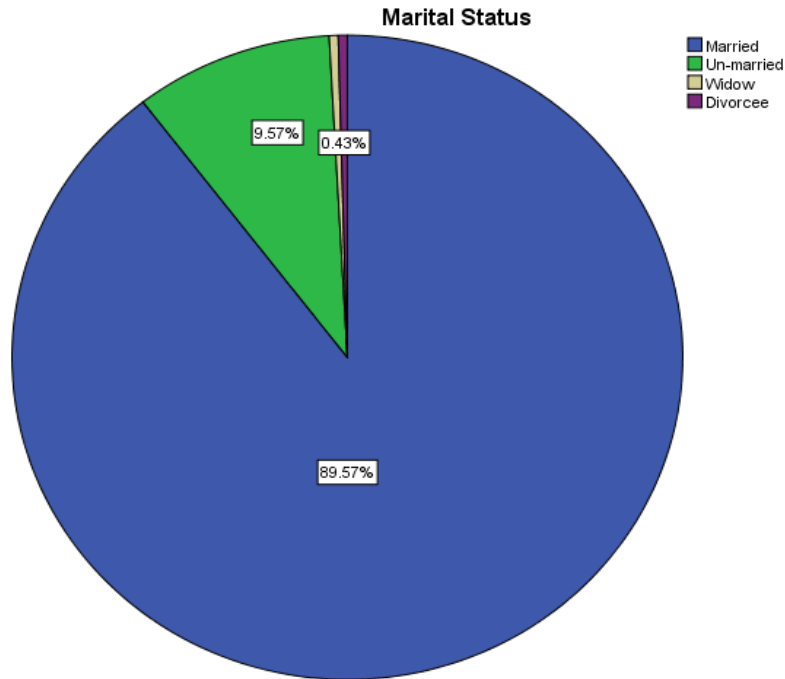


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 3 percent of respondents are illiterate, 38 percent of respondents have primary education, and 59 percent of respondents have secondary education. The data above indicates that the workers are not mostly illiterate, but are primary or secondary level educated. This also implies that this population is part of that segment of the unemployed, lacking skills or semi skills, or any professional qualification that could enable them to take other better-paying jobs. It is important to note here that, if not for MGNREGA, many of this working population could have been left unemployed.

TABLE 6.5

MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Marital Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	206	89.6	89.6	89.6
	Un-married	22	9.6	9.6	99.1
	Widow	1	0.4	0.4	99.6
	Divorcee	1	0.4	0.4	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 89 percent respondents are married, 9 percent respondents are unmarried, 1 percent respondent is a widow, and 1 percent respondent is a divorcee. This data also points out that most of the workers are married and have families to tend to; MGNREGA acts as viable support as income-earning opportunity. To mention about a worker, while interviewing, explained how MGNREGA allowed her to work in her surroundings; although dissatisfied with the low wages, she talked about she could come back home to her children early after the completion of the specified work. She later left work due to her daughter, who was two years old. She had not heard of the creche facility, which was to be provided by the administration and worksite manager. Had she been aware of this facility, or had this facility been provided by the administration, she would not have to withdraw from participation under the MGNREGS and earn her living.

Thus, we come to the next section of our data collection, which concerned the workers' awareness about the significant rights provided by the MGNREGS.

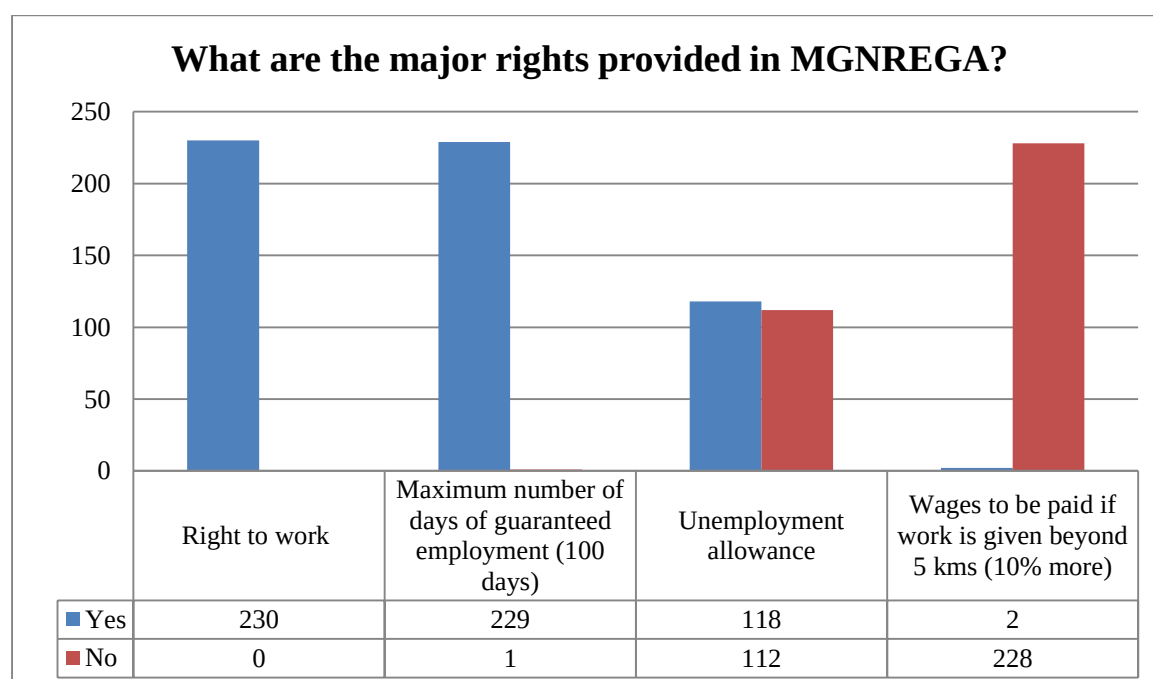
PART II

6.2 AWARENESS ABOUT THE MGNREGA

Any welfare programme or initiative of the Government hugely depends on the awareness of the people for whom it has been brought into effect.

For an employment generation initiative like MGNREGA, the workers need to be aware of its major provisions to take advantage of it. MGNREGA is the only Act promulgated in any developing nation that makes the right to work justiciable in the court of law, which means that the worker can approach the court of law if she/he is denied under it after they have applied for work. However, for a worker to do that, she/he needs to know what he has been guaranteed. Thus, an effort to create a picture of their level of awareness regarding the rights provided was made.

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.1



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents indicated that they were aware of the right to work provided in MGNREGS. All of the workers were aware of seeking work under the MGNREGS.

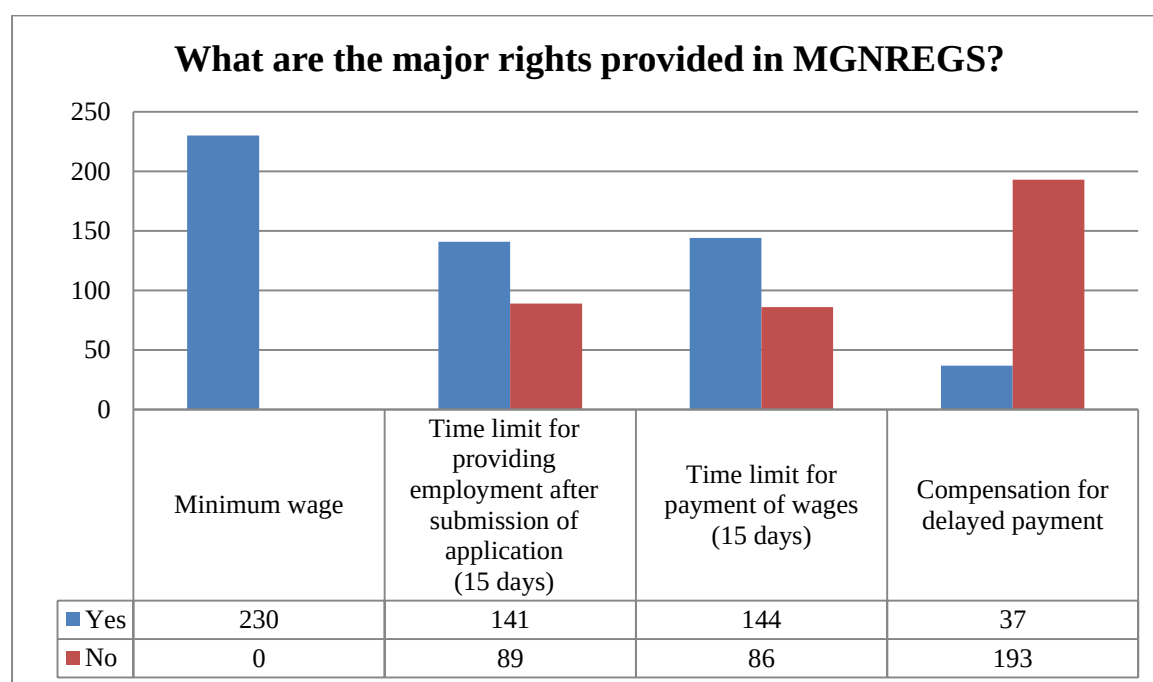
In the sample of 230 respondents, 99.6 percent respondents said 'yes,' and 0.4 percent respondents said 'no' regarding the awareness about the maximum number of days of guaranteed employment (100 days) provided in MGNREGS, which implies almost all the workers knew that they had to be provided with 100 days of employment. However, none could avail of this in their working tenure under the MGNREGS. There have been many debates about increasing the maximum number of guaranteed days for work under the MGNREGA, but, all this does not seem to find any relevance in this region.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 51.3 percent of respondents said 'yes', and 48.7 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding the awareness about the unemployment allowance provided in MGNREGS. Here, it has to be mentioned that the workers who recorded awareness about the unemployment allowance said that they heard it a joke or a hoax; none of them could even talk or, let alone claim it. All the deliberations and discussions in the Parliament that took place while the promulgation of the NREGA (now MGNREGA) concerning the payment of unemployment allowance, and the claims of the then opposition alleging that the Government is trying to pay workers for just applying and then sitting at home, the Government is making the workers lazy and irresponsible, prove to be meaningless in a situation where even after 15 years (MGNREGA was brought into existence in 2005, so, in 2020, it completes 15 years), the workers are unknown to this provision and have seldom claimed it, here, in the villages of Jharkhand.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 0.9 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 99.1 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding the awareness about extra wages to be paid if work is given beyond 5 kms (10 percent more) provided in MGNREGS. So, the whole purpose of keeping

the workers connected to their own villages by making the administration pay extra wages if work given to them exceeds the stipulated area for work gets defeated, since no worker is aware that the Government has promised to facilitate their work with extra wages for the extra mile. The workers, in desperation, to earn a living, take up works even in farther areas from their villages. Sometimes, it is as far as or nearly so to going to the city to find work. Work in the city pays more than MGNREGA; only if they knew that they could be paid extra would they not withdraw from MGNREGS work due to this situation.

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.2



From the above chart and numbers, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents indicated that they were aware of the minimum wage provided in MGNREGS.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 61.3 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 38.7 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding the awareness about the time limit for employing submission of the application (15 days) provided in MGNREGS. So, with nearly 40 percent of the workers

not knowing the time limit to be provided work by the administration, one can picture how workers wait endlessly for some work to be available to them. Even for the workers, who recorded that they were aware that work had to be provided within 15 days, they could not recall being provided with work within the stipulated period.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 62.6 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 37.4 percent said "no" regarding the awareness about the time limit for payment of wages (15 days) provided in MGNREGS. Thus, this explains the utter disappointment of workers about the delayed payment of wages, since nearly 40 percent of them do not even know that it is their right to get paid on time, which leads to the subsequent inquiry about awareness of the workers about the provision of the compensation to be paid to them in case of delayed payment.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 16.1 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 83.9 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding the awareness about compensation for delayed payment provided in MGNREGS. The data shows to what extent workers (nearly 84 percent) are about providing compensation in case of delayed payment. The Government, while framing the MGNREGA, took into account the technical and practical difficulties and hurdles the workers might have had to go through while availing work under the MGNREGS and thus, accordingly made suitable provisions for the workers to seek work and continue working the MGNREGS, but, due to the lack of awareness the MGNREGA is losing its appeal to the poor workers.

With the observable gaps in awareness, a curiosity arose about the awareness of the very basic provision of availing work under the MGNREGS in the workers under the Act. Thus, it was enquired whether the workers knew that they had to give application for work and the following chart is formulated on the basis of their responses.

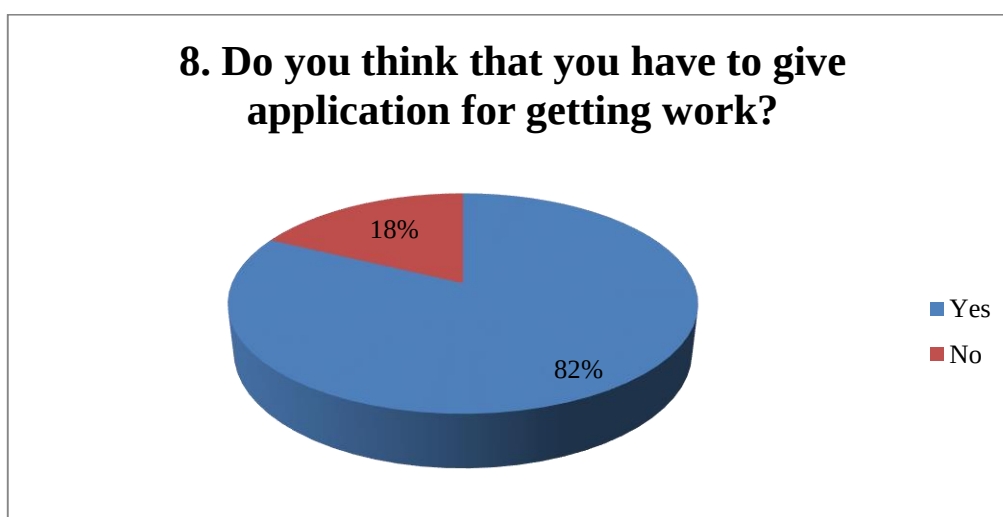
TABLE 6.6

AWARENESS ABOUT GIVING APPLICATION OF WORK

Do they think that they have to give an application for getting work?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	189	82.2	82.2	82.2
No	41	17.8	17.8	100.0
Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.3



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 82 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 18 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding the application for getting work. It is not surprising that even after such a long time of its passing and being brought into effect, some workers still are not aware that they have to apply in the village administration office for getting work. This is partly because of unawareness in general and, more specifically, administrative workers' attitudes toward the workers under the MGNREGS. Although the process of applying for work and availing work has been made simple by the

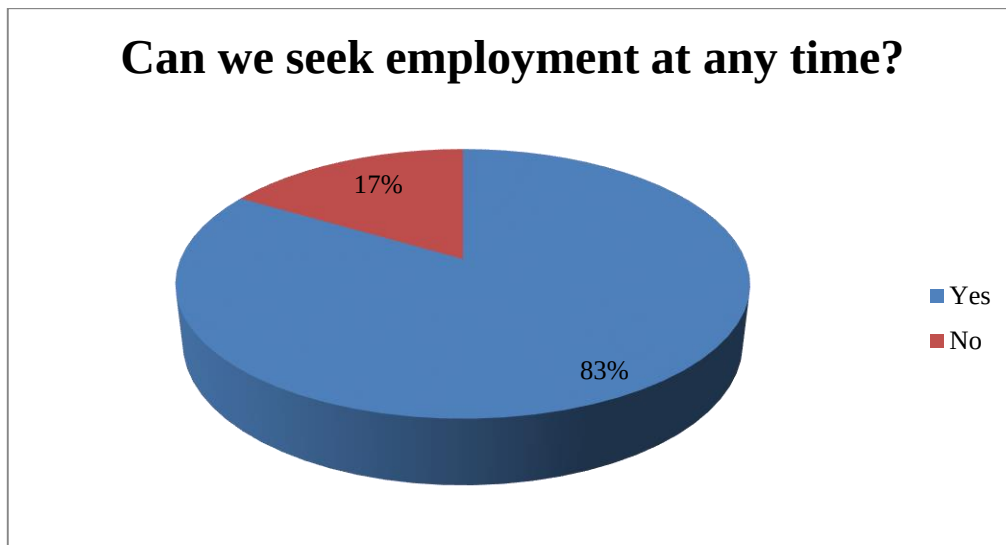
policymakers, the administration has made the same to be complex at various levels, from asking them to come again and again for filing a simple application to demanding money for attaching identification pictures, providing job cards, etc. The process has been made very tasking and tedious for resourceless workers. As a result, the application for availing of work under the MGNREGS, which is a right, has become an obligation done by the administration for them, in reality. No wonder awareness and availing of this right are diminishing with time. Later, it also became essential to know if the workers knew that they could apply for work during the year. Thus, it was enquired, and the following chart is formulated on the basis of their responses.

TABLE 6.7

AWARENESS ABOUT TIME FOR SEEKING EMPLOYMENT

Can we seek employment at any time?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	192	83.5	83.5	83.5
	No	38	16.5	16.5	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.4

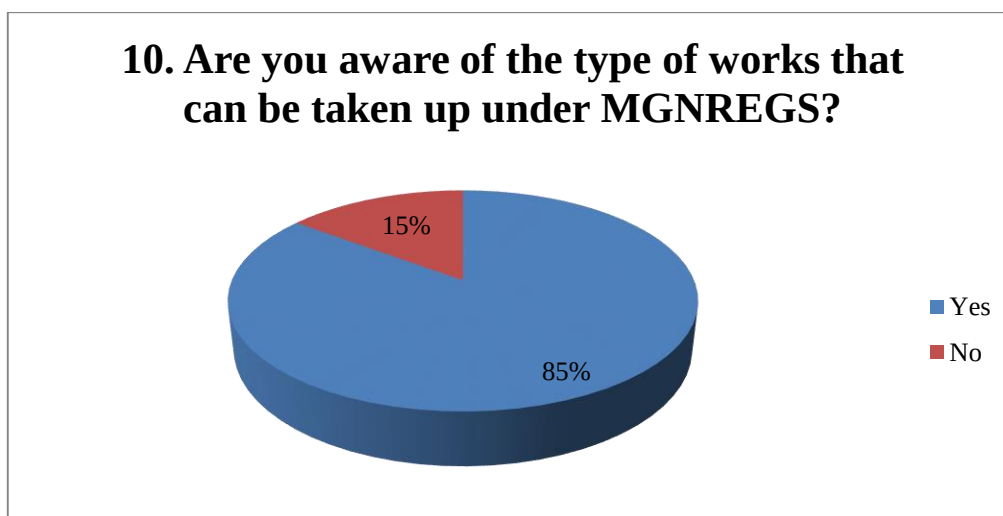


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 83 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 17 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding awareness for seeking employment at any time. The state of non-awareness in workers about the provision for asking for work during any time of the year is also because of the long duration of provision of work taken by the administration to provide work and also the non-availability of work even after application for months and months, this makes them believe that work cannot be asked at any time of the year.

It was also essential to know whether the workers were known to the types of works that could be taken under the MGNREGS. The following chart is made per their responses:

TABLE 6.8**AWARENESS ABOUT THE TYPE OF WORK THAT CAN BE TAKEN UP**

Are you aware of the type of works that can be taken up under MGNREGS?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	196	85.2	85.2	85.2
	No	34	14.8	14.8	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.5

From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 85 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 15 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding awareness of the type of works that can be taken up under MGNREGS. The village and district level authorities boast and claim regular MGNREGA orientation and awareness workshops and programmes; the workers still find it difficult to understand and remember the kinds of works undertaken under the MGNREGS. Over the years, the scope and kind of work that can be undertaken have

been expanding according to the workers' needs and requirements and the villages falling under different regions of the country. Kinds of preferable and suitable works vary from region to region in the country; for instance, in Jharkhand, soil conservation works have gained much importance due to its geographical makeup (it is made up of mostly plateau area and the soil is rocky, which is unable to hold water and retain moisture for a long time, which leads to irrigation issues for the farmers in the region, and, MGNREGS works like Dobha creation, trench bunding, etc. help the farmers to be able to create their own irrigation sources). There are many other new kinds of works that have been initiated in the State, multiple cropping, mango orchards plantations, etc., in the community-owned or individually owned lands. However, not many workers were aware of these.

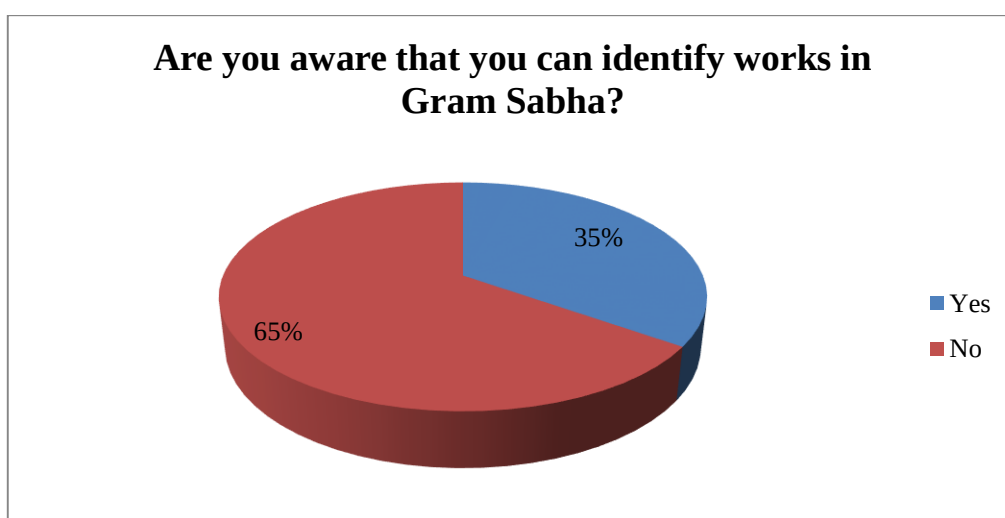
The following chart is made based on the workers' responses when they were asked about whether or not they knew that they could identify works under the Gram Sabha.

TABLE 6.9

AWARENESS ABOUT THE IDENTIFICATION OF WORK UNDER THE GRAM SABHA

Are you aware that you can identify works in Gram Sabha?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	80	34.8	34.8	34.8
	No	150	65.2	65.2	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.6



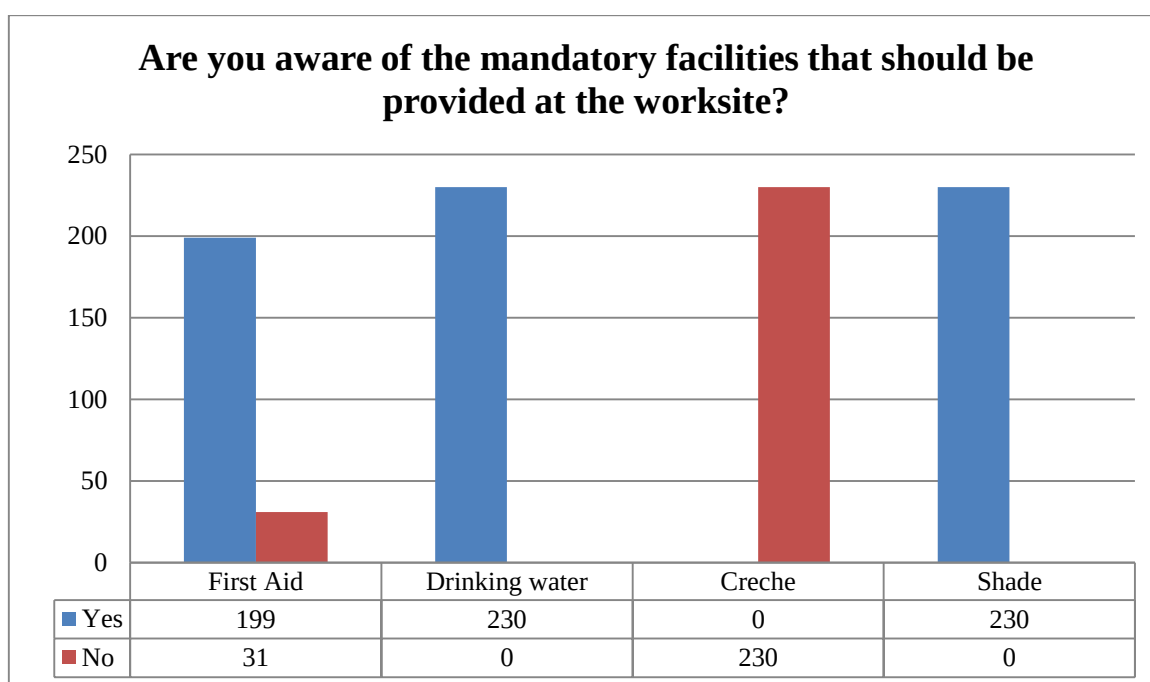
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 35 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 65 percent respondents said 'no' regarding awareness to identify works in Gram Sabha. The very basic purpose of the MGNREGS was the simple identification and consecutive selection of works by the workers in their own Gram Panchayat so that they are not pushed out of their understanding zone (needs and requirements of themselves or their own village). This purpose is being defeated almost in all possible ways, as, from the data, we can see how large proportion (65 percent) of the villagers still do not know to identify work in their own Gram Panchayat.

PART III

6.3 AWARENESS OF RIGHTS AND ENTITLEMENTS UNDER THE MGNREGS

The schemes formulated under the MGNREGA are known as the MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Schemes). The implementation of these schemes involves effective utilization of certain crucial entitlements and provisions, like worksites facilities.

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.7



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 86 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 14 percent said 'no' regarding the awareness about first aid that should be provided at the worksite. Most of the workers knew that they had to be provided with basic first aid in case of any mishap in the worksite. However, none could recall any incident of the provision of first aid to any of them, in case of any major or minor injury in the worksite, at the most, they were transferred to a local medical facility (which are mostly inadequate or inept in providing medical aid in case of major injuries or accidents). The injuries often worsen due to the absence of immediate first aid, which otherwise could have been taken care of with simple and handy first aid.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'yes' that they are aware of drinking water provided at the worksite, and water pots could be seen in almost all of the worksites.

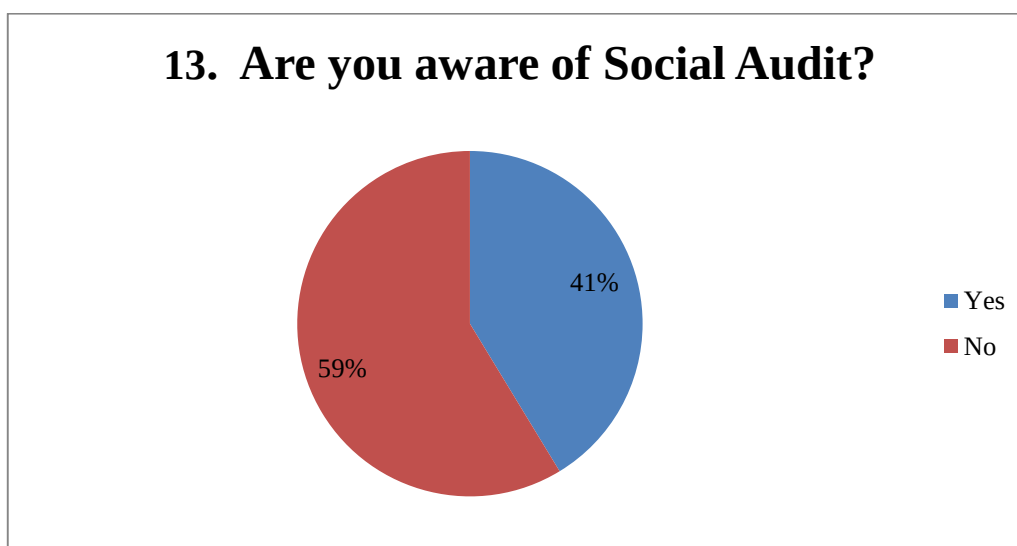
Of the 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no' that they are not aware of crèche that should be provided at the worksite. None of the workers said they were aware that it was their right to have a worksite creche. While discussing this, many women workers lamented that if only they knew that it could have been there or the administration had to provide this facility to them, they would not have had to leave work under the MGNREGS. Some of them recalled incidents of injuries and other incidents that their small children had to undergo on the worksite, after which they decided not to work anymore. Some older women said they wanted to work under the MGNREGS but could not work due to work's nature. During the discussion with them, a viable solution came to light, which was the employment of these women in the crèches as part of MGNREGA work, where they could take care of the women workers' children at the site. Thus, the complete unawareness about the provision of crèches has marred many existing and new employment opportunities.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'yes' that they are aware of shade provided at the worksite. Although there was awareness about the construction of shades at the worksite, the structure that was erected was shabby and hardly served any purpose, they mostly constructed of haystacks, dried tree branches or bleak old bamboos stick and some waste or discarded materials from the worksites, and, these would often fall off or get damaged at times of rain or strong winds. Thus, these shades have been serving little or no purpose all along in the worksites.

