

## NATURE, IMPLEMENTATION AND OUTPUT OF PUBLIC WORK PROGRAMMES BEFORE AND AFTER MGNREGA INITIATION IN INDIA

Prashant Bhimrao Dongardive<sup>1\*</sup> and Dewaram Abhiman Nagdeve<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, International Institute for Population Sciences, Mumbai

E-mail: [prashantbhimrao@gmail.com](mailto:prashantbhimrao@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Fertility Studies Department, IIPS, Mumbai.

### Article History

Received : 06 July 2022

Revised : 26 July 2022

Accepted : 10 August 2022

Published : 29 December 2022

### Keywords

MGNREGA, Public work programmes, PRI, Implementation, SHGs, MIS.

**Abstract:** The present paper is an attempt to study the implementation and outcomes of public work programmes before MGNREGA and after MGNREGA using an effective policy implementation framework given by Mazmarián and Sabatier (1981). The data has been used from National Sample Survey (NSS) 62nd round conducted during 2005-06 and NSS 68th round conducted during 2011-12. The analysis revealed that the implementation process of public work programmes has been changing since its inception, and many changes at the policy level have created a positive impact on the output of the programmes. MGNREGA has become a demand-driven programme; as a result, getting work has risen five times compared to previous programmes. Employment Guarantee Programme, Indira Awas Yojana, and Food for Work Programme were supposed to provide work to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. The uneven distribution of the MGNREGA fund among the states has shown some negative impact on employment generation in populous states in India. Maharashtra and Bihar generated less employment due to receiving fewer funds. There is a need in the programme to allocate more funds to the backward states as compared to the developed states. The changes in material and wage ratios affect the work allocation throughout the financial years in MGNREGA. Job card distribution is also a new step in the public work programme, which helps curb the programme's misuse. The programme is based on the Keynesian theory, which has been tested and proven appropriate during the implementation process.

### To cite this article

Prashant Bhimrao Dongardive & Abhiman Nagdeve (2022). Nature, Implementation and Output of Public Work Programmes before and after MGNREGA Initiation in India. *Man, Environment and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 249-267. <https://DOI:10.47509/MES.2022.v03i02.02>

## Introduction

Rural public work programmes started between 1960 and 1970 in India. The most important of these were crash schemes for rural employment and food-for-work programmes. These programmes received a renewed thrust in the shape of the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) initiated in 1980-81, and the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) started in 1982-83. In 1989-90, all these nationwide programmes were merged and converted into the Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), started in 1985 as a sub-scheme of the Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, like today's Ramabai Awas Yojana and Pradhanmantri Awas Yojana, has been mixed with Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was formed in 1999 to ensure sustainable income generation among assisted low-income families. All these programmes focused on the underprivileged population of the country. However, MGNREGA came up with a universal approach by which anyone in the rural area can work. Generally, the work taken up by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to provide wage employment, alleviate poverty and create assets is considered under public works.

There are differences of opinion among academicians, researchers, and policymakers about implementing public work programmes. The most obvious and so far most intensely researched effect of public work programmes is the increase in household's available income (Shah, 2004; Bagchee, 2005; Dreze, 2006). The researcher argues that the proposed public work will generate work for the poorest as well as an opportunity to revive public investment in agriculture and tackle the prevailing environmental crises gripping rural India (Shah, 2004). However, some studies show that MGNREGA is one of the unsuccessful programmes; due to unskilled work and corruption (Bibek, 2004; Bhalla, 2012). Some researchers found that there is little difference between NREGA and earlier employment programmes in terms of the primary purpose of employing demand at the statutory minimum wage, which is nowhere near being achieved. Authors have suggested that public work programmes and the required administrative arrangements have improved over time in light of experience (Bhatia and Dreze, 2006). The most obvious and, so far, the most intensely researched effect is the increase in available income of households participating in the programme. It is found that the design of public work programmes leads to more excellent rates of self-selection into the programme by poorer and scheduled tribes or scheduled caste households (Liu and Berrett, 2013).

Civil society actions have developed communication channels between higher authorities in bureaucrats and the panchayat raj institutions in India (Shah, 2007; Sabhiki, 2015). Civil society organizations are responsible for Self Help Groups (SHG) formation and cluster facilitation in Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana. MGNREGA came up with the idea

of a participatory approach. At the same time, these organizations have collectively worked in different parts of India. They have created the Cluster Facilitation Teams (CFI) to deliver the best output of the programme by improving the participation of the people and other stakeholders in the programmes. It is established that any programme cannot be executed without a proper implementation strategy for MGNREGA. The present paper has undertaken to study the outcomes of public work programmes before MGNREGA and after MGNREGA using an effective policy implementation framework given by Mazmari and Sabatier (1981).

### Data Source and Methods

The data has been used from the National Sample Survey (NSS) 62nd round conducted during 2005-06 and NSS 68th round conducted during 2011-12. It provides information about employment and unemployment in selected states and union territories in India. Schedule 10.0 provides employment information about households in rural areas related issues. The data relating to the participation of people in public work programmes and MGNREGA has been analysed. In the present paper, we dropped seven states with fewer than 500 sampled rural individuals, which results in a sample individual of 1,26,778 (37,439 households) for the NSS 62nd round and 1,78,188 (59,063 households) (for NSS 68th round) rural households from 28 states and is statistically representative at the state level. It provides individual-level information on various public work programmes (NSS 68th includes only MGNREGA as a public work programme). Three dummy variables have been constructed based on this information, namely, getting the job under a public work programme, job seeking, and seeking the job but not getting it.

