



PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU
 (Research Unit)
 Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
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(Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs))

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005
 (MGNREGA)**

(Ministry of Rural Development)

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Q1. What is the Mandate of [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act](#) (MGNREGA)?

The mandate of the [MGNREGA](#) is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Q2. What are the core objectives of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)?

The core objectives of the MGNREGS are:

- Providing not less than one hundred days of unskilled manual work as a guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas as per demand, resulting in creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and durability
- Strengthening the livelihood resource base of the poor
- Proactively ensuring social inclusion
- Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions

Q3. What are the goals of MGNREGA?

Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by guaranteeing wage employment opportunities

The goals of MGNREGA are as follows:

- Enhance livelihood security of the rural poor through generation of wage employment opportunities in works leading to creation of durable assets.
- Rejuvenate natural resource base of rural areas.
- Create a durable and productive rural asset base.
- Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially, women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation.
- Strengthen decentralized, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives.
- Deepen democracy at the grassroots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Q4. Is the Act restricted to particular States or districts?

No, it is implemented in all rural districts of the country.

MGNREGA was implemented in 200 districts in the first phase with effect from February 2006 and extended subsequently to additional 113 and 17 districts with effect from April 1st 2007 and May 15th 2007 respectively. The remaining districts were included under the Act with effect from April 1st, 2008. Currently, the Act is under implementation in 644 districts of the country with substantial rural population.

Q5. Whether State Government is having any powers to make rules for effective implementation of MGNREGS?

Yes, the State Government may by notification make rules to carry out the provisions of Act subject to the conditions of consistency with MGNREGA and rules made by the Central Government [(Section 32(1)].

Q6. In what way paradigm shift has taken place with the implementation of MGNREGA?

MGNREGA is demand driven wage employment programme and resource transfer from Centre to States is based on the demand for employment in each State. MGNREGA is bottom-up, people-centred, demand-driven, self-selecting and rights-based programme. It provides a legal guarantee for wage employment by providing allowances and compensation both in cases of failure to provide work on demand and delays in payment of wages for work undertaken. Plans and decisions regarding the nature and choice of works to be undertaken, the order in which each worksite selection etc., are all to be made in open assemblies of the Gram Sabha (GS) and ratified by the Gram Panchayat (GP). Social audit is a new feature, which creates accountability of performance, especially towards immediate stakeholders. Thus, MGNREGA also marks a break from the relief programmes of the past towards an integrated natural resource management and livelihoods generation perspective.

Q7. What is the role of Gram Sabha in MGNREGS?

The Gram Sabha has the following rights and responsibilities under the Act:

- It determines the order of priority of works in the meetings of the Gram Sabha keeping in view potential of the local area, its needs, local resources
- Monitor the execution of works within the GP
- It is the primary forum for conduct of social audits. It provides a platform to all residents to seek and obtain all relevant information from all the Implementing Agencies including GP in relation to MGNREGA works implemented in the GP area.

Q8. What are the roles of Gram Panchayat in MGNREGS?

The Gram Panchayat is responsible for the following activities:

- Receiving applications for registration
- Verifying registration applications
- Registering households
- Receiving applications for work
- Issuing Job Cards (JCs)
- Issuing dated receipts for these applications for work

- Make available all relevant documents including the Muster Rolls, bills, vouchers, measurement books, copies of sanction orders and other connected books of account and papers to the GS for the purpose of conducting the social audit
- Providing all information specified in Audit of Schemes Rules to the Social Audit Unit
- Maintaining accounts and providing utilization certificates in formats prescribed by Central/ State Government.
- Identification and planning of works, developing shelf of projects including determination of the order of their priority. Forward the list of works to Programme Officer for scrutiny and preliminary approval.
- 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.

Q9. What are the responsibilities of State Government in MGNREGS?

A. The responsibilities of the State Government are following:

- Frame Rules on matters pertaining to State responsibilities under Section 32 of the Act
- Set up a State level MGNREGS implementation agency/ mission with adequate number of high caliber professionals
- Set up a State level MGNREGS social audit agency/directorate with adequate number of people with knowledge on MGNREGA processes and demonstrated commitment to social audit
- Establish and operate a State Employment Guarantee Fund (SEGF)
- Delegate financial and administrative powers to the DPC and the Programme Officer, as is deemed necessary for the effective implementation of the Scheme
- Establish a network of professional agencies for training, technical support and for quality control measures.
- Generate widest possible awareness about MGNREGA across the State
- Ensure that civil society organizations involved in mobilizing MGNREGA workers are able to formally meet State, district and block level officials in a formal setting at least once a month.