After recording the workers' responses to the facilities provided under the MGNREGS, it became essential to see whether they were aware of the Social Audit provision. Thus, the following chart is composed of their response.

TABLE 6.10**AWARENESS ABOUT SOCIAL AUDIT**

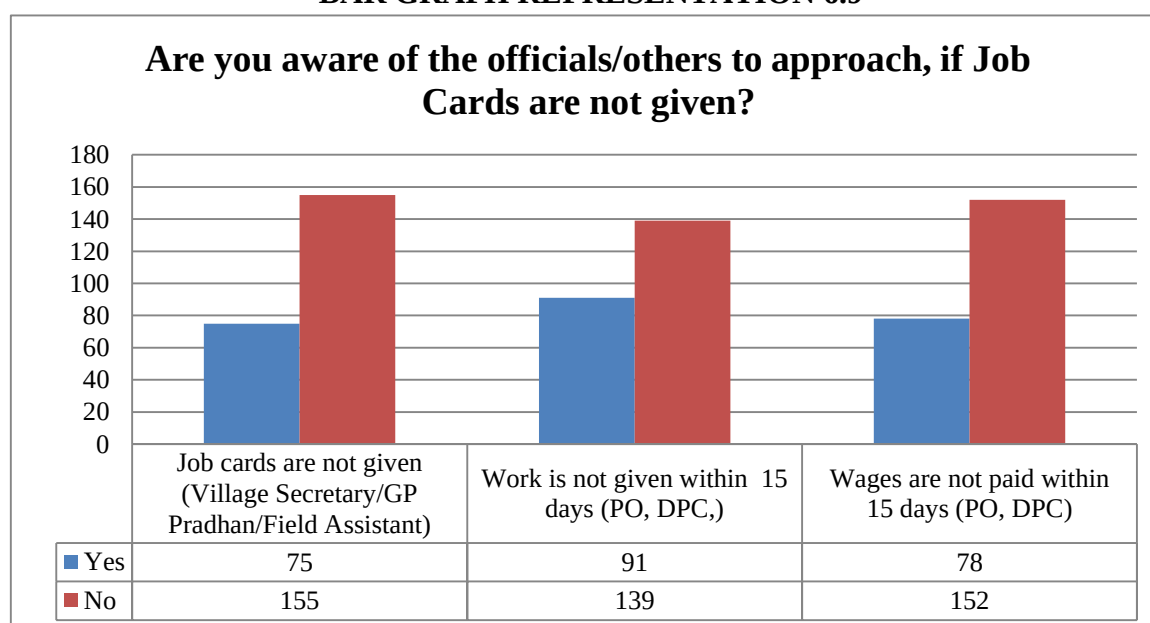
Are you aware of Social Audit:					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	95	41.3	41.3	41.3
	No	135	58.7	58.7	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.8

From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 41 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 59 percent of respondents said 'no' regarding awareness of Social Audit. Social Audit is one of the essential features of the MGNREGA that has to be carried out in every village where the MGNREGS operates. It was conceived that the social audit would enable the workers to come forward and discuss work, working conditions, and other critical work-related issues under the MGNREGS with administrative authorities. In turn, the authorities would help them out, find solutions or devise plans or strategies for better

implementation of the MGNREGS. It was also expected that these social audits would become a platform for the workers to report or bring into notice the discrepancies in carrying out the work. However, the level of awareness shows that more than half of the workers do not know about this provision. Even those who are aware of this cannot be said to have complete awareness about it. Hardly any complaints are registered, any issues are resolved, or any interest in making the workers much more aware of their rights under the MGNREGS. Moreover, during the discussions with the workers, it could be comprehended that the workers thought of these social audits as mere socialization and discussion meetings, meetings where they most of all convey their needs or needs of the villages; they hardly thought of these as a serious exercise to enable checks and balances in the implementation of the MGNREGS. The workers did not use this provision to demand accountability from the administrative officials involved and claim their rights and entitlements from them and the system.

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.9



In the sample of 230 respondents, 33 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 67 percent said 'no' regarding the official's/others' awareness to approach if job cards are not given. The villagers

had no idea about whom to approach in a case where they applied for a job card but were not provided with one.

One of the most significant issues that the villagers face is the ambiguity regarding the officials to approach in case of any confusion or complaint while working under the MGNREGS. Since there is no clarity in the chain of command among the officials responsible for implementing MGNREGS, the workers are clueless about whom to report or consult regarding any MGNREGS related matter. According to them, no official or authority takes up the responsibility to listen to them; the workers feel discouraged and disoriented; they give up work between or even before taking up the work. One of the workers recalled the non-payment of material wages; he mentioned that he continuously went on from one office to another until he gave up on claiming his right. No authority owed up to this responsibility, and he stopped work in the middle of a taken-up work.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 40 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 60 percent said 'no' regarding the official's/others' awareness to approach if work is not given within 15 days. The same scenario existed when work was not provided within the stipulated period of 15 days (for provision of work). During the interviews, it was recorded that most works were not provided within this period, and all they could do was to wait endlessly for them to be given work. They had no awareness about the officials' accountability to assist them in availing work within the stipulated period. Moreover, it was reported that even after repeated applications for work and request for taking up a certain kind of work in a village, the authorities would generally not take into account these requests and go on to create or devise works according to their own comfort or availability of already stocked up raw materials. This again was seen defeating the whole purpose of MGNREGA works, where work was supposed to be designed by the workers for themselves and their villages.

In the sample of 230 respondents, 34 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 66 percent said 'no' regarding the official's/others' awareness to approach if wages are not paid within 15 days. Again, there was no clarity among the workers about whom to approach or report non-payment of wages within the due period.

All the above factors have discouraged the workers from continuing to work under MGNREGS. The workers either withdraw from work mid-way or stop working towards completing work; these disappointed workers further refrain from seeking work under the MGNREGS.

PART IV

6.4 MGNREGS PARTICIPATION

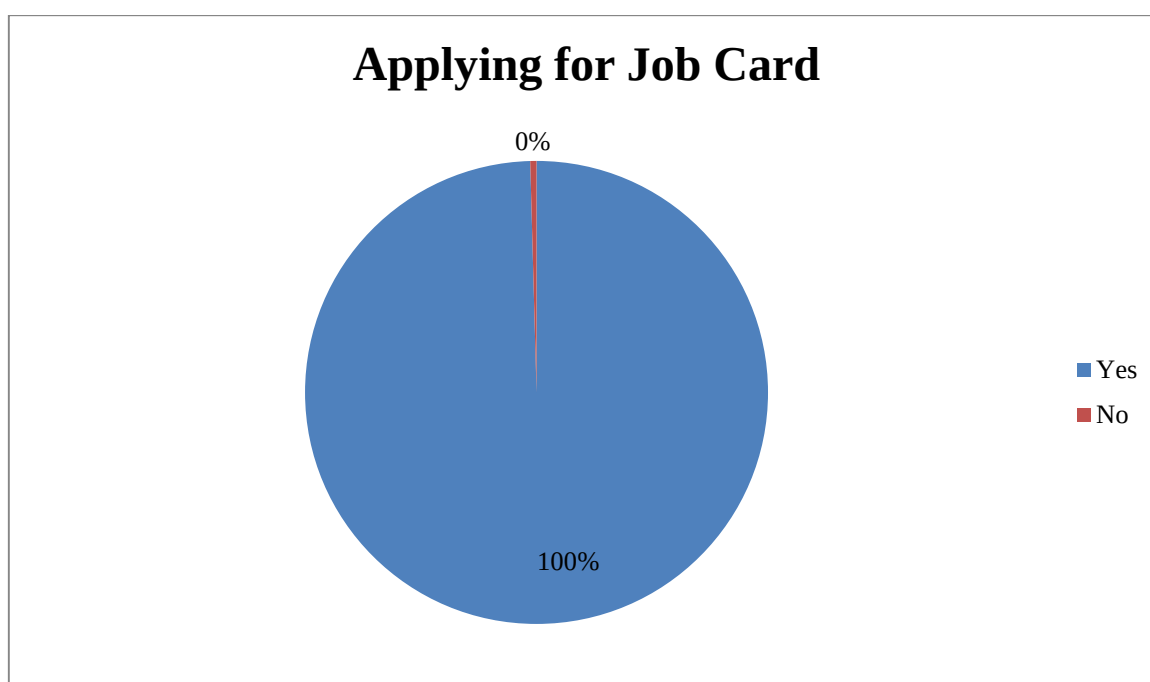
It was essential to understand the extent and pattern and the extent of the workers' participation under the Act, as the research objective primarily to understand why more and more workers are moving away from the MGNREGA.

TABLE 6.11
PARTICIPATION IN REGARD TO PROCESS OF MGNREGS

Applying for Job Card					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	229	99.6	99.6	99.6
	No	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

The first step towards availing under the Act is applying for a job card, which is why it was inquired about.

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.10

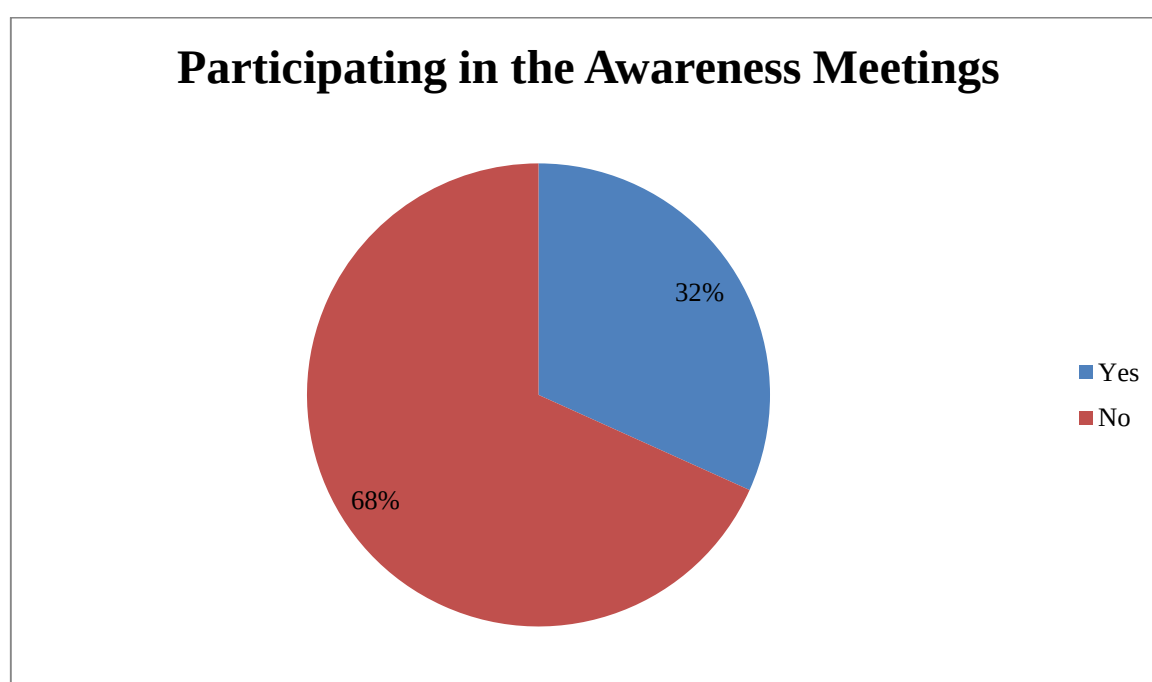


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 0 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 100 percent respondent who said 'no.' Thus, we can see that all the workers recorded that they have had registered or applied for work under the MGNREGA at some point in time; whether they have availed work or continue to work under the MGNREGA is another question. Here, it must be noted that since all the respondents are workers under the Act, all of them have at some point of time applied, which is why the statistics show 100 percent application for work by the workers. However, it does not mean that they are continuously applying for work or applying in the current year.

TABLE 6.12
PARTICIPATION IN THE AWARENESS MEETINGS

16. Participating in the Awareness Meetings					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	73	31.7	31.7	31.7
	No	157	68.3	68.3	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.11



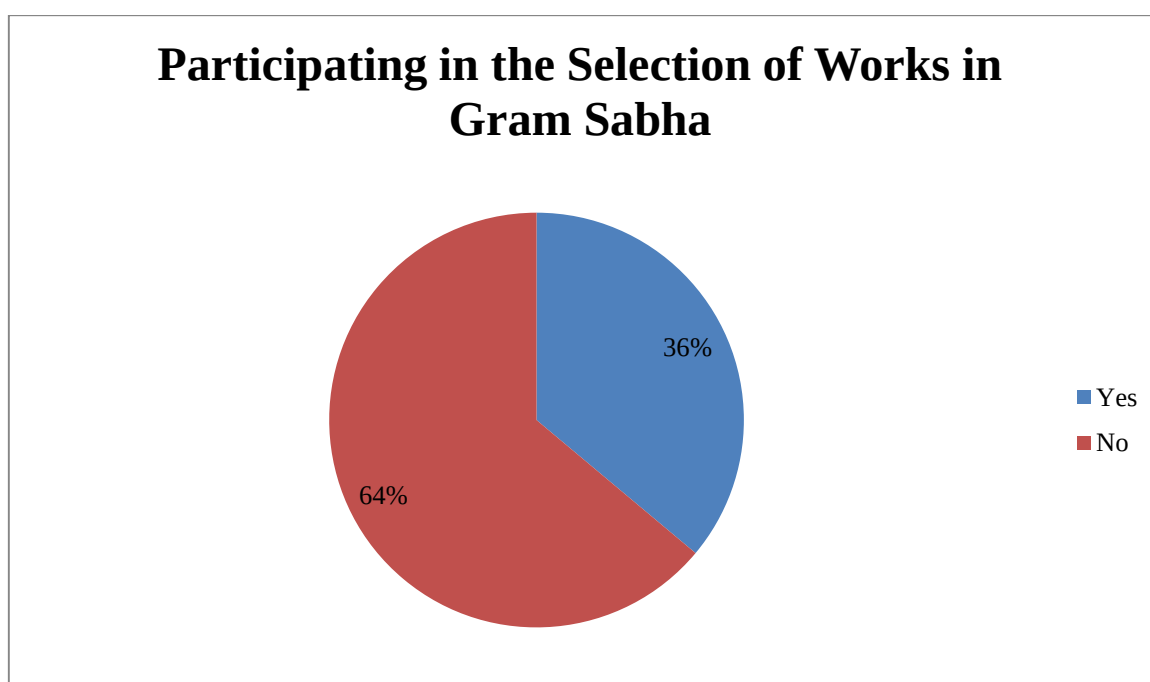
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 32 percent of respondents said 'yes' and 68 percent of respondents said 'no'. This is a similar scenario as the case of participation in the social audit meetings. Around 70 percent of the workers recorded that they had not even participated in any awareness meeting about the MGNREGS. This explains the level of exposure and awareness of MGNREGA rights and entitlements

among the workers. They reported that they were either not informed about the holding of these or were short of resources to be able to join these; for example, this kind of meeting was either held at the Panchayat Bhawan or at the Block Offices, which were mostly far off from the villages and they had no means of conveyance to go that distance. One of the workers said that they hardly earned Rs. 150-200 per day as daily wages, and the fare to go to such distance would use up not less than 50 rupees (to and fro the distance), so they deliberately avoided going to these. One of the workers said that these meetings were held on working days, where generally they had to go for daily wage or other work; they could not afford to skip their daily work for the sake of these works. One of them said that the time for these meets was at the morning or afternoon hours when these workers were engaged in their daily work; since these workers are mostly those workers who work on hand to mouth basis, skipping one of work would cost them the meal for that day, for them and their family, which, they could not afford.

TABLE 6.13
PARTICIPATION IN THE SELECTION OF WORKS IN GRAM SABHA

Participating in the Selection of Works in Gram Sabha					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	83	36.1	36.1	36.1
	No	147	63.9	63.9	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.12

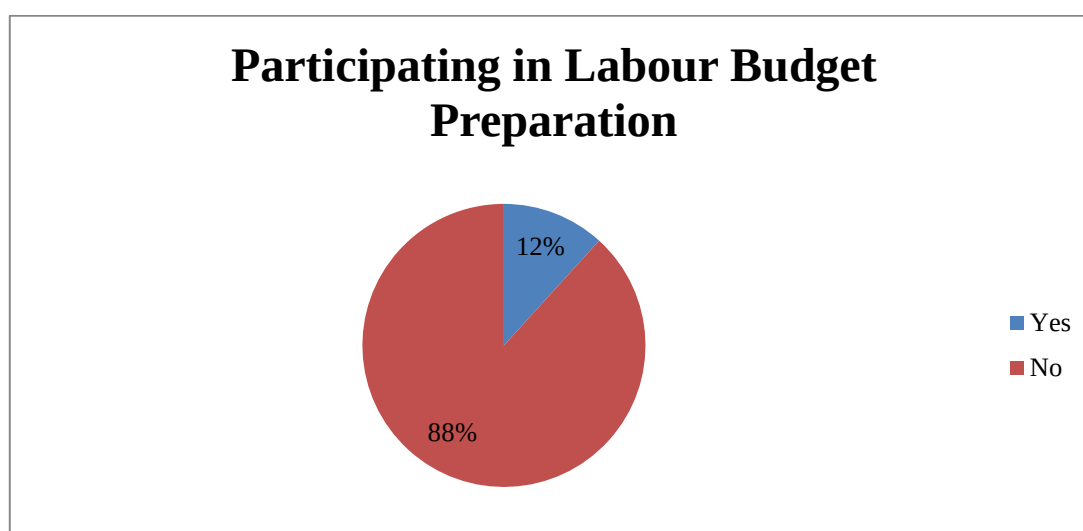


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 36 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 64 percent of respondents said 'no.' The question of participation of the workers in selecting works in Gram Sabha can be understood with the factors and circumstances explained about the workers' participation in awareness meets or social audits. To add to these circumstances, the villagers discussed that their opinions, needs, or requirements were often ignored at the administration level. They felt side-lined. They did not have the zeal to go for the meetings held to select works at the Gram Sabha.

TABLE 6.14
PARTICIPATING IN LABOUR BUDGET

Participating in Labor Budget Preparation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	27	11.7	11.7	11.7
	No	203	88.3	88.3	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.13



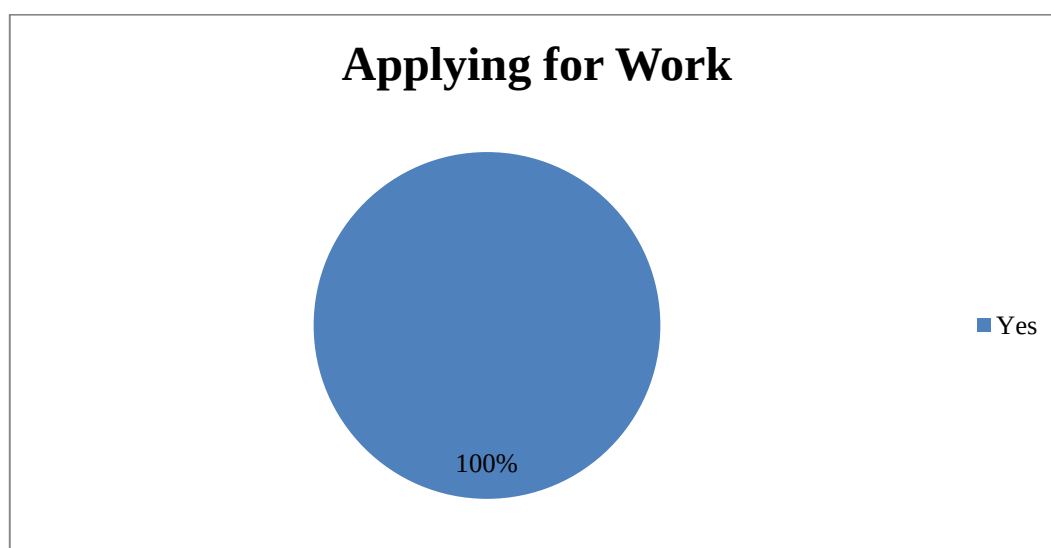
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 12 percent of respondents said 'yes,' and 88 percent of respondents said 'no.' The data above implies that around 90 percent of workers did not participate in preparing the labor budget. Conceptually MGNREGA is supposed to be a worker's Act wherein the workers decide schemes and work, ask for raw materials and tools, and accordingly prepare labor budget along with the administrative officials. However, in reality, these workers claimed that they were neither informed nor consulted in doing the same. The administration mostly decided the schemes and budget, and they had abided by it. This also points out to grave deviation from the spirit of

MGNREGA, where workers had to play the instrumental role in the implementation, and the administration had to facilitate their plans and demands.

TABLE 6.15
APPLYING FOR WORK

19. Applying for Work					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.14

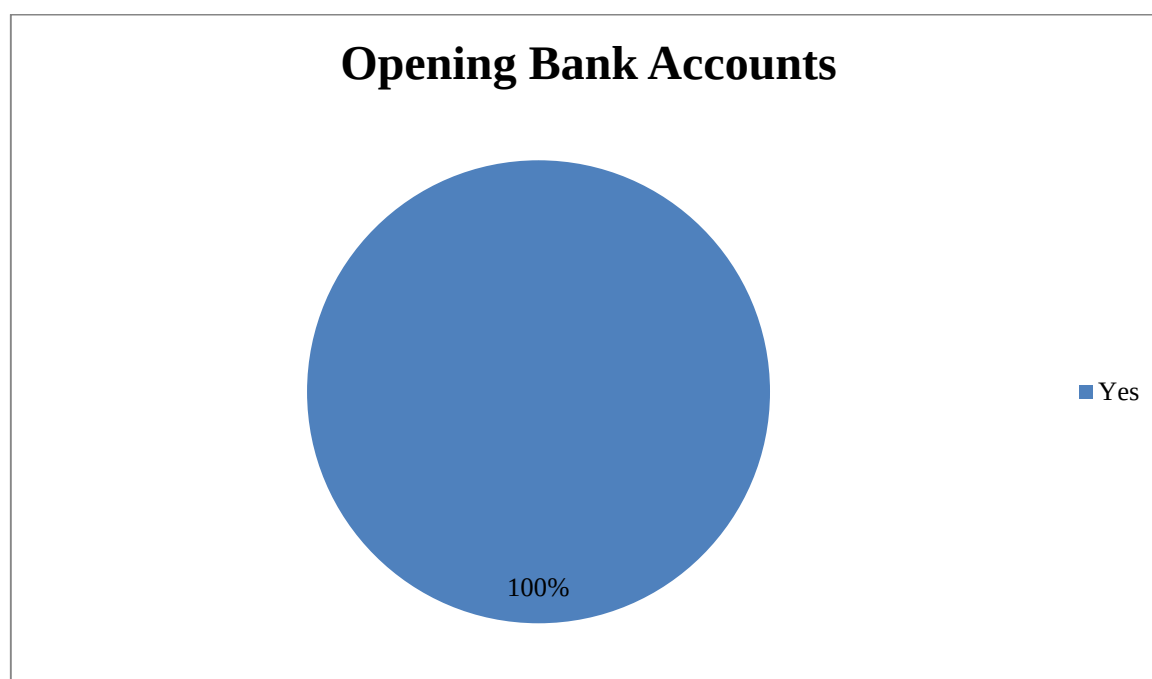


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, there are 100 percent of all respondents who said 'yes.' All the workers recorded that they applied for work under the MGNREGA at some point or the other.

TABLE 6.16
OPENING BANK ACCOUNTS

Opening Bank Accounts					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.15

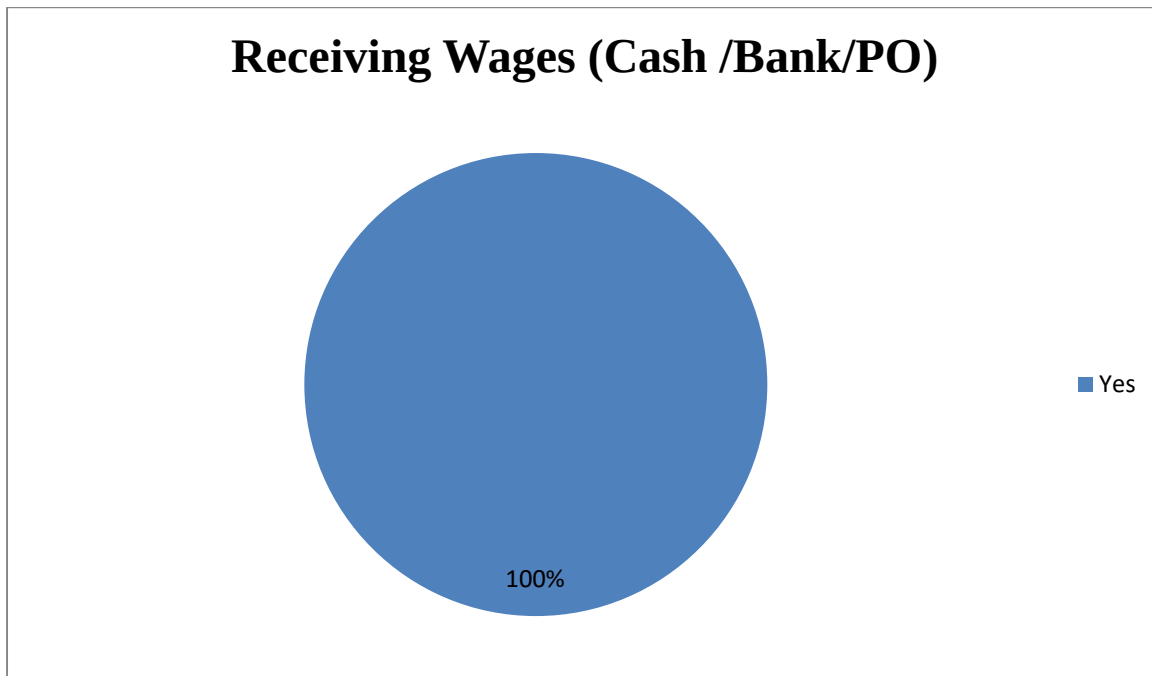


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, there are 100 percent of all respondents said yes. All the workers said they had opened a bank account for the remuneration from MGNREGA works or already had bank accounts that they linked to their MGNREGA work account.

TABLE 6.17
RECEIVING WAGES

Receiving Wages (Cash /Bank/ P.O.)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.16

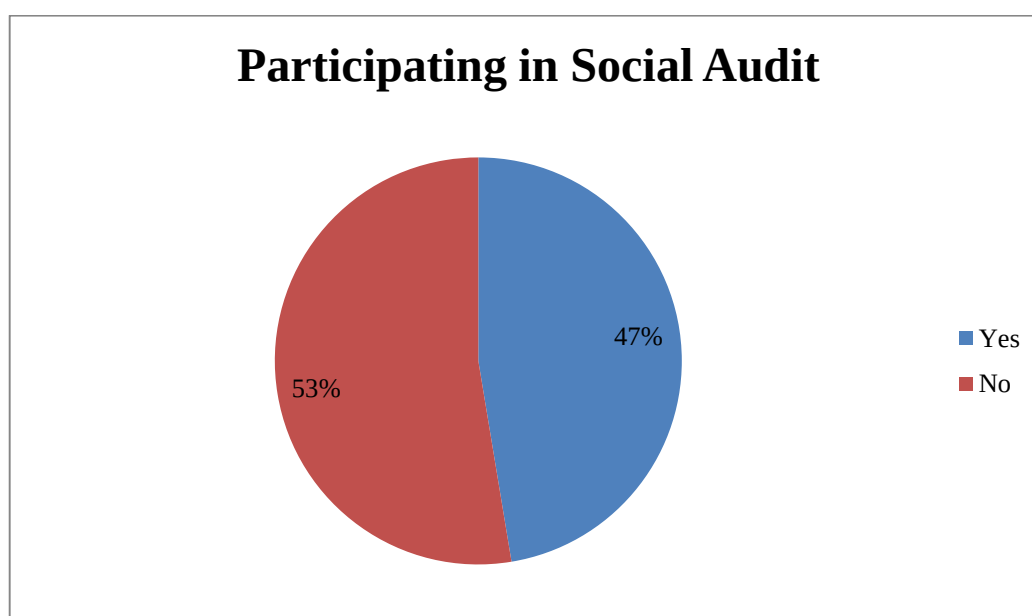


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, there are 100 percent of all respondents said 'yes'. All the workers recorded that they had received remuneration in the bank accounts; however, that has started to arise off late is related to the linkage of Aadhaar card and mobile number to their bank accounts. Many of the workers noticed the issues they faced while linking their bank account with Aadhaar. This problem has been discussed later in the chapter.

