# Role of MGNREGA in Rural Development of Himachal Pradesh.

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## **ABSTRACT**

MGNREGA essentially guarantee employment for the unemployed in rural area for 100 days in a year, through work such as building roads, improving water supply and works that are necessary to improve the village infrastructure. The uniqueness of this act is in the fact that it carries emphasis on issues like equality of wages for men and women, elimination of work contracting/middlemen, payment of wages only through bank and post office accounts to prevent corruption, creating transparency in workers muster roll etc. Any individual, irrespective of his socio-economic status can ask for employment (either in writing or verbally) from the Gram Panchayat. The act guarantees that if work is not provided with in a 15 days time frame (including the eligibility verification and issuing of the job cards) then the applicant is eligible for unemployment allowance. Work to be done is decided by the Gram Panchayat. Emphasis is given to unskilled manual labor focusing on building roads and other public village infrastructural facilities. Water conservation, afforestation, land development & drought proofing. All adults in a household are eligible to work. If the work site is not with in 5 kilometers from the applicant's residence then the applicant is eligible for an additional 10% of the wage. The law can be a big boast for nomadic tribal communities since locally domiciled but migrant population is also eligible for employment.

Keeping all this in view, an attempt has been made in the present research paper to analyze the role of MGNREGA in rural development with main focus on registration and employment eligibility, planning and implementation under MGNREGA, payment of wages and unemployment allowance & worksite facilities in Himachal Pradesh. Further, an attempt has also been made to analyze the role of Gram Panchayat in the planning and implementation of MGNREGA scheme, transparency and accountability in MGNREGA works and kinds of permanent asset (s) to create under MGNREGA in Himachal Pradesh.

**Key Words:-** Water conservation, Water harvesting, Drought proofing, Flood control, Protection works, and land development.

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#### Introduction

MGNREGA essentially guarantee employment for the unemployed in rural area for 100 days in a year, through work such as building roads, improving water supply and works that are necessary to improve the village infrastructure. The uniqueness of this act is in the fact that it carries emphasis on issues like equality of wages for men and women, elimination of work contracting/middlemen, payment of wages only through bank and post office accounts to prevent corruption, creating transparency in workers muster roll etc. Any individual, irrespective of his socio-economic status can ask for employment (either in writing or verbally) from the Gram Panchayat. The act guarantees that if work is not provided with in a 15 days time frame (including the eligibility verification and issuing of the job cards) then the applicant is eligible for unemployment allowance. Work to be done is decided by the Gram Panchayat. Emphasis is given to unskilled manual labor focusing on building roads and other public village infrastructural facilities. Water conservation, afforestation, land development & drought proofing. All adults in a household are eligible to work. If the work site is not with in 5 kilometers from the applicant's residence then the applicant is eligible for an additional 10% of the wage. The law can be a big boast for nomadic tribal communities since locally domiciled but migrant population is also eligible for employment (Hazra, 2009).

Keeping all this in view, an attempt has been made in the present research paper to analyze the role of MGNREGA in rural development with main focus on registration and employment eligibility, planning and implementation under MGNREGA, payment of wages and unemployment allowance & worksite facilities in Himachal Pradesh. Further, an attempt has also been made to analyze the role of Gram Panchayat in the planning and implementation of MGNREGA scheme, transparency and accountability in MGNREGA works and kinds of permanent asset (s) to create under MGNREGA in Himachal Pradesh.

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## Knowledge about the process of getting job cards:

Getting job card is one of the main tasks in MGNREGA because employment is to be provided on the basis of it. In order to know the views of the respondents, regarding the knowledge about the process of getting job cards, the respondents were asked whether they have knowledge about the process of getting the job card. It is found that majority of the respondents 487(96.44%) told that they have knowledge about the process of getting job card whereas 18 respondents (3.56%) have not said anything think in this regard due to their lack of knowledge about the process of getting job card.

