
INTEGRATING MGNREA WITH AGRICULTURE

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Abstract: The paper deals with integration of the MGNREA with the agriculture sector to solve the man power shortage in the agriculture sector and also help the government cut the spending for the scheme for improving the financial situation without affecting the workers.

Keywords: MGNREA- Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act.

Introduction: This paper deals with the various aspects of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Act (MGNREA) which promises 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to the rural population of the country and its impact on the lively hood of the rural population, impact on agriculture and the burden on the exchequer.

Few important Statistics about the MGNREA for the financial year of 2013-14

1. Total number of workers- 29.5 crores.
2. Total expenditure for the financial year- 38,624 crores.
3. Average wage rate per day per person- 132.7 Rs/-

Also a stunning observation could be made out from the statistics below

1. The average wage offered for the agricultural work across India by farmers is 140 Rs/-

Problem: Though MGNREA has been providing the rural population of the country with minimum guaranteed employment, this had led to the reduction of the availability of the man power for the agricultural sector as the works taken up under this scheme are mostly water conservation and water harvesting for irrigation; flood control and protection, drought-proofing, horticulture, renovation of traditional water bodies, land development and rural connectivity which are approved by the grama sabhas or the grama panchayats. The availability of man power for labour intense crops such as vegetables, paddy has decreased by a very large number which is causing severe problems to the farmers. And due to the lack of proper supervision, the efficiency(men days) is being very low.

Though the average wage offered by farmers is almost equal to the average wage offered under the MGNREA, the intensity of work associated with agricultural work is making the workers to work in the MGNREA scheme. To attract the labourers,

farmers are forced to offer high wages due to the intense work involved which is making them difficult to manage their finances leading to increased investment which is affecting their financial condition and making agriculture work difficult and non-profitable.

Also an important aspect of the MGNREA is the lack of value addition and asset creation. This has also been highlighted by Sri Nitin Gadkari, Honourable Minister for Rural Development that MGNREA must help in value addition to the economy of the country and not just providing employment in one of his interviews. And with increasing enrolment year by year there is an increase burden on the exchequer which is reeling under sever deficit

Solution: This situation can be altered by combining the NREGA scheme with the agriculture sector.

The steps proposed are

1. Enrolment of the workers with the Gram panchayat. (which is already happening)
2. The farmer who needs work force for his farm work approaches the Gram panchayat.
3. The Gram panchayat allot workers for that particular farmer.
4. The concerned farmer will provide the work to the workers.
5. The workers will be responsible for accomplishing the farm work of the farmer.

The Change in the Economics:

1. Considering the average wage to the same as 140RS/- (As specified above).
2. As the farmer is employing the workers he will be bearing half the wage i.e. 70Rs/- Will be given by the farmer
3. The Government now will have to bear only half the wage
4. From the statistics of 2013-14 where the expenditure on wages was 38,624 crores, the expenditure can be reduced by half to 16,312 crores(approx.)

Important Observations:

1. Farmers will have easy access to the man power required for his farm work.
2. The workers will work to the full potential as he is in the supervision of the farmer.
3. The farmers will have to pay only half the wages that they are paying now so that their investment is reduced and farming becomes more profitable.
4. As the farmer is also paying for the wages, he would play the role of an active supervisor, thereby increasing the work efficiency.
5. In the tough financial situation, it would help the government by cutting down the expenses by half (approx.).
6. The availability of man power would encourage more people to take up farming.
7. Also, as the entire process is overseen by the Gram Panchayat, the exploitation of the farm workers can be avoided as there would be stipulated work time.
8. The main purpose of the MGNRE is achieved.
9. Finally and importantly, it would enhance the agriculture sector adding a lot of value to the

economy of the country and also efficient use of man power.

10. Also with the saving, the government can increase the wages in future if required when the average minimum wage has to be increased without burdening the farmer(depending on the situation).

As the farming season is limited, the government can provide the workers with employment (if required) in the allied sectors under which works are taken up right now with the funds that have been saved. This would increase the number of working days provided for the workers thereby increasing their earnings without over burdening the exchequer.

Conclusion: The entire process would improve the overall efficiency, improve the financial condition of workers and farmers, reduce the burden on the exchequer, support agriculture and lead to value addition to the economy.

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2. www.indiastat.com- Indian statistical website.

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