TABLE 6.18
PARTICIPATING IN SOCIAL AUDIT

Participating in Social Audit					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	109	47.4	47.4	47.4
	No	121	52.6	52.6	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.17



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 47 percent of respondents said yes, and 53 percent of respondents said no. more than 50 percent of the workers recorded that they had not participated in the social audits. This can also be understood in light of the awareness about social audits among the workers.

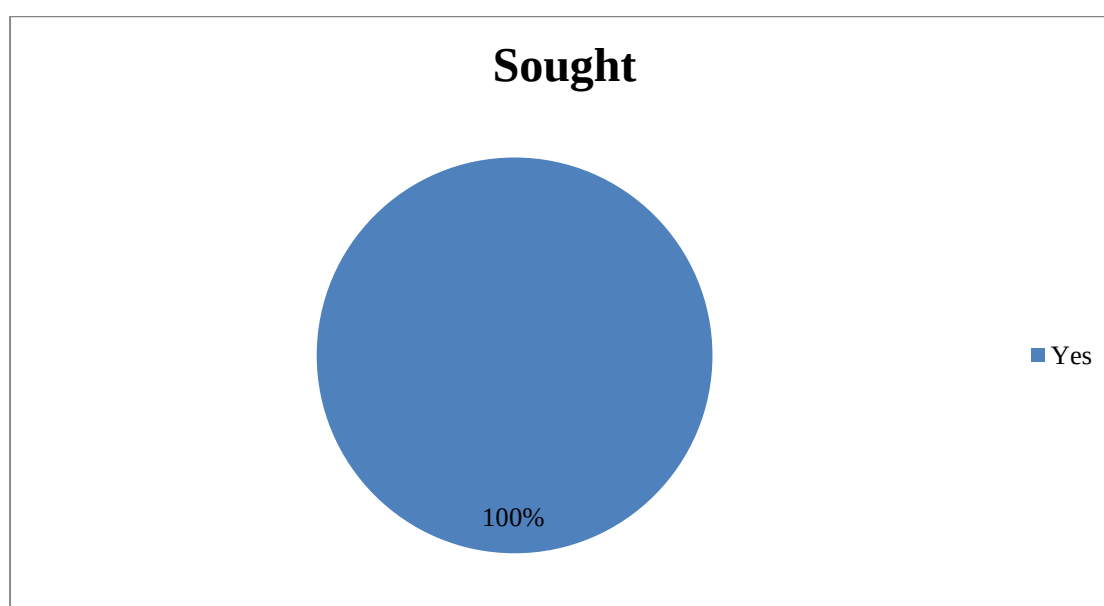
It became important to see if all the workers who sought work under the Act have got work under the MGNREGS. Initially, it was intended to see how many of the workers sought vis a

vis how many were provided with work. Participation of the household in the employment provided in MGNREGS and workers who have sought work under the Act.

TABLE 6.19
WORKERS SEEKING WORK

Sought					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.18



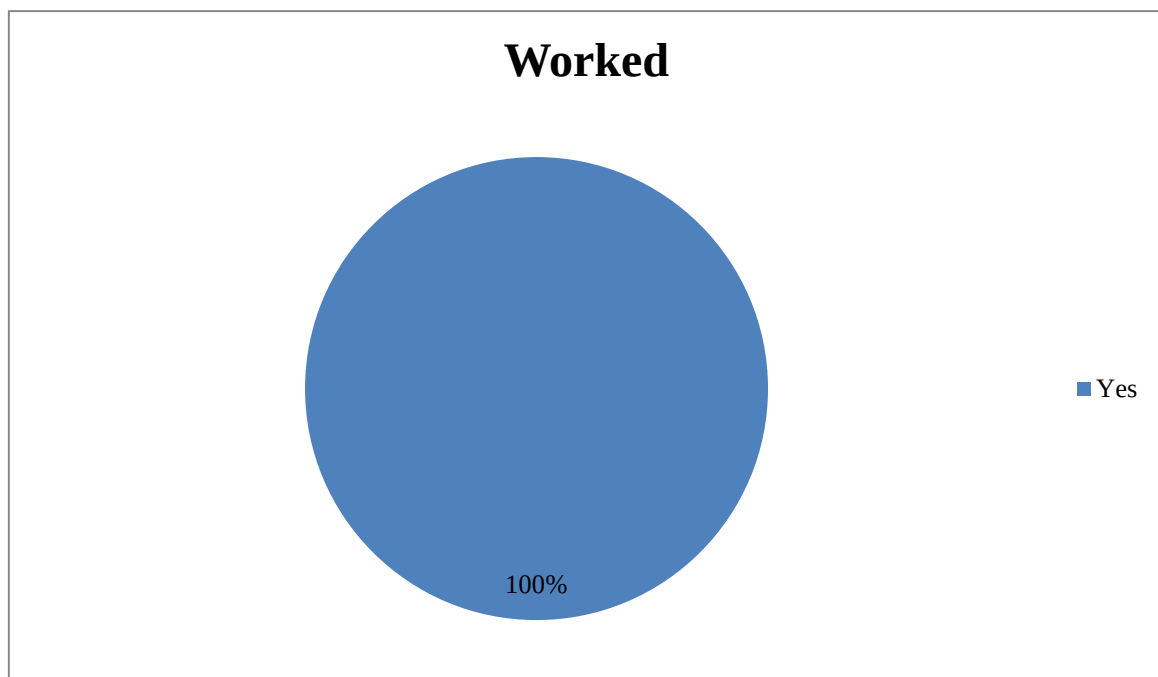
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, there are 100 percent of all respondents said 'yes.' All the interviewed workers recorded that they had sought work under the MGNREGA, but it should be taken into account that this data is for seeking work under MGNREGA at any point in time. The workers could not recall how many times they had applied for work, also, whether they had applied in the current year or the

previous years. It was very difficult to handle this question technically, so the response was recorded as seeking work even once under the Act.

TABLE 6.20
WORKERS HAVING BEING WORKED UNDER THE MGNREGS

Worked					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.19



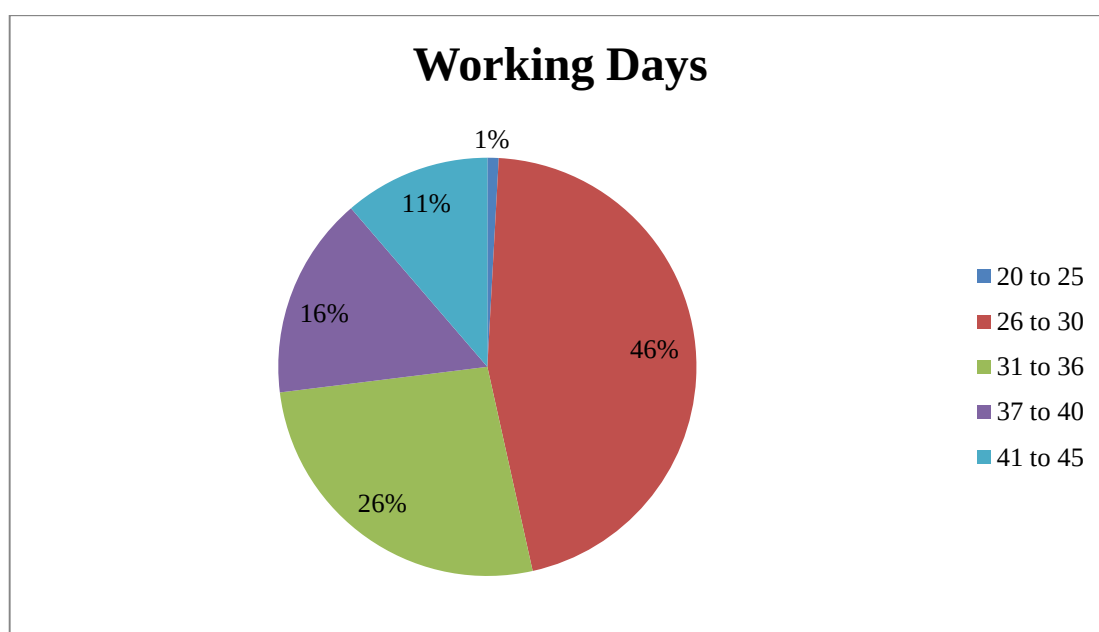
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, there is 100 percent of all respondents said 'yes.' Like the data above, about seeking work under the MGNREGA, the workers claimed they worked under it. It is also important to note that this data is for workers who have worked under the MGNREGS for even one time. As pointed out earlier, it was intended to see the amount of work provided vis a vis work that the worker had sought, but it was difficult for the workers to respond in exact numbers when they sought work

and got to work. They could just tell that they had asked for work a more significant number of times than the number of times they got to work. To further solve this confusion, officials involved in keeping track of the work of the MGNREGA in the block level administration were asked if they could make available data for work sought by the workers and the number of times they were provided work. To this question, they blatantly replied that the workers were provided work every time they had asked for work. This was in complete contrast to the workers' response, who pointed out that they were provided not work every time they asked for sought to work. Although all of them had worked once or more under the MGNREGS and it is, however, another matter of concern whether they continued to work, found meaningful employment under the Act, they could work under satisfactory work conditions and could avail or continue to work for full 100 days of work guaranteed under the MGNREGA. These are discussed later in the chapter.

TABLE 6.21
NUMBER OF WORKING DAYS

No. of Working Days/100					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20 to 25	2	.9	.9	.9
	26 to 30	105	45.7	45.7	46.5
	31 to 36	61	26.5	26.5	73.0
	37 to 40	36	15.7	15.7	88.7
	41 to 45	26	11.3	11.3	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.20



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 100 respondents, 1 percent of respondents worked for 20 to 25 days, 46 percent of respondents worked for 26 to 30 days, 26 percent of respondents worked for 31 to 36 days, 16 percent respondents worked for 37 to 40 days, and 11 percent respondents worked for 41 to 45 days. From the above data, we can see that the maximum of workers (46 percent) got to work under MGNREGA for just 26 to 30 days. This is way below the maximum number of mandays for work provided under the MGNREGA. Next comes working under the MGNREGS for 31 to 36 days, accounting for 26 percent of the worker's population. So, we can well notice the low and declining mandays under the MGNREGA.

PART V

6.5 CAUSES OF DECREASING PARTICIPATION OF THE WORKERS UNDER THE MGNREGA

From the workers' above-discussed responses, it can also be understood that the urge in workers to work under the MGNREGA had not died, all of them wanted to work, and all complained

of insufficient provision of work. They distanced themselves from working under the Act and the causes were divided into involuntary and voluntary causes.

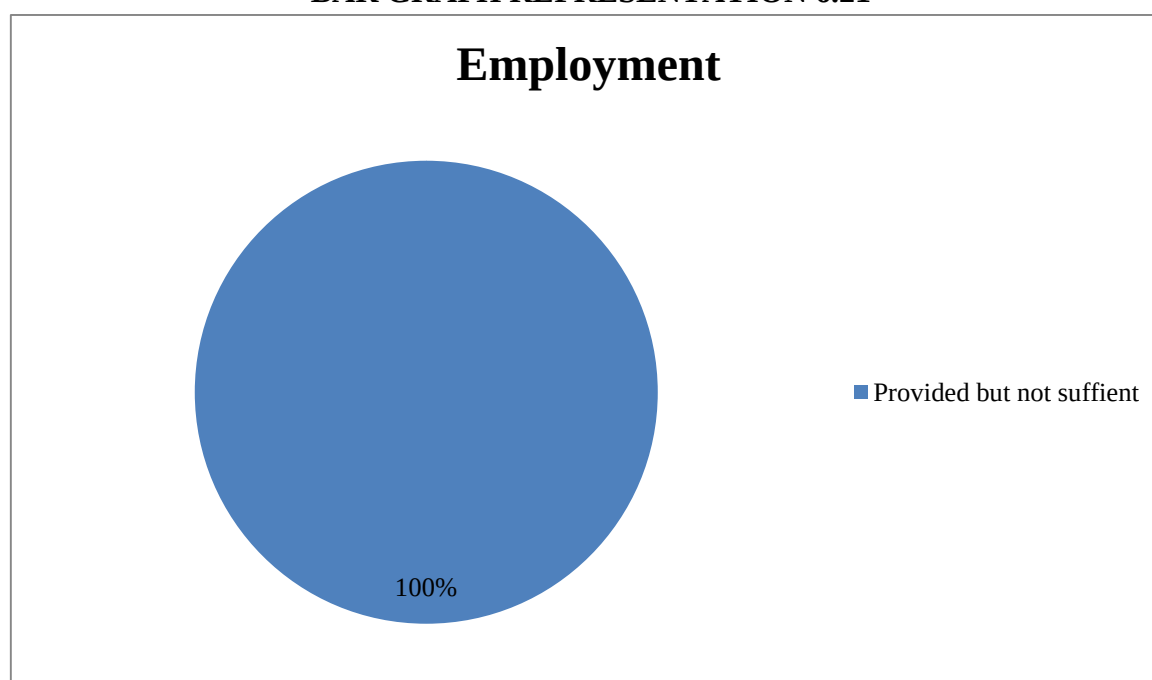
6.5.1 Involuntary Withdrawal of the Workers from Working Under the Act

This section of data deals with the causes that compelled the workers from opting out of work under the Act. In the previous chapters, we have seen that more and more workers are moving away from the MGNREGS, the causes that have discouraged the workers, workers can be many, out of which, the crucial ones have been discussed below.

TABLE 6.22
REASONS FOR INVOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL OF THE WORKERS FROM
WORKING UNDER THE MGNREGS

Employment					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Provided but not sufficient	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.21

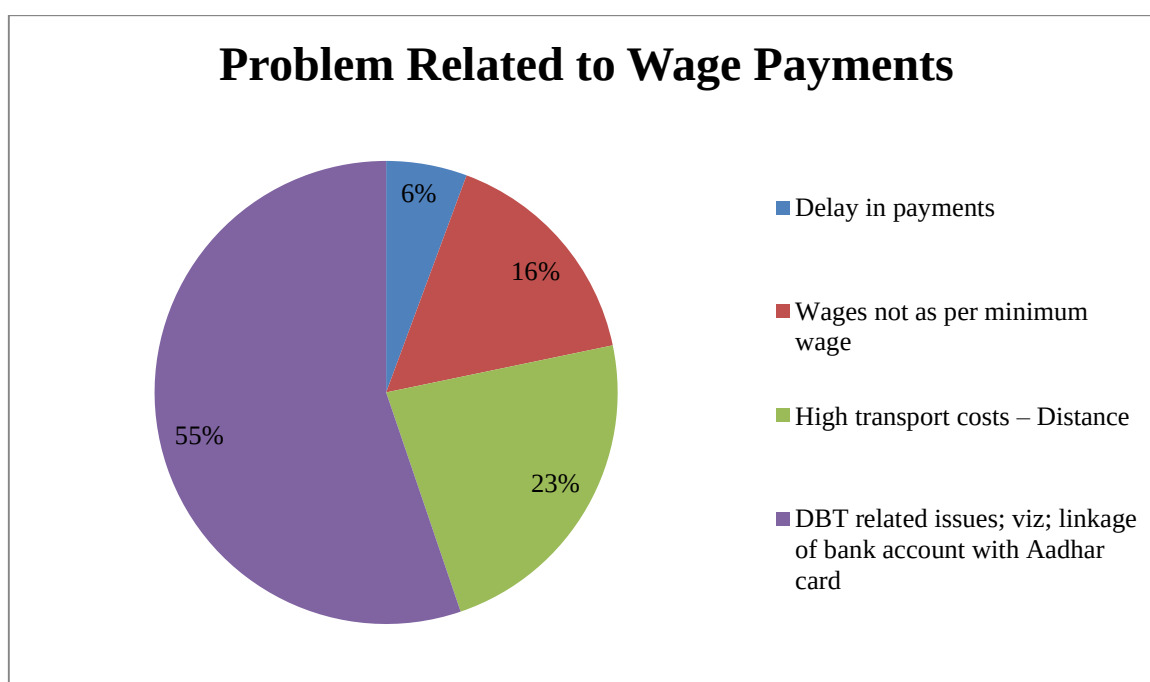


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents who said provided but not sufficient. Thus, the data above signifies that although all the workers have sought and worked under the MGNREGS, none of them recorded that they were satisfied with the amount of work that has been provided under it. This claim of the workers is also supported by the number of days they have worked under it. Thus, they slowly have begun to drift apart from seeking or continuing work under the MGNREGS since, it is insufficient and non-dependable.

TABLE 6.23
PROBLEM-RELATED TO WAGE PAYMENTS

Problem Related to Wage Payments					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Delay in payments	13	5.7	5.7	5.7
	Wages not as per minimum wage	37	16.1	16.1	21.7
	High transport costs – Distance	53	23.0	23.0	44.8
	DBT related issues; viz; linkage of bank account with Aadhaar card	127	55.2	55.2	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.22

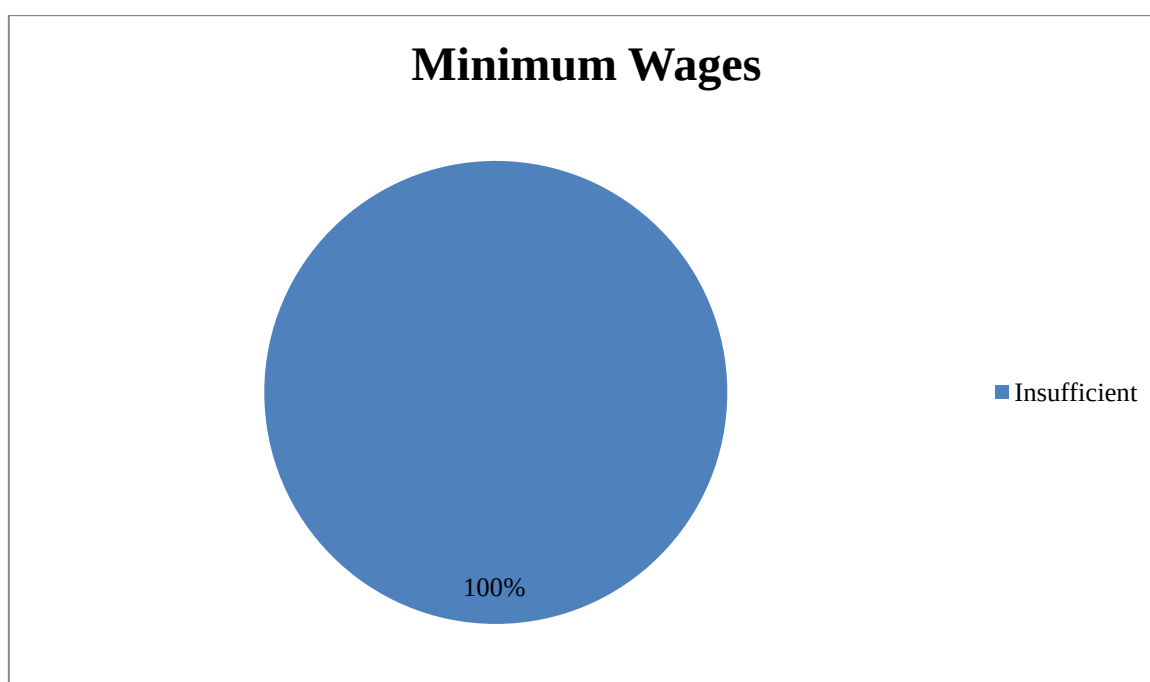


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 6 percent respondents said delay in payments, 16 percent respondents said wages not as per minimum wage, 23 percent respondents said high transport costs, and 55 percent respondents said D.B.T. related issues, viz; linkage of bank account with Aadhaar card.

TABLE 6.24
ISSUES WITH MINIMUM WAGES

Minimum Wages					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Insufficient	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.23



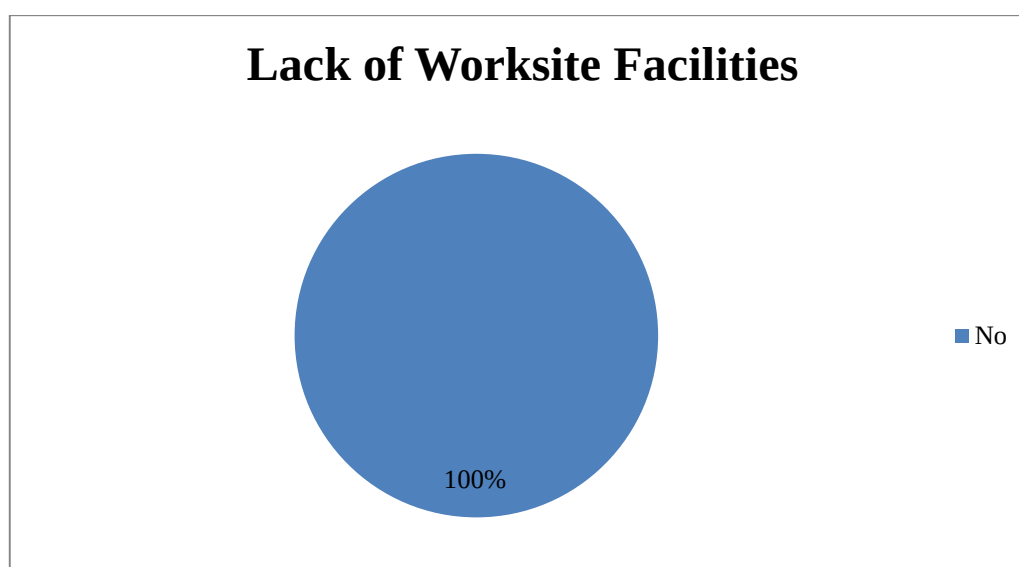
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said insufficient wages. All the workers recorded that the wages they were paid were insufficient for carrying out their livelihood and had been demanding raising the minimum wages. Although the workers were keen on working under MGNREGS, the insufficient minimum wages acted as a factor for seeking work other than MGNREGS. They expressed that only if the Government could raise the minimum wages would they be able to take up MGNREGS work as their basic employment, but, due to lower wages, they had to make it a secondary or no choice for employment.

TABLE 6.25

ISSUES WITH WORKSITE FACILITIES

Lack of Worksite Facilities					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.24



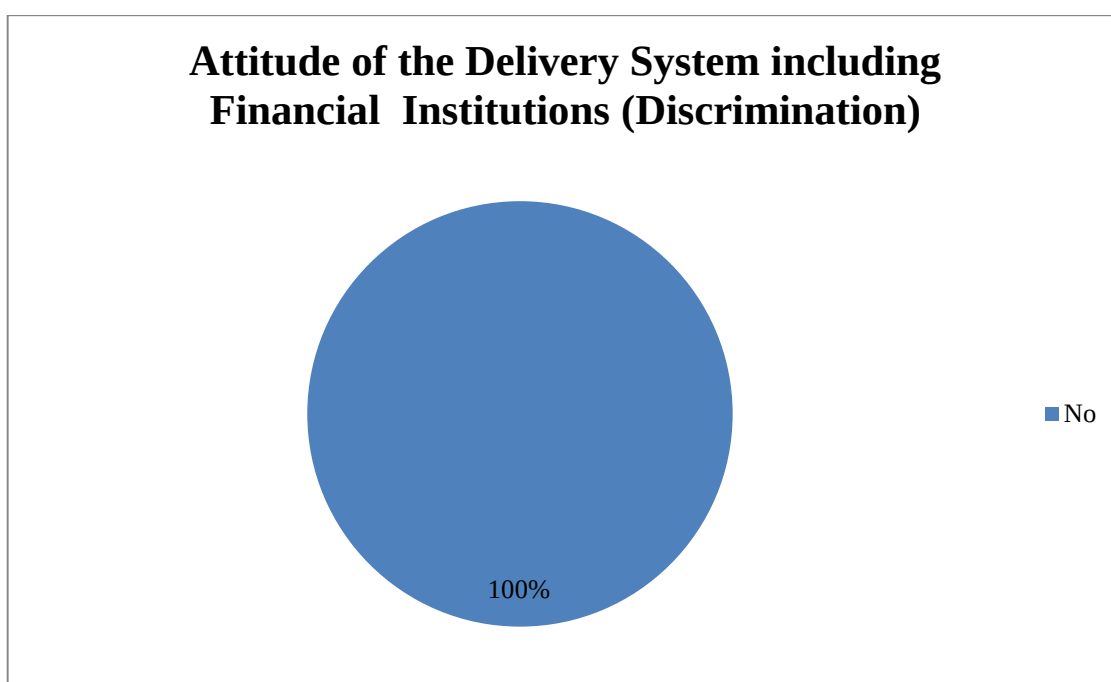
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no.' The workers did not express complaint against the absence of worksite facilities partially because of the lack of awareness about their rights and entitlements as worksite facilities and rest because they were keener on earning livelihood more than anything else for that matter lack of worksite facilities.

TABLE 6.26

ISSUES WITH DELIVERY SYSTEM

The Attitude of the Delivery System including Financial Institutions (Discrimination)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.25

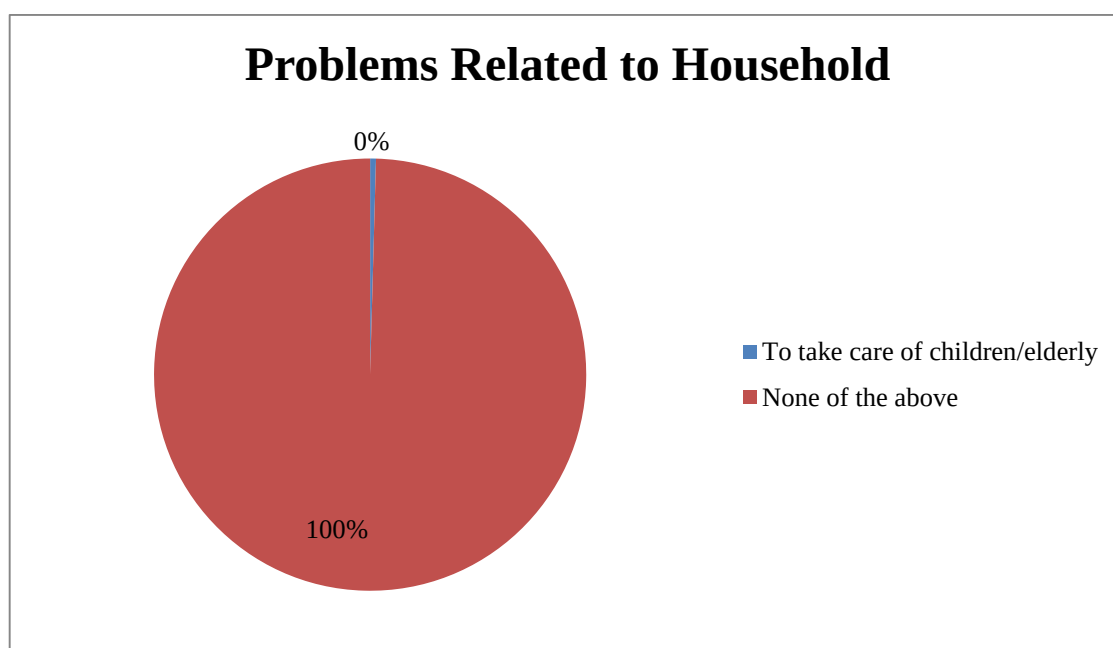


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said no. Although the workers did not record any instance or incident of discrimination in worksites, they expressed their disappointment about the indifference of financial delivery personnel or institutions accounting for delaying in wage payments, wrongful payment due to confusion and misinformation about Aadhaar card and bank account linkage. They expected the officials to help and guide them about the procedure and check the linkage procedure with them because they could often make mistakes in the process, resulting in wrongful or stuck-up payment.

