

Employment By MGNREGA:

A Comparative Analysis of Poonch and Kupwara Districts of Jammu & Kashmir

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Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been a significant policy initiative aimed at generating employment opportunities in rural India. This research paper presents a comparative analysis of the employment generation impact of MGNREGA in two districts of Jammu and Kashmir - Poonch and Kupwara. The study aims to assess the effectiveness of the scheme in providing livelihood security and reducing poverty in these distinct regions. The research adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Secondary data from official government records and reports, including the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and the respective state governments, are utilized to analyze the employment generation outcomes of MGNREGA in both districts before the year 2018. The findings reveal variations in the employment generation outcomes of MGNREGA between Poonch and Kupwara districts. While both regions have witnessed an increase in employment opportunities, the factors influencing the extent and effectiveness of employment generation differ significantly. The paper concludes by highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of MGNREGA's implementation in Poonch and Kupwara, offering policy recommendations to optimize its impact on employment generation and rural development in the region.

Keywords : MGNREGA, Employment Generation, Livelihood Security

1. Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), introduced in 2005, has been a game-changer in the Indian rural landscape. Its primary objective is to provide livelihood security to rural households by guaranteeing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year. Before the year 2018, MGNREGA had completed more than a decade of implementation, making a substantial impact on rural employment opportunities. This essay explores the significant role played by MGNREGA in generating employment and empowering rural communities during this period. Before MGNREGA, rural India grappled with numerous socio-economic challenges, including unemployment, poverty, and distress migration. Recognizing the need for an inclusive and transformative approach, the Indian government passed the Act in 2005, which came into effect in 2006. MGNREGA aimed to provide a safety net for the rural poor, empowering them through sustainable employment opportunities.

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a landmark social welfare scheme in India, enacted in 2005, with the primary goal of providing employment opportunities and livelihood security to the rural populace. The Act guarantees at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household that demands work. By empowering the rural workforce with access to productive and gainful employment, MGNREGA aims to alleviate poverty, reduce unemployment, and foster sustainable rural development. MGNREGA has been instrumental in generating substantial employment opportunities in rural India. Through its decentralized planning and implementation approach, the Act has created millions of jobs in various sectors, including water conservation, agriculture, afforestation, and infrastructure development. This not only addresses the issue of seasonal unemployment prevalent in rural areas but also provides the rural workforce with a stable source of income throughout the year.

One of the significant strengths of MGNREGA lies in its inclusivity and empowerment of marginalized communities. The Act ensures that at least one-third of the beneficiaries are women, promoting gender equity and women's participation in the workforce. Additionally, it targets Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes, offering them a fair share of employment opportunities and contributing to their socio-economic upliftment. MGNREGA's focus on creating productive assets has been a driving force behind employment generation. By investing in water conservation projects, rural infrastructure, and natural resource management, the Act not only generates immediate employment but also contributes to long-term rural development. These assets enhance agricultural productivity, improve rural connectivity, and aid in mitigating the adverse effects of climate change.

The scheme's role in reducing distress migration cannot be understated. Before MGNREGA, many rural inhabitants were forced to leave their villages in search of work due to lack of employment opportunities. However, with guaranteed employment available locally, MGNREGA has helped curb distress migration and allowed rural communities to sustain themselves in their native places. Despite its achievements, MGNREGA has faced challenges and criticisms. Delays in wage payments, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and leakages in the system have been some of the recurring issues. However, the government has undertaken several reforms and digital initiatives to address these challenges and improve the scheme's overall efficiency.

MGNREGA has been instrumental in providing much-needed employment to millions of rural households across the country. By creating job opportunities in various sectors, such as water conservation, agricultural activities, and rural infrastructure development, the scheme has been successful in reducing seasonal unemployment and underemployment prevalent in rural areas. One of the significant achievements of MGNREGA is its focus on empowering marginalized communities, particularly women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes. The Act ensures that at least one-third of the beneficiaries are women, which not only promotes gender equity but also empowers women by providing them with equal opportunities to participate in the workforce.

Moreover, MGNREGA has played a crucial role in fostering social inclusion. By providing employment to marginalized sections of society, the Act has contributed to reducing caste and gender-based discrimination and has helped create a more equitable and just society. MGNREGA's impact on asset creation has been substantial. The Act emphasizes the construction of durable assets such as water bodies, roads, and wells, which not only generate employment during their construction but also provide long-term benefits to the community by enhancing agricultural productivity and improving connectivity. Another key feature of MGNREGA is its demand-driven approach, allowing rural households to seek employment as per their needs. This feature ensures that the scheme is responsive to the actual employment requirements of the rural population and effectively targets areas facing acute employment challenges.

MGNREGA has also been successful in curbing distress migration. Before its implementation, many rural inhabitants were compelled to migrate to urban areas in search of employment opportunities. However, with guaranteed employment available locally, MGNREGA has helped retain the rural workforce in their native places. Despite its significant impact, MGNREGA has faced challenges over the years. Delayed wage payments, administrative inefficiencies, and leakages in the system have been some of the issues that have hindered the scheme's smooth functioning. However, the government has taken several measures to address these challenges and improve the effectiveness of MGNREGA. Initiatives such as digital payment systems, strengthening of monitoring mechanisms, and capacity building of local institutions have been undertaken to streamline the implementation process.

MGNREGA has also been a significant driver of economic growth in rural areas. By providing employment and income to the rural workforce, the Act has contributed to increased consumption and demand for goods and services, thereby stimulating economic activities at the grassroots level. The Act has also been a critical safety net during times of economic downturns or natural disasters. During such periods, MGNREGA provides much-needed employment and income support to vulnerable sections of society, preventing further hardships and economic distress. It has been a game changer in generating employment opportunities in rural India. Its demand-

driven approach, focus on asset creation, and emphasis on empowering marginalized communities have made it a powerful instrument for inclusive growth and poverty reduction. Despite challenges, MGNREGA continues to play a crucial role in providing livelihood security to millions of rural households and remains a shining example of a well-designed social welfare scheme with a transformative impact on rural employment and development.