### Views Regarding whether applied for registration to Gram Panchayat:

Further, the respondents were asked whether they applied for registration to Gram Panchayat in written? It has been found that cent-percent of the respondents applied for registration in written. Thus, it can be said that written application in necessary for getting job card.

# Views of the respondents regarding the source of getting information about MGNREGA:

The question was asked from the respondents from where they got information about MGNREGA Scheme? Table 1.1 shows the responses of the respondents in this aspect.

Table 1.1
Views of the respondents regarding the source of getting information about MGNREGA

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Panchayat	415	82.18
2.	Media	53	10.50
3.	Government Functionaries	37	7.32
4.	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.1 reveals that majority of the respondents (82.18%) got MGNREGA information through panchayat whereas 10.50 percent respondents got information through government functionaries and remaining 7.32 percent respondents got MGNREGA information through media. Hence, it can be said that majority of the respondents got MGNREGA information through panchayat.

# Any expenses on job card preparation:

All adult members of the household who are willing to work under MGNREGA can get the job card free of cost including photograph because it is included in MGNREGA Scheme. So, in order to know whether they have paid anything for the preparation of job card they were asked whether they incurred any expenses on job card preparation. Table 1.2 shows the response of the respondents regarding this.

Table 1.2

Views regarding the respondents regarding expenses on job card preparation

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	478	94.65
2.	No	27	5.35
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.2 shows that majority of the respondents 478 (94.65%) have reported expenses on job card preparation, whereas 27 respondents (5.35%) have reported no expenses on job card preparation. Further, the respondents were asked if 'yes' then to whom and how much they paid and for what?

It has been found that the majority of the respondents 478 (94.65%) have said that they paid twenty rupees to Gram Panchayat official's staff for photograph cost. Therefore, it shows that in spite of the fact that to get job card is free of cost under the scheme, people are spending money to get the job card. This shows that there is a lack of awareness among people regarding job card preparation.

## Whether Panchayat issued dated receipt of written application (for work):

As per MGNREGA guidelines, panchayats are supposed to issue dated receipt to the applicants on receiving the written or verbal application for employment. In order to know this, a question was asked from the respondents whether panchayat issued dated receipts of written application (for work). Table 1.3 shows the responses of the respondents regarding this.

Table 1.3
Views of the respondents regarding whether panchayat issued dated receipt of written application (for work)

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	38	7.52
2.	No	467	92.48
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.3 reveals that majority of the respondents (92.48%) have reported that panchayat did not issue dated receipt of written application (for work) because neither they nor panchayat bother about it, whereas 38 respondents (7.52%) are of the view that panchayat issued dated receipt of written application (for work). Thus, it has been found that majority of the respondents said that panchayat did not issue dated receipt after written application (for work) because they don't consider it important.

# Under which worker category you work

Under the MGNREGA, workers got maximum work under unskilled category. In order to know this, the respondents were asked under which worker category they work. Table 1.4 shows the views of the respondents on this aspect.

Table 1.4
Views of the respondents regarding under which worker category they work

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Unskilled	468	92.67
2.	Semi skilled	24	4.75
3.	Skilled	13	2.58
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.4 shows that majority (92.67%) of the respondents were working under unskilled worker category, whereas 24 respondents (4.75%) have said that they were working under semiskilled category and remaining 13 respondents (2.58%) were working under skilled worker category. This shows that majority of the respondents work under unskilled category of the workers.

# **Gram Sabha Meetings:**

Under the MGNREGA scheme Gram Sabha meetings are held once in a three months to discuss MGNREGA activities. The respondents were asked when the meetings of Gram Sabha are held? Table 1.5 shows the responses of the respondents regarding this.

Table 1.5
Views of the respondents regarding Gram Sabha meetings

No. of Respondents	Percentage
59	11.68
437	86.54
6	1.18
3	0.60
505	100.00
	59 437 6 3

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Table 1.5 reveals that majority of the respondents (86.54%) have said that Gram Sabha meetings are held once in a three months, 59 respondents (11.68%) have said that Gram Sabha meetings are held once in a month, 6 respondents (1.18%) have reported that Gram Sabha meetings held once in six months, whereas 3respondent (0.60%) has said that Gram Sabha meetings are held once in a year.