**Households got Public Work:** Households got work, at least for a day, in any 'public works' during the last 365 days, irrespective of the type of public works and the number of such works executed in the rural area. The response is recorded for the household level during 2005-06 and the individual level during 2011-12.<sup>1</sup>

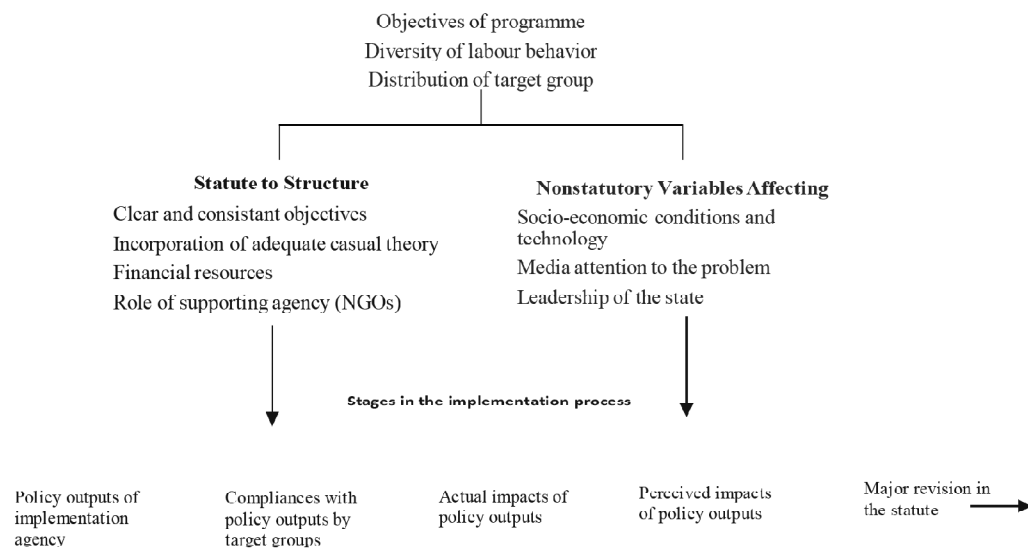
**Seeking for Public Work:** Whether he got it or not, a person seeking work in public work programmes is included in seeking a public worklist. According to the guidelines of MGNREGA, a person has to demand work before joining, and it is the same for food-for-work programmes and other public work programmes in India.

**Seeking Public Work but did not get:** A person seeking public work but did not get it for the last 365 days in India's rural areas. It includes those who have applied for the job or did not apply for the job in the public work programme. It refers to all the rural people, irrespective of caste, class, or religion. Various data sources are used to define the framework for the implementation. The official website of MGNREGA has been extensively used to get the circulars related to MGNREGA and current data. To understand the role of NGOs

in MGNREGA, the guidelines of 2013 and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the state government and NGOs have been studied. As the framework requires some in-depth data on media attention and leadership, we have used literature as a secondary data source. The lack of data on the very element has become one of the limitations of this paper.

### Implementation Framework

To analyse the implementation process, one has to categorize and understand the stakeholder's roles and responsibilities broadly. The implementation process constitutes two structures 1) Statute 2) Non-statutory. The process is mediated by multiple factors given in the below framework.

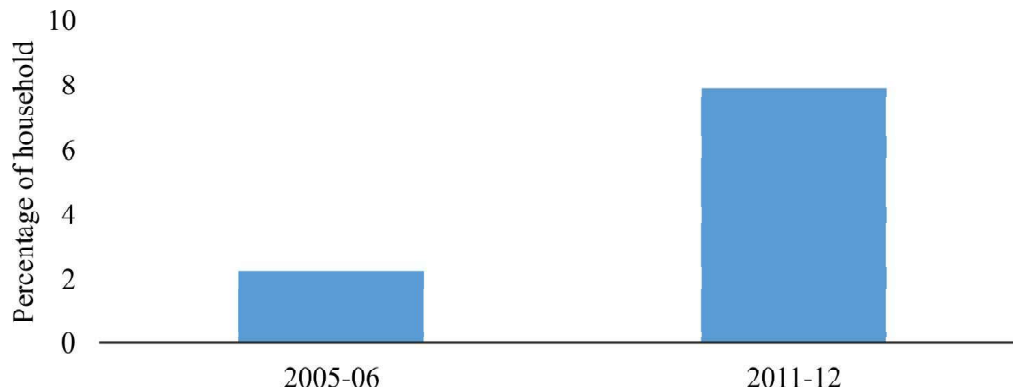


*Source:* Modified from Mazmarian and Sabastier (1981) 'Framework for Effective Policy Implementation'

## Results

### *Clear and Constant Objectives*

The 2005 Act that created the MGNREGA grants each rural household a legal right to employment of up to 100 days per year in public work projects at a state-specific minimum wage rate. The programme administered by the state and local government also contributes a small share of the variable cost of employment (Liu and Barrett, 2013). Figure 2 shows



*Source:* Data from NSS 62nd round for 2005-06 and MGNREGA official website for 2011-12

that among the total households that participated in the programme, only 2 per cent of the households could take up work in public work in 2005-06 (NSS 2005-06). This percentage has gone up by 4 times in 2011-12.

Table 1 depicts that more than 24 per cent of total households demanded public work, and around 17 per cent of them got work in MGNREGA. During 2005-06, demand for public work programmes was half of the MGNREGA. It shows an enormous state-wise variation in the increase in the number of people and household involvement in public work programmes. Between 2005-06 and 2011-12, Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Tripura, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh have shown a significant increase in the allotment of public work of around (19%), (13%), (31%), (17%) and (28%) respectively. Whereas, Haryana, Panjab, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Gujarat have shown less increase of around (01%), (03%), (01%), (06%), (04%) and (02%) respectively in public works allotment between 2005-06 and 2011-12. As a result, data shows that demand for the work has always been higher than the supply of the work in MGNREGA and other public work programmes in India. Nevertheless, Maharashtra has shown a decrease in allotment of public work between 2005-06 and 2011-12. Among the total households that demanded public work in Maharashtra, only 5 per cent of households managed to get work in public work programmes during 2005-06. However, only 3 per cent of them got work in MGNREGA during 2011-12. It seems that MGNREGA has failed more households than previous public work programmes. Similarly, It is found that among all the rural households, nearly 15 per cent of them generated demand for public work during 2005-06, and only 5 per cent of households got work in public work programmes. However, during 2011-12 more than 24 per cent of total households demanded work, and many of them (17%) got work in MGNREGA. As many researchers found that north-eastern states' involvement has notably increased in MGNREGA since its inception, our results also support the findings.