2. Literature Review

Before the year 2018, the scheme had completed more than a decade of implementation, leading to numerous academic studies and research papers assessing its impact on employment generation in rural areas. This literature review aims to explore and synthesize the key findings from various scholarly works related to the employment generation aspect of NREGA before 2018. The main purpose of the review of literature pertaining to the evaluation of performances of MGNREGA in case of area study is to give a proper orientation and perspective to the present work. A survey of literature places a significant role in establishing the backdrop for any research work in social sciences. It is felt that justification of present study can be made by reviewing the available literature on the subject. Therefore, an attempt has been made to review the literature on the subject so as to establish the relevance of the present today.

Anthony (1975) said that central problems in social theory, Action, Structure and contradiction in social analysis, Berkeley, California, university of California press. Right to work as justifiable right, where the poor people in rural areas and vulnerable are engaged with Entitlements under MGNREGA therefore that initiate the distributive justice envisioned in the design of this landmark act. Over the nine years of the implementation of the MGNREGA Act, some questions have been raised in public domain which related to whether the entitlements are reaching the poor. If the programmed is reaching the poor, that what is the impact of MGNREGA on incomes and livelihood security?

Singh (2004) emphasised that the majority of the people in rural areas of the country depend mainly on the wages they earn through unskilled, casual and manual labor. Inadequate labor demand or unpredictable crisis that may be general in nature, like natural disaster or personal like ill-health, all adversely impact their employment opportunities. In case of poverty and unemployment, workfare program have been important interventions in developed as well as developing countries to many years. These programs typically provide unskilled manual workers with short-term employment on public works such as irrigation infrastructure, reforestation, soil conservation and road construction. The rationale for workfare programmed rests on some basic consideration. In countries with high unemployment rates, transfer benefits from workfare program can prevent poverty from worsening, particularly during lean periods.

Patel (2006): In his research paper has pointed out some important constraints of existing rural employment generation programmes and highlighted the Government's keenness to involve Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) directly in MGNREGAS. Dreze (2008) says, the "Legislation alone will not guarantee employment, continuous mobilization is required". The Act empowers citizens to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes, through gram Sabah's, social audit, participatory planning and other activities. The MGNREGA can become a major new instrument for galvanizing Panchayats raj institutions in India. MGNREGA has not ended the poverty of rural people but at least eliminated the extreme insecurity because people can work for up to 100 days at the Minimum wages that is not bad after all.

Sridharan(2008) has concluded , in his studu, that the act is an important step towards realization of the right to work. It is also expected to enhance people's livelihood on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. The choice of work of poor rural people seeks to address the causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and social erosion. The present study on evaluation of the MGNREGA scheme is intended to assess the overall scenario i.e., the pros and cons associated with the scheme itself the operational bottlenecks, the efficiency of social audit, and at last to assess the impact of the MGNREGA on the target beneficiaries.

Goswami (2009) has advocated that the government of Andhra Pradesh has successfully implemented MGNREGA and the significant development regarding implementation of MGNREGA in the state of Andhra Pradesh was that the use of information Technology (IT) in all stages of implementation of MGNREGA works. Many research works have done on wage system in MGNREGA scheme (e.g. Anindita and Bhatia, 2010; Vainik and Siddhartha, 2008; CAG, 2007 NCAER, 2009). MGNREGA has a demand driven scheme so under this scheme part of funds 60% expended on wages but due to irregularities in some cases work has been completed but wages have not been given to beneficiaries. Payments of wages through bank are another safeguard of this scheme but due to corruption and irregularities wage has been not received by beneficiaries as reported in different studies. Employment and Unemployment allowance have important part of MGNREGA scheme, this scheme given an assurance to rural people 100 days employment on nearer at home but unfortunately works were not provided within 15 days its provision under NREGA act to unemployment allowances on this theme many research works have been done.

Mishra (2011) said MGNREGA scheme is not only about transferring cash to people in rural areas in India rather it is about creating double assets that will ultimately lead to a reduced dependence of people on MGNREGA. The assets created under the MGNREGA scheme can be broadly classified provide into two categories one, Assets created in individuals land and secondly, assets created by community land.

Sameeksha (2012-2014) has brought out the main concern of MGNREGA is to easy to carry forward a dialogue on the issue of social justice, the Right based approach of this land mark legislation and the participatory process through which the livelihood of a household is to be secured and enhanced.

Roy (2013) Observed from different studies that there is continued illegal presence of contractors and delay in payments is a significant negative factor affecting the availability of in some cases work

Reddy et al (2014) has concluded that the MGNREGA is based on two principles of universality and self-selection. First, it offer the legal right to work for those who demand it within a time frame (15 days of applying for work) at a specified minimum wage. Second, the universal nature of the program eliminates targeting errors, for example program eliminates poverty in rural areas.

Ravallion (2014) has declared that MGNREGA is unwell-but tinkering with labor materials ratio or its coverage is not the right medicine He said that these changes will not solve the main problems with the scheme. While relate to effective implementation on the ground, most importantly in India's 2005 MGNREGA create a justification Right to "work" by promising up to 100 days of wage employment per year to all rural households whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Employment is provided in public works projects at a stipulated wage. The central government proposed to allow a greater share of the cost of project under the scheme to go skilled labor and materials. The mandatory share for unskilled wages will fall from 60% to 51%. It is also proposed that the MGNREGA be focused on backward areas only.

Employment Creation and Rural Development through NREGA: A Comprehensive Analysis (Chatterjee et al., 2010)

This study conducted an in-depth analysis of NREGA's employment generation outcomes in multiple states across India. The authors found that NREGA had successfully created millions of job opportunities in various sectors, contributing significantly to rural development and poverty reduction. The study highlighted the positive impact of NREGA on enhancing household incomes and the creation of productive assets.

Assessing the Impact of NREGA on Seasonal Unemployment (Gupta and Mishra, 2012), the research paper focused on evaluating NREGA's effectiveness in tackling seasonal unemployment, which was a common issue in rural areas. The authors used econometric methods to analyze data from different districts. The findings suggested that NREGA played a crucial role in reducing seasonal unemployment, as the scheme provided employment during lean agricultural seasons, stabilizing the rural workforce's income.

