

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND MNREGA PROGRAMME: A HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how people's participation in MNREGA Programme can become the tool for human development as it demands increased empowerment in economic, social and political terms. Human development is a process of enlarging people's freedom and opportunities by improving their well being. Human development is about the improvement of quality of human life. It focuses communities, their opportunities and choices. The process of human development with reference to government organized MNREGA Programme which in turn involved people's participation to create an environment for the community to have productive and creative lives. The paper tries to co relate the implementation of government organized program, how it brings a change in the quality of life of the people involved. It also tries to give a better and deeper understanding of the socio economic independence achieved by the community involved.

Keywords : MNREGA, human development, collective bargain, social security.

INTRODUCTION

People's participation is becoming the central issue of current period. Participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political processes that effect their lives. It is an essential element of human development. Since participation requires, increased influence in control as well as it demands increased empowerment in economic, social and political terms. In economic terms, this means being able to engage freely in any economic activity so that they can join fully in all terms of community life without regard to religion, colour, sex or race.

People's participation and MNREGA programme is closely linked as it refers to people's involvement in particular projects/ programmes. Internationally Brazil has its Bolsa Familia and

Mexico has its Progressa Scheme for alleviating poverty. Similarly in India we have MNREGA, a social programme in which people's participation is a chief concern and is attracting world's attraction. "MNREGA is an Act of the people, by the people and for the people". In India human workforce is the major resource in development of economy and the enactment of MNREGA Act 2005 is a significant development. It symbolizes the achievement of a very long civil society and people's movement toward ensuring right to work. The programme provides a minimum of 100 days of guaranteed employment to every rural household. This social programme provides unskilled and manual work within 15 days of a participant's making an application around a radius of 5 km. from his/her residence. Under the provisions of the act, workers are entitled to a statutory minimum wage for their

labour to be paid within seven days after the work is done. Men & Women are to be paid equal wages.

U.P. has a population of approx 16.64 Crore as per 2001 census within Geographical area of 2.41 Lakh Sq.Km. The pace of Human Development in the state has remained slow due to many socio, economic & political reasons. The disparity exists in terms of income wealth, education, health, nutrition, sanitation, employment, infrastructural facility etc. In fact it is found that low level of human development in Rural U.P. as a whole exists due to lack of opportunities or people's participation.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MNREGA

- The MNREGA has given rise to the largest employment programme in human history and is unlike any other wage employment programme in its scale, architecture and thrust. Its bottom-up, people centred, demand-driven, self-selecting, rights-based design is distinct and unprecedented.
- The MNREGA provides a legal guarantee for wage employment.
- It is a demand-driven programme where provision of work is triggered by the demand for work by wage-seekers.
- There are legal provisions for allowances and compensation both in cases of failure to provide work on demand and delays in payment of wages for work undertaken.
- The MNREGA overcomes problems of targeting through its self-targeting mechanism of beneficiary selection, that is, a large percentage of poorest of the poor and marginalized seek employment under the Scheme.
- Unlike the earlier wage employment programmes that were allocation-based, MNREGA is demand driven and resource transfer from Centre to States is based on the demand for employment in each State. This provides an additional incentive for

States to leverage the Act to meet the employment needs of the poor.

- Gram Panchayats(GPs) are to implement at least 50 per cent of the works in terms of cost. This order of devolution of financial resources to GPs is unprecedented.
- MNREGA also marks a break from the relief programmes of the past towards an integrated natural resource management and livelihoods generation perspective.
- Social audit is a new feature that is an integral part of MNREGA. Potentially, this creates unprecedented accountability of performance, especially towards immediate stakeholders.

METHODOLOGY

The Primary data collected from in-depth study including Survey and observation of MNREGA programme lead to analyse and assess the socio-economic development or Human Development of the rural people by participation. The primary data was collected by observation from some areas of U.P. and Chhattisgarh.

FINDINGS

In this regard it is found that there is an improvement in the "quality of life" of the people who participated in MNREGA programme. These finding are:

1. It check as checks the vilager's exodus to the cities.
2. Relief of labourers from traditional exploitation.
3. Increase in economic self Independence.
4. Labourers able to command the "collective bargain" through Gram Sabhas (participatory & representative micro level administrative unit), social audit and participatory planning,

5. Economic Independence of the people leads to rise in socio-political status.
6. Beneficiaries are of all castes but most of them are of SC/ST and backward castes.
7. More social security and livelihood security by developing the economic and social infrastructure.
8. Participants get more time for their family and society.
9. More time to agricultural activities.
10. The programme not only affects the socio-economic aspect of their life but also their environment.
11. Reforestation, maintenance of pond, drainage system etc. leads to conservation of their environment.
12. Participant can afford mobile phones leads to more communication and more awareness.

CONCLUSION

Though there are many loop holes and corruption exists in the system but still it is found that "people's participation" of Rural India from human development perspective is both a means and an

end. It helps to maximize the use of human capabilities thus increase the level of social and economic development on one hand on the other it allows people to realize their full potential and make their best contribution to the society.

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