**Table 1: Percentage of households that got work, sought work but did not get work and sought work in public work programmes by state, India, 2005-06 and 2011-12**

State	Got work		Sought but did not get work		Seek for work		Total	
	2005-06	2011-12	2005-06	2011-12	2005-06	2011-12	2005-06	2011-12
Jammu & Kashmir	1.8	22.4	3.8	1.8	5.6	24.2	920	2,031
Himachal Pradesh	5.0	18.2	4.8	4.2	9.8	22.4	1,082	1,657
Punjab	0.6	4.3	5.0	3.0	5.6	7.3	1,088	1,552
Uttaranchal	21.3	22.4	3.1	2.8	24.4	25.2	456	1,048
Haryana	1.5	3.0	2.0	0.3	3.5	3.3	892	1,424
Rajasthan	17.2	24.7	13.0	12.6	30.2	37.3	1,888	2,581
Uttar Pradesh	4.4	16.5	6.4	3.3	10.9	19.8	3,047	5,916
Bihar	2.6	9.1	13.9	7.3	16.5	16.5	2,424	3,311
Sikkim	8.8	37.2	6.5	2.9	15.3	40.2	304	608
Arunachal Pradesh	6.3	27.4	10.1	3.4	16.3	30.7	568	1,072
Nagaland	7.0	62.2	9.9	2.9	17.0	65.1	376	672
Manipur	0.7	12.3	5.8	0.0	6.4	12.3	448	1,376
Mizoram	43.6	74.8	2.4	11.0	46.0	85.8	312	640
Tripura	28.4	59.8	14.2	3.5	42.6	63.4	824	1,312
Meghalaya	2.4	42.8	9.6	3.0	12.0	45.9	456	856
Assam	6.2	15.5	6.5	5.6	12.7	21.1	1,904	2,608
West Bengal	14.8	32.7	11.7	12.0	26.5	44.6	2,678	3,568
Jharkhand	8.2	17.8	14.9	7.5	23.1	25.3	1,256	1,759
Orissa	9.9	20.6	10.0	10.5	19.9	31.2	1,831	2,974
Chhattisgarh	15.2	43.6	17.9	6.7	33.0	50.3	552	1,438
Madhya Pradesh	13.9	17.9	10.9	10.9	24.8	28.9	1,720	2,736
Gujarat	2.3	5.0	8.1	6.6	10.4	11.6	1,264	1,712
Maharashtra	5.5	3.8	7.4	6.1	12.9	9.9	1,870	4,032
Andhra Pradesh	6.7	25.9	7.0	5.9	13.8	31.8	3,000	3,926
Karnataka	3.4	7.8	1.9	4.8	5.2	12.6	1,559	2,048
Kerala	0.4	5.1	2.1	0.6	2.5	5.8	2,048	2,607
Tamil Nadu	1.1	17.7	2.9	2.3	4.0	20.0	2,424	3,319
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>23.5</b>	<b>37439</b>	<b>59,063</b>

Table 2 reveals that among the total scheduled tribe households that demanded work, only 07 per cent managed to get work in public work programmes during 2005-06. However, 27 per cent of them got work in MGNREGA during 2011-12. Similarly, scheduled caste

households have shown a significant increase of around (19%) in job allotment in public work between 2005-06 and 2011-12. These estimates indicate that the act has merely helped the underprivileged groups to get work in public work programmes. Other backward classes also showed a significant increase due to MGNREGA with wide range variation across states for both periods. It is observed from Table 2 that out of total landless households in rural areas, only 14 per cent get work in MGNREGA. Among total medium and large-scale farmers, about 24 per cent of households get work in MGNREGA. It shows that landless households get less chance to work than medium and large-scale landholders do. In 2016, the Ministry released a circular saying that 11 types of works will come under the umbrella of MGNREGA. Much of the work was in the skilled worker category, which cannot be done by unskilled workers<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 2: Percentage of households that got work, sought but did not get work and sought work in public work programmes by housing characteristics, India, 2005-06 and 2011-12**

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Got work</i>		<i>Sought but did not get work</i>		<i>Seek for work</i>		<i>Total</i>	
	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>
<b>Household head</b>								
Male	7.4	17.4	8.8	6.8	16.2	24.2	33,337	52,817
Female	4.0	14.7	4.8	3.3	8.8	18.0	4,102	6,246
<b>Social Group</b>								
Schedule Tribe	7.2	27.1	8.3	10.0	15.6	37.0	5,384	9,649
Schedule Caste	6.7	24.7	8.8	8.9	15.6	33.6	7,141	10,098
Other Backward Class	4.0	14.1	6.1	5.0	10.1	19.0	14,277	23,416
Other Castes	0.5	11.3	6.5	5.2	7.0	16.5	10,630	15,900
<b>Landholding</b>								
Landless	3.3	14.9	1.1	5.8	4.4	20.7	58	2,143
Marginal	7.1	8.5	8.9	6.7	16.0	15.2	29,599	1,021
Small	6.1	14.5	5.9	5.2	12.0	19.7	4,367	1,327
Semi-Medium	7.3	17.6	5.2	5.8	12.6	23.4	2,432	2,463
Medium and above	5.4	17.5	4.8	6.5	10.2	24.0	983	52,109
<b>Wealth Quintile</b>								
1st Quintile	11.6	26.4	11.9	9.6	23.6	36.1	5,862	8,219
2nd Quintile	8.4	20.5	10.3	7.2	18.8	27.7	6,598	9,599
3rd Quintile	7.1	18.0	8.7	7.3	15.9	25.3	6,493	11,114
4th Quintile	5.6	13.4	6.1	5.3	11.8	18.6	8,678	13,312
5th Quintile	1.6	7.4	3.5	2.8	5.2	10.2	9,808	16,819
Total	7.0	17.1	8.2	6.4	15.2	23.5	37,439	59,063

### **Diversity of Labour Behaviour**

MGNREGA has given the authority to the rural people to demand work whenever they want. Gram Panchayat has been given the authority to design the labour budget for the work they want to do in their village. If the beneficiaries are not employed within 15 days from demand, he/she can claim the unemployment allowance. As per the Act, the state will pay the unemployment allowance to the beneficiaries (Ministry of Rural Development, 2013).