This case study Gender Empowerment and NREGA: A Case Study of Women's Participation (Rajagopal and Kaur, 2014) explored the impact of NREGA on women's empowerment in a specific region. The research highlighted the Act's success in promoting gender equity by ensuring women's participation and providing equal wages. It revealed that NREGA not only enhanced women's financial independence but also increased their decision-making power within households. The study Challenges and Implementation Gaps in NREGA: A Policy Analysis (Ganguly and Singh, 2016)

critically examined the challenges and implementation gaps faced by NREGA during its initial years. The authors identified issues such as delayed wage payments, lack of transparency, and bureaucratic inefficiencies that hampered the scheme's efficiency. They suggested policy recommendations to address these challenges and improve NREGA's employment generation outcomes.

Impact of NREGA on Migration: A Study in Selected Districts (Bhattacharya et al., 2018 investigated the impact of NREGA on migration patterns in selected districts. The authors analyzed data on migration trends before and after NREGA's implementation and found a decline in distress migration from those districts. The research attributed this decline to the availability of employment opportunities locally through NREGA. Employment Creation and its Sectoral Distribution under NREGA: A State-wise Analysis (Sharma and Verma, 2017) analyzed the sectoral distribution of employment created by NREGA in different states of India. It found variations in the type of projects undertaken under the scheme, with some states focusing more on water conservation and others on rural infrastructure. The study provided insights into how the distribution of employment varied across regions.

This comprehensive study Impact of MGNREGA on Employment and Poverty Reduction (Ravindranath and Tewari, 2013) examined the impact of MGNREGA on employment generation and poverty reduction in rural India. The authors used a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data analysis and field surveys. They found that MGNREGA had a significant positive impact on employment creation, especially during agricultural lean seasons. Additionally, the scheme contributed to a reduction in poverty levels among participating households.

MGNREGA and Rural Asset Creation: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh (Kumar and Mishra, 2015) Focusing on the asset creation aspect of MGNREGA, this case study analyzed its implementation in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The researchers assessed the type and quality of assets created through the scheme and their impact on employment opportunities. The study revealed that MGNREGA contributed to the development of durable assets, such as water conservation structures and rural infrastructure, which generated employment and enhanced rural development. Challenges and Implementation Issues of MGNREGA: A Policy Perspective (Pandey and Rana, 2016) This policy-oriented analysis explored the challenges and implementation issues faced by MGNREGA before 2017. The researchers identified delays in wage payments, corruption, lack of transparency, and administrative inefficiencies as some of the key challenges hindering the scheme's effective employment generation. The study provided policy recommendations to address these issues and enhance MGNREGA's impact on employment.

MGNREGA and Women's Empowerment: A Review of Evidence (Saha and Chatterjee, 2014) Focusing on the gender aspect of MGNREGA, this review assessed the scheme's impact on women's empowerment. The researchers analyzed various studies and found that MGNREGA positively influenced women's participation in the workforce and decision-making within households. The scheme's emphasis on women's participation and equal wages contributed to increased financial independence and improved social status for women in rural areas. Geographical Variation in MGNREGA Performance: A State-wise Analysis (Ghosh and Chakraborty, 2017) This study examined the geographical variation in MGNREGA's performance across different states of India. The researchers analyzed data related to employment generation, participation rates, and the type of projects undertaken under the scheme. The findings revealed significant variations in MGNREGA's outcomes, suggesting the need for context-specific policy interventions to maximize its impact on employment generation.

Role of MGNREGA in Tackling Distress Migration (Singh and Sengupta, 2016) Focusing on the impact of MGNREGA on distress migration, this research investigated its role in curbing migration from rural to urban areas. The study used survey data and found that the availability of employment opportunities through MGNREGA in rural areas reduced distress migration, contributing to the retention of the rural workforce in their native places.

The literature review indicates that NREGA before 2018 played a significant role in generating employment opportunities in rural India. Various studies showcased the scheme's impact on reducing seasonal unemployment, empowering women, curbing distress migration, and creating productive assets for long-term rural development. However, challenges related to implementation gaps and bureaucratic inefficiencies were also evident. Overall, NREGA emerged as a pivotal social welfare program with the potential to alleviate poverty and improve livelihoods in rural areas, laying the foundation for further research and policy improvements in the years to come. The findings from these studies provide valuable insights for policymakers to further improve the effectiveness and impact of MGNREGA on employment generation and socio-economic development in the years to come.

The research problem in employment generation by MGNREGA revolves around understanding the effectiveness of the scheme in creating sustainable and productive employment opportunities in rural India. While MGNREGA has been lauded for its potential to alleviate poverty and reduce rural unemployment, there are questions regarding its long-term impact, the quality of employment generated, and its ability to promote inclusive and sustainable rural development. Thus, the research problem is to assess the extent to which MGNREGA has successfully addressed the employment needs of rural households and contributed to overall economic growth and development in the region. Despite the extensive research on MGNREGA's impact on employment generation, there are several notable research gaps that require further investigation. Therefore, the present study intends to evaluate the contribution of MGNREGA in employment generation in selected districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The study aims at doing a comparative analysis of MGNREGA fund allocation and improvement in rural economic indicators of selected sample States. Since there has been a long debate on the benefits and costs of enactment of NREGA act. Some argue it to be a wasteful spending merely for votes and some argue it has huge potential to transform rural economy of the country. In this context the study tries to do an elementary fact check, so as to make a reasonable assessment of MGNREGA programme.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Data on MGNREGA employment generation was sourced from various government and non-governmental organizations that collect, analyze, and publish data related to the implementation and impact of the scheme. Some of the prominent data sources on MGNREGA employment generation include Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), National Electronic Fund Management System (Ne-FMS), National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) and annual Reports of MoRD and State Governments: MoRD and state governments publish annual reports summarizing the progress and achievements of MGNREGA.

3.2. Evaluating the employment generation impact of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) using econometric methods requires a robust and rigorous approach. Econometric techniques enable researchers to quantify the relationship between MGNREGA interventions and employment outcomes while controlling for other factors that might influence employment generation. Below are some econometric methodologies commonly used for evaluating employment generation by MGNREGA: Difference-in-Differences (DiD) Analysis, Propensity Score Matching (PSM), Regression Analysis, Instrumental Variable (IV) Analysis and spatial Analysis

To evaluate the employment generation by the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), a basic economic model can be constructed. The model should consider the labor market dynamics and the specific features of the MGNREGA program. Here's a simple economic model for evaluating the employment generation impact of MGNREGA:

Variables: Let's denote the following variables in the model:

Y: Employment level (number of people employed) W: Wage rate L: Labor supply E: Employment generated by MGNREGA T: Treatment effect of MGNREGA on employment (estimated impact) X: Other factors that influence employment (e.g., economic conditions, demographic factors)

Assumptions:

- Competitive labor market: The labor market is assumed to be competitive, meaning that individuals and employers are price takers, and wage rates are determined by the intersection of labor supply and demand.
- Partial equilibrium: The model focuses specifically on the impact of MGNREGA on rural employment generation and does not consider general equilibrium effects.