TABLE 6.27
ISSUES RELATED TO THE HOUSEHOLD

Problems Related to Household					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To take care of children/elderly	1	0.4	0.4	0.4
	None of the above	229	99.6	99.6	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	100.0	

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.26

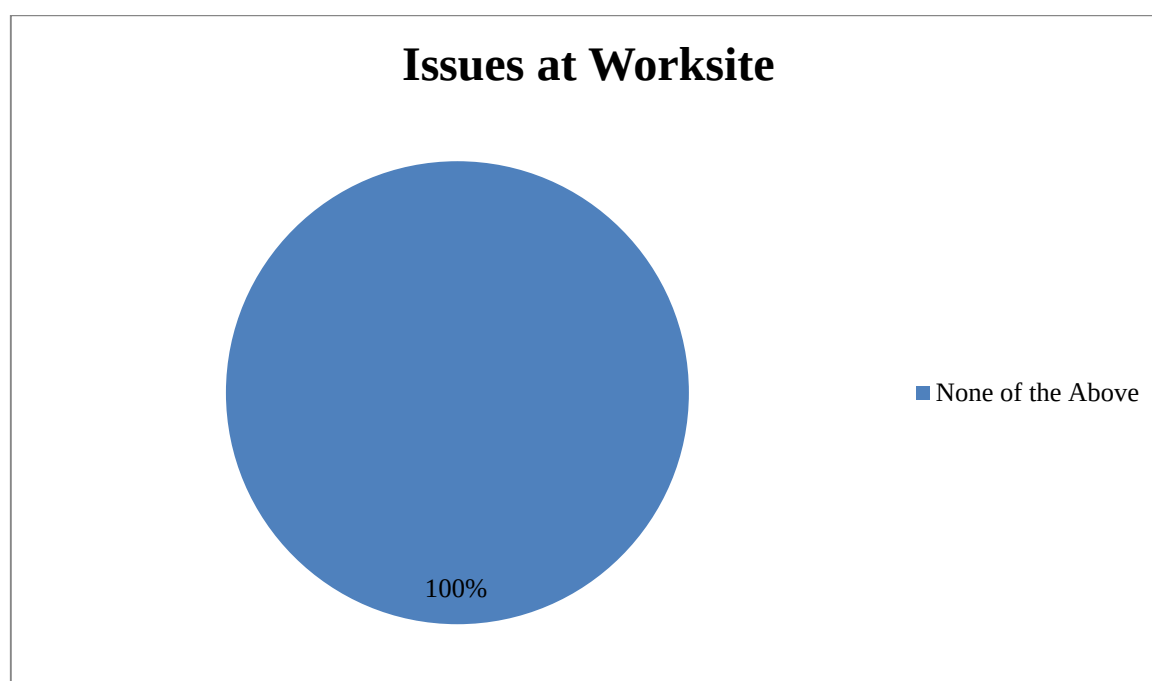


From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 0 percent of respondents have to take care of children/elderly and 100 percent of respondents have none of the above problems. None of the workers recorded that they had to discontinue working under the MGNREGS due to their household responsibilities.

TABLE 6.28
ISSUES AT THE WORKSITE

Issues at Worksite					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None of the Above	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

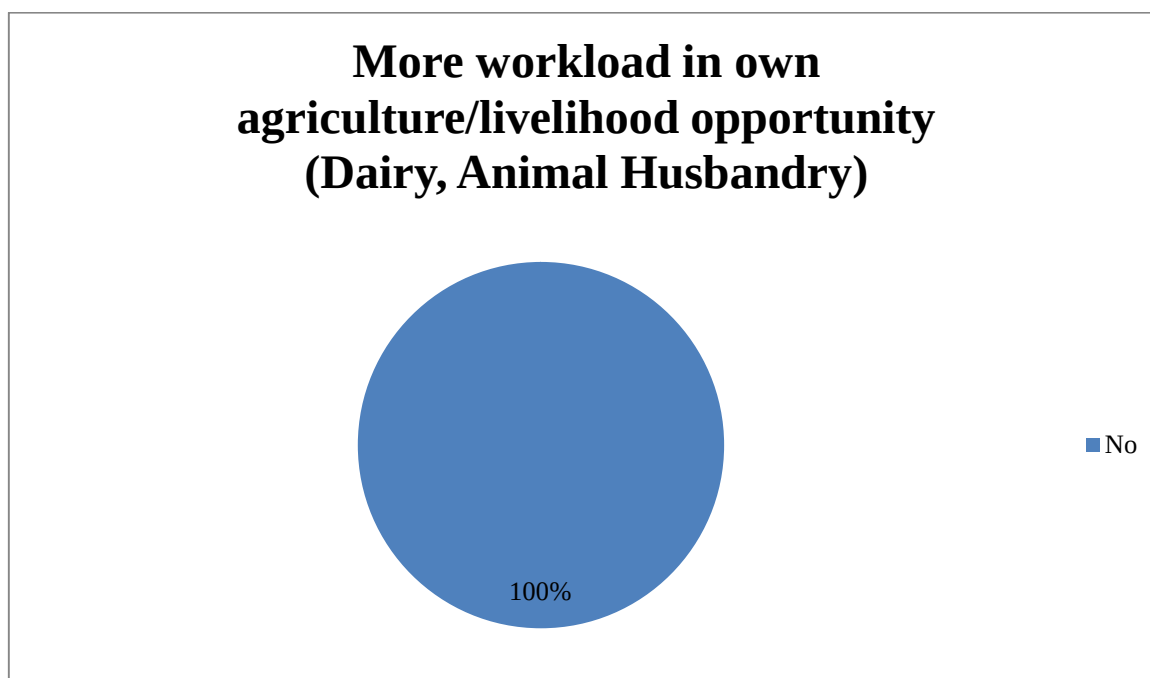
BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.27



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no' problems at the worksite. None of the workers recorded problems at worksites because they had a faint idea that along with providing employment, the MGNREGS also guaranteed certain basic rights like first aid, creches, etc. This data would be more meaningful in the future if the workers, after awareness about their rights and entitlements, said that they had no problems at worksites.

TABLE 6.29**ISSUE RELATED TO WORKLOAD OTHER THAN FROM MGNREGA**

More workload in own agriculture/livelihood opportunity (Dairy, Animal Husbandry, etc.)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

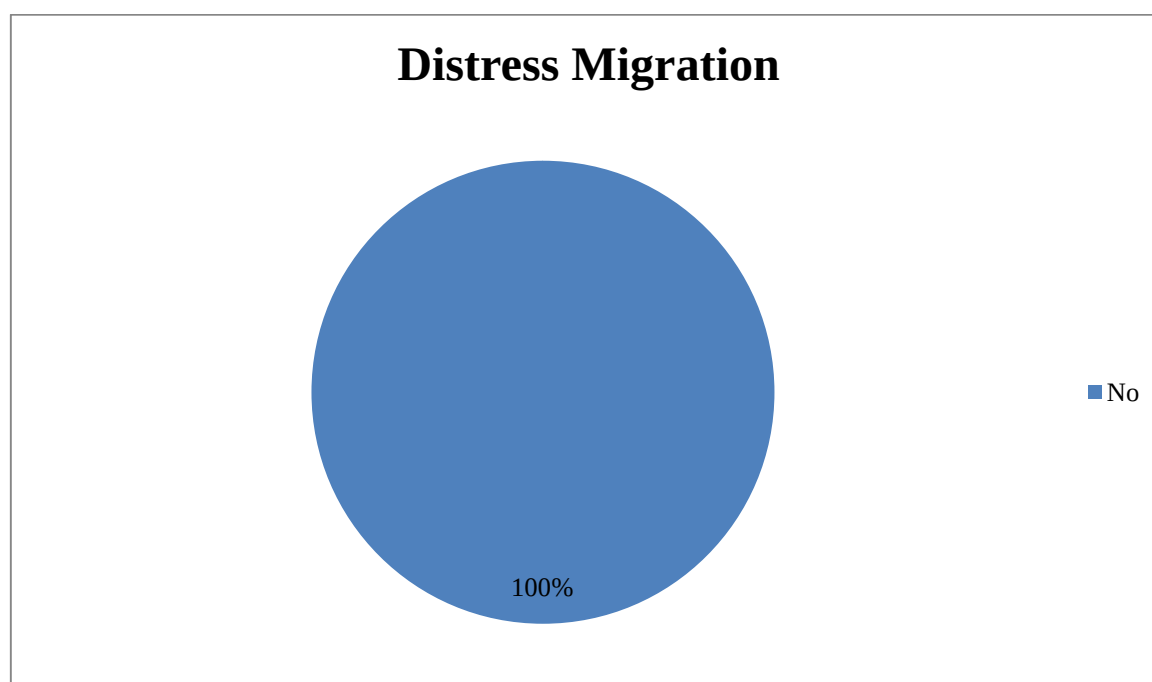
BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.28

From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no.' Thus, we can see that the workers, when discontinuing work or refraining from seeking work under the MGNREGS, do not have other issues forcing them to do so; it is, rather the disappointment and dissatisfaction with the provision of work under the MGNREGA, coming from lower wages, delayed payment, lesser number of mandays provided, etc.

TABLE 6.30
QUESTION OF DISTRESS MIGRATION

Distress Migration					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.29



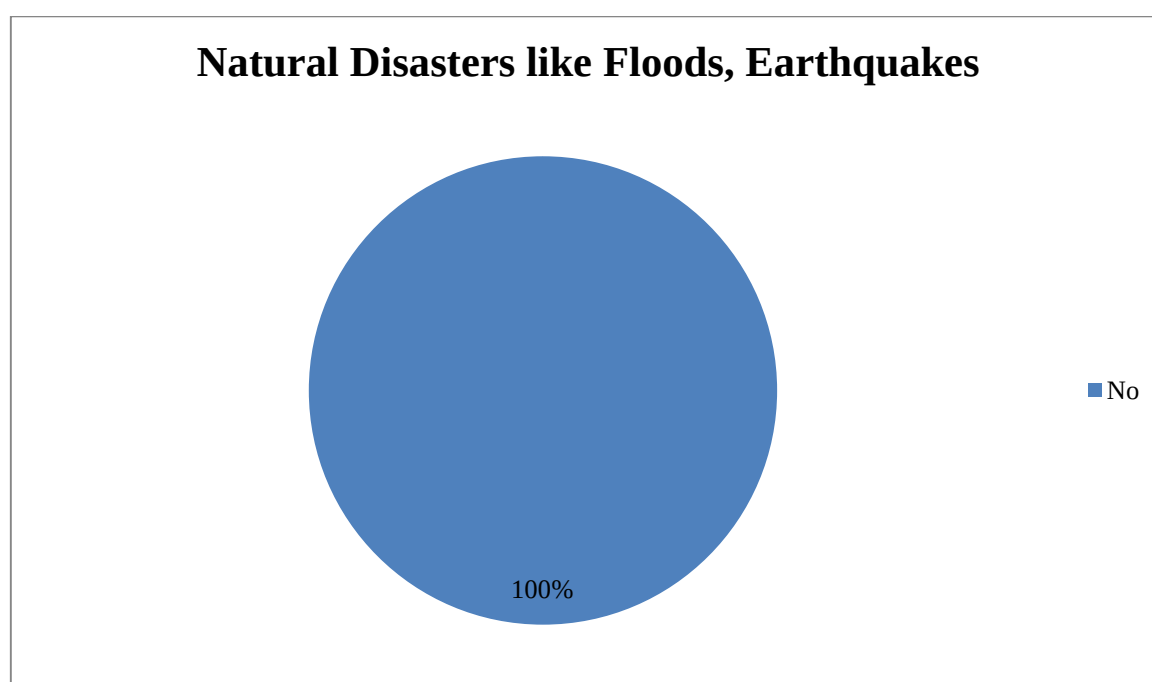
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no.' This is a striking revelation from the data, when none of the workers said that, due to migration or pull factors, they do not work under MGNREGA; they said that even when they get better wages from working in the towns or cities, they would prefer working under the MGNREGA only. Suppose the MGNREGS could address delayed payment issues, increasing the number of mandays, quick provision of work, speedy release of labor and material costs, etc. In that case, the workers could prefer working under the MGNREGS. They had many reasons to work under the MGNREGS, one of the reasons being their attachment to their surroundings and villages; they said that working under the

MGNREGS would make them create assets for themselves and their villages. They also said that they had the chance to remain closer to the family while working under the MGNREGS; some women workers had small babies who had to tend them, for whom MGNREGS could provide smooth and comfortable earning opportunities, as they could finish their work and go back to their homes to tend to their families, but, due to the problems mentioned above, they preferred not working anyway. Thus, inherent flaws in the implementation of the MGNREGS were the actual hurdle for the workers to avail work under it and not other factors such as migration or other factors.

TABLE 6.31
ISSUES RELATED TO NATURAL DISASTERS

Natural Disasters like Floods, Earthquakes					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.30



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no.' Thus, the data points out that there is no case of factors like natural disasters refraining the workers from working under the MGNREGS.

6.5.2 Reasons for Voluntary Withdrawal of the Workers from the MGNREGS

There could be various other reasons why the workers might withdraw from work on their own, due to their own personal reasons or reasons not owing to dissatisfaction or complaints with regard to amount or nature or conditions, etc. of work offered under the MGNREGS. They could stop seeking work or participating in the MGNREGA of their own will, and the possible causes are discussed below.

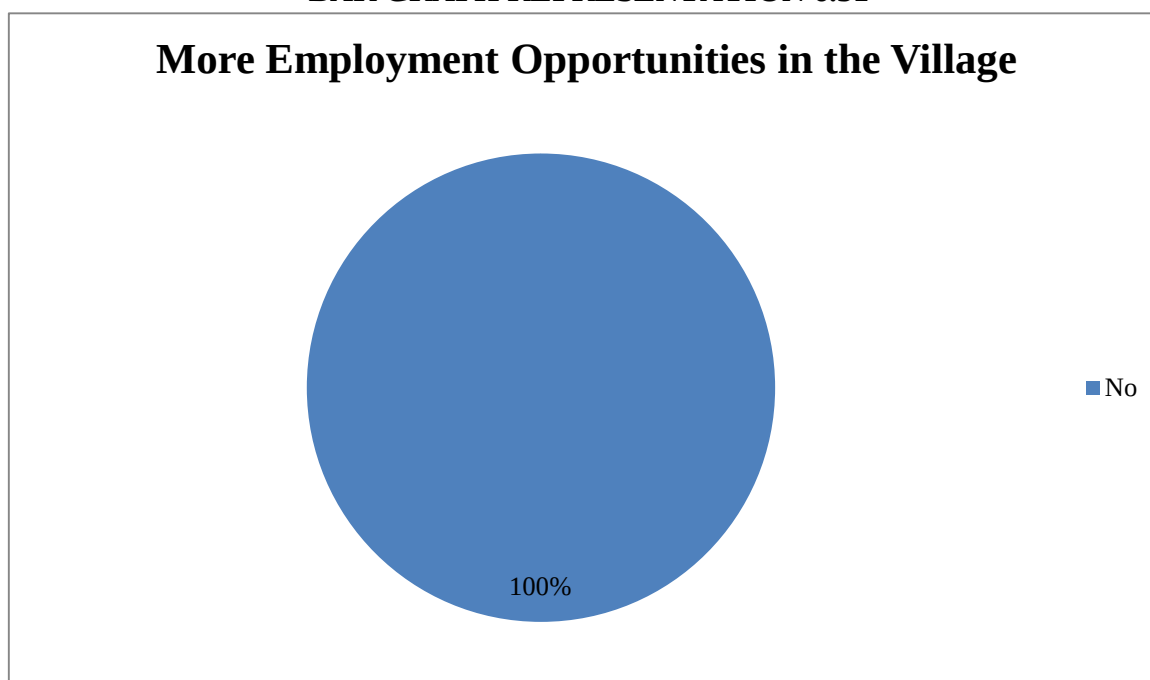
TABLE 6.32

AVAILABILITY OF MORE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

More Employment Opportunities in the Village					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

It could be possible that the workers might start working under other employment opportunities if they are present in the villages. Thus, this aspect was looked into, and the following data depicts the response of the workers.

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.31



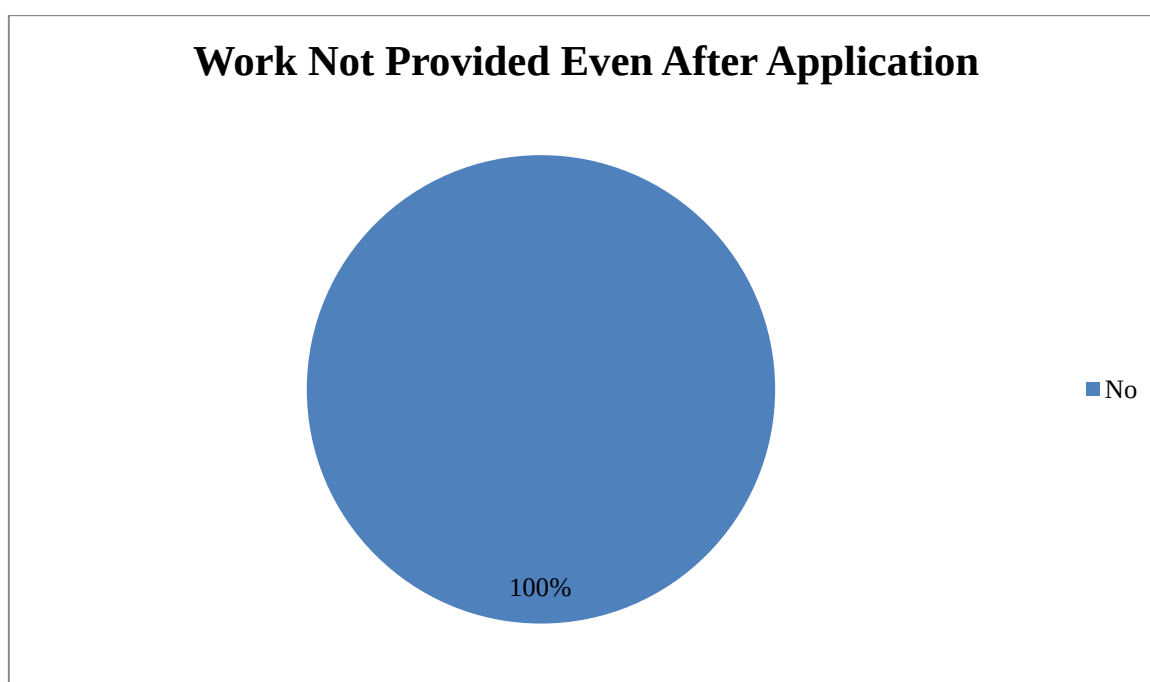
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no,' which means that the workers are not refraining from work under the MGNREGS due to the availability of alternative or better employment opportunities in the villages and implying that work under MGNREGS is being affected due to its administrative ignorance and implementational flaws.

TABLE 6.33

ISSUE OF WORK NOT BEING PROVIDED EVEN AFTER APPLICATION

Work Not Provided Even After Application					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.32



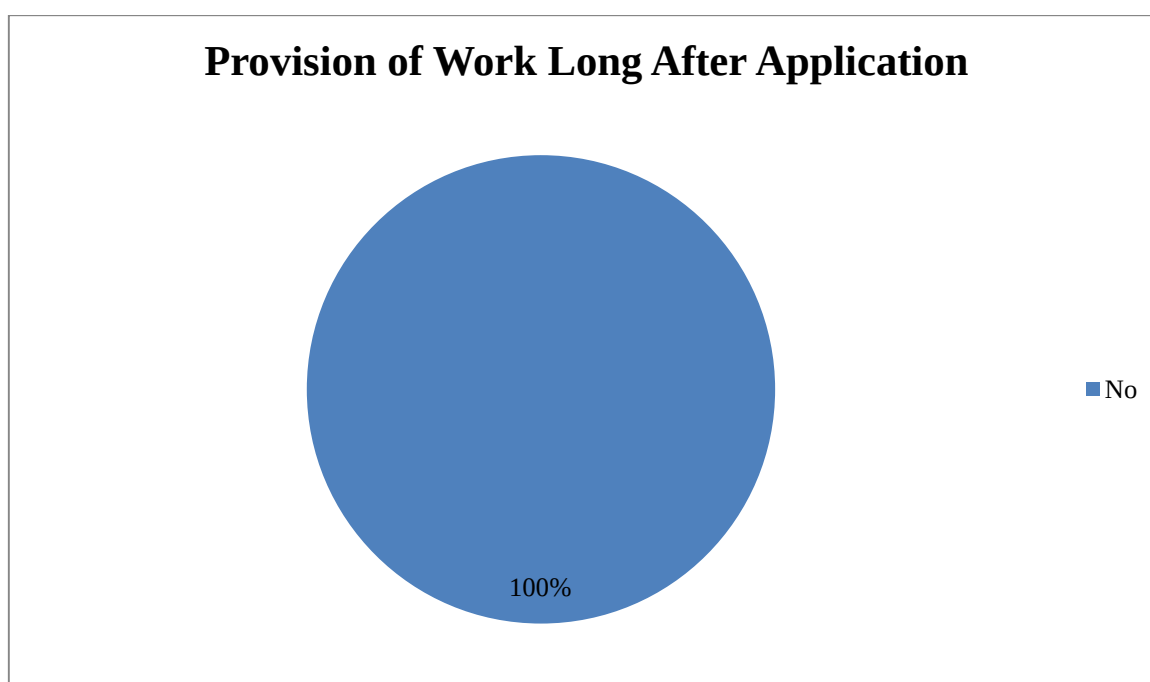
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no.' The workers did not claim that they had not gotten work under the MGNREGS even after application, but, along with this, they made sure to point out towards the hassles of availing work under it, viz. late sanctioning of works, lack of labour and material wages, delayed payment, etc.

TABLE 6.34

ISSUE OF DELAY IN PROVISION OF WORK

38. Provision of Work Long After Application.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.33



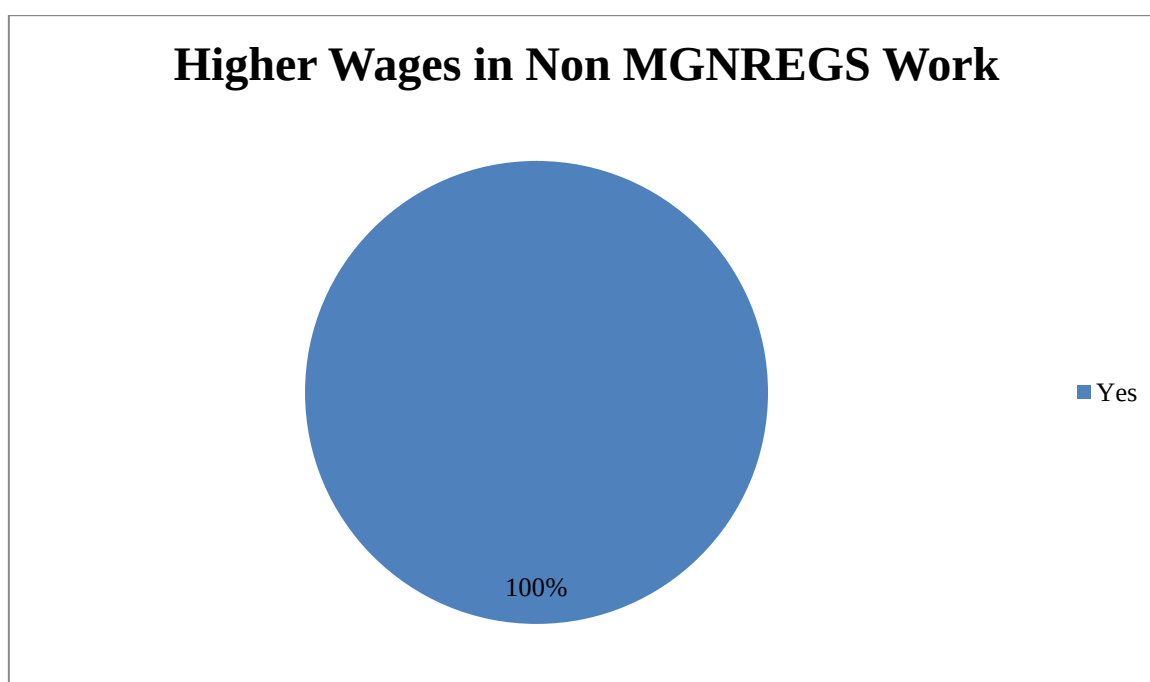
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'yes,' all the workers recorded that work was not provided timely and was delayed for long durations, many times the workers had to wait indefinitely or at least for months.

TABLE 6.35

AVAILABILITY OF HIGHER WAGES IN NON- MGNREGS WORK

Higher Wages in Non-MGNREGS Work					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.34



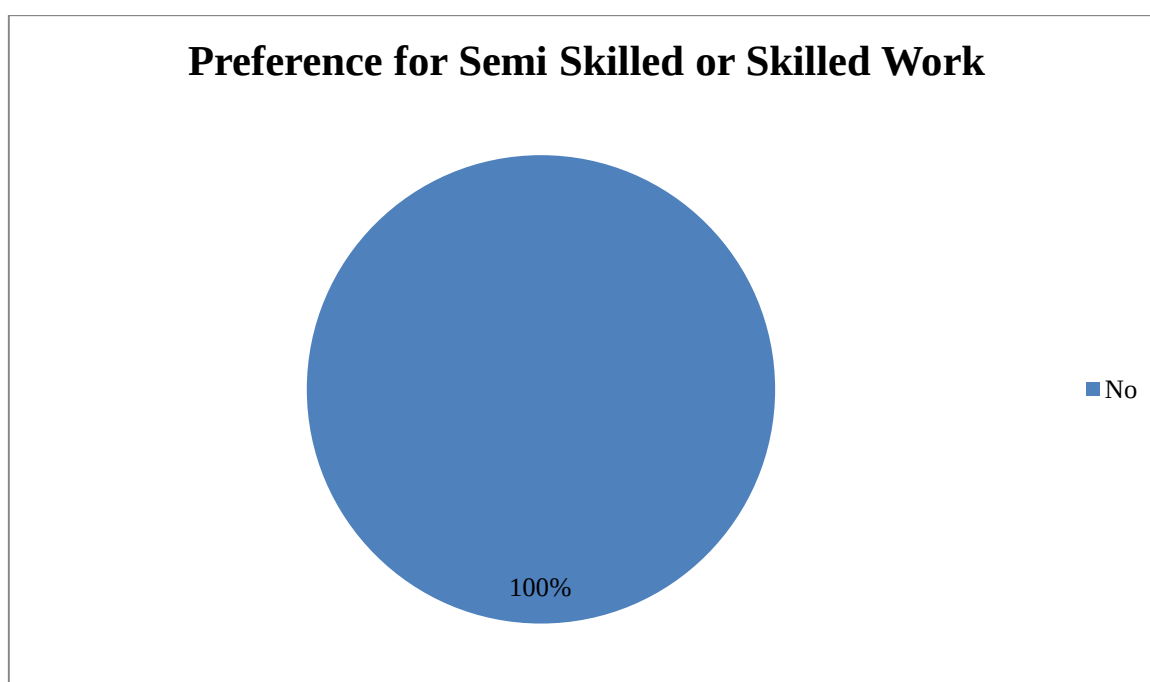
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'yes.' All the workers pointed out that work outside MGNREGS paid them comparatively more than it. Here, what needs to be taken into account is the opinion of a large number of workers. They would still want to work under the MGNREGA if only MGNREGS could raise the minimum wages and make timely payment of wages and address other issues in administration and implementation.