Table 3 provides information on the household participation in public work by state among scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), other backward classes and all other castes during 2005-06 and 2011-12. Nationally, 7.2 per cent and 6.7 per cent of the scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) households, respectively, participated during 2005-06. However, the participation increased more than thrice for SC and fourthfold for ST during 2011-12. Similarly, other backward classes also show a significant increase of around (13%) in public work participation of households between 2005-06 and 2012. Whereas other castes also show an increase of 10% in participation in public work between 2005-06 and 2011-12. According to census 2011, Punjab has the highest percentage of scheduled caste population (Gill, 2017); besides this, no participation of SC households in public works during 2005-06 and 2011-12. Similarly, Haryana has shown no participation of SC households in public work during 2005-06 and 2011-12. Among the total households who got jobs in public work, no SC household managed to get work in the public work programme during 2005-06. However, scheduled caste has shown significant participation of around 3% during 2011-12.

### **Distribution of Target Group**

The total rural skilled/unskilled population is the target population for the programme. This population distribution varies among different states, districts, blocks, and villages in India. Therefore, while allocating the funds, some states with more poor people in the working-age group do not receive sufficient funds and vice versa.

Table 4 reveals the distribution of released funds among states and Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1 score for the respective state. A greater index number greater the capacity of the state to eliminate poverty and vice versa. It is expected that the poorly performing state in SDG 1 needs to get more funds than those who are performing better. However, the table shows the opposite picture. Bihar is one the aspirants (poor) states for eliminating poverty, but it gets only 4 per cent of the total fund released for MGNREGA. According to SDG 1, there are a total of seven aspirant states in India, such as Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, and Uttar Pradesh. However, none of the states have received more than 7 per cent of the total fund released



**Table 3: Percentage of household participation in public work programmes by state and social groups, India, 2005-06 and 2011-12**

<i>States</i>	<i>Scheduled Caste</i>		<i>Scheduled Tribe</i>		<i>Other Backward Class</i>		<i>Other</i>	
	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>	<i>2005-06</i>	<i>2011-12</i>
Jammu & Kashmir	0.1	31.4	1.6	24.9	3.5	19.7	1.7	20.9
Himachal Pradesh	9.8	17.2	7.6	26.0	2.6	13.5	3.8	16.3
Punjab	0.0	0.0	1.2	8.1	0.2	4.0	0.2	0.3
Uttaranchal	12.9	8.8	33.3	34.7	1.7	9.3	19.4	22.0
Haryana	0.0	0.0	3.6	5.5	0.4	4.6	0.1	0.7
Rajasthan	32.1	39.6	17.3	24.9	12.4	19.9	10.1	20.1
Uttar Pradesh	42.3	18.7	9.7	29.6	2.1	13.5	1.3	4.5
Bihar	0.0	3.2	5.9	17.2	2.4	7.9	0.0	5.2
Sikkim	10.7	39.4	19.0	71.1	6.2	35.2	0.0	0.0
Arunachal Pradesh	6.4	34.8	0.0	17.6	7.9	21.9	5.7	6.8
Nagaland	7.2	62.4	0.0	31.1	0.0	24.4	0.0	0.0
Manipur	1.0	14.1	0.0	32.1	0.4	10.6	0.0	4.6
Mizoram	43	74.0	0.0	100.0	70.5	89.6	0.0	83.7
Tripura	34.3	68.3	32.3	54.3	21.9	45.8	22.5	58.6
Meghalaya	2.4	42.4	0.0	54.2	0.0	7.0	2.9	55.5
Assam	6.2	15.6	6.3	12.6	4.9	14.4	6.8	16.8
West Bengal	14.9	39.3	18.7	40.2	10.7	36.9	13.3	26.5
Jharkhand	12.9	20.5	8.7	23.5	5.8	15.9	4.6	10.3
Orissa	11.6	27.9	14.3	22.3	9.3	18.7	4.1	12.4
Chhattisgarh	12.0	49.0	9.3	39.3	20.1	41.8	0.0	17.3
Madhya Pradesh	20.0	26.0	21.9	25.5	10.3	13.5	1.9	6.3
Gujarat	4.7	11.6	1.4	6.2	2.2	3.0	0.5	0.6
Maharashtra	6.6	8.8	11.7	4.4	6.6	3.3	1.1	2.3
Andhra Pradesh	13.7	36.8	11.5	34.6	5.7	26.5	0.9	9.8
Karnataka	3.7	7.5	6.3	13.2	2.7	6.9	2.4	4.9
Kerala	5.3	19.7	1.2	10.3	0.3	4.1	0.0	4.7
Tamil Nadu	0.0	9.2	2.3	23.5	0.7	16.3	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>27.1</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>24.7</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>14.1</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>11.3</b>

for MGNREGA. Whereas well-performing states in SDG 1, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan, received 9% and 10% of the total fund release during 2017-18, respectively.