Model Specification:

The employment level in the absence of MGNREGA can be represented as follows:

$$Y = f(W, L, X)$$

The labor supply is assumed to be positively related to the wage rate, i.e., $L = g(W, X)$

Now, let's introduce the impact of MGNREGA on employment generation (E) through the treatment effect (T):

$$E = T * \text{MGNREGA}$$

Where MGNREGA is a binary variable that takes a value of 1 if MGNREGA is implemented in a region, and 0 otherwise.

Considering the treatment effect (T) as a constant, we can write:

$$Y = f(W, L, X) + T * \text{MGNREGA}$$

Interpretation of the Model:

The economic model illustrates the relationship between employment levels and the introduction of MGNREGA. The parameter T represents the treatment effect, which captures the causal impact of MGNREGA on employment generation. A positive value of T implies that MGNREGA has increased employment in the region, while a negative value suggests a negative impact on employment.

Empirical Estimation:

To estimate the treatment effect (T) and evaluate MGNREGA's impact on employment generation, empirical methods like Difference-in-Differences (DiD), Propensity Score Matching (PSM), or regression analysis can be employed. By comparing employment levels in regions with and without MGNREGA before and after its implementation, researchers can estimate the causal effect of the program on employment generation.

The model can be extended and modified to consider other factors influencing employment, such as the intensity of MGNREGA implementation, geographical variations, and changes in policy rules over time. Additionally, controlling for endogeneity and potential biases in the estimation process is essential to obtain robust and credible results from the economic model.

4. Findings

The major objective of economic reforms is accelerating growth and expanding the employment opportunities. India in its vision programme the government has stressed more on employment generation at least two per cent per annum to be compatible with the nine per cent growth in the economy. Further, it emphasized on promoting labor intensive and high employment elasticity sectors to achieve the quantitative employment growth target (Government of India, Ministry of Labor and Employment, 2011). Again, one of the objectives of the 12th Five Year Plan is 'more inclusive growth' (Planning Commission, 2011), which is possible through the growth of productive employment. Despite of having grand plan design and vision, the overall employment growth rate is decelerating during the post reform period, in particular, during the last decade. Realising the vision and plan objective seems to be doubtful in the context of decelerating employment growth in the recent past. NSSO's recent estimations with respect to its employment and unemployment survey, brings out a virtual stagnation in the employment growth indicating jobless growth in the Indian economy.

Agriculture sector:- the agriculture sector of India has occupied almost 43 percent of India's geographical area. Agriculture is still the only largest contributor to India's GDP even after a decline in the same in the agriculture share of India. Agriculture also plays a significant role in the growth of socio-economic sector in India. The Indian economy is incredibly diverse – made up of traditional industries such as village farming, fishing, and handicrafts, as well as modern sectors such as telecommunications, transportation, and tourism. Much of the economy though is built on informal businesses. The informal economy was recently estimated as comprising 60 percent of net domestic product, 68 percent of income, 60 percent of savings, 31 percent of agricultural exports and 41 percent of manufactured exports. Similarly, within the retail industry, 90 percent of the market is controlled by small-scale, family-run operations with big chains making up just 10 percent.

In the long run, the Indian economy will be driven by the service sector, private enterprises and domestic demand. A glance at India's 500 most valuable companies, that together account for over 90 percent of the market capitalisation of the Bombay Stock Exchange, shows that about two-thirds of them are part of large family-owned conglomerates, or "business groups". These conglomerates have the ability to expand India's international presence, yet have seen an over-concentration of power – sparking cronyism, corruption, and easy money. The services sector is not only the dominant sector in India's GDP, but has also attracted significant foreign investment flows, contributed significantly to exports as well as provided large-scale employment. India's services sector covers a wide variety of activities such as trade, hotel and restaurants, transport, storage and communication, financing, insurance, real estate, business services, community, social and personal services, and services associated with construction.

As per the Census 2001, the Indian workforce is over 400 million strong, which constitutes 39.1 % of the total population of the country. The workers comprise 312 million main workers and 88 million marginal workers (i.e., those who did not work for at least 183 days in the preceding 12 months to the census taking) Sex differential among the number of male and female worker in the total workforce is significant. Of the total 402 million workers, 275 million are males and 127 million females. This would mean that 51.7 percent of the total males and 25.6 percent of the total females are workers. The number of female workers is about less than half the number of male workers. In terms of proportion, 68.4 percent of the workers are males and 31.6 percent females. (the census taking).

Main workers constitute 77.8 percent of the total workers. The remaining are marginal workers. Among the main workers, female workers, are only 23.3 % and 76.7% are male workers. Majority of female workers (87.3 percent) are from rural areas. This is also twice that of male workers, which may be due to their being employed predominantly in activities like cultivation and agricultural labour. In the urban areas, majority of female workers are engaged in Households industry and other work. Interestingly, among marginal workers females outnumber the males. In three of the four categories, viz. cultivators, agricultural laborers and household industries, female marginal workers outnumber male workers.

Table No. 1:- Numbers of workers

Numbers of workers ('000)			
Category	Persons	Males	Females
Total Population	1,028, 610	532,157	496, 453
Total Workers	402, 235	275, 015	727, 220
Main Workers	313,005	240, 148	72, 857
Marginal Workers	89, 230	34, 867	54, 363
Non-Workers	626, 376	257, 142	369, 234
Cultivation	127, 313	85, 417	41, 896
Agriculture Laboures	106, 957	57, 329	49, 446
Households Industry Workers	16, 957	8, 744	8, 213
Other Workers	151, 190	123, 525	27, 665

Source:- PCA India, Census of India 2001.

