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RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEES ACT  
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# An Impact of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantees Act (MGNREGA) In Kashmir

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**Abstract – Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act was passed with a view to provide hundred days of guaranteed wage employment to the venerable sections of the society in order to raise the living standard of these sections of society. Realization of the venerability of these sections particularly in rural areas as 72% of population living in rural areas the Government of India passed an Act known as Mahatma Gandhi Rural employment Act in 2005 notified by Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India on 7th September 2005. Based on the fact that MGNREGA can do wonders in order to raise the living standard of rural India a study was carried out. The aim of the paper is to assess the impact of MGNREGA in Kashmir state, drawbacks which the act faces in rural areas in Jammu and Kashmir. The study is based on primary data. Finally the paper provides some suggestions whom if implied will definitely help in the mission for which the act was passed.**

**Keywords :** Employment, Government. MGNREGA

## INTRODUCTION

Former Prime Minister, Rajive Gandhi had once said that out of every 100 paisa allocated for public welfare only 14 paisa reaches the targeted people. Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of the specific group of people, the rural poor. It involves the extension of benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in rural areas, such as small farmers and landlords. In India, despite economic growth, poverty and unemployment continue to be the major economic problems with 75 per cent of the rural population living below poverty line and 74 per cent unemployed population hailing from rural India (Sanyal, 2011). India after the inception of independence realized the urgent importance of developing the villages and the vast majority of toiling millions who inhabit them. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), presently known as **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)** is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. It was launched on February 2, 2006 from Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh and initially covered 200 "poorest" districts of the country. The Act was implemented in phased manner – 130 districts were added in 2007–08. With its spread over 625 districts across the country, the programme has the

potential to increase the purchasing power of rural poor, reduce distress migration and to create useful assets in rural India. Around one-third of the stipulated work force is women. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of 120 (US\$2.27) per day in 2009 prices. It also fosters social and gender equality as 23% workers under the scheme are Scheduled Castes, 17% Scheduled Tribes and 50% women. In 2010–11, 41 million households were employed on NREGA worksites. The MGNREGA achieves twin objectives of rural development and employment. The MGNREGA stipulates that works must be targeted towards a set of specific rural development activities such as: water conservation and harvesting, afforestation, rural connectivity, flood control and protection such as construction and repair of embankments, etc. Digging of new tanks/ponds, percolation tanks and construction of small check dams are also given importance. The employers are given work such as land leveling, tree plantation, etc. MGNREGA has moved on to innovative initiatives like financial inclusion, social security provisioning for unorganized workers and identification of the poor. The law was initially called the **National Rural**

**Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)** but was renamed on 2nd October 2009.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE:

After independence various studies have been done on various rural development programmes in India. **Basu et al (2005)** states that MGNREGA can be thought of as a policy to boost rural income, stabilize agricultural production and reduce the population pressure on urban areas, **Hirway, Saluja and Yadav(2005)** conducted a study on the impact of NREGA in a village in sabarkantha district of Gujarat in which they examined the multiplier effect of MNREGS on household production, income and employment and the village economy, **Amir ullah Khan, MR Saluja(2006)** studied the impact of NREGA on rural livelihoods. According to them NREGA has enhanced people's livelihood on a sustained basis, by developing the economic and social infrastructure in rural areas, **Dre"ze and Lal (2007)** writing about NREGS in Rajasthan have come to the conclusion that Rajasthan comes first in terms of employment generation per rural household under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA). In 2006-07, the average rural household in Rajasthan"s six "NREGA Districts" worked for as many as 77 days under this programme, earning nearly Rs.4,000 in the process. This is an unprecedented achievement in the history of social security in India, **Lakshman (2007)** said that MGNREGA is the first legislation that compels the state to provide a social safety net for the poorest people of this country and seeks to address the urgent issues of hunger and rural distress that afflict large parts of India, **Mathur, Lalit(2007)** stated that NREGA has impacted the Poor, large numbers of unlettered households have made effort to come forward to register, **Roy(2007)** states that MGNREGA is the need of the hour to address the economic constraints of such a huge population in a sustainable manner, **Aakella and kidambi,(2007)**, said it is better to throw the money into a drain than to put it in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, **Economic Times (2007)** has reported about the adverse impact of the NREGS as the farm activities in states of Andhra Pradesh and Kerala and that this scheme should be implemented only in least agricultural sector, **Shah,(2008)** states that MGNREGA comes out as a potentially positive force to change the power structures working in the rural areas of India in favour of the poor.