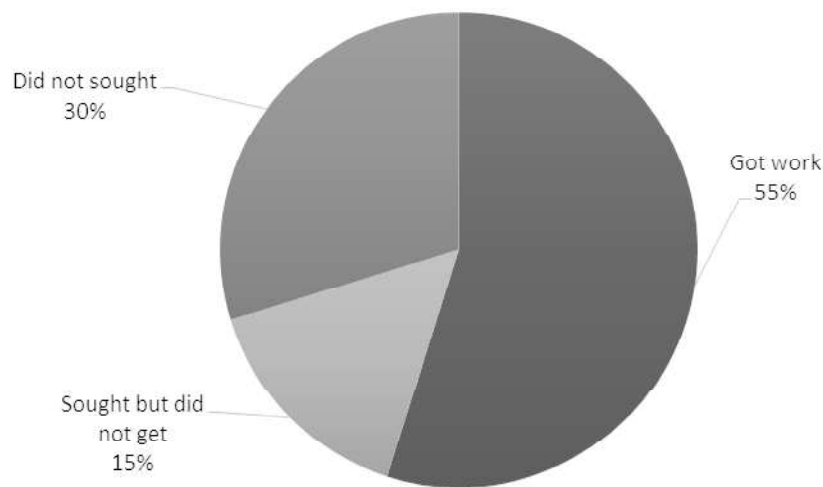
**Table 4: MGNREGA fund released and Sustainable Development Goal 1 score for the state**

<i>State</i>	<i>Fund released in 2017-18*</i>	<i>Sustainable Development Goal 1 Score (Eliminate poverty) #</i>
Andhra Pradesh	9.20	47
Arunachal Pradesh	0.37	52
Assam	2.02	53
Bihar	4.43	45
Chhattisgarh	5.21	50
Gujarat	1.48	48
Haryana	0.54	50
Himachal Pradesh	1.05	60
Jammu and Kashmir	2.24	61
Jharkhand	2.44	37
Karnataka	5.31	52
Kerala	3.33	66
Madhya Pradesh	6.76	44
Maharashtra	3.34	47
Manipur	0.28	44
Meghalaya	1.56	68
Mizoram	0.36	71
Nagaland	1.98	54
Odisha	3.94	59
Punjab	1.11	56
Rajasthan	8.46	59
Sikkim	0.19	64
Tamil Nadu	10.48	76
Tripura	0.73	71
Uttar Pradesh	6.63	48
Uttarakhand	1.29	65
West Bengal	10.67	57

*Source:* \* Ministry of Rural Development, #Niti Aayog, 2018-19

The Act gives a legal guarantee of employment in rural areas to anyone (Kumar & Maruthi, 2011) willing to do casual work at the statutory minimum rate of any adult who applies for work within fifteen days; failing that, unemployment allowances have to be paid. However, the NSS 68th round shows that people have demanded work but did not get any work. However, every individual is entitled to report his/her demand for the MGNREGA work. According to NSS 68th round, around 30 per cent of the rural households have MGNREGA job cards, and 15 per cent have one job card. Figure 3 shows that among the total job card-holders, only (55%) can manage to get a job in public work. However, 30 per cent of them don't seek a job, and 15 per cent seek a job but don't get one. It shows that about half of the individuals with the job, cards are able to get jobs in MGNREGA.

**Figure 3: Distribution of total individuals with MGNREGA job card in India during 2011-12**



*Source:* NSS 68<sup>th</sup> round

### **Incorporation of Adequate Casual Theory**

As government expenditure, public work programs are based on both Keynesian and Neoclassical theories of government interventions. Public works intend to increase employment opportunities in rural areas. Public works can be used to raise overall levels of output and employment (Eichner, 2013). The initial approach to unemployment in Indian planning can be seen as a variant of the Lewis Model, trying to overcome what was at that time widely believed to be the vital constraint on its growth process. The shortage of capital stock is about the availability of employable persons. As early as 1962, the perspective

planning division under Pitambar Pant tried to work out the growth rate necessary to give the poorest (30%) of the population a nutritionally adequate diet. Later, the fifth plan document's approach showed that the maximum feasible rate of growth of 5-6 per cent per annum was not by itself sufficient to bring about a substantial decline in the level of poverty.

Underprivileged groups in society have always been at the top of the priority of public work programmes. Employment Guarantee Programme, Indira Awas Yojana, and Food for Work Programme were mainly focused on scheduled tribes and scheduled castes populations. Any household in a rural area can demand work in MGNREGA. At the same time, MGNREGA also prioritizes disadvantaged groups, namely, scheduled tribes, scheduled castes, and women. The MGNREGA has taken the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) department and private agencies' help to reach out to the poor people. These programmes have been designed for the eradication of poverty and hunger. It became more important to see whether these people were getting a job through the scheme or not.

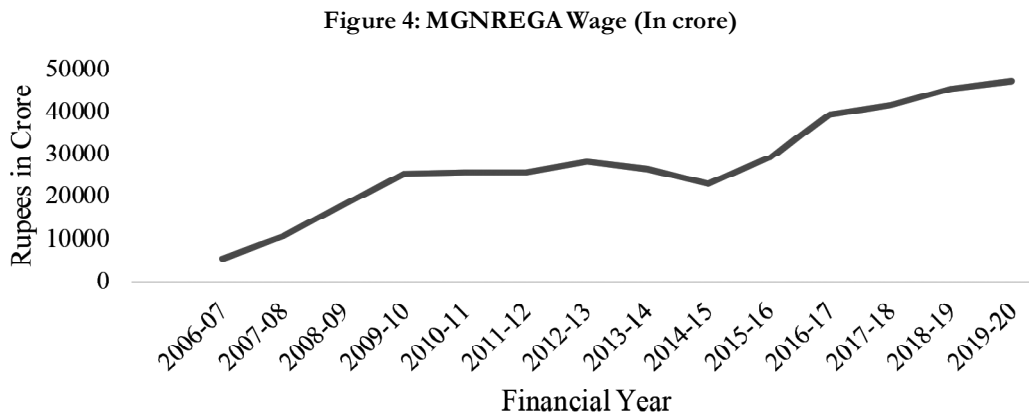
Self-help groups were asked to be involved in MGNREGA works to increase the proportion of female partitions in the scheme. Non-government organizations, NRLM, and activists worked in India's many backward states, such as Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha. Integrated participatory planning programmes have been implemented by the state and central government to have more and more involvement of the local Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and local people.