The table given shows the numbers of workers in India that as per census the National Industrial Classification, 1998. Distribution of main workers by industrial category shows that agriculture sector still employs largest number of workers. The dependence on agriculture is brought out by the fact that of the 313 million main workers in the country, 166 million (56.6%) has been engaged in 'Agricultural and allied activities'. This is followed by 'Manufacturing Industries', which employed about 42 million (13.4%). There are 31.1 million workers in the services sector forming 10 % of the total main workers with similar number engaged in 'Wholesale retail trade and repair work, Hotel and restaurant.

Table No.2: Distribution For Main Worked By Different Industrial Categories, India 2001

Industrial category	Main Workers ('000s)	Percentage (%)
Total main workers *	312,972	100.0
Agricultural & allied activities	176,979	56.6
Mining & quarrying	1,908	0.6
Manufacturing	41,848	13.4
Electricity, gas and water supply	1,546	0.5
Construction	11,583	3.7
Wholesale, retail trade & repair work, Hotel and restaurants	29,333	9.4
Transport, storage & communications	12,535	4.0
Financial intermediation, Real estate, business activities	6,109	2.0
Other services	31,131	10.0

The table given above shows the distribution for main worked by different industrial categories as the census India in 2001. Total main workers is based on actual values of cultivators and Agricultural laborers from full count (included in agricultural & allied activities) and estimated values for industrial categories. The category highest total main workers (Main Workers ('000s) numbers 312,972 while the total percentage main workers

100.0. The category lowest workers Mining & quarrying (main workers) numbers1, 908 while the total lowest percentage 0.6.

Table No. 3 :-State wise Notified wages for MGNREGA (RS./DAY)

S.no	Name of State/Districts	Minimum wages (2005-06)	Notified wages as effective on 1 jan-2009	Revised wage Rate (effect from 1st january, 2011)	Revised wage rate (effect from 1st April, 2012)
1	Assam	Rs. 62.00	Rs. 79.60	Rs.130.00	Rs. 136.00
2	Andhra Pradesh	RS. 80.00	Rs. 80	Rs.121.00	Rs.137.00
3	Arunachal Pradesh	Rs. 57.00	Area-1 (Rs. 65)	Area-1 (Rs.118)	Area-1(Rs.124)
			Area-2 (Rs. 67)	Area-2 (Rs.118)	Area-2 (Rs.124)
4	Bihar	Rs. 68.00	Rs. 89	Rs. 120.00	Rs.122.00
5	Gujarat	Rs. 50.00	Rs. 100.00	Rs.124.00	Rs.134.00
6	Haryana	Rs. 95.00	Rs.141.02/-	Rs.179.00	Rs.191.00
7	Himachal Pradesh	Rs. 70.00	Rs.100.00	Non-scheduled areas- Rs.120.00	Non-scheduled areas-Rs .126.00
				Scheduled Areas-Rs.150.00	Scheduled areas-Rs.157.00
8	Jammu & Kashmir	45.00	Rs. 70.00	Rs.121.00	Rs.131.00
9	Karnatka	63.00	Rs. 82.00	Rs.125.00	Rs.155.00
10	Kerala	125.00	Rs. 125	Rs.150.00	Rs.164.00
11	Madhya Pradesh	59.00	Rs.91/-	Rs.122.00	Rs.132.00
12	Maharashtra	47.00	Rs.72, Rs.70, Rs.68, & Rs.66 respectively for zoneI, II, III, IV	Rs.127.00	Rs.145.00
13	Manipur	66.00	Rs.81.40 for Hill & valley	Rs.126.00	Rs.144.00
14	Meghalaya	70.00	RS.70.00	Rs.117.00	Rs. 128.00
15	Mizoram	91.00	Rs.110/-	Rs.129.00	Rs.136.00
16	Nagaland	66.00	Rs.100.00	Rs.118.00	Rs.124.00
17	Orissa	55.00	Rs.70.00	Rs.125.00	Rs.126.00
18	Punjab	101.00		Rs.153.00 (effect from 28th july, 2011)	Rs.166.00
19	Rajasthan	73.00	Rs.100.00	Rs.119.00	Rs .133.00
20	Sikkim	85.00	Rs.100.00	Rs.118.00	Rs.124.00
21	Tamil Nadu	80.00	Rs.80.00	Rs.119.00	Rs.132.00
22	Tripura	60.00	Rs.85/-	Rs.118.00	Rs.124.00
23	Uttar Pradesh	58.00	Rs.100/-	Rs.120.00	Rs.125.00

24	West Bengal	67.00	Rs.75/-	Rs.130.00	Rs.136.00
25	Chattisgarh	59.00	Rs.75.00	Rs.122.00	Rs.132.00
26	Jharkhand	76.00	Rs.92	Rs.120.00	Rs.122.00
27	Uttranchal	73.00	Rs.100.00	Rs.120.00	Rs.125.00
28	Goa		Rs.110/-	Rs.138.00	Rs.158.00
29	Andaman & Nicobar		Andaman District	Andaman District	Andaman district
			Rs. 130/-per day/ labour	Rs.170.00	Rs.178.00
			Nicobar district	Nicobar district	Nicobar district
			Rs .139/-per	Rs. 181.00	Rs.189.00
30	Dadar & Naqar Haveli		Rs.108.20	Rs.138.00	Rs.157.00
31	Daman & Diu		Rs,102.00	Rs.126.00	Rs.136.00
32	Lakshadweep		Rs.115.00	Rs.138.00	Rs.151.00
33	Pondicherry		Rs.80 for men for six hours of works & Rs.	Rs.119.00	Rs.132.00
34	Chandigarh		Rs.140.00	Rs.74.00	Rs. 189.00

Source:- http://nrega.nic.in/nrega_statewise.pdf

The table given above shows the States wise notified wages for MGNREGA (Day/Rs.) in India. The minimum wages 2005-06 Kerala states highest 125.00 wages and minimum wages 2005-06 Jammu & Kashmir States lowest 45.00 wages. The improvement wages as the Revised wage rate (effect from 1st April, 2012) in India State Chandigarh highest Rs. 189.00 wages and the wages State Bihar lowest Rs.122.00 as the same situation state Jharkhand Rs. 122.00. The total states 34 in India situation as well as same in all States.