# Delay of more than one month in issuing of job card:

Under the MGNREGA Scheme the job card should be issued with in 15 days of application. In order to analyze this, the respondents were asked whether there was delay of more than one month in issuing of the job card to them? Table 1.6 shows the view of the respondents regarding this.

 ${\bf Table~1.6}$  Views of the respondents regarding delay of more than one month in issuing of job card

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	68	13.46
2.	No	437	86.54
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.6 indicates that majority of the respondents (86.54%) said that there is no delay in issuing of job card to them because job card is issued after 15 days of application, whereas 68 respondents (13.46%) have said that there is a delay of more than one month in issuing of the job card. It shows that majority of the respondents have said that there is no delay in issuing of job cards to them after applying for the job card.

## Delay of more than 15 days in allotment of work:

Under the MGNREGA, Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work. If it not, then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid as liability of payment of unemployment allowance. Further, the respondents were asked whether there was delay of more than 15 days in allotment of work. The 1.7 shows the responses of the respondents in this regard.

Table 1.7
Delay of more than 15 days in allotment of work

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	472	93.47
2.	No	33	6.53
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.7 shows that majority of the respondents (93.47%) replied that there was delay of more than 15 days in allotment of work, whereas 33 respondents (6.53%) are of the opinion that there was no delay of more than 15 days in allotment of work. Thus, it can be said that there is delay of more than 15 days in allotment of work in this panchayat.

Further, the respondents were asked have they ever been paid less than the amount entered on job card and muster roll. It has been found that cent-percent of the respondent, are of the view that they did not get less amount entered on job card and muster roll. Another question was asked from the respondents that whether MGNREGA scheme is providing at least 100 days of guarantee wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members in rural area volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It has been found that cent percent of the respondent have said MGNREGA scheme is providing at least 100 days of guarantee wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult member in rural area volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

# Whether satisfied with 100 days work under MGNREGA:

Further, the respondents were asked whether they are satisfied with 100 days work or they want more days work. It is found that cent percent of the respondents are not satisfied with 100 days work under MGNREGA and they want more days work because now they can easily full fill their basic needs with the help of this employment scheme. Therefore, they need more days work.

Another question was asked from the respondents whether they agree that MGNREGA is the first best employment scheme for rural development. It is found that cent percent of the respondents were of the opinion that MGNREGA is the first best employment scheme for rural development to provide employment guarantee for 100 days to every households whose adult member in rural area can do unskilled manual work.

Further, the respondents were asked should MGNREGA scheme be continued. It is also found that the cent percent of the respondents are of the opinion that MGNREGA scheme should be continued as this scheme has uplifted them financially as well as socially.

#### Total days worked under MGNREGA:

One of main objective of MGNREGA is to provide 100 days wage employment to the members of every household who have got the job card. Keeping in view, the respondents were asked for how many days they have worked under the MGNREGA in the year 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14. Table 1.8 shows the responses of the respondents in this regard.

Table 1.8 reveals that majority of the respondents (63.17%) have worked between 76-100 days in the year 2011-2012, 96 respondents (19.00%) have worked between 51-75 days in the same year, 52 respondents (10.30%) have worked between 26-50 days in this year, whereas 38 respondents (7.53%) have worked in the MGNREGA upto 25 days in the year 2011-2012.