## MGNREGA IN KASHMIR STATE:

Jammu and Kashmir is the northern most hilly state of India situated between 32.15 degree & 37.05 degree North latitude & 72.35 degree & 83.20 degree east longitude. J&K state is the 11th largest having a geographical area of 101387\* Sq. Kms. accounting to 3.20% of the total area of India. It is the 19th most populous state having a population of about 101.44 lakh souls (2001 census) of which 75.19% residing in rural areas in comparison to 102861.10 lakh total

population & 72.18% rural population of India. The state is divided into three distinct regions based on the geography of the state and two administrative regions namely Kashmir division which includes Ladakh also and Jammu division.

The state is having two capital's summer capital Srinagar and winter capital Jammu. The climate of J&K exerts a profound influence on the inhabitants of any region. The social, cultural, economic and other aspects of life are directly and indirectly governed by climate. The climate ranges from burning & scorching heat of plains of Jammu to snow-capped heights of Gulmarg (Kashmir) & the mud peaks of the mount Godwin Austin ( Ladakh), 21265 feet above sea level , the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the world. From Alpine (Ladakh region) the extremely variants of climate in Jammu & Kashmir are due to its location & topography. Broadly the state of J&K comprises three distinct regions cold arid desert areas of Ladakh, temperate Kashmir valley & the humid subtropical region of Jammu. Jammu and Kashmir Government at the time of launching of the scheme, conceptualized and imperative that instead of providing separate staff for implementation decided to launch the scheme with existing available staff with rural development department although if they would have hired professional staff on that would have not only removed the time lag in the planning but also would have helped in proper implementation and evaluation of the scheme.

Another benefit for the state government would have been that it would not have to bear the expenses for the salaries as 75% administrative costs are borne by the central government. Non engagement of staff acts as a double edged sword for MGNREGA.

Grievances of the labourers working under MGNREGA or the job card holders were to resolved/solved by an ombudsman but the powers of the ombudsman are so that he cannot pass any order like an RTI counterpart. So the ombudsman should be provided with such powers so that he can actually act a person that will be there for the cause of workers. As far as Kashmir is concerned as per primary data there is not any person appointed to actually work as ombudsman.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:-

The present research aims to assess the impact of analysis of MGNREGA on Kashmir state, with the following objectives:

1. To assess the extent of additional employment generation through MGNREGA to the rural poor.
2. To examine the impact of MGNREGA on the rural upliftment in the study area.

- To make suggestions for strengthening the implementation strategy of MGNREGA.

## METHODOLOGY:

The study is based on primary data. The study is based on purposive sampling technique. The primary data's are collected through structured questionnaire, 100 beneficiaries form the total sample of the study. Simple statistical tools have been used to analyse the data.

## ANALYSIS:

The socio-economic condition of the people from the study area is shown in table 1 and 2. In order to show the age-wise persons employed in financial years of 2010-11 to 2012-13 in Kashmir under MGNREGA different age groups.

**Table-1: Age wise Persons Employed in Financial Years of 2010-11 to 2012-2013 in (Kashmir)**

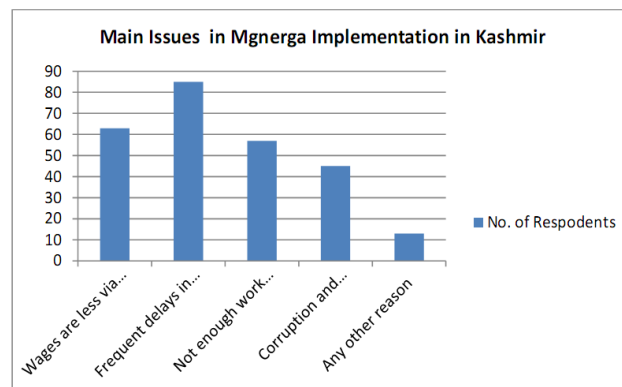
YEAR	18-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	>60
2010-11	48799	56517	47311	28352	13310
2011-12	144566	180236	155549	85533	38975
2012-13	242372	290123	243368	126655	52066

**Sources:** Ministry of Rural Development



**Table-2: Main Issues(as per Questionnaire with sample) in Mgnernga Implementation in Kashmir**

Issues	Wages are less via workload	Frequent delays in payment of wages	Not enough work available	Corruption and malpractices	Any other reason
No. of Respondents	63	85	57	45	13



## CONCLUSION:

Based on the analysis of the primary data it can be concluded that MGNREGA is still in a distant dream of achieving for what it was meant with special reference to that of Kashmir and that too with respect to 2010. The scheme is flooded a lot of operational loopholes from planning to the implementation of the act, and the payment is very delay in the study area.

## SUGGESTIONS:

- The policy should not be homogeneous for the whole nation, rather it should be formulated keeping in mind the geographical conditions, climate, so that a sense of equality can be arisen among the citizens.
- The act should be provided with adequate staff as provided in other states so that effective and efficient planning and implementation can be achieved.

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