



THE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN MAHATMA GANDHI NREGS

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Introduction

Rural poverty is mainly a result of low rainfall, illiteracy, believing superstitions, low productivity, and unemployment. In order to alleviate Rural poverty, Government of India notified The National Rural Employment guarantee Act (Later called Mahatma Gandhi NREGA) on September 7, 2005, aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. . However, Social security programmes are not free from flaws. So is the case with MGNREGA, the success of this programme is mainly depends on the calibre of the key stake holders at village level. This article discusses the role and responsibilities of the key stake holders of the MGNREGS programme, while implementing the world's largest employment generating programme.

Who are the Stakeholders in MGNREGA?

The key stake holders of MGNREGS are 1. Wage Seekers, 2. Gramsabha, 3. Three tier Panchayat Raj institutions, 4. Programme officer at the block level, 5. District programme Coordinator, 6. State Government, 7. Central Government 8. Ministry of Rural Development (MORD), 9. Other important stake holders and 10. Civil Societies. Let us discuss the role and responsibilities of the each stake holder in detail in implementing the MGNREGS programme in rural areas.

Firstly, wage seekers are the main key stake holders in implementing the scheme. The rights and entitlements of the wage seekers are

1. Application for registration,
2. Obtaining a job card
3. Application for work and obtain a dated receipt for the application made.
4. Choice of time and duration of the work applied for
5. Getting work with fifteen days of application or from the date when work is sought in the case of an advance application, whichever is later
6. Facilities of crèche, drinking water, first aid, shade etc, on the work site.
7. Right to get 10% extra wage in case of employment provided beyond 5 km of radius.
8. Right to check their Muster Rolls and to get all the information regarding their employment entered in their JCs.
9. Disbursement of wages will be made on a weekly basis or in any case not later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done. If not eligible for late wage compensation.
10. Right to get unemployment allowance, in case employment is not provided within fifteen days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought in the case of an advance application, whichever is later.
11. Medical treatment in case of injury in the course of unemployment including cost of hospitalization if required an ex-gratia payment in case of disability or death in the course of employment.

Secondly, The role of Gramsabha, recommends works to be taken up and is the final authority to determine the order of priority in which works will be initiated under MGNREGA, monitor the execution of works within the GP and it is the primary forum for conduct of social audits.

Thirdly,

- a. The Gram Panchayat as a stake holder , receiving applications for registration , verifying registration applications , Registering households , issuing job cards, allotting work within fifteen days of submitting the application or from the date when work is sought in the case of an advance application , whichever is later , irrespective of the implementing agency , awareness generation and social mobilization , convening the GS for planning and social audit and monitoring implementation at the village level, ensuring conduct of social audits and following up on required actions and setting up Cluster –Level Facilitation Teams to provide technical support to GPS within each cluster of GPs.
- b. The role of Intermediate panchayats in MGNREGS is to approve the block level plan and forwarding it to the District panchayat for final approval.
- c. District level Panchayat approves received plans finally, supervise and monitor the works taken up at the GP and Block level and carry out such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State council, from time to time.



Fourthly, the role of Programme Officer is at the Block level, he acts as a coordinator for Mahatma Gandhi NREGS. The primary responsibility of the PO is to ensure that anyone who applies for work gets employment within 15 days. Other important functions of the PO are, consolidating of Labour Budget after scrutiny, prioritising shelf of works received from GPs to the Block and submitting it to the District panchayat for scrutiny and consolidation, ensuring baselines survey to assess work demand, monitoring and supervising implementation of works taken up by GPs and other implementing agencies within the block.

Fifthly, the role of District Programme Coordinator in MGNREGS is to receive the Block panchayat plans and consolidate them along with project proposals received from other implementing agencies for inclusion in the District plan for approval by the DPs, accord timely sanction to shelf of projects, ensure timely release and utilization of funds, review, monitor and supervise the performance of the Pos and all implementing agencies in relation to MGNREGS works, conduct and cause to be conducted periodic inspection of the works in progress and verification of Muster rolls, carry out responsibilities as given in Schedule II related to grievance redresses, submit periodic progress and updates to the state government. The role of District Panchayat Officer in MGNREGS is to consolidation of Annual Block plan (within the District) in to a district plan, adding any inter-block work that according to them will be a good source of employment with prior approval of Gramsabha and monitoring and supervision of the MGNREGS scheme in the district.

Sixthly, at State level State Employment Guarantee Council and State Government are important stakeholders. The role of State Employment Guarantee Council is to advise the State Government on the implementation of the scheme, review the monitoring and redressal mechanisms and suggest improvements, evaluate and monitor the scheme within the state and prepare the annual report to be laid before the State Legislature by the State Governments. The role of state governments in MGNREGS is to frame the rules on matters pertaining to state responsibilities under section 32 of the act, develop and notify the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme for the state, set up the SEGC, set up a State level MGNREGS implementation agency /mission with adequate number of people with knowledge on MGNREGA processes and demonstrated commitment to social audit, establish a State Employment Guarantee Fund, ensure that the State share of the MGNREGS budget is provisioned for and released in to the SEGF in the beginning of the financial year so that it can be used as a revolving fund, establish a network of professionally agencies for training, technical support and for quality control measures and ensure compliance with all processes laid down in the act, rules and guidelines.

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Seventh Stakeholder Central Government includes Central Employment Guarantee Council. The role and responsibility of the Central Employment Guarantee Council is to establish a central evaluation and monitoring system, advise the Central Government on all matters concerning the implementation of the Act, review the monitoring and redressal mechanism from time to time and recommend improvements required, promote the widest possible dissemination of information about the schemes and preparation of annual reports to be laid before Parliament by the Central government on the implementation of this act.

Next Important Stakeholder is Ministry of Rural Development (MORD). The role and responsibility of the Ministry of Rural Development (MORD) is to frame the rules under the act, issue operational guidelines for the effective implementation of the act, make budgetary allocation and ensure timely release of central share, monitoring, evolution and research on the performance of MGNREGA and empanel agencies that can be used by state Governments as PIAs for implementation of MGNREGA works and determine the percentage value of funding that can be given to them to meet their administrative costs.

Other Important Stakeholders in MGNREGA include: Members of social Audit, Vigilance and Monitoring Committees, Technical staff of Implementing agencies, departments with whom MoU has been signed for convergence with MGNREGA.

What roles can Civil Society Organisations and Self Help Groups Play in MGNREGS?

The Civil society Organisations working at gross-roots can play a very significant role in awareness generation among wage-seekers and in supporting and building capacities of GPS and State Governments in planning, implementation, and social audit of MGNREGA.



The Self Help Groups can play a direct role in spreading awareness, organising work, accessing entitlements assistance in door to door survey and ensuring social accountability.

Conclusion

If all the above said stake holders work towards using their capacities and calibres in implementing the scheme effectively, the poverty will be alleviated. The more of the rural assets creating under MGNREGS in rural areas will become the wealth of the villages.

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