Table 1.8 Views of the respondents regarding they worked under MGNREGA in the year 2011-12, 2012-13 and 2013-14

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
<u> </u>	2011 12 (N. 16D. 1)	_	
A	2011-12 (No. of Days)		
1.	0-25	38	7.53
2.	26-50	52	10.30
3.	51-75	96	19.00
4.	76-100	319	63.17
	Total	505	100.00
В	2012-13 (No. of Day)		
1.	0-25	27	5.35
2.	26-50	41	8.12
3.	51-75	85	16.83
4.	76-100	352	69.70
	Total	505	100.00
C	2013-14 (No. of Days)		
1.	0-25	31	6.14
2.	26-50	63	12.48
3.	51-75	104	20.59
4.	76-100	307	60.79
	Total	505	100.00

In the year 2012-2013, the majority of the respondents (69.70%) have worked between 76-100 days, 85 respondents (16.83%) have worked between 51-75 days, 41 respondents (8.12%) have worked between 26-50 days. whereas only 27 respondents (5.35%) have worked upto 25 days in the same year. In the year 2013-2014, the majority of the respondents (60.79%) have worked between 76-100 days, 104 respondents (20.59%) have worked between 51-75 days, 63 respondents (12.48%) have worked between 26-50 days. and remaining only

31 respondents (6.14%) have worked up to 25 days. Therefore, it is found that in the three financially years 2011 to 2013 the majority of the respondents have worked for up to 100 days.

# Whether got unemployment allowance:

If a worker who has applied for work under MGNREGA is not provided employment within 15days from the day on which work is requested, an unemployment allowance shall be payable to him by the State Government at the rate prescribed in the Act. In this regard the respondents were asked whether they got unemployment allowance, If demanded the work and it was not provided within 15 days. In this regard the cent-percent respondents are of the view that they did not get unemployment allowance, if demanded the work and it was not provided within 15 days. Therefore, it can be said that people are not getting unemployment allowances because of least knowledge of this act.

# Views of the respondents regarding disbursement of wages:

Under the MGNREGA scheme, wages are to be paid according to piece rate or daily rate. Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a for night in any case. Further, the respondents were asked after how many days, wages have been disbursed. Table 1.9 shows the responses of respondents regarding this.

Table 1.9
Views of the respondents regarding time period taken for wage disbursement

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Within a week	19	3.76
2.	With in fortnight	37	7.33
3.	With in one month	347	68.71
4.	With in two months	45	8.91
5.	With in three months	57	11.29
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.9 shows that the majority of the respondents (68.71%) are of the views that they got their wages within one month, 57 respondents (11.29%) have pointed out that they got their wages with in three months, 45 respondents (8.91%) total that they got their wages after two months, 7.33 percent respondents have reported that they got their wages fortnight, whereas only 19 respondent (3.76%) said that they got their wages with in one week. This shows that as per the norms of this scheme people are entitled to have their wages on weekly basis or within fortnight but due to administrative reasons or lack of awareness among the people, they are not paid their wages timely.

# **Mode of Payment:**

Under the MGNREGA operational guidelines all payment of wages must be through banks and post office. In this regard, the respondents were asked how the wages are disabused to them. It has been found that cent percent respondents told that they were getting their wages through bank. No one was getting wages through post office or through any other mode.

## Worksite facilities available:

Under the MGNREGA guidelines crèche, drinking water, first aid and shade are to provided on the worksite. In this regard, the respondents were asked about the worksite facilities. The views of the respondents are shown in the table 1.10. Table 1.10 reveals that majority of the 418 respondents (82.77%) have reported that crèche facility is not available near the worksite whereas 87 respondents (17.23%) told crèche facility is available near the worksite. Further, regarding drinking water facility the majority of the 431 respondents (85.35%) said that drinking water facility is available at the worksite, 14.65% respondents said that drinking water facility is not available at the worksite.

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Table 1.11 Views of the respondents regarding worksite facilities

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
A	Crèche		
1.	Yes	87	17.23
2.	No	418	82.77
	Total	505	100.00
В	Drinking Water		
1.	Yes	74	14.65
2.	No	431	85.35
	Total	505	100.00
С	Shade		
1.	Yes	39	7.72
2.	No	466	92.28
	Total	505	100.00
D	Group Insurance		
1.	Yes	37	7.32
2.	No	468	92.67
	Total	505	100.00
E	First Aid Box		
1.	Yes	59	11.68
2.	No	446	88.32
	Total	505	100.00

Further, the majority of the respondents 92.28 percent reported that shades facility is not available at the worksite whereas 39 respondents (7.72%) are of view that shade facility is available there with regard to group insurance the vast majority of the respondents (92.67%) told that group insurance facility is not available and 37 respondents (7.32%) said that group insurance facility is available. Further, the majority of the 446 respondents (88.32%) have reported that first aid box facility is not available at the worksite, whereas 59 respondents (11.68%) told that first aid box facility is available there.

