



## A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF WAGE SYSTEM ON MGNREGA IN RURAL INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO MANIPUR, INDIA

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper critically analyse the wage system of MGNREGA in rural India with special reference to Manipur, India. As per latest census, Rural Population in India is 68.84% while the Urban Population in India is 31.16%. The role of rural areas in the development and growth of a country like India needs no proof, as it is evident from the orientation of government policies and programs that rural areas are acting as drive engines for the growth and development of a country. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted into law to promote livelihood security in India in 2005, with an aims to provide 100 days of guaranteed paid employment, in the form of unskilled manual works, to any households providing interest adult volunteers in every financial year, which is the largest employment program of the world. In this proposed study, both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data are collected through survey and interview by using stratified random sampling methods. Study areas are selected from both the topographic regions (2 valley districts and 3 hilly Districts). A total number of 100 samples are collected through questionnaire in which 20 samples each are from each selected districts. Above all, Secondary data that are available on government official websites, report, documents etc. are also used for study.

**KEYWORDS :** MGNREGA; Wage System; Rural India; and Manipur.

### INTRODUCTION

As per latest census, Rural Population in India is 68.84% while the Urban Population in India is 31.16%. The role of rural areas in the development of a country like India needs no proof, as it is evident from the orientation of government policies that rural areas are acting as drive engines for the growth of the country. Rural India has seen numerous ups and downs since its independence. Rural development has been a crucial issue for states with a large number of the rural population as various programs were launched for the development of poor and marginal people living in rural areas. The government in the recent past has framed numerous schemes and programs for the development of rural areas of the country to tap the resources for the betterment of rural masses. Among them, The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was one of the Flagship Programs. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) The act aims to provide 100 days of guaranteed paid employment, in the form of unskilled manual works, to any households providing interest adult volunteers in every financial year which is the largest employment program of the world. This ambitious program has several objectives in addition to providing economic security, such as creating durable assets (e.g. roads, canal, etc.), strengthening natural resource management, empowering rural women, promoting decentralization, making government process more transparent and reinforcing the grass-roots procedures for democracy (Ministry of Rural Development, 2024).

### REVIEW OF LITERATURES

The main purpose of the review of literatures about the evaluation of performances of MGNREGA in Rural Development is to give a proper orientation and perspective to the present work. A survey of literature plays a significant role in establishing the backdrop for any research work. It is felt that the justification of the 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 to establish the relevance of the present study.

*"Does Local Governance Ensure the Effectiveness of MGNREGA in the Tribal Area of Jharkhand, India?"* by

### Yadav and Gupta (2023):

In order to assess how local government is responsible for the efficient implementation of MANREGA in tribal dominated area, a study has been carried out in the tribal areas of Jharkhand, India. For this study, extensive field work was done in Gumla Jharkhand and it was found that Gram Panchayats have different ways of implementing the MANREGA program in the region. Varied differences were found when comparisons were made in terms of transparency, guidelines, meetings, development projects under MANREGA etc. In Basia region, MANREGA were the most successful because of local people being aware, active support of the state, education, population convergence schemes and the leadership of the GhramPanchayat while in Kamdara region much success of the program was not witnessed.

*"Soil and Water Conservation Works through National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) In Andhra Pradesh- An Analysis of Livelihood Impact"* by Kareemulla et. al., (2009):

The impact of the implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) has been studied on rural livelihood and nature of works related to soil and water conservation in the three leading states of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh. Their studies showed that in the state of Andhra Pradesh, soil and water conservation (SWC) works were the prioritized works which accounted for 80 percent of the total. Also the share of labor wages under the scheme to be 80 percent with only 20 percent for material which according to the scheme should be 40 percent. The scheme, in reality, appeared to have resulted in a decline from 27 percent to only 7 percent in migration levels.

As per the linear regression function the number of family members participating in the NREGA they held has been significantly influenced by income from other sources, family size, and landholdings. The NREGA earnings were observed to be mainly spent on food, education, and health security. Although the programme has the provision of 100 days of wage employment but as per their statement, the actual number of days of employment on an average was only 25 days per households. This gap they suggested should be bridged at least in the distressed districts.

**“Employment Guarantee: Progress So Far”, Economic and Political weekly,” by Mature (2007):**

Mature (2007) studied about the status of migration under the MGNREGA, this study carried out in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan. It is revealed that migration has reduced in several villages and minimum wages were raised in many states, the participation of women increased significantly even in the districts of Rajasthan and A.P through the scheme. The scheme is very helpful to reduce migration and increase wage rate in various state in India. As per above statement conclude that this scheme basically formulated to decrease migration in rural masses particularly the majority has been becoming migration of schedule cast, people and this schemes is very helpful to schedule tribes in Indian.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In this proposed study, both primary and secondary data are used. Primary data are collected through survey and interview by using stratified random sampling methods. Study areas were selected from both the topographic regions: (2 valley districts and 3 hilly Districts). Imphal East, Imphal West (the two valley Districts), while Senapati, Chandel, and Ukhrul (3 hilly Districts) are selected for study. A total number of 100 samples are collected through questionnaire in which 20 samples are from each districts. With the permission of the supervising officer and the consent of the workers, face-to-face interviews were conducted. Each one lasted for 12-15 minutes. All the information collected was noted down appropriately and filled in the self-prepared questionnaire. The gathered information was subjected to statistical analysis including running it on SPSS 2.0. The findings and outcomes have been thoroughly explained in writing along with appropriate figures, bar graphs, pi-charts etc.