### **Financial Resources**

According to various researchers, a very serious problem with MGNREGA has been the irregular flow of funds. It results in the delayed payment of the labours. (Sebastian, 2017) Since its launch, MGNREGA expenditure has increased steadily. However, for the FY 2011- 12, there has been a marginal drop in allocations that stand at 40,000 crores rupees. The scheme accounts for (46%) of the rural development budget. However, despite being demand-driven, there are wide interstate variations in the ability to spend the funds. In FY 2009-10, Mizoram, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal spent over 90 per cent of the total funds available to them; on the other hand, Maharashtra spent less than (60%). The government has changed the material and wage ratio to 49:51; earlier, it was 40:60 (Bhattacharya, 2014).

Figure 4 clearly shows that fund flow has been decreased during 2013-14, which is because of changes in the government. The graph shows that allocation has improved by more than five times in 2017 as compared to 2006-07. The change clearly shows that less money will go into the hands of labour and more to the contractors. The expenditure on wages went up till 2009-10; then after it became steady, and after 2013-14, it showed

some downfall. During 2015-16 the expenditure on wages started increasing significantly (Figure 5).



*Source:* Official website of MGNREGA

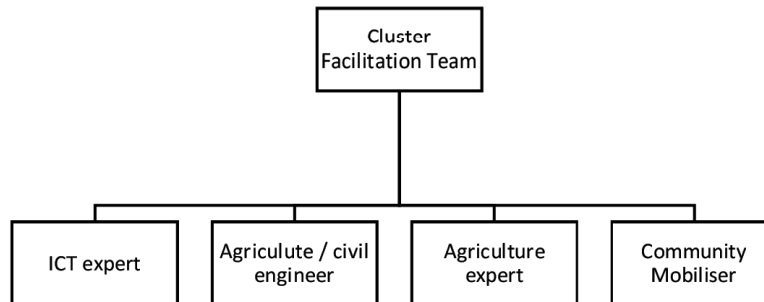
### Role of Supporting Agency

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) work as capacity builders, trainers, and one of the stakeholders in public work programmes. Non-government organisations (NGOs) were expected to improve their skills in organizing motivational camps and training programmes and create Self Help Groups (SHGs) with greater transparency (Planning Commission of India, 2008). The enactment of the MGNREGA is a classic success story of civil society action in India, as stated by Mihir Shah. The campaign for the right to work was involved at every stage of NREGA formulation. Moreover, the intense pressure was able to play a significant part in the Act being passed in the parliament. Now when we are considering reforms in NREGA, civil society has to play a crucial role once again (Shah, 2007).

The Cluster Facilitation Team (CFT) Project was intended to provide the human resources to administer MGNREGA in some backward regions, where it is required the most (Sabhiki, 2015). Various CSOs ran Kaam Mango Abhiyan, Social Audit, Cluster facilitation, and Integrated Participatory planning approach-I, II.

The CFT comprises four specialists, one each for community mobilization soil and moisture conservation, agriculture and allied activities, and Management Information System (MIS). The project has 77 CSO partners in 207 blocks across nine states. It is funded entirely by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is implemented through CSOs working with block-level officials, and is overseen by the state government. The same program was implemented by the CSOs from the year April 2014 to March 2017.

Figure 5



Source: MGNREGA Operational Guidelines 2013

### Structure of CSOs team

Cluster Facilitation Team (CFT) comprises four specialists, one each for community mobilization soil and moisture conservation, agriculture and allied activities, and MIS & ICT. One of these four is designated as the Assistant Programme Officer (APO)/team leader/ Coordinator. The CFT works under the project officer (PO) but will also be jointly accountable to the Gram Panchayat (GP) within their cluster. The CFT is located in one of the cluster's GPs or at the PO's office at the block level (MGNREGA Operational Guidelines, 2013).

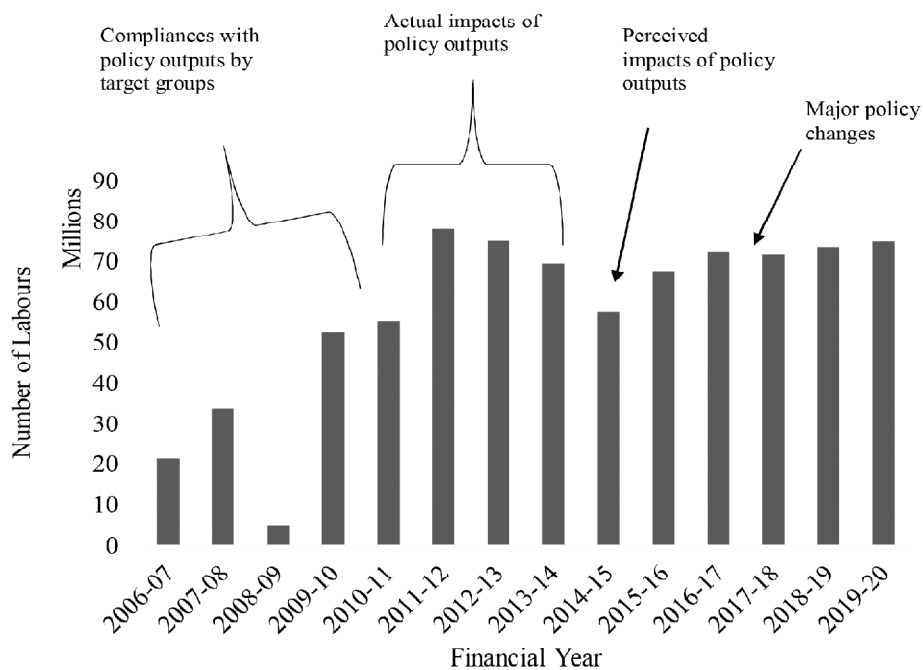
### Stages of the Implementation Process

The NREGA was initiated in 2005 and started implementation at the national level in 2009 in United Progressive Alliances. The Indian National Congress party has mentioned the very programme in its manifesto (Dreze, 2017). We have considered person-days work in the programme as the output of the programme in MGNREGA. The implementation started with some selected states, and Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were considered as target groups. As the graph shows, the output of the programme increased after 2009, as it is called MGNREGA.