TABLE 6.36

ISSUE OF PREFERENCE OF SEMI-SKILLED OR SKILLED WORK

Preference for Semi-Skilled or Skilled work					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.35



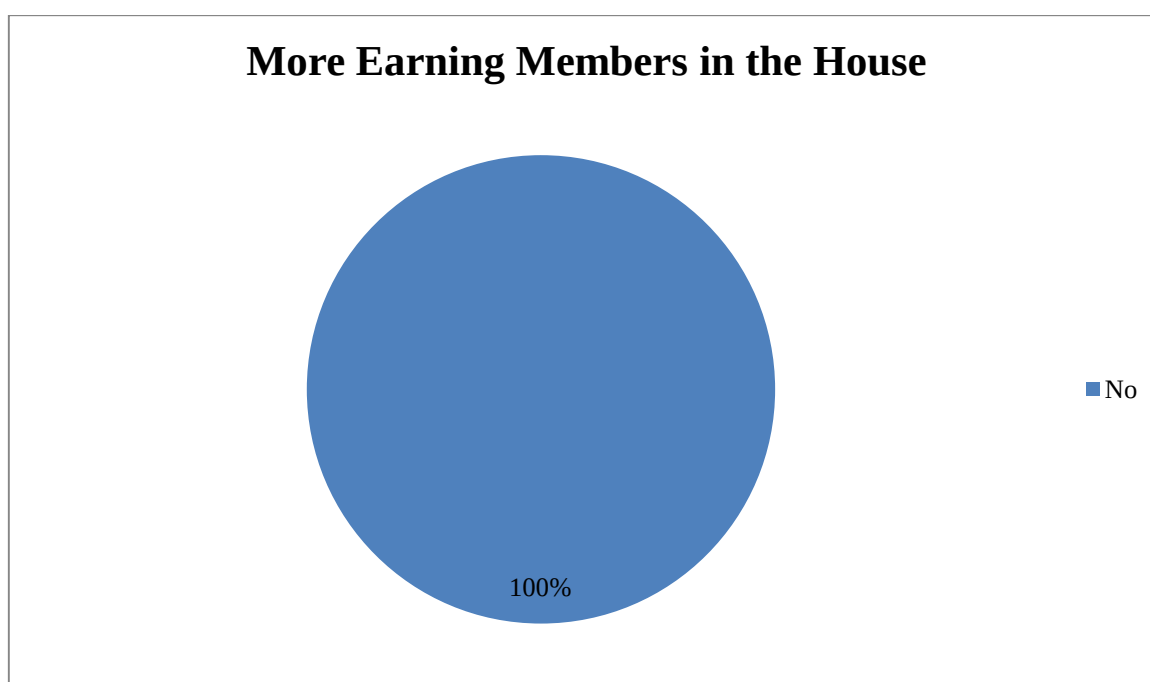
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said no, implying that working under the MGNREGS was not hampered because there was demand or preference for semi-skilled or skilled work in the villages their surroundings, meaning that there was ample scope of work that could employ the unskilled labor in the villages.

TABLE 6.37

POSSIBILITY OF MORE EARNING MEMBERS IN THE HOUSE

More Earning Members in the House					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.36



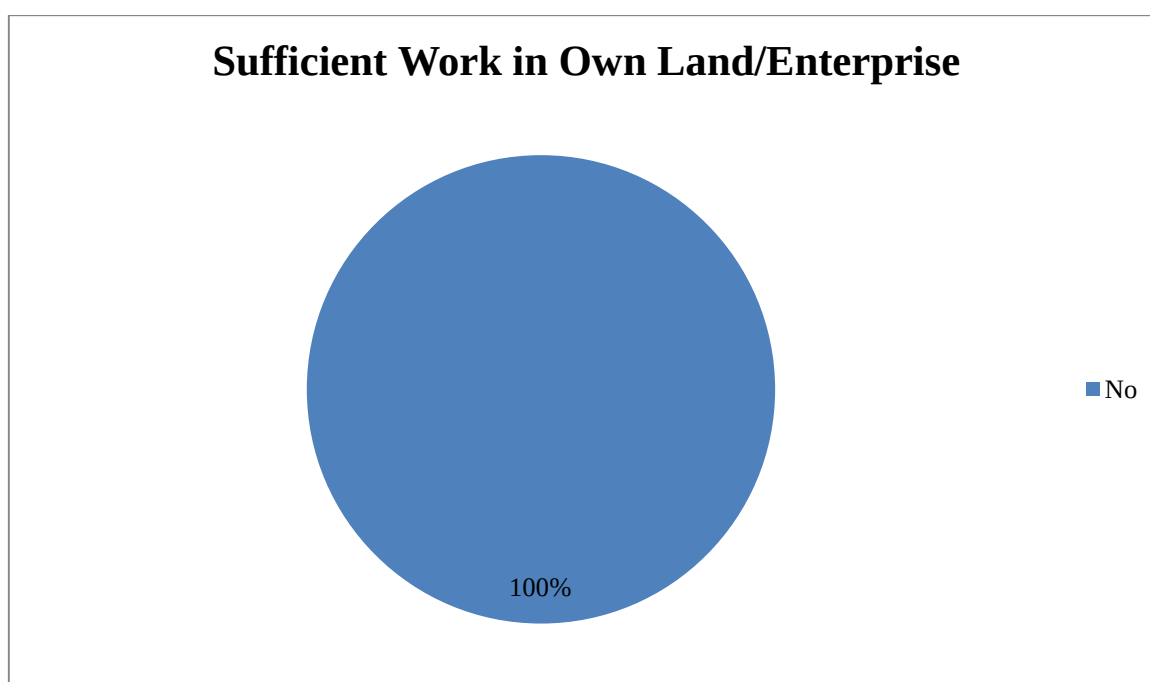
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no.' None of the workers recorded that they had many or enough working members in their household, due to which they are not willing to work under the MGNREGA. Thus, implying that there was no instance where work under MGNREGA was not needed as an employment or livelihood earning opportunity.

TABLE 6.38

POSSIBILITY OF POSSESSION OF SUFFICIENT LAND OR PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Sufficient Work in Own Land/Enterprise					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.37

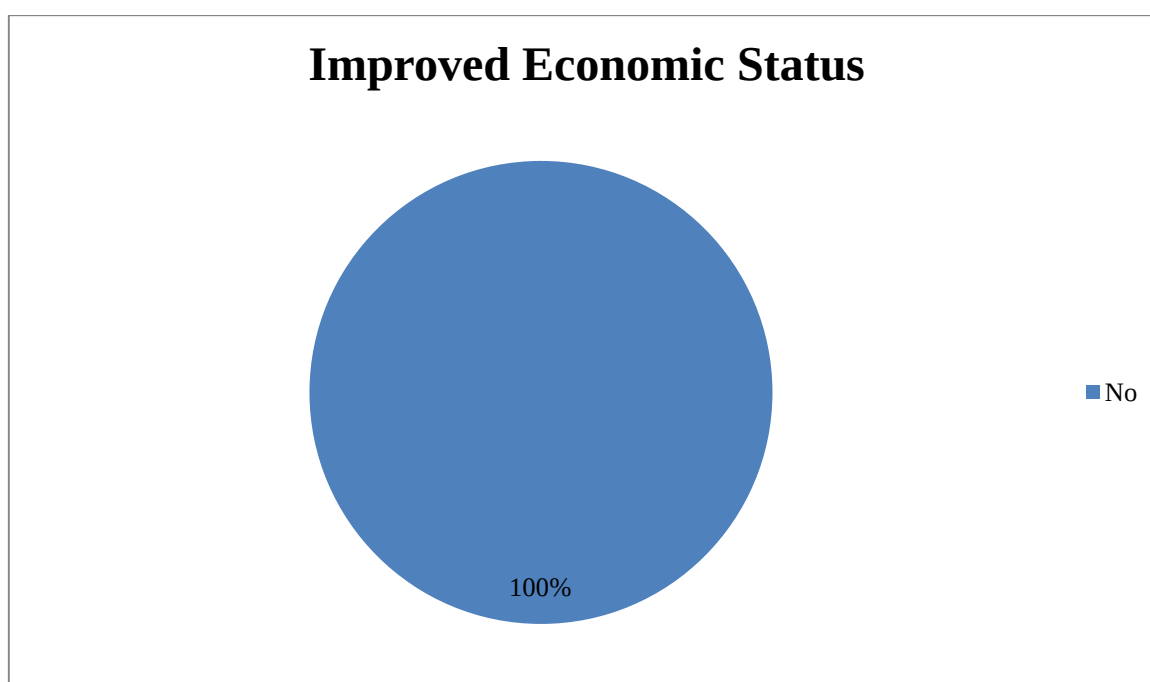


Subsequently, from the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no' to the question that they had sufficient work in their land or enterprise, implying that MGNREGA was not less than an essential employment opportunity for them in any case.

TABLE 6.39
POSSIBILITY OF IMPROVED ECONOMIC STATUS

Improved Economic Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.38



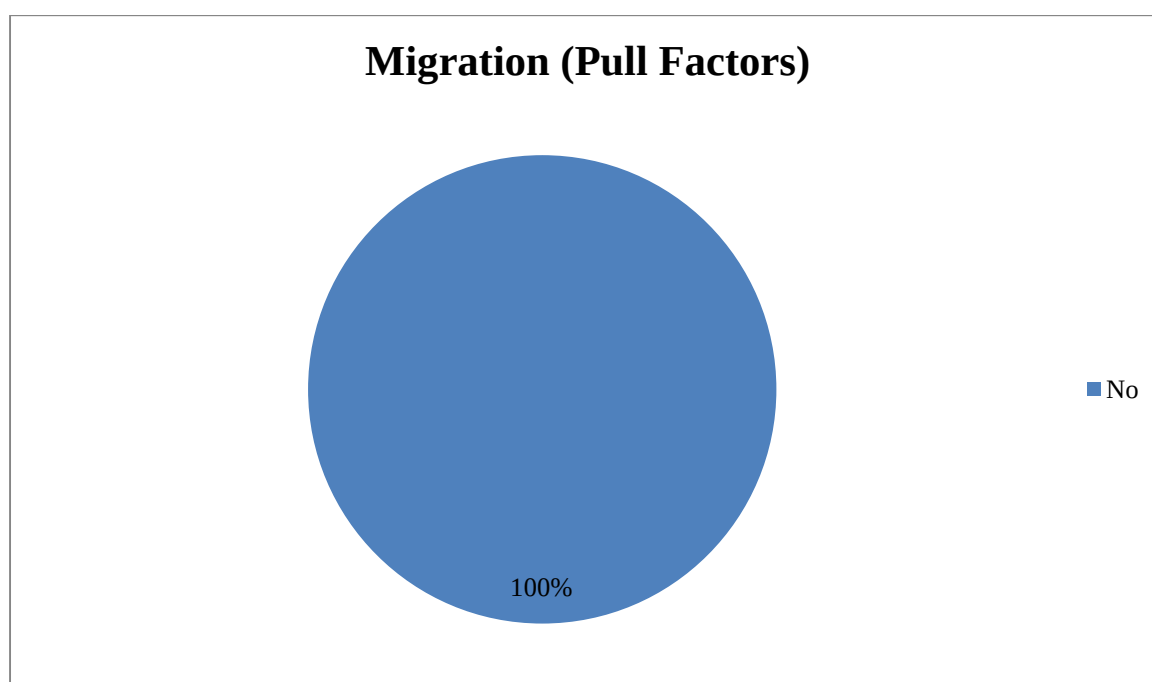
From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no' to the question of refraining from working under the MGNREGS because they have or had achieved improved economic status over the years. On practical grounds, the active/passive workers under MGNREGS are mostly landless laborers or subsistence level cultivators. They need a better, reliable, and continuous employment and income source at any given period or space.

TABLE 6.40

PHENOMENA OF MIGRATION

Migration (Pull Factors)					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	230	100.0	100.0	100.0

BAR GRAPH REPRESENTATION 6.39



From the above chart and number, it is visible that in the sample of 230 respondents, 100 percent of respondents said 'no' to the question where migration could be the factor limiting the happening of work under the MGNREGS. When interviewed, the workers mostly agreed that if MGNREGA becomes accommodative to their needs and requirements, they would prefer working under it rather than working anywhere else, even if it provided more in terms of wages. They expressed that MGNREGA could provide them much more than mere wages from work. Thus, to conclude, from the above tables and charts, it can be seen that the workers do not disassociate themselves from the MGNREGA, express their will to work under the Act, make known the conditions which discourage them from working under the MGNREGS and their hopes and aspirations regarding the MGNREGS that could be taken into account for the administration to ensure more extensive and better participation under the Act.

Along with the interaction with workers under the MGNREGA, the B.D.O (Block Development Officer) and the other officials were interacted with and interviewed. Their responses show the administrative issues and hurdles that hinder the administration of

MGNREGA in the Block and are discouraging the workers from working under it. Worker's participation is the essence of the MGNREGS, and such decrement weakens the spirit of the Act.

The subsequent chapter, the last chapter, discusses the policy impasse under the MGNREGA in light of the causes leading to decrement in worker participation as discussed in the present chapter and the Government's stance towards it as discussed in the previous chapter chapters. The next chapter also includes the MGNREGA policy model and contains policy implications, suggestions, and other significant conclusions.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

The present chapter concludes the study by substantiating the research objectives and understanding the responses to the lead question of the study. It is divided into conclusions and suggestions concerning the research objectives and the lead question, correspondingly.

7.1 MGNREGA IN THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF PUBLIC POLICY

The study has discussed the Act in light of the theoretical framework of public policy. Firstly, it has discussed the concept of Public Policy and then located MGNREGA in various Public policy models and approaches.

It was found that the MGNREGA can be located in many models and approaches in Public Policy, they are:

7.1.1 MGNREGA and the Institutional Model of Public Policy

MGNREGA, we know that the Government of India has enacted it as a law for employment generation and creation of livelihood supporting assets. As discussed above, it entrusts the various departments at the centre, state, district, block and village levels to assist in the implementation of the various schemes taken under this Act. The bureaucrats have essential functions to perform in order to carry out the implementation of the Act. The Act comes as a legal guarantee of the right to work, and the judicial institutions also have a crucial role to play in any case of jeopardising of the rights of workers under this Act.

Thus, by way of institutions acting as the origin of the policy and also playing an inherent role in the promulgation of the Act and carrying out of the policy, MGNREGA can be said to have compliance to the institutional model of public policymaking.

7.1.2 MGNREGA and the Systems Model of Public Policy Making

India has been struggling with the issues of widespread poverty, food security, unemployment, so and so forth. It has tried to address these concerns with the help of various programmes owing to its welfare and developmental policies. These concerns of the country can be understood as demands of the population which goes inside the political system for being met. The political system takes into account these inputs, which is the demand and then with the help of its institutions converts them into an output which is the policy outcome. India's Government can be understood as the political system that has been trying to solve the issues of the nation with policies as output. Regular evaluation of these policies has been going on to make them more effective and successful in addressing these issues. This continues cyclically as demands get converted into policy outcomes; policy outcomes go into the environment from where the market had been generated. The loopholes or lacunae get addressed, becoming a demand again and going into the system and coming out as policy outcomes that become more suited to the environment's changing needs. This process of input in the design and output from the system is dynamic and cyclical.

Thus, we can trace MGNREGA in the framework of the systems model of public policy making also.

7.1.3 MGNREGA and the Rational Choice Model of Public Policy

The larger part of India lives in rural areas and faces various issues such as food security, water security, unemployment, lack of education opportunities, so on and so forth. MGNREGA as a policy to address widespread unemployment of the rural and unskilled manual labour force can be seen as an effort to create a maximum social gain. The country cannot progress with such vast parts of its labour force being unemployed or non-productive. MGNREGA, along with generating employment in these sections of the country, aims to create worthwhile assets for

their long-term livelihood sustenance. Thus, MGNREGA leads to the hope of larger social gains, causing it to comply with the rational choice model of public policy.

7.1.4 MGNREGA and the Incremental Approach to Policy Analysis

MGNREGA is also in line with the many welfare-related activities of the Government where the policymakers have made necessary improvisations to make the Act more effective than its predecessors. For example; providing child care facilities for the children of the women workers, making work available within reach, promising unemployment allowance to those who apply but are provided jobs, creating assets for livelihood through the works permitted under the schemes that follow the action, the policymakers have definitely taken into account, the incremental analysis of previous developmental policies and have tried to make MGNREGA, an Act, more viable, practical and successful in addressing the needs of the larger sections of the society.

7.1.5 MGNREGA and the Bottom-up Policy Approach

In the previous chapters, it has been discussed that public policymaking in India has come a long way. It started from centralised planning for development and welfare, following the top-down approach. Gradually, with the understanding of the people's needs, the need for democratic decentralization, and participation of people in the policy process and programmes, it adopted the bottom-up approach to public policy. The Government of India enacted MGNREGA, the implementation of which was entrusted to the grassroots of the nation and the people for whom it was brought into existence. The Act empowers the workers to choose work suitable to their village's needs and requirements from the list of the permissible works (that again have been well thought and enlisted, keeping into consideration the needs of the people). The Panchayats are entrusted with floating and facilitation of works. The Act aims to strengthen the grassroots level organisation to make possible progress that comes from and within the

country's roots and then spreads to the whole nation. This is contrary to the government's earlier efforts to develop the country where welfare programmes were floated, and the effects were expected to trickle down to the larger sections of society. Thus, MGNREGA follows the 'bottom up' public policy mechanism.

7.1.6 MGNREGA and Public Policy Implication: Observations from the Field

The implications of the models and approaches discussed above can be brought together and understood in the light of the following figure as incorporated in the Act.

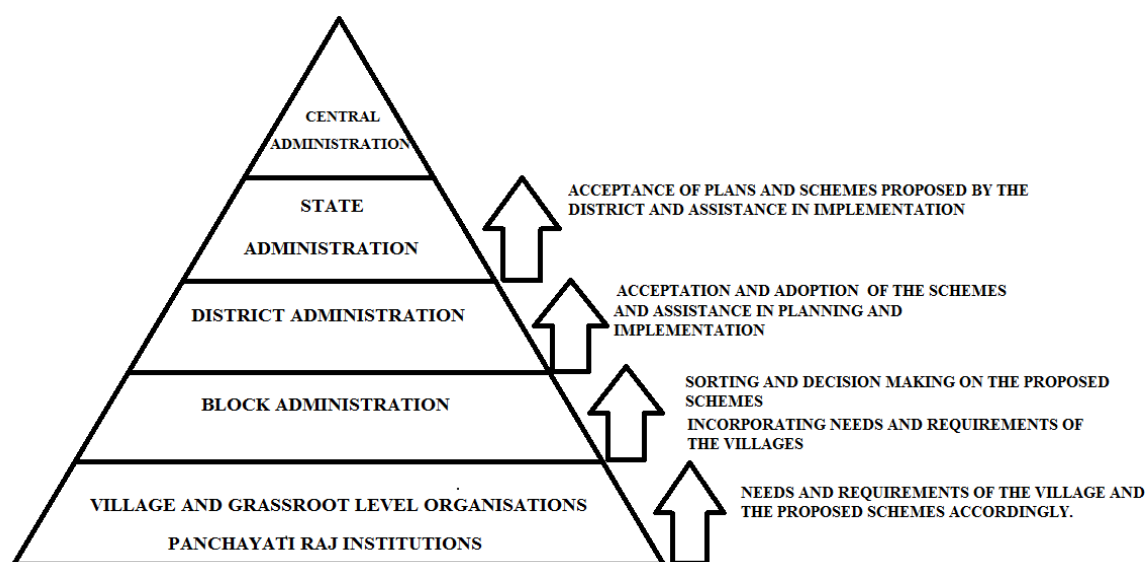


Figure 7.1: Bottom-up Approach Incorporated in the MGNREGA

Note: This figure has been constructed in accordance with the provisions of the actual Act of MGNREGA.

However, during the field visits, it was observed that the above-incorporated bottom-up approach had been continually refuted or ignored at the ground level. The figure below explains the actuality of operationalization of the MGNREGS on the ground level.

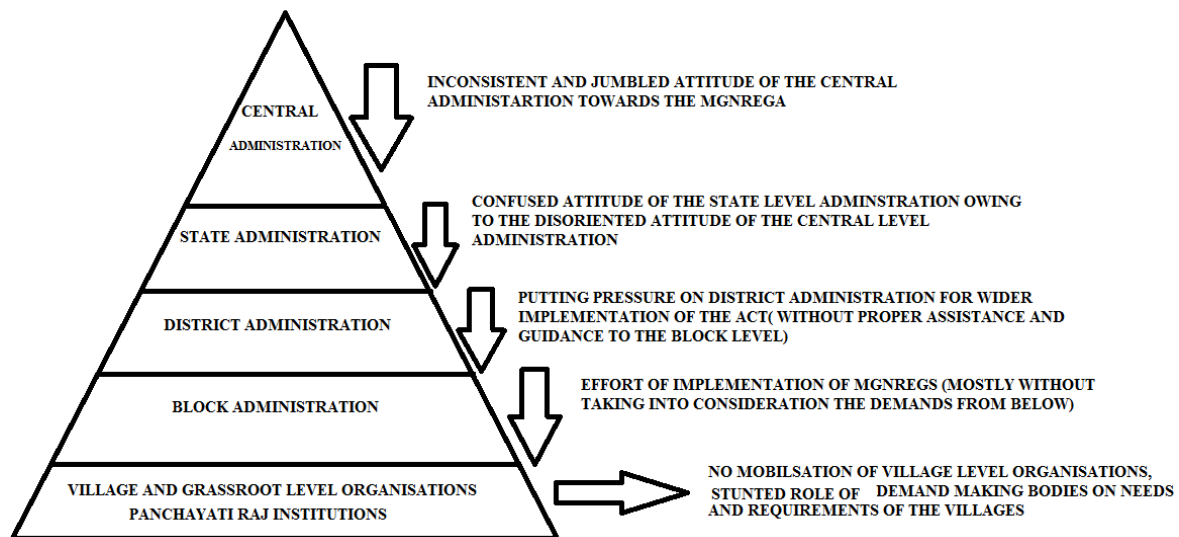


Figure 7.2: The Top-Down Approach Followed under the MGNREGA

Note: This figure has been constructed based on the field survey observations and data collected in the study sample.

Taking into account the responses of the administration involved and the workers under the Act, the following figure has been constructed as the model implementation mechanism for the Act. It explains how the implementation should ideally begin at the grassroots or the village level and then reach to the upper levels of the administration. It also depicts the need for coordination and communication between the various levels of the administrative units for effective operationalization of the Act.

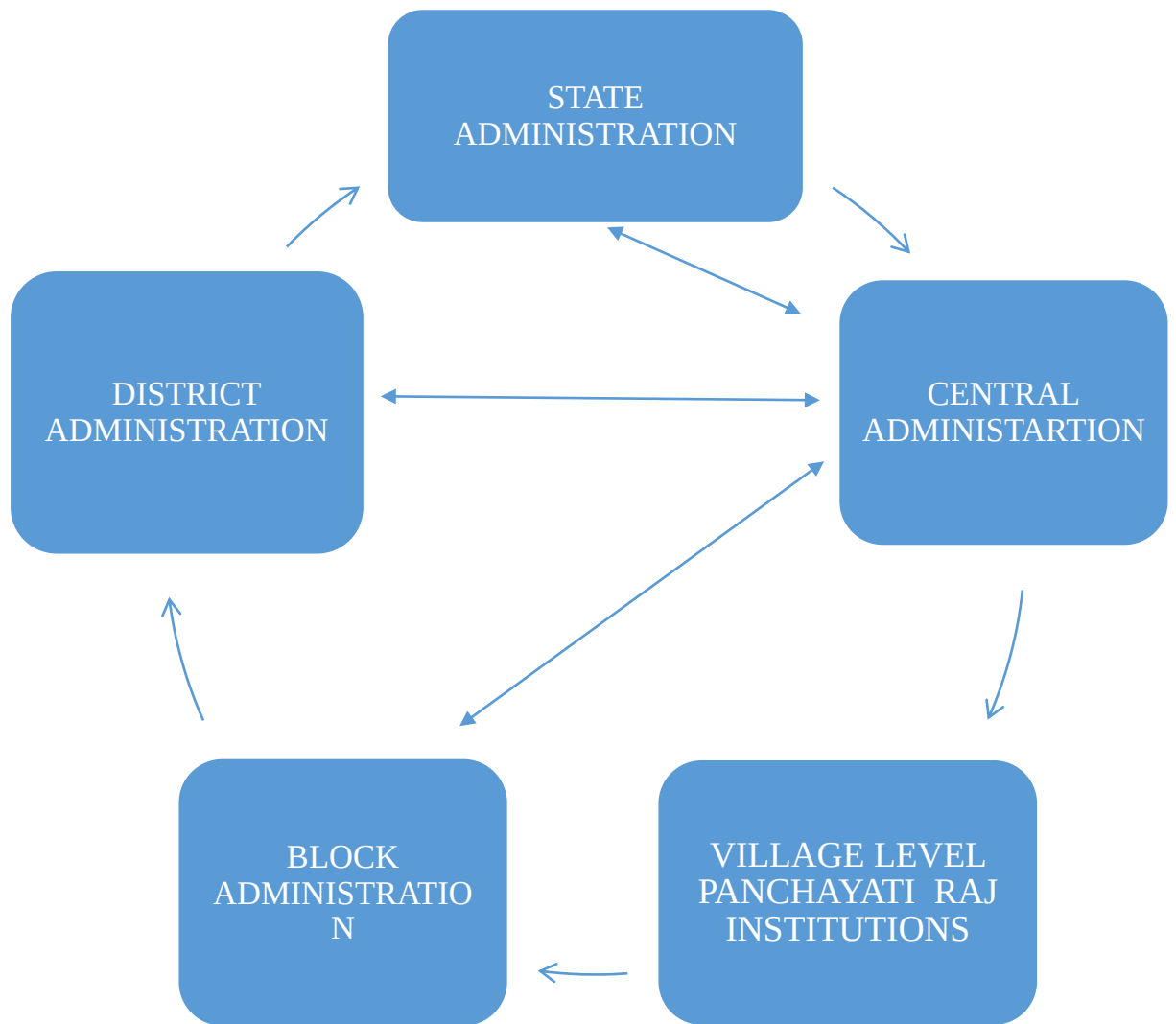


Figure 7.3: The Model Mechanism of Implementation of the MGNREGA

Note: This is a suggestive figure based on ‘what should be’ happening under the MGNREGA.

7.2 THE MGNREGA PUBLIC POLICY MODEL

By way of combining all the models and approaches to public policy discussed above, the MGNREGA can be said to have a distinctive model of its own. This model can be drawn influenced mainly by the systems approach, incorporating all the above-mentioned approaches at different stages of its promulgation and implementation.

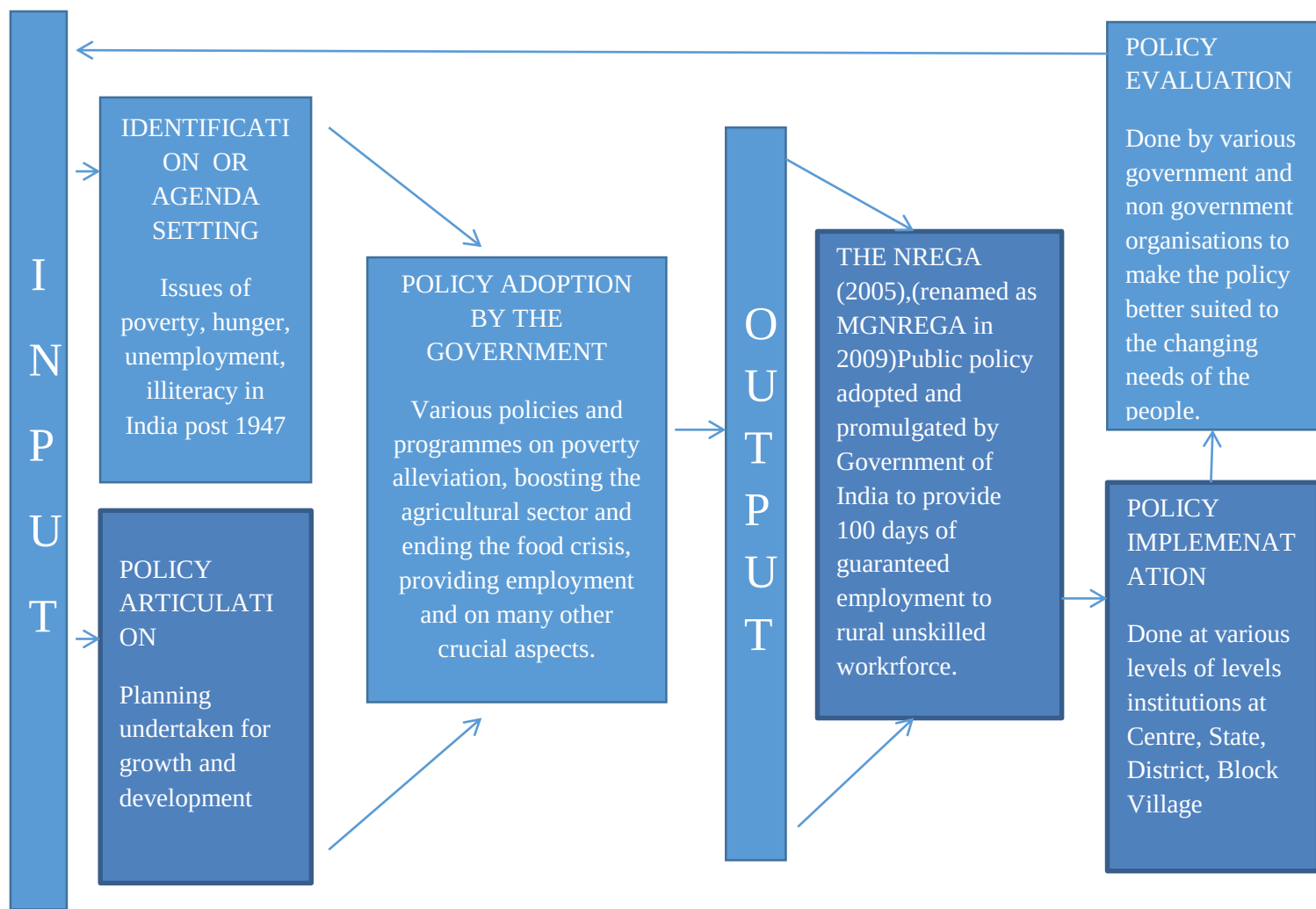


Figure 7.4: The MGNREGA Public Policy Model, adapted from Easton's Framework of Policy Analysis, 1965.