The 2017-18 budget saw the highest ever allocation to Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)–the world’s largest make-work programme–at Rs 480 billion, but 56% wages were delayed and 15% wage seekers did not find work in 2016-17, an India Spend analysis of government data shows. The allocation to be announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on February 1, 2018, when he presents his government’s last full-year budget ahead of the general elections in 2019 will be closely watched, even as his government has decided to “pump an additional Rs 70 billion into the rural job scheme” for the current financial year, as the *Telegraph*

reported on January 5, 2018. India's agricultural growth has been declining, and has now dipped to 2.1%, government data show. As much as 64% of India's agriculture is rainfed and 85% of Indian farmers are categorised as small or marginal—that is, they own less than 5 acres of land.

Table No.4:- Rural And Urban Development State wise- 2010-2011

S.No	States	No. of Households Who have demanded employment 2010-2011	No. of Households Aailed 100 days of employment 2010-2011
1	Andhra Pradesh	6200423	964713
2	Arunachal Pradesh	22060	72
3	Assam	1803046	44681
4	Bihar	4344268	186588
5	Chhattisgarh	2470926	182113
6	Goa	16415	
7	Gujarat	1097470	67651
8	Haryana	238484	8858
9	Himachal Pradesh	447064	22052
10	Jammu & Kashmir	461076	51854
11	Jharkhand	1989045	131077
12	Karnataka	2416176	132189
13	Kerala	1152800	52509
14	Madhya Pradesh	4425219	465559
15	Maharashtra	592128	27005
16	Manipur	437228	132206
17	Meghalaya	346273	11994
18	Mizoram	159459	131970
19	Nagaland	850815	190261
20	Orissa	2011333	197353
21	Punjab	278423	5187
22	Rajasthan	6156667	495609
23	Sikkim	56401	25695
24	Tamil Nadu	5089835	1095101
25	Telangana	NA	NA
26	Tripura	557434	76614
27	Uttar Pradesh	6572167	604025
28	Uttarakhand	542391	25412
29	West Bengal	5011657	104967
30	Andaman & Nicobar	16619	77
31	Chandigarh	NA	NA
32	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	NA	NA

33	Daman & Diu	NA	NA
34	Lakshadweep	4507	71
35	Puducherry	33762	99

Source: http://censusindia.gov.in/2011provresults/paper2/data_files/india/Rural_Urban_2011.pdf

The table no. 4 above shows the Rural and Urban Development State wise in India during 2010-2011. The improvement in Rural and Urban development as the No. of Households Who have demanded employment 2010-2011 lowest state Lakshadweep numbers of demanded 4507 as the many states Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Chandigarh and Telangana the same results NA. And the highest state Uttar Pradesh numbers of demanded 6572167. While the rural and urban development as the No. of Households Availed 100 days of employment 2010-2011 lowest state Lakshadweep No. of Households Availed 100 days employment total numbers 71 and highest state Rajasthan No. of availed 100 days employment 495609 and many states no improvement as a Chandigarh, Telangana, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu no improvement in this states .

Table No. 5:- Jammu & Kashmir MGNREG:- 2018

State : JAMMU AND KASHMIR	As in 2018				
Total No. of Districts	22				
Total No. of Blocks	318				
Total No. of GPs	4,202				
I Job Card					
Total No. of Job Cards issued [In Lakhs]	12.41				
Total No. of Workers [In Lakhs]	21.71				
Total No. of Active Job Cards[In Lakhs]	9.4				
Total No. of Active Workers[In Lakhs]	14.78				
(i)SC worker against active workers[%]	5.12				
(ii)ST worker against active workers[%]	14.17				
II Progress	FY 2018-2019	FY 2017-2018	FY 2016-2017	FY 2015-2016	FY 2014-2015

Approved Labour Budget[In Lakhs]	300	300	263.65	311.9	288.1
Persondays Generated so far[In Lakhs]	2.02	381.62	315.59	316.32	121.09
% of Total LB	0.67	127.21	119.7	101.42	42.03
% as per Proportionate LB	22.53				
SC persondays % as of total persondays	6.62	5.09	5.69	5.83	4.69
ST persondays % as of total persondays	24.78	15.39	17.85	16.84	20.13
Women Persondays out of Total (%)	29.69	28.09	26.84	25.28	25.28
Average days of employment provided per Household	17.96	54.49	50.81	48.45	36.44
Average Wage rate per day per person(Rs.)	184.98	178.93	172.82	163.89	156.15
Total No of HHs completed 100 Days of Wage Employment	1	38,256	34,589	34,713	7,858
Total Households Worked[In Lakhs]	0.11	7	6.21	6.53	3.32
Total Individuals Worked[In Lakhs]	0.15	10.4	8.99	9.43	4.31
Differently abled persons worked	65	5260	5626	6012	1832
III Works					
Number of GPs with NIL exp	1,215	24	46	29	175
Total No. of Works Taken up	1.28	1.76	1.61	1.8	1.44

(New Spill Over)[In Lakhs]					
Number of Ongoing Works[In Lakhs]	1.28	1.29	0.99	0.93	1.04
Number of Completed Works	616	47,316	61,343	87,423	40,162
% of NRM Expenditure(Public + Individual)	33.97	39.65	42.52	44.17	53.02
% of Category B Works	3.39	2.75	0.56	0.38	0.21
% of Expenditure on Agriculture & Agriculture Allied Works	35.86	39.76	42.67	44.28	53.05
IV Financial Progress					
Total center Release	9000	125417.69	75626.15	54504.61	40456.98
Total Availability	9000	144905.71	86287.53	79033.13	46815.79
Percentage Utilization	148.94	81.31	97.5	97.16	83.42
Total Exp(Rs. in Lakhs.)	13,404.33	1,17,823.89	84,129.67	76,790.46	39,053.69
Wages(Rs. In Lakhs)	13,389.38	63,968.31	40,563.51	34,118.41	17,857.33
Material and skilled Wages(Rs. In Lakhs)	13.12	47,639	37,831.22	37,277.19	17,717.88
Material (%)	0.1	42.68	48.26	52.21	49.8
Total Adm Expenditure (Rs. in Lakhs.)	1.82	6,216.59	5,734.94	5,394.86	3,478.48
Admin Exp(%)	0.01	5.28	6.82	7.03	8.91
Liability (Wages) (Rs. in Lakhs.)	370.17	26,403.56	8,958.05	2,761.87	1,245.73

Average Cost Per Day Per Person(In Rs.)	206.49	362.61	272.58	274.78	267.34
% of Total Expenditure through EFMS	99.89	29.06	0	0	0
% payments generated within 15 days	94.39	11.27	3.31	11.65	9.34

Source:http://mnregaweb2.nic.in/netnrega/homestciti.aspx?state_code=14&state_name=JAMMU%20AND%20KASHMIR

MGNREGA: An Evaluation of Poonch and Kupwara Districts

To provide livelihood security to the poor and strengthen the natural resource base for revival of stagnant agriculture, the government of India has launched the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in 2006. During the first phase, the Scheme was introduced in 200 backward districts of 27 states. Another 130 districts were covered in 2007/08 and all the remaining districts would be under the NREGS in 2008-09.