Figure 6 shows the output of the public work (MGNREGA) from 2006-07 to 2019-20. The output divides the trend of employment into four phases. In the first phase, the output increases with an intermediate decrease. This is because MGNREGA was initially implemented as NREGA in 2009 in selected backward districts in India (Ministry of Rural Development, 2012). To enlarge the programme, 130 districts in 2007 and another 285 districts in 2008. Employment was provided to limited people with low wages. Less employment allotment resulted in a low output of the programme. In 2009, NREGA was renamed MGNREGA and started universal implementation of the programme in India.

The actual impact of the programme is observed during 2011-12 and 2012-13, which shows a pick in the employment generation. During 2013-14, parliament elections were held, and a new government came into power which reaffirmed the programme. It resulted in a decrease in the output of the programme in the third phase from 2013 to 2015. It is observed that implementation strategies have evaded, and the new process came into the picture. The total expenditure on the programme has increased; other schemes came under the umbrella of the MGNREGA.

**Figure 6: Employment provided in MGNREGA**



Source: MGNREGA official website

## Discussion

The MGNREGA programme is a matter of discussion among academicians and independent researchers who work on rural livelihood. Many researchers observed that the great extent of corruption, under-implementation, coverage, the government will, and such issues affect the programme. It is one of the biggest employment guarantee programmes in the world. There are many stakeholders in a programme that continuously influence the implementation on the ground; as per the guidelines of the MGNREGA, civil society organizations have to

play a vital role in building the requisite capacity building in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs). An analysis is based on an effective implementation model for MGNREGA in India. The result shows that the employment attainment of public work programmes has improved in MGNREGA as compared to other programmes before 2005. Rural poverty reduction is one of the important objectives of the MGNREGA. While there are multiple hypothesized mechanisms through which guaranteed employment in public work schemes at minimum wage might reduce poverty. After employment became a constitutional right, households started demanding work.

Many qualitative studies have found that scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and women groups have been traditionally excluded from public schemes (Dreze and Khera, 2009). The present paper found the evidence correct and support the existing assumption. The 2017-18 budget observed the highest-ever allocation to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the world's largest make-work programme at 480 billion rupees, but (56%) of the wages got delayed, and (15%) of wage seekers did not find work in 2016-17 (Kulkarni, 2017). The delayed payment problem has been there in the programme since its inception, but not a single person/labour has gone to Court to ask why he is entitled to do so (Dreze, 2017). NSS 68th round says that a total of 3,855 people have been unemployed for a different time spell in the last 365 days.

MGNREGA has allowed all rural workers to work or demand work irrespective of their caste, class, religion, gender, and other disabilities. These things helped a lot with the unprecedented achievement of MGNREGA in rural areas of India. According to official website data, around 4,12,501 disabled people were currently involved in MGNREGA during 2017-18. Unmet demand for the work has not shown any decrease, though there is a provision in the programme for the work. However, it is mandatory by the law that all those who demand the work should be allotted work within 15 days from the day of demand. It clearly shows that the law has merely helped the underprivileged social groups to be involved in a public work programme. As a result, scheduled caste (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), and women groups cannot rip benefits of the programme and have traditionally been excluded from the basic right to work.

There are mixed views about the implementation of new technology in MGNREGA. Some of the researchers show that technology has stopped the leakages in the programme and strengthened it. The age has to make the best use of the latest Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Since MGNREGA is a right-based programme, smart cards / Handheld devices can be used as an IT tool to ensure rights and entitlements. The wire (2007), research says that NREGA has become less transparent by using the digital India platform. Biometric Identification to authenticate direct transactions to the beneficiary account reduces corruption in MGNREGA (Anderson et al., 2013). Around ten crore bank/post



account has been opened under MGNREGA, and around 80% of payments are made through bank and post (Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, 2012). Still, the programme faces some inaccuracy and lacks transparency and linkages (CAG, 2008).

The government of India has developed an official website for MGNREGA to make governance more transparent and effective. The website covers many aspects of the programmes, such as the availability of job cards, demand generated for the works, the library for the documents related to MGNREGA, performance dashboard, active workers, and guidelines for the MIS reports and Audio Visual (AV) for the promotion of programmes. Most of the labour workers in MGNREGA have come to know about the programme via media. At the same time, the social audit has played an important role in providing the information to the last mile (Kumar & Shah, 2015).

## **Conclusion**

The implementation process of public work programmes has been changing since its inception in India. Many changes at the policy level have created a positive impact on the output of the programmes. Improvement in the output is observed after MGNREGA came into the picture, but women's participation, landless farmers, marginal farmers, and households completing 100 days have not increased significantly. Significant improvement in household participation in public work is found in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Kerala. However, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Haryana have shown a decrease in household and labour participation. Employment Guarantee Programme, Indira Awas Yojana, and Food for Work Programme were supposed to provide work to scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. MGNREGA has become a universal programme; anyone in a rural area can demand work. The uneven distribution of the MGNREGA fund among the states has shown some negative impact on employment generation in populous states in India. Maharashtra and Bihar receive fewer funds than Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal. As a result, less employment is generated in the respective states. More funds should be allocated to the backward states as compared to the developed states. The material and wage ratio has changed to 49:51; earlier, it was 40:60. All this affects the work allocation throughout the financial years in MGNREGA. The success of any programme depends on implementation processes such as MGNREGA. MGNREGA could not get satisfactory results due to the lack of an effective strategy for implementation.