7.3 CONTINUATION OF MGNREGA IN THE COUNTRY AND THE STATE

It has been discussed in the previous chapters that MGNREGA has acquired a very significant role in providing a viable employment opportunity in the rural areas of the country. Jharkhand stands no exception to the significance of the Act in the State. It has been discussed how the MGNREGS could bring about rural transformation, support and advance agriculture and give meaningful employment to the rural workforce. It has been established that where the workers need MGNREGA, the state also needs it. However, as we have seen in the previous chapters, there is a decline in worker's participation under the Act. It has been discussed how the stance of the Government and the declining worker's participation is causing a Policy Impasse in the MGNREGA. This leads us to our next research objective, which is to explore this phenomenon

of Impasse in the Act, but before that, let us look into the lead question of the study, which is to understand the causes that influence the worker's participation under the Act.

7.4 CAUSES INFLUENCING PARTICIPATION OF THE WORKERS UNDER THE ACT

The study has attempted to locate the workers' problem areas. It has been done with the help of Primary Field Data collected through field works conducted in the block Namkum. The field works have led to the unraveling of the status of the MGNREGA understanding of the operation of the MGNREGS and the point of view of the workers, their attitude, their issues, their demands, and other related crucial aspects of the workers and work under the MGNREGS. These have been summarised as observations and findings of the study.

7.4.1 Observations and Findings of the Study

The observations and findings of the study have been further classified into the worker's response side and observer's impression. These are discussed below:

7.4.1.1 Workers Response Side

Most of the workers belong to the Scheduled Tribe category and are male, implying that MGNREGA has not been able to find more significance in the women workforce in the area. Most of them have no educational background indicating that there is a larger scope of MGNREGA to operate and give employment opportunities to the unskilled or underskilled workforce in the region. The workers practice subsistence agriculture and daily wage work, meaning that in both circumstances, MGNREGA can be a boon for them, by either assisting them in agriculture or by giving them wage employment in their own village.

The highest number of mandays is 50 for the last year (2018-2019). Most of them have awareness about the basic entitlements such as the right to work, minimum wages, etc. but not

many are aware of the compensation that should be paid in case of delay in payment if work is provided beyond 5 kms, time limit for provision of work, i.e., within 15 days of application for work.

None of them have availed unemployment allowance. Not many are aware of new works that can be taken under the Act. There is a serious lack of interest in participation in the selection of work in the Gram Sabha. There is no clear understanding of complainant authority, i.e., where the workers can approach in case of work-related problems. Most of them have job cards, but those are not updated. There is significantly less participation in awareness meetings. The reasons for involuntary withdrawal from work mostly include insufficient wages, lesser works, and delay in payment.

No worker indicated problems at worksites. Almost all of them noted the apathy of the officials involved in MGNREGS regarding wages, timely payment, timely provision of work. Many workers have pointed towards nonpayment of material cost for the materials used in the schemes. Most workers suffer in work due to non-availability or provision of tools for carrying out the work. Most workers suffer due to a lack of technical assistance. These are also causing the workers to move away from the Act involuntarily.

The reasons for voluntary withdrawal from work primarily include duration taken for the provision of work, higher wages in non MGNREGs work. Both are pointing out again towards the administrative negligence towards the operationalization of the Act and establishing that the workers' participation is decreasing owing mainly to involuntary causes rather than voluntary ones. This means that if the grievances and demands of the workers are confronted by the administration, there could possibly be an increase in their participation under the Act.

7.4.1.2 OBSERVER'S IMPRESSION

Many crucial observations have helped create an understanding of the administration and

implementation of the Act and essential insight into the mindset, attitude, hope, desire, and need of the workers, which are the very essence of the Act.

Some of them are:

- The workers are utterly disappointed and disapproving of the present wages, even when the Government raised the minimum wages from Rs. 168 to Rs. 171 in this year in the State of Jharkhand. This raise in wages comes after a yearlong protest and continued strikes ranging from 6 to 7 months; the workers, after revision in the wages, call the amount "a mockery" of their needs.
- There is stagnancy in the officials' effort for more involvement of the workers in the MGNREGS, mainly because of the inherent issue of lesser wages and delay in payment.
- There is a serious decline in work applications leading to lesser demand for work by the daily wage workers mostly because they do not want to work in such less wage.
- Even if the workers apply for work and start working under the MGNREGS, they get seriously discouraged because of the extreme delay in payment of wages.
- Even for the workers who use to demand work by planning schemes in their piece of own land (like construction of wells, the building of TCBs or Dobhas, etc.), demand is touching a very low point because first; there is non-availability of required tools, second; there is non-payment of material cost, third; there is very less technical assistance from the side of the administration and fourth; there are times when there is complete non-payment of wages to the workers involved in the work.
- Partial or low awareness about the Act is inhibiting the workers from seeking work under the MGNREGS. For instance, the workers know that they can give an

application for employment at any time of the year, and they get job accordingly. Still, they are not aware of the provision of compensation if work is provided after 15 days; some of the workers have heard of unemployment allowance. Still, not even one of them has availed.

- The workers pointed out towards the provision of one job card per household, which covers all the household working members. They claim that even if they try and indulge in the MGNREGS, the days provided for work when getting divided amongst the same household workers is not enough.
- There is no clarity about whom or where to approach any issue that arises while working under the MGNREGS.
- To check data regarding work demanded vis a vis work provided, there is a complete void as there is no record of the work required, and the officials claim that work provided for every demand whereas, the workers claim that they do not get a job even after application or sometimes get work long after application.

Thus, the above factors are causing a decrement in the participation of the workers in the MGNREGS. Even the formulation of new schemes under the MGNREGS does not have much effect in the region, and there is a continuous lessening of workers participation under the MGNREGA. However, we have seen that despite all the difficulties and hurdles that workers face in availing work under the Act and subsequently losing the desire to seek work under the same, they do not show total disassociation towards the Act. They hope that the administration takes note of these and makes the necessary changes and arrangements for them to make use of the MGNREGS in the true spirit.

Here the discussions and responses recorded with the CFT members also become critical to comprehending the participation of the workers under the MGNREGS in the region. As they work closely with the workers, Rozgar Sevaks, mates and the village heads, they bring about

a clear picture of the concerned aspects. Along with the problems faced by the workers, they have also suggested solutions simultaneously for these. Their responses and suggestions are listed below.

7.4.2 CFT AND OTHER OFFICIAL'S RESPONSE SIDE

There is the presence of CFT (Cluster Facilitation Team) in the block. These are semi-government organizations employed in the block for facilitating the implementation of the villages' schemes. Since the panchayat officials and other people involved in administering the schemes are not fully aware of the processes and are not technically competent to execute these schemes due to the computer and internet-related aspects, CFTs have been introduced in these areas. These officials supervise the schemes' technical and overall operation and have been very helpful in making the MGNREGS simpler and accessible to the village workers. The block-level administration is laden with the implementation and works of various welfare and other government schemes, and it becomes difficult for them to reach out to each other. Every worker in the village under the MGNREGS CFT officials becomes very instrumental in making MGNREGS accessible to the workers. Their roles and responsibilities include spreading awareness about the MGNREGA, helping them and Gram Sabha in planning works and sorting out technical positions, helping Rozgar Sevaks and mates in their jobs' technicalities measuring work, calculating mandays, calculating wages, etc. They become a link between the village-level worker and the administration to implement the MGNREGS better. Therefore, subject to the availability of these officials, 10 CFT officials have been interviewed. Their responses, views, and concerns are recorded all together and are listed below.

- Often, the Rozgar Sevaks are not from the assigned Panchayats and do not live in the same area or surroundings. There is no arrangement for the Rozgar Sevak to visit worksites. Thus, the worksites remain unchecked and non-monitored.
- The mates responsible for conducting schemes at the worksites are not adequately

trained and adequately equipped.

- The remuneration provided to the local or grassroots level personnel is meager and delayed.
- The frequency of awareness meetings is low.
- More awareness about the Act should be made through nukkad nataks, storytelling, hoardings, paintings, radio, etc.
- The effort to provide technical assistance, e.g., in the measurement of work, is significantly less.
- The State boasts of initiatives such as 'Yojana Banao Abhiyaan,' in which the workers can make their schemes. The encouragement at the level of local administration for involvement in the planning of works is very low.
- DBT linkage is a massive hurdle in availing payments.
- The process of availing of jobs should be made simple and straightforward, and work should be provided as soon as there is a demand for labor.
- Delay in payment should be checked.
- Non-payment of material cost wages should be checked.
- The grievance redressal mechanism should be readily available and accessible.

Thus, the above-listed factors and their respective solutions can be taken into account for the participation of the workers under the Act. If the measures suggested by the CFT are taken into account, the worker's involvement will increase eventually.

Therefore, we can conclude that involuntary causes primarily influence the participation of the workers, and in the locale of the study, the decrement in participation is largely due to these.

7.5 THE POLICY IMPASSE IN MGNREGA

The preliminary field visits suggested a picture of stagnation of the MGNREGA in the region. In the attempt to understand this stagnation, the stance of the government was taken into account. It has been discussed above (and also in the chapters) that negligence of the government both at the nation and the state level has negatively impacted the Act. This has discouraged the workers, and they seem to be moving away from it. Data from the MIS reveal that there is a decrement in worker's participation in the state. Therefore, an attempt to understand the factors behind it or enlist factors influencing workers' participation has been made with the help of primary data collected from the sample block, Namkum in the state. This has been discussed above as well.

Although we have seen that the MGNREGA has come a long way since its initial years of inception and implementation and has been able to create a significant impact on the employment and livelihood earning opportunities across the country and the states, the Act appears to be in a standstill. Owing to the neglect and ignorance of the policymakers and disenchantment among the workers, making them move away from the scheme, the MGNREGA is going through a phase of what we can call an "Impasse".

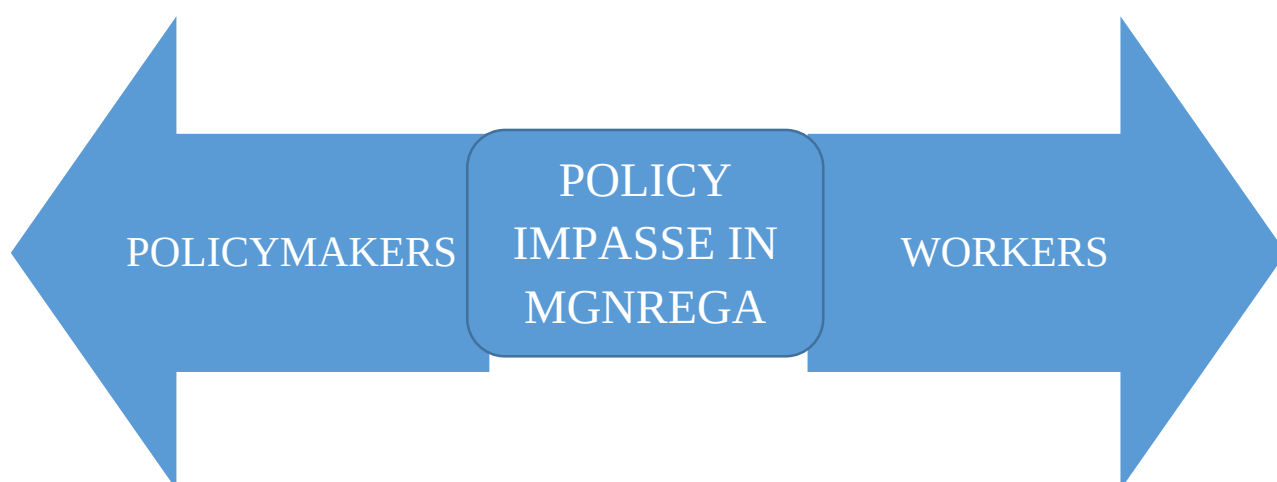


Figure 7.5: Policy Impasse in the MGNREGA.

As discussed in the previous chapters, numerous incidents indicate the ignorance and neglect of the policymakers towards the Act and administration of the MGNREGS. The MGNREGA is a public policy that rolls on the participation of the workers, and when the participation is declining, the MGNREGA is getting into the phase of a standstill. Therefore, keeping these in mind, one can witness the policy impasse in the MGNREGA and the decrement in the worker's participation.

Due to the policymakers and administrators' apathetic attitude, the workers seem to be discouraged and disenchanted with the MGNREGA. They can be seen to have been moving away from the MGNREGS. They no longer wish to participate under the MGNREGS, they are seeking lesser and lesser work, and even if they are working under it, they are dropping out of the work, withdrawing from work. There is no real push from the administration level for the MGNREGS, and the workers also do not seem to be pulled towards the Act. This creates a deadlock between them and leads to a juncture in the MGNREGA where it is standstill. Here, we are establishing that a Policy Impasse is occurring in the MGNREGA.

7.5.1 Ways to Resolve the Impasse in the Act

There can be ways through which this Impasse can be effectively resolved, and in the light of the study, these can be the following:

- ▶ Facilitating Awareness and Dissemination of Information under MGNREGA
- ▶ Addressing Shortage of Staff and Lack of Professionals
- ▶ Addressing the lack of Peoples Planning
- ▶ Making the Social Audit favourable
- ▶ Simplifying the availing employment under MGNREGA (Registering under MGNREGA)
- ▶ Checking the fallacies in the Quality of the Work and Low Work Completion Record

- ▶ Fostering the realization of Social and Developmental Aspect
- ▶ Facilitating women in MGNREGA
- ▶ Checking corruption: A Major Discrepancy in the Implementation of the Act
- ▶ Addressing the absence of Effective Grievance Redressal System

7.5.1.1 Facilitating Awareness and Dissemination of Information under MGNREGA

The preceding analysis has shown that although with the combined efforts made by the officials of the concerned department, like Village Level's Worker's, Block Development Officer's, etc, and the mass media, the awareness and dissemination under MGNREGA have improved but is still far beyond satisfactory. Although the people are aware of the fact that under this Act is their right to ask for employment, they are hardly aware of the provision for unemployment allowance and compensation for the late provision of jobs (after 15 days of application for jobs, the workers are entitled 1/4th of the minimum wages as compensation for the late provision of work). There were workers who said that they got work almost a year after applying for work. Most of the villagers are confused due to the prevalence of so many programs that they cannot know and understand which programme is meant for what, which applies to MGNREGA. MGNREGA being altogether a different program having other provisions, requires more awareness to become available and understandable to the ordinary people. Although initially efforts like "Orientation Programmes" for the village level workers, Village and Panchayat level meetings, Nukkad Nataks, Padyatras, Film Shows, Rallies and Miking were made for creating awareness about the Act, only short-lived awareness impact was created because all these efforts started at the onset on the implementation but gradually with time they declined and thus half complete, half incomplete awareness about the Act was created. Therefore, they should have done continuously to create large-scale awareness about the Act and its schemes.

7.5.1.2 Addressing Shortage of Staff and Lack of Professionals

The launch of the Act was not accompanied by the appointment of additional personnel to carry it out. The existing team has been burdened with carrying out MGNREGA works primarily because of the lack of adequate managerial and technical workforce in the village and the block levels. Even after fifteen years of it coming into force, the MGNREGA lacks specific and committed officials for strengthening it at the village levels. During the field visits in the MGNREGA worksites, it was observed that any random and untrained or undertrained officials were assigned to temporarily look into the administration of the MGNREGS in the various villages. There was no clarity among the villagers or the workers about whom to consult or complain about any difficulty they face working under the Act. This has a negative impact on the preparation of plans, scrutiny, approval, monitoring, work measurement, and the maintenance of specified records at the district and block levels. Inadequate and delayed planning results in insufficient progress and work quality. There is also the issue of the non-appointment of a full-time dedicated Programme Officer at the block level who has a pivotal role in successfully implementing the MGNREGS. Due to the absence of these officials and technical resources and manpower, the administrative and technical scrutiny of work, approval of works, and supervision of carrying out completion of works are routed to the normal departmental channels, which are already burdened with existing responsibilities.

During the visits to the DRDA office (known as the Vikas Bhawan in Ranchi), the MGNREGA department was to be seen, but it was found to be empty (with no proper staff and no required information). During one of the visits, the officials concerned with the program were found, but they refused to talk about the information or the required data which were asked from them. At the Panchayat level, the MGNREGA guidelines specifically provide for the appointment of a 'Rozgar Sevak' but disappointingly, during the field survey, there was no availability of such Rozgar Sevaks for the meeting except for the meetings of 'Mates' from the local areas who

carry out the work of the Rozgar Sevak. Serious issues of non-payment of salaries and significantly fewer wages paid to these 'Mates' were also found while in discussion with them during the field visits. These 'Mates' are poor villagers who act as Rozgar Sevaks who complain about lesser salaries and even non-payment of salaries to them by the administration. It should be considered that these mates are poor villagers who have lots of responsibilities and are left with low or no interest in carrying these out due to such working conditions. Thus, the local administration should do better salaries and timely payment of wages not to lose interest in the carrying out works under the MGNREGS.

7.5.1.3 Addressing Lack of People's Planning

As discussed above, there is an acute shortage of staff dedicated to implementing the MGNREGA. There is a little effort or no effort as a part of social mobilization, without which is hardly any of MGNREGA emerging as a people-centric program. Only those works for which standardized estimates are available are focused upon. Plans are made and accepted on the "top" and sent downwards for implementation to the Gram Panchayats. Many times, the Gram Sabhas are not even aware of the fact that under the MGNREGA, works cannot be started without their approval and are forced to implement action plans made by the district. Minimal effort has been made to take part in the plan formulation. It is the opposite of the very essence of the Act that holds plans have to be conceived and formulated at the Panchayat level and carried out in complete cooperation with the everyday workers. So, the very purpose of the Act gets defeated. Thus, measures to improve the participation of the local population in the MGNREGS should be made by the administration, which would increase their involvement.

7.5.1.4 Making the Social Audit Favourable

Social Audit in a democracy implies participation and complements financial audit by improving auditing quality, performance and strengthening financial audit. Social Audit

incorporated in MGNREGA includes four basic principles:

- i. Transparency
- ii. Participation
- iii. Representative Participation
- iv. Accountability

Social Audit in NREGA can be taken up at four stages:

- i. Planning Stage: For ensuring that the Gram Panchayat is considering need-based works and covering productive/investment and which are drawn up in consultation with the community serving the poor and disadvantage.
- ii. Preparation Stage: For ensuring that estimates are proper and are in tune with the approved quantum of work.
- iii. Implementation Stage: For ensuring that the wages are paid rightly, correctly, and to the right people on time.
- iv. After completing work, ensuring that the quality of work is in tune with the quantity and the estimated cost.

During the field survey, it was observed that there were failures both at the administrative and at the people's level. The process of social audit needs tremendous efforts at the grassroots level for mobilization and preparation of the rural poor to understand what the audit process means and how it should be carried out so it could be used to ensure that the poor villagers themselves plan and participate in the process of employment generation, asset creation and development of their own villages. Moreover, events of social audits need consistent follow-ups, and in the field visits, there is no social audit process taking place in most of the areas barring one or two worksites. Provision for mandatory availability of muster rolls on the worksite is also not followed. While the administration claims that a social audit has been conducted, in reality, no

report of the social audit proceedings was made available for scrutiny. Thus, we see that the concept of social audit incorporated in MGNREGA has fallen short due to its vulnerability to many discrepancies and the flaws that have crept into it in effective functioning. The workers are not reciprocated at the local administration level, so they are slowly drifting apart from the MGNREGS. Thus, strengthening social audit could also bring back the workers to the MGNREGS.

7.5.1.5 Simplifying the Availing of Employment under MGNREGA (Registering under MGNREGA)

The first step of getting registered under MGNREGA schemes seems a herculean task for the unskilled labour force, comprising a major portion of illiterate and non-trained job seekers. The job forms required to be filled for taking up employment tasks create a lot of confusion and difficulties for them as they cannot do these formalities on their own. This also creates a space for intermediaries who would explain the employment opportunities and fill their forms. These middle men encash their own interest at the cost of illiteracy and unawareness of the rural labor force. The rural unemployed again have to suffer despite concrete provisions for work. Thus this draws attention towards the fact that to avail themselves opportunities, and they should be able to understand these opportunities.

One of the workers narrated her painstaking experience of registration under the MGNREGA. When she first heard that the job card form for National Rural Jobs Guarantee Scheme was being completed, she went to Gram Sewak and asked for the application form. She began to clarify this ordeal. To her query, he responded that the forms were in the market. Then she went to the local market and bought the form for Rs.2/-. She could not fill out the form, so a broker/agent cheated her, and he used Rs.5/- as a fee for filling up her form. She went to the block office to submit the form, but nobody was present at the block office to accept her form.

Other workers were very present at the office in the block, but they denied receiving the form. Again another officer suggested her, and he said that if she only had a Rs.20/-, he might have her Work Card application form deposited. She did not have Rs.20/- so she had to go to the block office around five or four times to fill in the form she eventually did to get to know the Gram Sewak. Work Cards were also provided, and for another two days, she had to attend the block office to obtain her Job Card. She sacrificed her regular pay for a continuous five days for jobs as the stern follow-up to the block office for her Job slip. After a vigorous pursuit, she eventually received her work card. Thus, it is evident that how difficult the work of getting registered for work under the MGNREGA is and how important is the fact that not only provision for work by the Government can ensure employment generation for the rural poor and development of the villages, but zealous literacy and educational campaign run for them is equally important. However, the most crucial task here is for the administration and the officials responsible for the Act and the schemes to do their work, relentlessly and honestly.

7.5.1.6 Checking the Fallacies in the Quality of the Work and Low Work Completion Record

One of the major problems that MGNREGA is confronted with is the low work completion record. The labor is employed for a certain period of time and not for a certain piece of work. Thus when the time period of work is over, there is no drive to complete the work. Moreover, employment on the basis of time and not work basis further disinterests the labor to look into the quality and completion of work. Since there is no provision related to the completion of work in the overall planning, several works taken under the programme remain incomplete even after months of starting them, and the concerned departments initiate a large number of works and abandon the old incomplete works mid-way. There are many work sites reported to have been having incomplete works like a half dug well, canal and many incidents of accidents and mishaps taking place due to the poor quality of work like falling down of roofs, sheds,

washing away of roads buildings and other structures due to bad weather and so on. The success of MGNREGA is not to be assessed only on the basis of the term of employment provided but also in terms of the assets created. Village development through productive asset creation is a major objective of the scheme. An analysis of the official data regarding work completion record highlights serious drawbacks of the Schemes covered under the Act. Thus, looking into this aspect would also help increase the participation of the workers in the MGNREGS.

7.5.1.7 Fostering the Realization of Social and Developmental Aspect

There have been a lot of reports, incident and instances indicating towards the fact that the Dalit and marginalized section of the labor force is getting neglected. It was observed during the field visits, observation of the work procedures, and interaction with the workers that there exists a nexus between the upper caste rural population and the providers of work under the various schemes covered under the Act. The base of the Act was to target the entire unemployed rural population in an impartial and non-prejudiced manner, but this is thinned by the intentional ignorance on the part of the officials vested with the responsibilities of providing employment opportunities to the marginalized. There exists extended support to the rural upper-caste unemployed section in areas having a general caste population. However, since most of the villages, the poor, unemployed section, belong to the SCs, O.B.Cs, and the STs, these officials are hardly interested in looking into the affairs related to the programme, which further broadens the base of marginalization. In the areas dominated by tribal populations, there were even instances where a 'mate' from a particular tribe could be found favouring workers of the same in getting jobs under the schemes. There was a complete lack of follow-ups by higher officials with regard to registering workers, payment of wages, starting of a work and its completion, and so on. Thus, if this administrative apathy is removed from the MGNREGA, the workers could come forward to seek more and more work, or in other words, it would boost the worker's participation in the MGNREGS.

7.5.1.8 Facilitating Women in MGNREGA

The Act advocates for fair compensation for men and women. It has special provisions like the creation of a crèche the MGNREGS worksite for encouraging women workers to come forward and seek work under it. MGNREGA can play an instrumental role in economically empowering women, creating the foundations for greater and meaningful liberation of women, and boosting their self-esteem by providing work for them with equal pay and better facilities in the village.

However, in spite of these provisions for priority for unemployed women labor force the actual practice reflects the gender bias in employment generation. It was observed during the field visits that the women labor is many times denied enrollment under the scheme, and when employed, they have to face several hardships related to the absence of women-centric provisions, unsafe environment, and physical labor-intensive work, and so on. Women workers having children often suffer in carrying out their work due to the absence of crèches. Children are left on open fields where they work, and many times there are accidents and mishaps. It is practically tough for women workers to get meaningful employment under this Act. So, the mere mentioning of job guarantees does not imply the achievement of equal employment opportunities by women. Thus, if there happens adherence to the provisions incorporated in the MGNREGA for the women workers, women could seek more and more work and, in turn, realize the objective of women's employment and empowerment conceptualised and included in the MGNREGA.

7.5.1.9 Checking Corruption: A Major Discrepancy in the Implementation of the Act

Mihir Shah, a member of the erstwhile Planning Commission, wrote in a leading daily newspaper, "The Hindu," an article that proposed a range of reforms concerning the definition of social audit and the almost absolute control of Panchayati Raj administer the function under

MGNREGA schemes. He stressed strengthening the Raj Framework to enhance agricultural production and livelihood programmes, enable the usage of MGNREGA in SMEs, enhancing social audits, innovative use of IT, reform of the rate schedule, and development of a wider range of spaces to encourage civil society to engage in MGNREGA.

There are incidences of radicalism in the MGNREGA triggered by the pervasive incompetence and inconsistencies in the Act, contributing to the incidence of several murders and self-immolation. The early radical case on the MGNREGA violent murder of young Jharkhand activist Lalit Mehta reveals that the radical requirements of the MGNREGA have challenged corporate interest with a great deal of power (NREGA). On his way home via the Kandra forest, on 14 May 2008, Lalit, a full-time protester from Vikas Sahyog Rendra (VSK), was violently murdered. He was thirty-six. He left behind his wife, a 28-year-old Adivasi woman, and two daughters, aged 1 and 3.

These kinds of incidents have imprinted the minds of the workers discouraged them from working under the Act. Only if the administration works towards lessening corruption, minimizing discrepancies, and encouraging safer and well-assisted work environments in the MGNREGS, the workers could come forward to participate in the MGNREGS.

7.5.1.10 Addressing the Absence of Effective Grievance Redressal System

The absence of an effective Grievance Redressal System has succumbed and made MGNREGA vulnerable to many weaknesses. The poor and mostly illiterate workers are not aware of their rights, and moreover, they do not even know whom and where to submit their grievances and how to proceed with them. Although the Government has passed an Ombudsman order recently, no practical establishment of it has taken place.

Another problem attached to it is the provision of a meager fine amount of Rs. 1000 (as reported in the field visits) on any official found guilty of neglect of duty or corrupt practice while in

duty has further crippled MGNREGA. Most of the officers and the staff do not bother about the fine, and even if they are slapped with such a fine, they make all possible efforts to evade it and are successful in it. There should be stronger provisions to curb such evasions and ensure effective implementation and carrying out of responsibilities, at least due to the fear of law.