## Awareness about the accidental benefits under MGNREGA:

Under the MGNREGA operational guidelines in case of accident at the worksite, all medical reimbursement to the workers is provided by the MGNREGA funding. In this regard, the respondents were asked whether, they have awareness about accidental benefits under MGNREGA. The responses of the respondents are shown in the table 1.11.

Table 1.11
Views of the respondents regarding their knowledge about the accidental benefits under MGNREGA

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	41	8.12
2.	No	464	91.88

Total	505	100.00

Table 1.11 shows that majority of the respondents (91.88%) have reported that they do not have any knowledge and awareness about the accidental benefits whereas 8.12 percent respondents know about the accidental benefits under MGNREGA. Thus, it can be said that there is lack of knowledge about the accidental benefits among the respondents in the study area.

### Views regarding leave in a week:

Under the MGNREGA guidelines, this is the responsibility of the Panchayat to provide a leave in a week for rest to the worker in full wages. Further, the respondents were asked whether the got leave in a week. Table 1.12 shows the views of the respondents regarding this question.

Views of the respondents regarding leave in a week

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	44	8.71
2.	No	461	91.29
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.12 indicates that a vast majority of the respondents (91.29%) have reported that they have not availed any leave facility in a week whereas 44 respondents (8.71%) told that they have availed such facility. Thus, it can be said that a vast majority of the respondents have not availed leave facility in a week.

## Whether involved in the work selection:

Under MGNREGA, it is necessary for PRIs to involve rural people in the work selection because the rural peoples and MGNREGA workers are the members of the Gram Sabha. In this regard, the respondents were asked whether they are involved in the work selection under MGNREGA or not? Table 1.13 shows the response of the respondents regarding this.

Table 1.13
Views of the respondents regarding their involvement in the work selection

S. No.	Response	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Yes	123	24.36
2.	No	382	75. 64
	Total	505	100.00

Table 1.13 reveals that a vast majority of the respondents (75.64%) told that they are not involved in the work selection, whereas 123 respondents (24.36%) reported that they are involved in the work selection. Thus, it shows that a vast majority of the respondents are not involved in the work selection under the MGNREGA.

# Participation in Gram Sabha meeting where MGNREGA agenda has been discussed:

Further, the respondents were asked whether they have ever attended a Gram Sabha meeting in which agenda on MGNREGA has been discussed? It has been found that cent percent of the respondents are of the view that they have attended Gram Sabha meeting in which MGNREGA agenda has been discussed.

Further, another question was asked from the respondents whether Gram Sabha of the panchayat is held on MGNREGA activities? It is found that cent percent of the respondents are of the opinion that MGNREGA activities are discussed and finished during Gram Sabha meeting.

# Satisfaction with the work measurement:

Under the MGNREGA scheme, work measurement will be recoded in the measurement book maintained by qualified technical personnel incharge of worksite. Measurement should be done on daily basis and in a transparent manner. The respondents were asked whether they are satisfied with the work measurement or not? It has been found that cent percent respondents are satisfied with the work measurement and work measurement is generally recorded by the technical qualified personnel especially Junior Engineer on the worksite and verification is done a week before payment of wages.

## Role of Panchayat in planning and implementation of MGNREGA works:

Further, the respondents were asked about the role of panchayat in planning and implementation of MGNREGA works. It is found the majority of the respondents (86.51%) have said that the panchayats play an important role in planning and implementation of MGNREGA work as per priorities of necessary works in their area. The panchayats prepare the development plan with the consent of the Gram Sabha and accordingly implement the MGNREGA works as per the MGNREGA guidelines whereas 13.49% respondents are of the view that role of panchayat in planning and implementation is not very important.