## **Notes**

1. The household has been considered as MGNREGA household if any member of the household worked/seeking for the work/ seeking but did not get public work. Implementation process constitutes two implementation structures 1) Statute to structure 2) Non-statutory structure

2. See at : [https://nrega.nic.in/Netnrega/WriteReaddata/Circulars/2390Annual\\_Master\\_Circular\\_2019-20.pdf](https://nrega.nic.in/Netnrega/WriteReaddata/Circulars/2390Annual_Master_Circular_2019-20.pdf)

### References

- Anderson, S., A. Kotwal, A. Kulkarni, A. & B. Ramaswami. 2013. Observations on the Scope of Corruption in NREGA, (International Growth Centre working paper no. F-7013-INC-1), retrieved from <https://www.theigc.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Anderson-Et-Al-2013-Working-Paper.pdf/>, accessed August 25, 2020.
- Bagchee, A. 2005. Political and administrative realities of Employment Guarantee Scheme, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 40(42): 4531–37.
- Bhalla S. 24 July 2013. The Unimportance of NREGS, *Indian Express*, Retrieved from <https://archive.indian-express.com/news/the-unimportance-of-NREGS/1145676/>, accessed January 5, 2014.
- Bhatia, B., & J. Dreze. 2006. Employment guarantee in Jharkhand: Ground realities, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 41(29): 3198-3202.
- Bhattacharya, S. 15 October 2014. Will the government heed calls to save rural jobs?, *India Together*, retrieved from: <http://indiatogether.org/letters-to-pm-on-proposed-changes-to-mgnrega-government>. Accessed August 12, 2020.
- Comptroller and Auditor General of India. 2008. *Performance Audit Report No. 11*", retrieved from: <https://saiindia.gov.in/content/report-no-11-2008-period-ended-march-2007-performance-audit-implementation-national-rural>, accessed on August 20, 2020.
- Dreze, J. and R. Khera. 2009. The Battle for Employment Guarantee: The MGNREGA is making a difference to lives of rural poor people, slowly but surely, *Frontline*, Vol 26 No 9(1): 3-16.
- Dreze, J. 2017. *Sense and Solidarity: Jholavala Economics for Everyone*, 32-46. Great Clarendon Street, Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press.
- Gill, M. 2017. Demographic Dynamism of Punjab. 1971–2011. *Economic & Political Weekly*, 52(3): 27.
- Eichner, H. 2013. *Public Works Programs: Use and Effectiveness to Stabilize Income and Eradicate Poverty as Seen in Argentina and India*, retrieved from: <https://www.fandm.edu/uploads/files/94948051798169436-public-works-program-original.pdf>, accessed July 12, 2019.
- Kulkarni, A. 2015: CFT in Maharashtra, *News Reach*, National Resource Centre for Rural Livelihoods, New Delhi, 15(6):11-14.
- Kulkarni, A. 2017. The state of the economy and mass perception. Ideas for India, retrieved from: <https://www.ideasforindia.in/topics/governance/the-state-of-the-economy-and-mass-perception.html>, accessed August 1, 2020.
- Kumar, P. and I. Maruthi. 2011: *Impact of NREGA on Wage Rate, Food Security and Rural-Urban Migration in Karnataka*. Agricultural Development and Rural Transformation Centre, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bangalore, pp 91-92.
- Kumar, Y. and D.C. Sah. 2015. Transparency, Disclosers and Governance: NREGA and Social Audits in Madhya Pradesh, *Journal of Land and Rural Studies*, 3(1):102-120.

- Liu, Y. and C.B. Barrett. 2013: Heterogeneous pro-poor targeting in the national rural employment guarantee scheme, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 48(10): 46-53.
- Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. 2012. MGNREGA Sameeksha, An Anthology of Research Studies on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, 2006–2012. In Mihir Shah, Neelakshi Mann and Varad Pande (Eds), *Orient Black Swan*, 14. New Delhi.
- Ministry of Rural Development. 2018. MGNREGA State-wise Financial Report from 2014-15 to 2018-19, retrieved from: <https://rural.nic.in/finance/budget/financial-information> accessed on August 5, 2020.
- Ministry of Rural Development. 2013. *Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act Operational Guideline*, retrieved from: <http://nrega.nic.in/netnrega/guidelines.aspx>, accessed on June 1, 2020.
- Niti Aayog. 2019. *Niti Ayog Annual Report, 2018-19*: 36-37. Retrieved from: <https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-11/AnnualReport2019.pdf>, accessed on August 10, 2020.
- Sabatier, P. and D. Mazmarian. 1986. The conditions of effective implementation: A guide to accomplishing policy objectives, *Journal of Public Policy*, University of California Press, 6(1): 481-504.
- Sebastian P. T. 28 June 2017.: May hike MGNREGA funds, but more needs to be done, *National Herald*, Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalheraldindia.com/business/budget-2017-may-hike-mgnrega-funds-ironically-last-resort-both-for-government-and-rural-poor-hit-by-demonetisation>, accessed on July 1, 2020.
- Sabhiki, I. 2015. Many Hands Make Light Work Reflecting on the MGNREGA-NRLM Convergence CFT project” *News Reach*, National Resource Centre for Rural Livelihoods, New Delhi, 15(6):1-9.
- Shah, M. 2004. A Historic Opportunity, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 39(50): 5287-5291.
- Shah, M. 2007. Employment guarantee, civil society and Indian democracy, *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42( 45/46): 43-51.
- In Blow to Poor, Government Cuts Compensation for Delay in Payment of NREGA Wages. 7 May 2017. *The Wire*, retrieved from: <https://thewire.in/economy/blow-poor-government-cuts-compensation-delay-payment-nrega-wages>, accessed on March 12, 2020.