Thus we can see how the MGNREGA is floundering with the above weaknesses and flaws, and these are discouraging the workers from seeking work under the Act, creating an impasse in the MGNREGA.

There has been substantial evidence from the previous chapters that the MGNREGA does not lack the potential to provide employment assistance to the employment starved population and bring about transformation in the villages alongside by creating worthwhile assets. Moreover, there can be no denial of the fact that the Act has tremendous potential to transform the employment stagnation and rural poverty in the country. However, the decrement in its worker's participation is marring this whole purpose of the Act. Lastly, to briefly put together, what has been discussed comprehensively in the chapters before, greater and meaningful participation of the workers can be brought by incorporating certain '**Suggestions**' which would make way for the following '**Policy Implications**.'

7.6 SUGGESTIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. **Strengthening the Panchayati Raj System:** The Panchayati Raj system is the key to the success of the MGNREGA, and unless and until it is strengthened, the implementation of the MGNREGS is far from reality. Specific steps for the strengthening of the Panchayati Raj should be taken, which are:
 - a) Provision of much-needed staff to the Panchayati Raj Institutions.
 - b) Introduction of improved administrative systems and procedures.

c) Recruitment of technical staff and providing training to the existing staff.

d) Inducing planning, implementation capacity, and ensuring accountability.

2. **Encouraging and supporting the cultivators should be done religiously:** It is necessary to focus on increasing the productivity of agriculture and other livelihood systems, as well as to allow the use of NREGA on private lands of small and marginal farmers. They should not be left without technical support, aid with materials and labor wages, and any other kind of work assistance whenever they face any difficulty. In this way, the unskilled labour used these schemes by the poor, marginal, and landless labourers can create much more lasting livelihood sustenance and employment opportunities for them.

3. **Simplifying the widespread and creative use of Information Technology:** Information technology is a powerful tool if used to check corruption in MGNREGA. The complete computerization of all stages of the MGNREGA work, right from registration of workers to issue jobs, preparation of work estimates to the handling of the muster rolls. Along with enhancing the efficiency, it also opens up MGNREGA to public scrutiny even at the lowest level or unit of implementation. The issues of incomplete data and unavailability of data which lead to problems in understanding and evaluating the programme at the lowest level that is of the blocks and the villages covered under it can be solved. A clear view of the MGNREGS can be availed from just a click at the concerned internet sites can be a very big help for the people interested in understanding the scheme, its coverage, and impact. This might increase more and more public participation in the MGNREGS. However, as we have seen in the chapter before, the introduction of Information Technology seems to have been forced on the people in the village and the workers; they hardly understand and are not able to deal

with its problems. Thus, it should be simplified, and they should be given time and room for adapting to the use of Information Technology in the MGNREGA.

4. **Linking the MGNREGA works to other important works covered by early programmes:** For e.g., Afforestation should be prioritized by linking it to other forest programs. Presently, the MGNREGA works have been linked with the Swachh Bharat Mission, aiming to improve rural sanitation. This will also aid rural health policy and the achievement of the National Rural Health Mission's objectives. (NRHM).
5. **Encourage the rural folks to participate in the scheme by leaving behind all the presumptions and social prejudices:** The rural administration and the population should be wheedled to participate in the MGNREGS actively. Equal participation and equal benefits should be propagandized to make the Act more inclusive and successful. Cash rewards, advance promotions, and increments based on performance should be given to the officials of the concerned department. This should be given due publicity through print and electronic media both at the national as well as the local level.
6. **Greater role of the civil society organizations:** The civil society organizations should take more and more initiatives to work for the cause of the poor rural villages and their accessibility and handling of their rights under the Act. The marginalized unemployed rural poor should be brought to the mainstream to benefit out of the various schemes which can be done by various NGOs, individual volunteers, and so on. Inclusion of all unemployed rural populations would mean the realization of the social developmental aspect. When analyzed the past and the current progress, workers need more push and confidence to seek more work under it, and MGNREGA has a long way to go.

Thus, by adhering to some of these suggested measures and putting a check on the earlier mentioned flaws and weaknesses, the 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment

Guarantee Act' can witness greater worker's participation, it can overcome the phase of policy impasse and realise its goals. It can turn into a successful programme providing greater employment opportunities, creating larger and long-lasting livelihood sustenance opportunities and durable and worthwhile assets in the village, leading to the overall development of the rural population and the poor villages.

7.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present research is subject to certain limitations, which are as follows:

1. **Review of literature:** During the study of contextual literature, it was found that many studies have dealt with the implementation and administration of the MGNREGS. However, not much has been stressed in need to understand the mindset or attitude of the workers underlying their participation. Therefore, not many similar research studies or works have been included in the present study.
2. **Sample size and data collection:** The data collection under the study was often confronted with worker's strikes or bandhs in the locale. It was tough to find workers who would want to talk about their mindset, reasons underlying their participation, or non-participation under the MGNREGS. However, since the research objective was committed to exploring and understanding this aspect better, the researcher had to take into account the available workers as respondents to the questionnaire focused on the same.
3. **Collection, compilation of primary data, and drawing of inferences:** It was observed that responses to many questions in the interaction and questionnaire were either not answered or not easy for the respondents to answer. Some of these questions were related to their earning through MGNREGS or NON-MGNREGS, their income in the previous work, previous years, or the time taken in between application for work

and availing of work. Thus, these had to be left during the collection and compilation of data.

7.8 SCOPE OF FURTHER DISCUSSIONS AND RESEARCH

It can be brought to notice with the change in the current Government in the State; the minimum wage under MGNREGA in the State has risen to Rs.194 (January 2021), but it still has a way to go as the minimum wage in the state is Rs. 283. It has been proposed that the Government is willing to increase the wage more than this. On the occasion of a one-year government celebration, Chief Minister Hemant Soren said, "MGNREGA is a lifeline for rural poor people. But, people do not show much interest due to inadequate wages. As a result, we have decided to increase the remuneration from the Rs 194 fixed by the Centre to Rs 225 from the State exchequer."³²¹

It would be interesting to see the impact of this increase in the minimum wage and tap the inducement effect on the workers' participation under the Act.

It is about time that we understand that any government's welfare program heavily depends on people's attitude for whom it is meant for or the beneficiaries as we call it. As the study suggests, there is a high probability of the occurrence of a discouraged worker effect. This aspect can act as an apt research objective in the regions such as Jharkhand, which are still battling for the success of MGNREGA. Research in these areas could also serve as a tool to understand the government's implementation and administration of welfare schemes from the beneficiaries' perspective.

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Appendix I - Questionnaire

Factors influencing demand for MGNREGS Work

Schedule for MGNREGS Workers

Part I- Identification Particulars:

1. State _____
2. District _____
3. Block _____
4. GP _____
5. Village _____

Part-II Socio- Economic Profile

6. HH No.
7. Name of the Head of the Household:
8. Job card no.
9. Age: (Years)
10. Sex: male-1; Female- 2
11. Caste: *SC-1; ST-2; OBC-3; Minorities-4; OC-5*
12. Education
Illiterate -1; Primary-2; Secondary-3; High School and above-4
13. Marital Status
Married-1; Un-married-2; Widowed -3; Divorcee-4; Deserted -5
14. Size of the Household: Adult male Adult Female Children
15. No. of earning members in the Household:

Adult Male

Adult Female

Children

16. Size of (operational) land holding (acres):

Dry acres Wet acres Nil

17. Principal occupations of the household (As per income earned)

Cultivator-1; Agriculture Labour -2; Non-Ag. Labour -3; Artisan -4; Business -5 ;**Services -6; Wage Employment - 7**2010-11 2017-18

18. Family annual income for 2010-11 and 2017-18

(Rs.)

s.no	Net Income From	2010-11	2017-18
1	Agriculture		
2	Labour (Excluding MGNREGS)		
3	Dairy and livestock		
4	Others (Specify)		

19. Family annual income from MGNREGS in 2010-11 Rs.

2017-18 Rs.

Part III: Awareness about MGNREGS:**Awareness about Rights and Entitlements**

20. What are the major rights provided in MGNREGS?

(Yes - 1; No - 2)

- i. Right to work
- ii. Maximum number of days of guaranteed employment (100 days)
- iii. Unemployment allowance
- iv. Wages to be paid if work is given beyond 5 kms (10% more)
- v. Minimum wage
- vi. Time limit for providing employment after submission of application

Rs.

- (15 days)
- vii. Time limit for payment of wages (15 days) ☐
- viii. Compensation for delayed payment ☐
21. Do you think that you have to give application for getting work? **Yes - 1; No - 2** ☐
22. Can we seek employment at any time? **Yes - 1; No - 2** ☐
23. Are you aware of the type of works that can be taken up under MGNREGS?
Yes - 1; No - 2 ☐
24. Are you aware that you can identify works in Gram Sabha? **Yes - 1; No - 2** ☐
25. Are you aware of the mandatory facilities that should be provided at the worksite?
Yes - 1; No - 2
- i. first aid ☐
- ii. drinking water ☐
- iii. crèche ☐
- iv. Shade ☐
26. Are you aware of Social Audit: **Yes - 1; No - 2** ☐
27. Are you aware of the officials / others to approach, if
Yes - 1; No - 2
- i. job cards are not given (Village Secretary/GP Pradhan/Field Assistant) ☐
- ii. work is not given within 15 days (PO, DPC,) ☐
- iii. wages are not paid within 15 days (PO, DPC) ☐

Part IV: MGNREGS Participation

28. Participation in regard to Process of MGNREGS

Sl. No	Indicators	Yes		No	NA
		Active*	Passive		
I	MGNREGS Process				
a	Applying for job card				
b	Participating in the awareness meetings				
c	Participating in the selection of works in Gram Sabha				
d	Participation in Labour Budget preparation				
e	applying for work				
f	Opening bank accounts				
g	Receiving wages (Cash / Bank / PO)				
h	Participating in the social audit				

(* Active: raising questions, demanding services, obtaining benefits.....)

29. Reasons for non participation

30. Reasons for active/passive participation

31. Participation of the household in the employment provided in MGNREGS

Year	No. of days of employment	Member - 1			Member - 2			Member -3		
		Age	Sex	Edu.	Age	Sex	Edu.	Age	Sex	Edu.
2010-11	Sought									
	Worked									
2017-18	Sought									
	Worked									

(Note: The information relating to the member with in demand for MGNREGS work can be an indicator of rise or decline in demand of work)

32. Reasons for involuntary withdrawal

Sl. No	Reasons for decline in demand	Yes	No	NA	If Yes, explain
A	Lack of job card				
B	Employment				
	Not provided				
	Provided but not sufficient				
	Provided but not acceptable (not timely, outside GP, Nature of work)				
C	Problems related to wage payments				
	Delay in payments				
	Wages not as per minimum wage				
	High transport costs – Distance				
	DBT related issues; viz; linkage of bank account with Aadhar card				
D	Minimum wages; sufficient				
D	Lack of Worksite facilities				
E	Attitude of delivery system including financial institutions- (discrimination/ indifference)				
F	Problems related to household				
	Household workload,				
	to take care of children/elderly				
	ill- health				
	not having the tools				
	culturally not permitted				
G	Problems at worksite				
	Group arrangement				
	Rigid timings				
	Harassment				
H	More workload in own agriculture/livelihood opportunity (dairy, ...)				
I	Distress migration				
J	Natural disasters like floods, earthquakes,				
K	Any other (specify_____)				

33. Reasons for voluntary withdrawal

Sl. No	Reasons for withdrawal	Yes	No	NA	If Yes, explain
1.	More employment opportunities in the village				
2.	Work not provided even after application				
3.	Provision of work long after application				
4.	Higher wages in non-MGNREGS works				
5.	Preference for semi-skilled or skilled work				
6.	More earning members in the house				
7.	Sufficient work in own land/enterprise				
8.	Improved economic status				
9.	Migration (Pull factors)				
10.	Any other (specify _____)				

34. Are you satisfied with MGNREGS work: to large extent-1; to some extent-2; nil-3

☐

35. If not, Why

36. What changes do you suggest in MGNREGS to meet your employment needs
(3 main factors)



भारत का राजपत्र The Gazette of India

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इस भाग में भिन्न पृष्ठ संख्या दी जाती है जिससे कि यह अलग संकलन के रूप में रखा जा सके।
Separate paging is given to this Part in order that it may be filed as a separate compilation.

MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE

(Legislative Department)

New Delhi, the 7th September, 2005/Bhadra 16, 1927 (Saka)

The following Act of Parliament received the assent of the President on 5th September, 2005 and is hereby published for general information:—

THE NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT, 2005

No. 42 OF 2005

[5th September, 2005.]

An Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Be it enacted by Parliament in the Fifty-sixth Year of the Republic of India as follows:—

CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

- (1) This Act may be called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005.
- (2) It extends to the whole of India except the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
- (3) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, appoint; and different dates may be appointed for different States or for different areas in a State and any reference in any such provision to the

Short title,
extent and
commencement.

commencement of this Act shall be construed as a reference to the coming into force of that provision in such State or, as the case may be, in such area:

Provided that this Act shall be applicable to the whole of the territory to which it extends within a period of five years from the date of enactment of this Act.

Definitions.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,—

- (a) "adult" means a person who has completed his eighteenth years of age;
- (b) "applicant" means the head of a household or any of its other adult members who has applied for employment under the Scheme;
- (c) "Block" means a community development area within a district comprising a group of Gram Panchayats;
- (d) "Central Council" means the Central Employment Guarantee Council constituted under sub-section (1) of section 10;
- (e) "District Programme Coordinator" means an officer of the State Government designated as such under sub-section (1) of section 14 for implementation of the Scheme in a district;
- (f) "household" means the members of a family related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and normally residing together and sharing meals or holding a common ration card;
- (g) "implementing agency" includes any department of the Central Government or a State Government, a Zila Parishad, Panchayat at intermediate level, Gram Panchayat or any local authority or Government undertaking or non-governmental organisation authorised by the Central Government or the State Government to undertake the implementation of any work taken up under a Scheme;
- (h) "minimum wage", in relation to any area, means the minimum wage fixed by the State Government under section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for agricultural labourers as applicable in that area; 11 of 1948.
- (i) "National Fund" means the National Employment Guarantee Fund established under sub-section (1) of section 20;
- (j) "notification" means a notification published in the Official Gazette;
- (k) "preferred work" means any work which is taken up for implementation on a priority basis under a Scheme;
- (l) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;
- (m) "Programme Officer" means an officer appointed under sub-section (1) of section 15 for implementing the Scheme;
- (n) "project" means any work taken up under a Scheme for the purpose of providing employment to the applicants;
- (o) "rural area" means any area in a State except those areas covered by any urban local body or a Cantonment Board established or constituted under any law for the time being in force;
- (p) "Scheme" means a Scheme notified by the State Government under sub-section (1) of section 4;
- (q) "State Council" means the State Employment Guarantee Council constituted under sub-section (1) of section 12;
- (r) "unskilled manual work" means any physical work which any adult person is capable of doing without any skill or special training;
- (s) "wage rate" means the wage rate referred to in section 6.

CHAPTER II

GUARANTEE OF EMPLOYMENT IN RURAL AREAS

3. (1) Save as otherwise provided, the State Government shall, in such rural area in the State as may be notified by the Central Government, provide to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work not less than one hundred days of such work in a financial year in accordance with the Scheme made under this Act.

Guarantee of rural employment to households.

(2) Every person who has done the work given to him under the Scheme shall be entitled to receive wages at the wage rate for each day of work.

(3) Save as otherwise provided in this Act, the disbursement of daily wages shall be made on a weekly basis or in any case not later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done.

(4) The Central Government or the State Government may, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make provisions for securing work to every adult member of a household under a Scheme for any period beyond the period guaranteed under sub-section (1), as may be expedient.

CHAPTER III

EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEMES AND UNEMPLOYMENT ALLOWANCE

4. (1) For the purposes of giving effect to the provisions of section 3, every State Government shall, within six months from the date of commencement of this Act, by notification, make a Scheme, for providing not less than one hundred days of guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in the rural areas covered under the Scheme and whose adult members, by application, volunteer to do unskilled manual work subject to the conditions laid down by or under this Act and in the Scheme:

Employment Guarantee Schemes for rural areas.

Provided that until any such Scheme is notified by the State Government, the Annual Action Plan or Perspective Plan for the *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana* (SGRY) or the National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) whichever is in force in the concerned area immediately before such notification shall be deemed to be the action plan for the Scheme for the purposes of this Act.

(2) The State Government shall publish a summary of the Scheme made by it in at least two local newspapers, one of which shall be in a vernacular language circulating in the area or areas to which such Scheme shall apply.

(3) The Scheme made under sub-section (1) shall provide for the minimum features specified in Schedule I.

5. (1) The State Government may, without prejudice to the conditions specified in Schedule II, specify in the Scheme the conditions for providing guaranteed employment under this Act.

Conditions for providing guaranteed employment.

(2) The persons employed under any Scheme made under this Act shall be entitled to such facilities not less than the minimum facilities specified in Schedule II.

11 of 1948.

6. (1) Notwithstanding anything contained in the Minimum Wages Act, 1948, the Central Government may, by notification, specify the wage rate for the purposes of this Act:

Wage rate.

Provided that different rates of wages may be specified for different areas:

Provided further that the wage rate specified from time to time under any such notification shall not be at a rate less than sixty rupees per day.

11 of 1948.

(2) Until such time as a wage rate is fixed by the Central Government in respect of any area in a State, the minimum wage fixed by the State Government under section 3 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 for agricultural labourers, shall be considered as the wage rate applicable to that area.

Payment of
unemployment
allowance.

7. (1) If an applicant for employment under the Scheme is not provided such employment within fifteen days of receipt of his 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 shall be entitled to a daily unemployment allowance in accordance with this section.

(2) Subject to such terms and conditions of eligibility as may be prescribed by the State Government and subject to the provisions of this Act and the Schemes and the economic capacity of the State Government, the unemployment allowance payable under sub-section (1) shall be paid to the applicants of a household subject to the entitlement of the household at such rate as may be specified by the State Government, by notification, in consultation with the State Council:

Provided that no such rate shall be less than one-fourth of the wage rate for the first thirty days during the financial year and not less than one-half of the wage rate for the remaining period of the financial year.

(3) The liability of the State Government to pay unemployment allowance to a household during any financial year shall cease as soon as—

(a) the applicant is directed by the Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer to report for work either by himself or depute at least one adult member of his household; or

(b) the period for which employment is sought comes to an end and no member of the household of the applicant had turned up for employment; or

(c) the adult members of the household of the applicant have received in total at least one hundred days of work within the financial year; or

(d) 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) The unemployment allowance payable to the household of an applicant jointly shall be sanctioned and disbursed by the Programme Officer or such local authority (including the Panchayats at the district, intermediate or village level) as the State Government may, by notification, authorise in this behalf.

(5) Every payment of unemployment allowance under sub-section (1) shall be made or offered not later than fifteen days from the date on which it became due for payment.

(6) The State Government may prescribe the procedure for payment of unemployment allowance under this Act.

Non-
disbursement
of
unemployment
allowance in
certain
circumstances.

8. (1) If the Programme Officer is not in a position to disburse the unemployment allowance in time or at all for any reason beyond his control, he shall report the matter to the District Programme Coordinator and announce such reasons in a notice to be displayed on his notice board and the notice board of the Gram Panchayat and such other conspicuous places as he may deem necessary.

(2) Every case of non-payment or delayed payment of unemployment allowance shall be reported in the annual report submitted by the District Programme Coordinator to the State Government along with the reasons for such non-payment or delayed payment.

(3) The State Government shall take all measures to make the payment of unemployment allowance reported under sub-section (1) to the concerned household as expeditiously as possible.

Disentitlement
to receive
unemployment
allowance in
certain
circumstances.

9. An applicant who—

(a) does not accept the employment provided to his household under a Scheme;

or

(b) does not report for work within fifteen days of being notified by the Programme Officer or the implementing agency to report for the work; or

(c) continuously remains absent from work, without obtaining a permission from the concerned implementing agency for a period of more than one week or remains absent for a total period of more than one week in any month,

shall not be eligible to claim the unemployment allowance payable under this Act for a period of three months but shall be eligible to seek employment under the Scheme at any time.

CHAPTER IV

IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING AUTHORITIES

10. (1) With effect from such date as the Central Government may, by notification specify, there shall be constituted a Council to be called the Central Employment Guarantee Council to discharge the functions, and perform the duties, assigned to it by or under this Act.

Central
Employment
Guarantee
Council.

(2) The headquarters of the Central Council shall be at Delhi.

(3) The Central Council shall consist of the following members to be appointed by the Central Government, namely:—

(a) a Chairperson;

(b) not more than such number of representatives of the Central Ministries including the Planning Commission not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India as may be determined by the Central Government;

(c) not more than such number of representatives of the State Governments as may be determined by the Central Government;

(d) not more than fifteen non-official members representing Panchayati Raj Institutions, organisations of workers and disadvantaged groups:

Provided that such non-official members shall include two chairpersons of District Panchayats nominated by the Central Government by rotation for a period of one year at a time:

Provided further that not less than one-third of the non-official members nominated under this clause shall be women:

Provided also that not less than one-third of the non-official members shall be belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and Minorities;

(e) such number of representatives of the States as the Central Government may, by rules, determine in this behalf;

(f) a Member-Secretary not below the rank of Joint Secretary to the Government of India.

(4) The terms and conditions subject to which the Chairperson and other members of the Central Council may be appointed and the time, place and procedure of the meetings (including the quorum at such meetings) of the Central Council shall be such as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

11. (1) The Central Council shall perform and discharge the following functions and duties, namely:—

Functions and
duties of
Central
Council.

(a) establish a central evaluation and monitoring system;

(b) advise the Central Government on all matters concerning the implementation of this Act;

(c) review the monitoring and redressal mechanism from time to time and recommend improvements required;

(d) promote the widest possible dissemination of information about the Schemes made under this Act;

(e) monitoring the implementation of this Act;

(f) preparation of annual reports to be laid before Parliament by the Central Government on the implementation of this Act;

(g) any other duty or function as may be assigned to it by the Central Government.

(2) The Central Council shall have the power to undertake evaluation of the various Schemes made under this Act and for that purpose collect or cause to be collected statistics pertaining to the rural economy and the implementation of the Schemes.

State
Employment
Guarantee
Council.

12. (1) For the purposes of regular monitoring and reviewing the implementation of this Act at the State level, every State Government shall constitute a State Council to be known as the(name of the State) State Employment Guarantee Council with a Chairperson and such number of official members as may be determined by the State Government and not more than fifteen non-official members nominated by the State Government from Panchayati Raj institutions, organisations of workers and disadvantaged groups:

Provided that not less than one-third of the non-official members nominated under this clause shall be women:

Provided further that not less than one third of the non-official members shall be belonging to the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, the Other Backward Classes and Minorities.

(2) The terms and conditions subject to which the Chairperson and members of the State Council may be appointed and the time, place and procedure of the meetings (including the quorum at such meetings) of the State Council shall be such as may be prescribed by the State Government.

(3) The duties and functions of the State Council shall include—

(a) advising the State Government on all matters concerning the Scheme and its implementation in the State;

(b) determining the preferred works;

(c) reviewing the monitoring and redressal mechanisms from time to time and recommending improvements;

(d) promoting the widest possible dissemination of information about this Act and the Schemes under it;

(e) monitoring the implementation of this Act and the Schemes in the State and coordinating such implementation with the Central Council;

(f) preparing the annual report to be laid before the State Legislature by the State Government;

(g) any other duty or function as may be assigned to it by the Central Council or the State Government.

(3) The State Council shall have the power to undertake an evaluation of the Schemes operating in the State and for that purpose to collect or cause to be collected statistics pertaining to the rural economy and the implementation of the Schemes and Programmes in the State.

13. (1) The Panchayats at district, intermediate and village levels shall be the principal authorities for planning and implementation of the Schemes made under this Act.

Principal authorities for planning and implementation of Schemes.

(2) The functions of the Panchayats at the district level shall be—

(a) to finalise and approve blockwise shelf of projects to be taken up under a programme under the Scheme;

(b) to supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Block level and district level; and

(c) to carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Council, from time to time.

(3) The functions of the Panchayat at intermediate level shall be—

(a) to approve the Block level Plan for forwarding it to the district Panchayat at the district level for final approval;

(b) to supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Gram Panchayat and Block level; and

(c) to carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Council, from time to time.

(4) The District Programme Coordinator shall assist the Panchayat at the district level in discharging its functions under this Act and any Scheme made thereunder.

14. (1) The Chief Executive Officer of the District Panchayat or the Collector of the district or any other district level officer of appropriate rank as the State Government may decide shall be designated as the District Programme Coordinator for the implementation of the Scheme in the district.

District Programme Coordinator.

(2) The District Programme Coordinator shall be responsible for the implementation of the Scheme in the district in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the rules made thereunder.

(3) The functions of the District Programme Coordinator shall be—

(a) to assist the district Panchayat in discharging its functions under this Act and any scheme made thereunder;

(b) to consolidate the plans prepared by the Blocks and project proposals received from other implementing agencies for inclusion in the shelf of projects to be approved by the Panchayat at district level;

(c) to accord necessary sanction and administrative clearance, wherever necessary;

(d) to coordinate with the Programme Officers functioning within his jurisdiction and the implementing agencies to ensure that the applicants are provided employment as per their entitlements under this Act;

(e) to review, monitor and supervise the performance of the Programme Officers;

(f) to conduct periodic inspection of the works in progress; and

(g) to redress the grievances of the applicants.

(4) The State Government shall delegate such administrative and financial powers to the District Programme Coordinator as may be required to enable him to carry out his functions under this Act.

(5) The Programme Officer appointed under sub-section (1) of section 15 and all other officers of the State Government and local authorities and bodies functioning within the district shall be responsible to assist the District Programme Coordinator in carrying out his functions under this Act and the Schemes made thereunder.

(6) The District Programme Coordinator shall prepare in the month of December every year a labour budget for the next financial year containing the details of anticipated demand

for unskilled manual work in the district and the plan for engagement of labourers in the works covered under the Scheme and submit it to the district panchayat.

Programme
Officer.

15. (1) At every Panchayat at intermediate level, the State Government shall appoint a person who is not below the rank of Block Development Officer with such qualifications and experience as may be determined by the State Government as Programme Officer at the Panchayat at intermediate level.

(2) The Programme Officer shall assist the Panchayat at intermediate level in discharging its functions under this Act and any Scheme made thereunder.

(3) The Programme Officer shall be responsible for matching the demand for employment with the employment opportunities arising from projects in the area under his jurisdiction.

(4) The Programme Officer shall prepare a plan for the Block under his jurisdiction by consolidating the project proposals prepared by the Gram Panchayats and the proposals received from intermediate panchayats.

(5) The functions of the Programme Officer shall include—

(a) monitoring of projects taken up by the Gram Panchayats and other implementing agencies within the Block;

(b) sanctioning and ensuring payment of unemployment allowance to the eligible households;

(c) ensuring prompt and fair payment of wages to all labourers employed under a programme of the Scheme within the Block;

(d) ensuring that regular social audits of all works within the jurisdiction of the Gram Panchayat are carried out by the Gram Sabha and that prompt action is taken on the objections raised in the social audit;

(e) dealing promptly with all complaints that may arise in connection with the implementation of the Scheme within the Block; and

(f) any other work as may be assigned to him by the District Programme Coordinator or the State Government.

(6) The Programme Officers shall function under the direction, control and superintendence of the District Programme Coordinator.

(7) The State Government may, by order, direct that all or any of the functions of a Programme Officer shall be discharged by the Gram Panchayat or a local authority.

Responsibilities
of the Gram
Panchayats.

16. (1) The Gram Panchayat shall be responsible for identification of the projects in the Gram Panchayat area to be taken up under a Scheme as per the recommendations of the Gram Sabha and the Ward Sabhas and for executing and supervising such works.

(2) A Gram Panchayat may take up any project under a Scheme within the area of the Gram Panchayat as may be sanctioned by the Programme Officer.

(3) Every Gram Panchayat shall, after considering the recommendations of the Gram Sabha and the Ward Sabhas, prepare a development plan and maintain a shelf of possible works to be taken up under the Scheme as and when demand for work arises.

(4) The Gram Panchayat shall forward its proposals for the development projects including the order of priority between different works to the Programme Officer for scrutiny and preliminary approval prior to the commencement of the year in which it is proposed to be executed.