### View of the respondents regarding MGNREGA works:

The intention of the MGNREGA is to provide a basic employment guarantee in rural areas. The act indicates the kinds of works that may be taken up for this purpose. As per schedule 1 of the Act, the focus of the MGNREGA in the permissible works like water conservation and water harvesting, drought proofing (including plantation and afforestation), irrigation canal including micro and minor irrigation works, flood control and protection works, minor irrigation, horticulture and land development on the land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY and land reform beneficiaries, renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks, land development and rural connectivity. In this regard, the question was asked from the respondents about the different works carried out under MGNREGA scheme. It has been found that cent-percent of respondents are of the view that works like water conservation, drought proofing, land development, flood protection, minor irrigation work, rural connectivity, check dam, construction of kucha and pucca path, drinking water tanks, boundary walls, retaining walls, playground, renovation of drinking water bodies, safety walls, and development of temple courtyards etc. are carried out under MGNREGA scheme in their area.

### Priority of the work proposed:

Under the MGNREGA operational guidelines, Gram Sabha decides the priority of the work proposed. A question in this regard was asked from the respondents that who decides the priority of the work proposed. It has been found that cent percent respondents are of the views that Gram Sabha decides the priority of the work proposed to be carried out under MGNREGA.

### Source of information about the MGNREGA work:

Further the respondents were asked how households are informed about the work under MGNREGA. It has been found that cent percent of the respondent pointed out that the registered households under MGNREGA are informed about the works under MGNREGA through personal contacts, through PRIs officials and representatives and also by displaying a notice on the public places etc.

The finding of the present research paper, shows that majority of the respondents know the process of getting job cards. The majority of the respondents got MGNREGA information through panchayat. Further, it has been found that majority of the respondents reported expenses on job card preparation. Majority of the respondents have reported that panchayat did not issue dated receipt of written application (for work). The majority of the respondents are working under unskilled worker category. The most of the respondents are of the view that Gram Sabha meetings are held once in a three months.

Further, the majority of the respondents have said that there is no delay in issuing of job cards to them. Further, the cent-percent of the respondents have said that they did not get less amount entered on job card and muster roll. It has been found that cent-percent of the respondents have told MGNREGA scheme is providing at least 100 days of guarantee wage employment in a financial year of every household whose adult member in rural area volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Further, it is found that cent percent of the respondents are not satisfied with 100 days work under MGNREGA and they want more days work to fulfill their basic needs. It is also found that cent percent of the respondents are of the opinion that MGNREGA scheme is the first best scheme for development employment scheme and it should be continued. It is found that the majority of the respondents have worked for up to 100 days in the year 2008-2009.

In regard of unemployment allowance the cent-percent respondents are of the view that they did not get unemployment allowance, if demanded, work was not provided to them within 15 days. The majority of the respondents are of the views that they got their wages with in one month. The majority of the respondents do not know about the accidental benefits. A vast majority of the respondents have reported that they have not availed any leave facility in a week. Further, the cent percent respondents are satisfied with the work measurement. The majority of the respondents have said that the panchayats play an important role in planning and implementation of MGNREGA work as per priorities of necessary works in their area.

Further, it has been found that cent-percent of the respondents are of the view that water conservation, drought proofing, land development, flood protection, minor irrigation work, rural connectivity, check dam, construction of kucha and pucca path, drinking water tanks, boundary walls, retaining walls, playground, renovation of

drinking water bodies, safety wall and development of temple countryard etc. work are carried out under MGNREGA scheme in their area.

Further, it has been found that cent-percent respondents are of the view that Gram Sabha decides the priority of the work proposed to be carried out under MGNREGA and registered households under MGNREGA are informed about the works under MGNREGA through personnel contacts, through PRIs officials and representatives and also by displaying a notice on the public places, etc.

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