Above all, Secondary data that are available on government official websites, report, documents etc. are also used for study.

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Following three research objectives are chosen for conducting this study-

- to evaluate level of satisfaction of women workers (including trans-genders)
- to discover major causes of delay in completion of MNREGA programs
- To assess the impact of MGNREGA on uplifting livelihood

**A Critical Analysis Of Wage System On Mgnrega In Manipur**

Manipur is a strategically located state in the north-eastern region of India, surrounded by Nagaland in the north, Assam to the west, Mizoram to the south and sharing a long international border with Myanmar to the east and south. The geographical areas of the state can broadly be divided into two regions, hills and valley. The hilly regions which constitute around 90 percent of the total land area account for 40 percent of the total population while the remaining 60 percent of the population in the states resides in the valley area, with only 10 percent of the land area (Registrar General & Census Commission, 2024).

The employment scheme like MGNREGA holds special importance for hilly states like Manipur which has faced great challenges in the development process because of its tough hilly topography and geographical constraints. The development of Manipur remains a matter of concern to the policymakers as the people of the area face challenges like unemployment, poverty, and migration. The introduction of wage programs like MGNREGA in the area has helped to provide a thrust to the development process and can, therefore, be termed as a boon for the rural people due to its

demand-oriented approach which makes the authorities responsible and as well as accountable for employing individuals.

**FINDINGS**

Five areas were chosen which are- Imphal East, Imphal West (the two valley regions), Senapati, Chandel, and Ukhrul (3 hilly regions). 20 respondents from each area were selected.

Gender of respondents

Male: 50 Female: 40 Transgender: 10

Education- illiterate: 50%, 8<sup>th</sup>: 23%; 10<sup>th</sup>: 16%; 12<sup>th</sup>: 11%

**Question:** As a women (also includes the transgender) entitled to get employment do you think the scheme is proving its worth to you, if no then mention the reasons?

Do not get exactly equal wage as men do	34%
Do not get job when they demand for it	19%
Do not receive wage on assigned time	18%
Do not get the facility of child-care taker/ drinking water/ shade etc.	17%
As transgenders do have to face biasness and men are chosen over them to do the assigned job	12%

In above question, the trans-genders and women are included in the same category because all of the trans-genders that participated in the study were male who had become female and they wanted themselves to be identified as females. So, this is a women centered question and it throws light on how women think that the MANREGA scheme in Manipur is proving its worth to them or not. Many responses from women including trans-genders were recorded and after statistical analysis it was found that most of the women were not entirely satisfied and happy with the MANREGA working and operational plans in Manipur.

37% of the women population replied that they have to face biasness and they do not get equal wage as man do which is a mandatory condition in MANREGA scheme. 21% of the women replied that the demand on job aspect is not full filled because whenever they need a job and they demand for it they do not get it easily. 20% of the women laborers complained of not receiving the wages on time; sometimes it's took more than a few months to get the job salary and that too was not given completely and the certain portion was deducted which was absolutely unethical and illegal. 19% of the women reported that the promised facilities of drinking water and shade are not available at many work sites and those women who had small children to be taken care of were not provided with the child care which is the serious issue and the Ghram Panchayat was not considering the matter and was not making any efforts to either make the arrangements or solve the problem of child care at work site.



**Fig.** No caretaker- Children of female MANREGA workers all playing by themselves.

13% of the women who were trans-genders reported that their

female appearance and attire was a problem and they have to face a competition and biasness with the men in the labor force and if for any certain job transgender and men both are available then men are chosen and trans-genders are left behind.

**Question:** Reasons for projects not being completed in time?

Delay in wages	40%
Gram Panchayat not informing about job availability	18%
Political instability of the State	25%
Absence of raw material	10%
Red Tapeism and favoritism while jobs are assigned	7%

Many of the projects in Manipur have not been completed in time and when the laborers were asked that what is the lag and what are the reasons for this delay in completion of project many types of replies were obtained. And after category-wise statistical analysis it was found that 40% of the all laborers reported that delay in wages was the prime reason; they lose their enthusiasm and respect for the work they are doing which causes delay in completion of certain works. In 18% of the cases Ghrampanchayat was found to be lethargic and shaggy who was not informing the laborers about the availability of job and when any job is not undertaken in time then how is it possible that it can get completed in time.

## CONCLUSION

It was observed that in the state of Manipur above-mentioned objectives do not get fulfill and do not render satisfactory outcomes. Most of the women labourers despite of getting work were found to be highly unsatisfied and discontent with the type of working conditions and were constantly complaining about the partial behaviour at the time of allocation of job and irregularity of the wages. The trans ganders also face the same challenges as women labourers do.

It was also observed that most of the projects in Manipur were not completed in time and it was mostly on the negligence part of the state government who was unable to provide sufficient funds. The Gram Panchayat is also responsible to a significant extent for delayed projects because it was unable to identify the work area and problematic situations. Hence was not able to eradicate the hindrances, which caused undue delay in completion of several projects.

However, Wage System on MGNREGA gave to some significant extent of productive impact on the lifestyle and living standard of the beneficiaries in Rural Areas in Manipur, India. As they get wage/source of income, they enable to send their children to School for schooling. It also help them to access the basic health care facilities. Their wages are mainly spent on food, education, and health security. In addition, it also reduce the migration level from one village to another village for the search of manual labor.

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