(5) The Programme Officer shall allot at least fifty per cent. of the works in terms of its cost under a Scheme to be implemented through the Gram Panchayats.

(6) The Programme Officer shall supply each Gram Panchayat with—

- (a) the muster rolls for the works sanctioned to be executed by it; and
- (b) a list of employment opportunities available elsewhere to the residents of the Gram Panchayat.

(7) The Gram Panchayat shall allocate employment opportunities among the applicants and ask them to report for work.

(8) The works taken up by a Gram Panchayat under a Scheme shall meet the required technical standards and measurements.

17. (1) The Gram Sabha shall monitor the execution of works within the Gram Panchayat. Social audit of work by Gram Sabha.

(2) The Gram Sabha shall conduct regular social audits of all the projects under the Scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat.

(3) The Gram Panchayat shall make available all relevant documents including the muster rolls, bills, vouchers, measurement books, copies of sanction orders and other connected books of account and papers to the Gram Sabha for the purpose of conducting the social audit.

18. The State Government shall make available to the District Programme Coordinator and the Programme Officers necessary staff and technical support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme. Responsibilities of State Government in implementing Scheme.

19. The State Government shall, by rules, determine appropriate grievance redressal mechanisms at the Block level and the district level for dealing with any complaint by any person in respect of implementation of the Scheme and lay down the procedure for disposal of such complaints. Grievance redressal mechanism.

CHAPTER V

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL AND STATE EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE FUNDS AND AUDIT

20. (1) The Central Government shall, by notification, establish a fund to be called the National Employment Guarantee Fund for the purposes of this Act. National Employment Guarantee Fund.

(2) The Central Government may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, credit by way of grants or loans such sums of money as the Central Government may consider necessary to the National Fund.

(3) The amount standing to the credit of the National Fund shall be utilised in such manner and subject to such conditions and limitations as may be prescribed by the Central Government.

21. (1) The State Government may, by notification, establish a fund to be called the State Employment Guarantee Fund for the purposes of implementation of the Scheme. State Employment Guarantee Fund.

(2) The amount standing to the credit of the State Fund shall be expended in such manner and subject to such conditions and limitations as may be prescribed by the State Government for the purposes of implementation of this Act and the Schemes made thereunder and for meeting the administrative expenses in connection with the implementation of this Act.

(3) The State Fund shall be held and administered on behalf of the State Government in such manner and by such authority as may be prescribed by the State Government.

22. (1) Subject to the rules as may be made by the Central Government in this behalf, the Central Government shall meet the cost of the following, namely:— Funding pattern.

- (a) the amount required for payment of wages for unskilled manual work under the Scheme;

(b) up to three-fourths of the material cost of the Scheme including payment of wages to skilled and semi-skilled workers subject to the provisions of Schedule II;

(c) such percentage of the total cost of the Scheme as may be determined by the Central Government towards the administrative expenses, which may include the salary and allowances of the Programme Officers and his supporting staff, the administrative expenses of the Central Council, facilities to be provided under Schedule II and such other item as may be decided by the Central Government.

(2) The State Government shall meet the cost of the following, namely:—

(a) the cost of unemployment allowance payable under the Scheme;

(b) one-fourth of the material cost of the Scheme including payment of wages to skilled and semi-skilled workers subject to the provisions of Schedule II;

(c) the administrative expenses of the State Council.

Transparency
and
accountability.

23. (1) The District Programme Coordinator and all implementing agencies in the District shall be responsible for the proper utilisation and management of the funds placed at their disposal for the purpose of implementing a Scheme.

(2) The State Government may prescribe the manner of maintaining proper books and accounts of employment of labourers and the expenditure incurred in connection with the implementation of the provisions of this Act and the Schemes made thereunder.

(3) The State Government may, by rules, determine the arrangements to be made for the proper execution of Schemes and programmes under the Schemes and to ensure transparency and accountability at all levels in the implementation of the Schemes.

(4) All payments of wages in cash and unemployment allowances shall be made directly to the person concerned and in the presence of independent persons of the community on pre-announced dates.

(5) If any dispute or complaint arises concerning the implementation of a Scheme by the Gram Panchayat, the matter shall be referred to the Programme Officer.

(6) The Programme Officer shall enter every complaint in a complaint register maintained by him and shall dispose of the disputes and complaints within seven days of its receipt and in case it relates to a matter to be resolved by any other authority it shall be forwarded to such authority under intimation to the complainant.

Audit of
accounts.

24. (1) The Central Government may, in consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, prescribe appropriate arrangements for audits of the accounts of the Schemes at all levels.

(2) The accounts of the Scheme shall be maintained in such form and in such manner as may be prescribed by the State Government.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS

Penalty
for non-
compliance.

25. Whoever contravenes the provisions of this Act shall on conviction be liable to a fine which may extend to one thousand rupees.

Power to
delegate.

26. (1) The Central Government may, by notification, direct that the powers exercisable by it (excluding the power to make rules) may, in such circumstances and subject to such conditions and limitations, be exercisable also by the State Government or such officer subordinate to the Central Government or the State Government as it may specify in such notification.

(2) The State Government may, by notification, direct that the powers exercisable by it (excluding the power to make rules and Schemes) may, in such circumstances and subject to such conditions and limitations, be exercisable also by such officer subordinate to it as it may specify in such notification.

27. (1) The Central Government may give such directions as it may consider necessary to the State Government for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

Power of
Central
Government
to give
directions.

(2) Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-section (1), the Central Government may, on receipt of any complaint regarding the issue or improper utilisation of funds granted under this Act in respect of any Scheme if *prima facie* satisfied that there is a case, cause an investigation into the complaint made by any agency designated by it and if necessary, order stoppage of release of funds to the Scheme and institute appropriate remedial measures for its proper implementation within a reasonable period of time.

28. The provisions of this Act or the Schemes made thereunder shall have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force or in any instrument having effect by virtue of such law:

Act to have
overriding
effect.

Provided that where a State enactment exists or is enacted to provide employment guarantee for unskilled manual work to rural households consistent with the provisions of this Act under which the entitlement of the households is not less than and the conditions of employment are not inferior to what is guaranteed under this Act, the State Government shall have the option of implementing its own enactment:

Provided further that in such cases the financial assistance shall be paid to the concerned State Government in such manner as shall be determined by the Central Government, which shall not exceed what the State would have been entitled to receive under this Act had a Scheme made under this Act had to be implemented.

29. (1) If the Central Government is satisfied that it is necessary or expedient so to do, it may, by notification, amend Schedule I or Schedule II and thereupon Schedule I or Schedule II, as the case may be, shall be deemed to have been amended accordingly.

Power to
amend
Schedules.

(2) A copy of every notification made under sub-section (1) shall be laid before each House of Parliament as soon as may be after it is made.

30. No suit, prosecution or other legal proceedings shall lie against the District Programme Coordinator, Programme Officer or any other person who is, or who is deemed to be, a public servant within the meaning of section 21 of the Indian Penal Code in respect of anything which is in good faith done or intended to be done under this Act or the rules or Schemes made thereunder.

Protection of
action taken
in good faith.

31. (1) The Central Government may, by notification, and subject to the condition of previous publication, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Power of
Central
Government
to make
rules.

(2) In particular, and without the prejudice of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the number of representatives of the State Governments under clause (e) of sub-section (3) of section 10;

(b) the terms and conditions subject to which the Chairman and other members of the Central Council may be appointed, and the time, place and procedure of the meetings (including the quorum at such meetings) of the Central Council, under sub-section (4) of section 10;

(c) the manner in which and the conditions and limitations subject to which the National Fund shall be utilised under sub-section (3) of section 20;

(d) the rules relating to funding pattern to meet the cost of certain items under sub-section (1) of section 22;

(e) any other matter which is to be, or may be, prescribed or in respect of which provision is to be made by the Central Government by rules.

32. (1) The State Government may, by notification, and subject to the condition of previous publication, and consistent with this Act and the rules made by the Central Government, make rules to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Power of
State
Government
to make
rules.

(2) In particular, and without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing power, such rules may provide for all or any of the following matters, namely:—

(a) the terms and conditions upon which eligibility for unemployment allowance may be determined under sub-section (2) of section 7;

(b) the procedure for payment of unemployment allowance under sub-section (6) of section 7;

(c) the terms and conditions subject to which the Chairperson and members of the State Council may be appointed, and the time, place and procedure of the meetings (including the quorum at such meetings) of their appointment to the State Council, under sub-section (2) of section 12;

(d) the grievance redressal mechanism at the Block level and the District level and the procedure to be followed in such matter under section 19;

(e) the manner in which and the conditions and limitations subject to which the State Fund shall be utilised under sub-section (2) of section 21;

(f) the authority who may administer and the manner in which he may hold the State Fund under sub-section (3) of section 21;

(g) the manner of maintaining books of account of employment of labourers and the expenditure under sub-section (2) of section 23;

(h) the arrangements required for proper execution of Schemes under sub-section (3) of section 23;

(i) the form and manner in which the accounts of the Scheme shall be maintained under sub-section (2) of section 24;

(j) any other matter which is to be, or may be, prescribed or in respect of which provision is to be made by the State Government by rules.

Laying of
rules and
Schemes.

33. (1) Every rule made by the Central Government under this Act shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament, while it is in session, for a total period of thirty days which may be comprised in one session or in two or more successive sessions, and if, before the expiry of the session immediately following the session or the successive sessions aforesaid, both Houses agree in making any modification in the rule or both the Houses agree that the rule should not be made, the rule shall have thereafter have effect only in such modified form or be of no effect, as the case may be; so, however, that any such modification or annulment shall be without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done under that rule.

(2) Every rule or Scheme made by the State Government under this Act shall, as soon as may be after it is made, be laid before each House of the State Legislature where there are two Houses, and where there is one House of the State Legislature, before that House.

Power to
remove
difficulties.

34. (1) If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Central Government may, by order published in the Official Gazette, make such provisions, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, as appear to it to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty:

Provided that no order shall be made under this section after the expiry of three years from the commencement of this Act.

(2) Every order made under this section shall be laid, as soon as may be after it is made, before each House of Parliament.

SCHEDULE I

[See section 4(3)]

MINIMUM FEATURES OF A RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME

1. The focus of the Scheme shall be on the following works in their order of priority:—
 - (i) water conservation and water harvesting;
 - (ii) drought proofing (including afforestation and tree plantation);
 - (iii) irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;
 - (iv) 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 under the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India;
 - (v) renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks;
 - (vi) land development;
 - (vii) flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas;
 - (viii) rural connectivity to provide all-weather access; and
 - (ix) any other work which may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government.
2. Creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor shall be an important objective of the Scheme.
3. The works taken up under the scheme shall be in rural areas.
4. The State Council shall prepare a list of preferred works for different areas based on their ability to create durable assets.
5. The Scheme shall be subject to appropriate arrangements as may be laid down by the State Government under the rules issued by it for proper maintenance of the public assets created under the Scheme.
6. Under no circumstances shall the labourers be paid less than the wage rate.
7. When wages are directly linked with the quantity of work, the wages shall be paid according to the schedule of rates fixed by the State Government for different types of work every year, in consultation with the State Council.
8. The schedule of rates of wages for unskilled labourers shall be so fixed that a person working for seven hours would normally earn a wage equal to the wage rate.
9. The cost of material component of projects including the wages of the skilled and semi-skilled workers taken up under the Scheme shall not exceed forty per cent. of the total project costs.
10. It shall be open to the Programme Officer and Gram Panchayat to direct any person who applied for employment under the Scheme to do work of any type permissible under it.
11. The Scheme shall not permit engaging any contractor for implementation of the projects under it.
12. As far as practicable, a task funded under the Scheme shall be performed by using manual labour and not machines.
13. Every Scheme shall contain adequate provisions for ensuring transparency and accountability at all level of implementation.
14. Provisions for regular inspection and supervision of works taken up under the Scheme shall be made to ensure proper quality of work as well as to ensure that the total wages paid for the completion of the work is commensurate with the quality and quantity of work done.

15. The District Programme Coordinator, the Programme Officer and the Gram Panchayat implementing the Scheme shall prepare annually a report containing the facts and figures and achievements relating to the implementation of the Scheme within his or its jurisdiction and a copy of the same shall be made available to the public on demand and on payment of such fee as may be specified in the Scheme.

16. All accounts and records relating to the Scheme shall be made available for public scrutiny and any person desirous of obtaining a copy or relevant extracts therefrom may be provided such copies or extracts on demand and after paying such fee as may be specified in the Scheme.

17. A copy of the muster rolls of each Scheme or project under a Scheme shall be made available in the offices of the Gram Panchayat and the Programme Officer for inspection by any person interested after paying such fee as may be specified in the Scheme.

SCHEDULE II

(See section 5)

CONDITIONS FOR GUARANTEED RURAL EMPLOYMENT UNDER A SCHEME AND MINIMUM ENTITLEMENTS OF LABOURERS

1. The adult members of every household who—

- (i) reside in any rural areas; and
- (ii) are willing to do unskilled manual work,

may submit their names, age and the address of the household to the Gram Panchayat at the village level (hereafter in this Schedule referred to as the Gram Panchayat) in the jurisdiction of which they reside for registration of their household for issuance of a job card.

2. It shall be the duty of the Gram Panchayat to register the household, after making such enquiry as it deems fit and issue a job card containing such details of adult members of the household affixing their photographs, as may be specified by the State Government in the Scheme.

3. The registration made under paragraph 2 shall be for such period as may be laid in the Scheme, but in any case not less than five years, and may be renewed from time to time.

4. Every adult member of a registered household whose name appears in the job card shall be entitled to apply for unskilled manual work under the Scheme.

5. All registered persons belonging to a household shall be entitled to employment in accordance with the Scheme made under the provisions of this Act, for as many days as each applicant may request, subject to a maximum of one hundred days per household in a given financial year.

6. The Programme Officer shall ensure that every applicant referred to in paragraph 5 shall be provided unskilled manual work in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme within fifteen days of receipt of an application or from the date he seeks work in case of advance application, whichever is later:

Provided that priority shall be given to women in such a way that at least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested for work under this Act.

7. Applications for work must be for at least fourteen days of continuous work.

8. There shall be no limit on the number of days of employment for which a person may apply, or on the number of days of employment actually provided to him subject to the aggregate entitlement of the household.

9. Applications for work may be submitted in writing either to the Gram Panchayat or to the Programme Officer, as may be specified in the Scheme.

10. The Gram Panchayat and Programme Officer, as the case may be, shall be bound to accept valid applications and to issue a dated receipt to the applicant. Group applications may also be submitted.

11. Applicants who are provided with work shall be so intimated in writing, by means of a letter sent to him at the address given in the job card and by a public notice displayed at the office of the Panchayats at the district, intermediate or village level.

12. As far as possible, employment shall be provided within a radius of five kilometres of the village where the applicant resides at the time of applying.

13. A new work under the Scheme shall be commenced only if—

(a) at least fifty labourers become available for such work; and

(b) the labourers cannot be absorbed in the ongoing works:

Provided that this condition shall not be applicable for new works, as determined by the State Government, in hilly areas and in respect of afforestation.

14. In cases the employment is provided outside such radius, it must be provided within the Block, and the labourers shall be paid ten per cent. of the wage rate as extra wages to meet additional transportation and living expenses.

15. A period of employment shall ordinarily be at least fourteen days continuously with not more than six days in a week.

16. In all cases where unemployment allowance is paid, or due to be paid, the Programme Officer shall inform the District Programme Coordinator in writing the reasons why it was not possible for him to provide employment or cause to provide employment to the applicants.

17. The District Programme Coordinator shall, in his Annual Report to the State Council, explain as to why employment could not be provided in cases where payment of unemployment allowance is involved.

18. Provision shall be made in the Scheme for advance applications, that is, applications which may be submitted in advance of the date from which employment is sought.

19. Provision shall be made in the Scheme for submission of multiple applications by the same person provided that the corresponding periods for which employment is sought do not overlap.

20. The Gram Panchayat shall prepare and maintain or cause to be prepared and maintained such registers, vouchers and other documents in such form and in such manner as may be specified in the Scheme containing particulars of job cards and passbooks issued, name, age and address of the head of the household and the adult members of the household registered with the Gram Panchayat.

21. The Gram Panchayat shall send such list or lists of the names and addresses of households and their adult members registered with it and supply such other information to the concerned Programme Officer at such periods and in such form as may be specified in the Scheme.

22. A list of persons who are provided with the work shall be displayed on the notice board of the Gram Panchayat and at the office of the Programme Officer and at such other places as the Programme Officer may deem necessary and the list shall be open for inspection by the State Government and any person interested.

23. If the Gram Panchayat is satisfied at any time that a person has registered with it by furnishing false information, it may direct the Programme Officer to direct his name to be struck off from the register and direct the applicant to return the job card:

Provided that no such action under this paragraph shall be directed unless the applicant has been given an opportunity of being heard in the presence of two independent persons.

24. If any personal injury is caused to any person employed under the Scheme by accident arising out of and in the course of his employment, he shall be entitled to, free of charge, such medical treatment as is admissible under the Scheme.

25. Where hospitalisation of the injured worker is necessary, the State Government shall arrange for such hospitalisation including accommodation, treatment, medicines and payment of daily allowance not less than half of the wage rate required to be paid had the injured been engaged in the work.

26. If a person employed under a Scheme dies or becomes permanently disabled by accident arising out of and in the course of employment, he shall be paid by the implementing agency an *ex gratia* payment at the rate of twenty-five thousand rupees or such amount as may be notified by the Central Government, and the amount shall be paid to the legal heirs of the deceased or the disabled, as the case may be.

27. The facilities of safe drinking water, shade for children and periods of rest, first-aid box with adequate material for emergency treatment for minor injuries and other health hazards connected with the work being performed shall be provided at the work site.

28. In case the number of children below the age of six years accompanying the women working at any site are five or more, provisions shall be made to depute one of such women worker to look after such children.

29. The person deputed under paragraph 28 shall be paid wage rate.

30. In case the payment of wages is not made within the period specified under the Scheme, the labourers shall be entitled to receive payment of compensation as per the provisions of the Payment of Wages Act, 1936 (4 of 1936).

31. The wages under a Scheme may be paid either wholly in cash or in cash and kind provided that at least one-fourth of the wages shall be paid in cash only.

32. The State Government may prescribe that a portion of the wages in cash may be paid to the labourers on a daily basis during the period of employment.

33. If any personal injury is caused by accident to a child accompanying any person who is employed under a Scheme, such person shall be entitled to, free of charge, such medical treatment for the child as may be specified in the Scheme and in case of death or disablement, through an *ex gratia* payment as may be determined by the State Government.

34. In case of every employment under the Scheme, there shall be no discrimination solely on the ground of gender and the provisions of the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976 (25 of 1976), shall be complied with.

✱

B. A. AGRAWAL,
Addl. Secretary to the Govt. of India.

Appendix III – Field Work

As explained in the thesis, involuntary causes dominate the causes affecting the workers' participation under the Act in the region; below are some pictures taken during the fieldwork that show how administrative apathy and ignorance have affected the same.



Picture 1: Workers showing an incomplete well, the construction of whose is on halt due to non-payment of material costs.

Factors influencing demand for MGNREGS Work
Schedule for MGNREGS Workers

Part I- Identification Particulars: *Sonia Tindley*

वित्तीय वर्ष 20.....

काम की माँग एवं बेरोजगारी भत्ता की विवरणी

क्रम संख्या	सदस्य का नाम	काम के लिए आवेदन की तिथि	आवेदन प्राप्त रसीद संख्या एवं तिथि	रोजगार की माँग			भुगतान की गई बेरोजगारी भत्ता की राशि (यदि हो तो)	प्राधिकृत पदाधिकारी का हस्ताक्षर
				दिनांक से	दिनांक तक	दिनों की संख्या		
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नोट:- प्राधिकृत पदाधिकारी द्वारा आवेदन प्राप्त रसीद निर्गत करते समय भरा जाएगा।
वित्तीय वर्ष के अंत में ताल लकीर खिंचा जाय तथा शेष बचे पंक्तियों को क्रास कर दिया जाय।

7

Picture 2: MGNREGA job card having no record or any entry about worker or work undertaken.



Picture 3: A well that got destroyed in monsoon and is left unattended by the administration, the workers, for this the material cost has not been sanctioned.



Picture 4: A worker beside a well that she got constructed on her land, managing it through her resources and complete payment for which the administration has not done either for labor or material since last year.



Picture 5: A deserted worksite under MGNREGS where no worker wants to work under meager wages.



Picture 6: Women workers having small children, indicating the issues they face while working under MGNREGS.



Picture 7: Dried up *dobha* (due to incomplete work).

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MGNREGA Workers and their Reticence in Namkum, Jharkhand

Farah Naz*

[This paper entitled, “MGNREGA workers and their Reticence: An Account from Namkum Jharkhand,” is entirely based on fieldwork surveys, interactions with the workers, and observations collected from the worksites and fields. A primary account of any public policy-based welfare program (here MGNREGA) and its implementation mechanism, practices, and patterns become very important for understanding the program’s actual administration and practical implications. With the government doing budget cuts and expressing its intentions of not continuing the scheme, irresponsible handling of schemes and inadequate attention and intervention in the administration of the MGNREGS at the grassroots (village level), the workers under the MGNREGS seem to have lost the drive to seek work under the MGNREGA and participate in it. Ironically, the MGNREGA, innovatively promulgated for the workers, claiming to take into account their needs and requirements, the workers claim to have no say or voice in its implementation. What is most striking and saddening is their silence on the sabotaging and denial of their rights and entitlements under the MGNREGA, which is meant to be “their scheme.” To understand this phenomenon and make the MGNREGA a workers Act, one needs to understand the worker’s point of view. Thus, the paper has been written, keeping in mind the objective of providing an insight to the readers about workers’ perspective towards the MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT, i.e., MGNREGA.]

The present paper is an effort to explain the observable reticence in MGNREGA¹ workers with the help of observations and inferences from a field study conducted in the Namkum Block of Ranchi district in Jharkhand.

The preliminary field study was conducted in November 2018. It started with visits to the concerned block offices and meeting with the officials involved in the administration of the Act and implementation of the schemes. It came into notice that the MGNREGA workers and the officials are on strike demanding better work conditions and hike in the minimum wages. The minimum wage in Jharkhand at that time (2018) was Rs.168, and it had continued to be this low for over 5-6 years, three years before the government raised the wage from Rs.167 to Rs.168 after a long period of protest and demand (as informed by the workers).

Apart from the previously taken up work, not much work was happening under the scheme in that period. The workers were being called out and persuaded to continue working for the completion of previously taken up work.

Namkum has a total area of 415.61 sq. km, where urban area is 13.75 sq. km and rural is 401.86² sq. km. It has Households of 28756 of the total population where the number of rural households is 23299, and the urban household is 5457, and the important crops are paddy and wheat. The area primarily has small farmers engaging in subsistence agriculture and daily wage seekers. While understanding the employment or livelihood pattern of the workers, it was observed that they mostly engaged in daily wage works or work on either their agricultural fields or fields of others. When confronted about participation in MGNREGA, they expressed their

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disappointment about meager payment in the MGNREGS³.

They argued that the wage paid to them under the MGNREGS was so low that they could hardly manage their daily affairs. The payment of wages also took a lot of time, which made working under the MGNREGS futile as they didn’t have anything in their hand for their daily household needs by the end of the day because most of the times, they could not receive wages at the end of the day. They indicated that by going to the cities, they get at least double the amount of the wage provided under MGNREGA on the same day by the end of the day so that they can carry out their living in a sufficient manner.

I enquired whether they had an understanding of the process of creation of man-days and the payment after that and also about awareness of unemployment allowance or compensation in the case where the payment was not made under 15 days of completion of work, to which they seemed to be well informed. They said that there is no limit for them to wait for the wages, and there haven’t been many times when the wages were paid on time. The issue they stressed most about was the inadequate wages which made working under MGNREGA futile. Therefore, underpayment and untimely payment restricted the workers from working under the Act.

Thus, the status of MGNREGA observed was:

- Good level of awareness among the workers about the Act and the underlying schemes as in clarity in processes of availing jobs and planning of works to be undertaken in the villages
- Fewer works were being taken up due to the non-timely payment and lesser wages.

PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS (PRIs) IN MGNREGA: SIGNIFICANCE, ROLE, AND CHALLENGES

Farah Naz*

ABSTRACT

India has a rural population of about 65.07 percent which implies that larger part of the population in the country lives in the rural areas. India, being the largest democracy, has also had the need to extend democracy to its rural areas to create greater and meaningful participation of its rural population in the nation's growth and development. To address this need, the Panchayati Raj Institutions were introduced by the 73rd Amendment Act in the country. The PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions) were created as the local level government or the Government at the grassroots. These were brought into existence for social justice and economic development for the people living in the rural areas. These institutions play a fundamental and critical role in delivering goods and services promised and provided by the Government for the growth and development of the rural areas and the people inhabiting it. The MGNREGA entrusts a fundamental role to these PRIs in the MGNREGS (Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Schemes). However, these PRIs are often confronted with many challenges at various levels, which cripple the effective implementation of the Act. The paper, therefore, tries to look into the significance, roles and challenges of the PRIs concerning the MGNREGA.

Keywords: Panchayati Raj Institutions, MGNREGA, MGNREGS.

INTRODUCTION

"Indian independence must begin at ground level," according to Mahatma Gandhi. On 2nd October 1959, the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) were adopted as a tool of democracy decentralisation, on the basis of the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee's recommendations.

In 1993 a 73rd Constitutional Amendment created the hope to resolve the matter through the mobilisation of Panchayati Raj Institutions through the grassroots movement toward democracy (PRIs). These PRIs are responsible for the facilitation of agricultural production, rural employment generation, and the introduction of rural development programmes. The institution of Panchayati Raj, its past and its planned role in the growth of the country, becomes extremely significant before understanding the role of PRI in MGNREGA and its challenges.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

The Panchayati Raj Institution and Development in the Rural Context

The Concept of Development and Rural Development

To understand the role of PRIs in the development in the rural context, the concept of development and rural development becomes essential to understand.

Multi-dimensional process of growth and progress is generally referred to as **development**. It is understood in terms of gradual change in economic, social, and political conditions. The root of the development process lies in progressive change, which is why it should be common with all the members of the community or society, and all should benefit from the development process. Development should make

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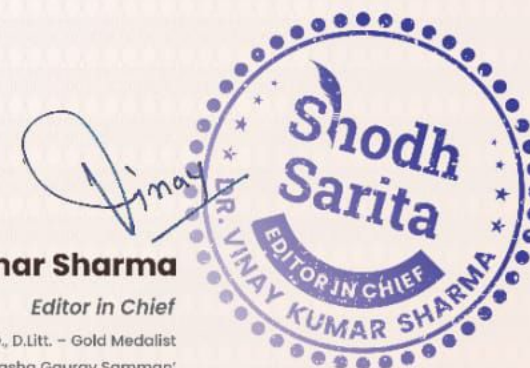
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MAHATAMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT: IMPACT ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN JHARKHAND

Farah Naz*

Abstract:

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 is landmark legislation in Indian history of social security legislation after independence. The Act comes as a very significant step by the Government of India in the line of Policy Interventions for Rural Development.

The Government of India brought Act with the objective of enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household and also to increase the sustainable agriculture economy along with the development of rural infrastructure. Although the Act has shown a significant impact on rural development in many parts of the country, Jharkhand, however, presents a deplorable and dismal picture of the performance of the Act and its schemes in enhancing livelihood security and creating employment opportunities for the rural poor.

The aim of the paper is to examine the impact of the Act on rural development in Jharkhand, the basic fallacies in its implementation, and measures suggested in order for making the Act successful in the rural areas of the State.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Employment assistance, Rural development

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 is a landmark legislation in Indian history of social security legislation after independence. Enacted after a successful struggle for employment guarantee legislation, this legislation is a partial victory towards a full-fledged right to employment in any developing country context. The essential feature of this legislation that separates it from any other public service provisioning scheme is its enactment through the Parliament of India.

The main objective of the Act is: "To provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work."¹

The Government of India brought NREGA in the line of several other measures and schemes for the purpose of rural development with the objective of enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household and also to increase the sustainable agriculture economy. The Act aims at developing the rural areas by providing income-earning opportunities to employment starved rural workers by giving assured 100 days of work with the provision of standard minimum wages along with the creation of worthwhile assets in the villages for the development of rural infrastructure. Although the main purpose of the programme is to provide

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