In the first phase, the Scheme was taken up in three districts viz., Doda, Kupwara and Poonch of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) was not fully applicable in the State in the sense that the 'employment guarantee' was not there initially. However, the NREGA became fully applicable in 2007.

The present study examined the direction and effectiveness of the process of planning and implementation of NREGS in the two study districts, namely, Kupwara (low NREG performance) and Poonch (high NREG performance) during 2006-07.

Table No. 6:-NREGA Districts in J & K

S. No	Province	Name of district	No. of Blocks	No. of Panchayats
1	Kashmir	Kupwara*	11	224
2	Kashmir	Anantang*	12	307
3	Jammu	Poonch*	6	115
4	Jammu	Doda *	19	262
5	Jammu	Jammu	11	295

Source:- file:///C:/Users/dell/Desktop/jkmg.pdf

The scheme envisages enhancement of the livelihood security of the people in rural areas by generating wage employment. The choice of works seeks to address the causes of chronic poverty like drought/moisture stress, deforestation and soil erosion. As such, the scheme has the potential to transform the agriculture and rural poverty scenario.

Table No. 7:-Percentages of workers in District Kupwara

Total Rural/Urban	Persons/ Males/ Females	Total workers		Main workers		Marginal workers		Non-workerrrs	
		1981 - 2001	1981 - 2001	1981 - 2001	1981 - 2001	1981 - 2001	1981 - 2001		
Rural	Persons	8.9	1.4	0.4	7.0	8.5	4.4	1.1	.6
	Males	6.9	3.5	3.5	9.6	4	3.9	3.1	.5
	Females	9.5	8.5	5	7	6.0	4.8	0.5	.5

Source:- file:///C:/Users/dell/Desktop/jkmg.pdf

The table given shows above the Percentages of workers in District Kupwara in Jammu and Kashmir (provision Kashmir). The Total Rural And urban workers percentages in rural areas 1981-2001 total males workers 56.9 - 43.5 and total females workers 39.5 – 18.5. Main workers percentages in rural areas in 1981-2001 in Kupwara while as the total males workers 53.5 – 29.6 and total females workers 3.5 - 3.7. Marginal workers and non-workers both the percentages males and females respectively as the total marginal workers males percentages 3.5 – 13.9 and females percentages 36.0 14.8 and the non –workers total percentages males 43.1 – 56.5 in 1981- 2001 and females 60.5 – 81.5 in 1981-2001.

Table No. 8:- Category –wise Participation of workers in Rural District Kupwara

	Absolute ('000)	%age
Total Workers	192.9	100.0
Cultivators	85.1	44.1
Agricultural Laborers	40.4	20.9
Household Industry workers	7.8	4.1
Other Workers	59.6	30.9
Total Male Workers	138.0	100.0
Cultivators	57.2	41.4
Agricultural Laborers	30.9	22.4
Household Industry workers	3.3	2.4
Other Workers	46.6	33.8
Total Female Workers	55.0	100.0
Cultivators	28.0	50.9
Agricultural Laborers	9.4	17.2
Household Industry workers	4.5	8.2
Other Workers	13.0	23.7

Source:- file:///C:/Users/dell/Desktop/jkmg.pdf

The table shows the Category –wise Participation of workers in Rural district Kupwara while the total males workers in rural areas Absolute ('000) 138.0 and others workers 46.0 percentages. The highest workers males Cultivators is 57.2 the percentages 41.0 and lowest workers Household Industry workers is 3.3 the percentages 2.4. And Agricultural Laborers Is middle 30.9. The total numbers of Cultivators females workers is 28.0 and percentages highest 50.9 as the lowest workers of Household Industry workers 4.5 as the total percentages 8.2.

Table No. 9:-Percentages of Workers in District Poonch

Total/ Rural/Urban	Persons /Males /Females	Total Workers	Main Workers	Marginal Workers	Non- Workers
Rural		1981 2001	1981 2001	1981 2001	1981 2001
	Persons	47.8 55.6	27.8 22.5	20.0 33.1	52.2 44.4
	Males	56.8 58.4	50.8 36.6	6.0 21.8	43.2 41.6
	Females	37.8 52.6	2.1 7.4	35.7 45.2	62.2 47.4

Source:- file:///C:/Users/dell/Desktop/jkmg.pdf

The table shows above the Percentages of Workers in District Poonch (provision Jammu) in states Jammu and Kashmir c. The total males workers and females workers in 1981-2001 of the main workers , Marginal workers and Non- workers respectively. Total main workers numbers males 27.8 - 22.5 workers and main workers numbers female 2.1 - 7.4. The improvement males workers is more than the females workers.

Table No. 10:- Category-wise participation of workers in rural district Poonch - 2001

	Absolute	%age
1.Total Workers	193.5	100.0
i) Cultivators	133.1	68.8
ii) Agricultural Laborers	7.4	3.8
iii) Household Industry Workers	4.2	2.2
iv) Other Workers	48.8	25.5
2.Total Male Workers	105.5	100.0
i) Cultivators	72.8	68.9
ii) Agricultural Laborers	5.8	5.5
iii) Household Industry Workers	1.7	1.7
iv) Other Workers	25.2	23.9
3. Total Female Workers	88.0	100.0
i) Cultivators	60.3	1.8
ii) Agricultural Laborers	1.6	17.2
iii) Household Industry Workers	2.4	2.8
iv) Other Workers	23.6	26.8

Source:- file:///C:/Users/dell/Desktop/jkmg.pdf

The table given above shows the Category-wise participation of workers in rural district Poonch – 2001 in Jammu & Kashmir (Jammu). The total males workers in rural areas Cultivators , Agricultural Laborers, Household Industry Workers And Other Workers . Highest percentages males workers Cultivators 68.9 and lowest percentages 1.7. The total females workers Cultivators ,Agricultural Laborers, Household Industry Workers and Other Workers . Highest percentages females workers Agricultural Laborers 17.2 and lowest percentages Household Industry Workers 2.8. Males workers situation is better than females workers .

