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**A STUDY ON NREGA:
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE STATE OF ASSAM**



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Short Profile

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ABSTRACT:

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is a project undertaken by central government for upliftment of rural people in India. This scheme mainly aims at providing 100 days of employment to all the rural workers in a financial year.

In a country like India where 60% people live in villages, it is very important to make sure that at least head of the family gets employment, so that, he or she can

support the family. Keeping this in view Government of India introduced this scheme under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005

KEYWORDS

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme , Methodology , Limitations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To study the success rate of NREGA scheme in the state of Assam.
2. To analyze the scenario of rural unemployment in Assam.
3. To make a comparative study on performance of NREGA in Assam with a few other states of the country

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY:

The research is a descriptive research and is based on primary as well as on secondary data. The researcher has taken 5 districts as a cluster sampling from among the 27 districts. In the second stage, 30 workers who were benefited (sample size=30) were chosen from among these districts as sample unit using judgement sampling method. The information was collected from them through telephone after conducting direct personal interview with them. The researchers have also made use of secondary data that has been available on the respective site, other websites, books and journals. Percentage has been used as a tool for making analysis.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

The main limitations of the study are highlighted under the following points

1. The study is limited to the state of Assam only. Primary data has been collected from only six districts of Assam. A non-probabilistic multi-stage sampling technique has been used which is subjected to biasness.
2. In some situations, the exact effect of the scheme could not be identified as we are ignorant of the situation prevailing in the region before launching of the scheme.
3. The benefits of NREGA can be analyzed in the long run only. It is too early to comment on the performance of the scheme.
4. Adequate statistical data are not available for making the comparison of performance of NREGA in absolute terms

OPERATION AND FUNCTIONING

In NREGA, 100 days wages guarantee is given to the workers in a financial year. Block wise division is made for each district under the scheme. Block Development Officer is the controlling authority for each block. However, the regulatory authority is in the hands of District Commissioner. Each block requires fund which is allocated by District Commissioner. Gaon Panchayat is also involved for proposal of requirement of fund. Now-a-days, an automated fund transfer system has been developed under which fund is transferred on online mode.

PERFORMANCE OF NREGA IN ASSAM

After implementation of NREGA scheme there has been immense change in the financial

position of the working class in Assam. There are 27 districts in Assam with 238 blocks. 42.38 lakhs no of job cards are issued and a total of 65.08 lakhs workers have got jobs under this scheme. All these job seekers are covered under this scheme and they are enjoying the benefit.

Analysis on the data collected:

30 samples have been taken from five districts of Assam.

1. Kamrup Rural 2. Baksa 3. Barpeta 4. Nagaon 5. Dhubri

Most of the workers were not satisfied. The workers of Dhubri said that there was no complete wage guarantee under the scheme as they didn't get regular payment. 40% of the workers were of the opinion that payment were not made on regular basis.

Workers of Nagaon district said that government agents charged commission on a high rate which was the main problem.

One thing was clear from the survey that most of the workers from Kamrup Rural were satisfied. Only 30% workers complained about irregularity of wage payment

Another problem faced by the workers is recent change in the wage payment system. Now-a-days, wage payment is made through bank accounts of the workers. But all the laborers didn't have a bank account. They adopted some alternative means for it.

Comparison of performance of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme

Almost all the states of India are covered under NREGA but performance of this scheme is different in different states. For example in Andhra Pradesh, total number of job card issued is 15032206 while in Assam number of job card issued is 415872. The scheme MGNREGA is a huge success in Andhra Pradesh.

Number of job card issued in the state of Bihar in the year 2013-2014 is 13011768. Number of household applied for job card is 13296055. This number is also quite higher than that of Assam.

In the state of Madhya Pradesh total number of job card issued is 9945151 and the number of household applied for job card is 10090871

Against a total population of 31,169,272

Total number of persons who demanded work in Assam under this scheme is 1601573 out of which 1601242 numbers of persons were allotted work.

In the state of Andhra Pradesh against a total population of 75,72,7541 total numbers of persons demanded work is 12470333 and total number of persons allotted job is 12410789.

FINDINGS:

1. This scheme is an utmost necessary scheme in a country like India where one-fourth of the population

sleep without dinner. This scheme in theories is the best suited tool to eradicate poverty to a considerable extend.

2.The need to make strategies to implement this scheme is equally important and repeatedly researches should be made to find better ways of allocation of funds through this scheme and ensuring reviews on it.

3.Some of the workers or beneficiaries are still not satisfied because they have found difficulties in payment timing, procedures and policies.

4.The job that they had been assigned to them didn't suit perfectly to their skills.

5.Demand for the job has been found to be less in proportion to the population in the state. This indicates lack of awareness.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1.This scheme should be focused more as it is a good scheme in books. However, proper implementation with proper allocation of funds through proper channel is necessary to be taken note of. This will help reach the fund to the real needy.

2.Some workers were not satisfied with the policies and procedures of the payment under the scheme. They should be given opportunity to be heard. The real scenario and effectiveness of the scheme can be understood well only from the real beneficiaries of it.

3.Awareness seems to be lacking. It is the duty of the government to educate people so that they can understand about their rights and benefits that they are supposed to get.

CONCLUSION:

Thus, from the above analysis we can come to the conclusion that the success rate of NREGA in Assam is not up to the mark. This is because, against a total of 31, 169,272 population only 1601242 numbers of persons were allotted work under this scheme .That means the success rate is 5%. On the other hand the success rate of NREGA in Andhra Pradesh is 16.38% which is much higher than that of Assam.

The study helps us to know that the funds allotted by the government for the scheme is not properly allotted as the people who are in need have not got the benefits of it. There are some people who badly in need for job to support their family. So, proper allocation of funds with proper planning, strategic implementation and proper and continuous reviews of the effectiveness can finally yield a grand success in the particular scheme.

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