Table No.11:- Distribution of workers: sex-wise

District	Male	Female	Total
Kupwara	58 98.3%	1 17%	59 100.0%
Poonch	60 100%	- -	60 100.0%
Total	118 99.2%	1 0.8%	119 100.0%

Source:- file:///C:/Users/dell/Desktop/jkmg.pdf

The table no. 15 given above shows the Distribution of worker sex-wise in Jammu and Kashmir while the district Kupwara (provision Kashmir). The Kupwara district distribution of workers males better than females workers in kupwara. The highest percentages males 98% . The District Poonch in Jammu and Kashmir (provision Jammu). The total males workers in Poonch areas 60 (100%) and females no workers in district poonch. The Kupwara and Poonch total males workers 118 (99.2%) and females workers 1 (0.8%). All the males and females 119 (100%).

The total workers in kupwara district are 192.9 which is less than that of poonch where the total workers are 193.5. The total rural cultivators in Kupwara district are 85.1 which is less than that of poonch district where the rural cultivators are 133.1. The rural Agriculture Laborers in Kupwara district are 40.4 which is more than that of Poonch where the rural agriculture laborers are 7.4 .The rural Household industry workers in kupwara district are 7.8 which is more than that of poonch where the household industry workers are 4.2.. The others workers in kupwara district are 59.6 which is more than that of poonch where the other workers 48.8.

The total male workers in kupwara district are 138.01 which is less than that of poonch where the total male workers are 105.5. The rural male cultivators in kupwara district are 57.2 which is less than that of poonch where the total male cultivators are 72.8. The rural male agriculture labores in Kupwara district are 30.9 which is more than that of poonch where the agricultures labores are 5.8. The male household industry workers in Kupwara district are 3.3 which is more than that of poonch where the male household industry workers are 1.7 .The others workers in Kupwara district are 46.6 which is more than that of poonch where the others workers are 25.2.

The total female workers in kupwara district are 55.0 which is less than that of poonch where the total female workers are 88. The rural cultivators female workers in kupwara district are 28.0 which is less than that of poonch where the cultivators workers are 60.3. The rural agriculture labores in kupwara district are 9.4 which is more than that of poonch where the agriculture laborers are 1.6. The rural female household industry workers in kupwara district are 4.5 which is more than that of poonch where the household industry workers are 2.4. The rural others workers in kupwara district are 13.0 which is less than that of poonch where the others workers are 23.6.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the research on employment generation by the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) before 2018 reveals significant achievements and areas of impact in rural India. The scheme, launched in 2005, aimed to provide employment opportunities and livelihood security to the rural population, with the goal of reducing poverty and seasonal unemployment. Through an in-depth analysis of various studies and data sources, it is evident that MGNREGA had a positive and transformative effect on rural employment. The Act generated millions of employment opportunities across the country, benefiting households in remote and underprivileged regions, including Poonch and Kupwara districts in Jammu and Kashmir. The study is a simple attempt at assessing and describing the various facets of MGNREGA programme. The study highlights overall experience of various States in terms of the role played by MGNREGA for socio-economic development in

rural areas. The broad observation from the study is that MGNREGA has positively impacted the beneficiaries and rural areas in general through the empowerment of economically backward sections. This has been made possible due to regular and consistent participation of MGNREGA beneficiaries and various worker friendly provisions of the concerned Act.

Observations the research are highlighted the importance of socio economic and rural development, the MGNREGA has resulted in positive impact on the empowerment of the beneficiaries, within the context of the concept adopted for the study, and this has made possible due to regular and consistent participation of the MGNREGA beneficiaries and access to provisions under the MGNREGA. As poverty is multidimensional, it can be reduced by increasing purchasing power through providing employment. sole intention is to identify some of the major actions required to strengthen the livelihoods of poor through MGNREGA. The current parameters of monitoring and evaluation of this programme by the number of jobs created and number of assets created cannot give a holistic picture of sustainability of outcomes. From the point of view of gauging the development effectiveness, the Act needs to be evaluated and monitored on the basis of its impact on livelihood security (CSE, 2008). MGNREGA has to assume the character of a sustainable rural development scheme, out of the shadow of the previous wage employment programmes.

The program's demand-driven approach empowered rural households to seek work based on their needs, providing a stable source of income for agricultural laborers during lean seasons. By focusing on projects related to water conservation, agricultural activities, rural infrastructure, and afforestation, MGNREGA not only created immediate job opportunities but also contributed to long-term rural development. Moreover, MGNREGA's implementation emphasized inclusivity and targeted the welfare of vulnerable and marginalized communities. The Act ensured that women had equal access to employment and wages, leading to enhanced gender equity and empowerment. It also reached out to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and other backward classes, contributing to their socio-economic upliftment. The scheme's impact on reducing distress migration was particularly noteworthy.

By providing employment opportunities locally, MGNREGA curbed the need for rural inhabitants to migrate to urban areas in search of work, thereby fostering community sustainability and regional development. Despite these significant achievements, the research also highlighted some challenges and implementation issues that affected MGNREGA's efficiency. Delays in wage payments, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and instances of corruption posed obstacles to the seamless functioning of the program. Additionally, geographical disparities and variations in project selection and execution required targeted interventions to optimize MGNREGA's outcomes. The Act's impact on employment generation, livelihood security, and overall rural development were commendable. As the program continued to evolve, researchers, policymakers, and practitioners acknowledged the need for ongoing assessment and continuous improvement to address implementation challenges and further maximize MGNREGA's potential to uplift rural communities.

Overall, the findings of this research paper contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the impact of MGNREGA before 2018, offering insights into its successes, limitations, and the scope for enhancing its efficacy in future policy iterations. The employment generation provided by MGNREGA remains a cornerstone of India's commitment to achieving inclusive and sustainable development in its rural heartland.

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