Q10. What roles can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) play in MGNREGS?

CSOs working at the grassroots 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 SHGs can play a direct role in spreading awareness, organising work, accessing entitlements, assistance in door-to-door survey and ensuring social accountability. The MGNREGA Operational Guidelines provide the framework for engagement of CSOs, support in the operationalisation of Cluster Facilitation Team (CFT) project in convergence with National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

Q11. What is a Job Card?

Job Card is a key document that records workers' entitlements under MGNREGA. It legally empowers the registered households to apply for work, ensures transparency and protects workers against fraud.

Q12. What is the procedure to register oneself for employment?

Household having adult members desirous of seeking unskilled wage employment in MGNREGA may apply for registration. The application for registration may be given on prescribed form or plain paper to the local Gram Panchayat. To allow maximum opportunities to families that may migrate, registration shall also be opened throughout the year at the GP office.

Q13. Who should apply for Job Card on behalf of a Household?

Any adult member can apply on behalf of Household.

Q14. What is the definition of an adult in a household?

Adult means a person who has completed 18 years of age.

Q15. Can all adult members of a household register for Job Card?

Adult members of a household willing to do unskilled manual work can register themselves to obtain a job card under MGNREGA.

Q16. When is an applicant eligible for Unemployment allowance?

If an applicant is not provided employment within fifteen days of receipt of his/her application seeking employment, in all cases of advance application, employment should be provided from the date that employment has been sought, or within 15 days of the date of application, whichever is later. Else, unemployment allowance becomes due. It will be calculated automatically by the computer system or the Management Information System (MIS).

Q17. What is a Gram Panchayat Development Plan under MGNREGA?

Section 16 (3) & (4) of the Act states that every Gram Panchayat shall prepare a Development Plan and maintain a shelf of works to meet the employment demand. A development plan is an annual work plan that comprises shelf of projects for each village with administrative and technical approvals. The development plan is a rolling plan, since the approved shelf of projects may carry over one financial year to the next depending upon this lifespan of the projects.

Q18. What is a District Perspective Plan under MGNREGA?

District Perspective Plan is prepared for five years, which identifies the needs and gap in the districts in all the sectors. The district perspective plan is a multi-year plan for different departmental projects. The district perspective plans should be prepared in such a manner that it can be breakable into various annual plans.

Q19. What types of works are taken up under MGNREGS?

Para 4(1), Schedule I provides provision for the following works under MGNREGA:

Category A: Public Works Relating to Natural Resources Management:

- Water conservation and water harvesting structures to augment and improve groundwater like underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams, check dams with special focus on recharging groundwater including drinking water sources.
- Watershed management works such as contour trenches, terracing, contour bunds, boulder checks, gabion structures and spring shed development resulting in a comprehensive treatment of a watershed.
- Micro and minor irrigation works and creation, renovation and maintenance of irrigation canals and drains.
- Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of irrigation tanks and other water bodies.
- Afforestation, tree plantation and horticulture in common and forest lands, road margins, canal bunds, tank foreshores and coastal belts duly providing right to usufruct to the households.
- Land development works in common land

Category B: Individual Assets for Vulnerable Sections:

- Improving productivity of lands of households specified in Paragraph 5 through land development and by providing suitable infrastructure for irrigation including dug wells, farm ponds and other water harvesting structures.
- Improving livelihoods through horticulture, sericulture, plantation, and farm forestry.
- Development of fallow or wastelands of households specified in Paragraph 5 of the Schedule I to bring it under cultivation.
- Unskilled wage component in construction of houses sanctioned under the Indira Awaas Yojana or such other State or Central Government Scheme.
- Creating infrastructure for promotion of livestock such as, poultry shelter, goat shelter, piggery shelter, cattle shelter and fodder troughs for cattle.
- Creating infrastructure for promotion of fisheries such as, fish drying yards, storage facilities, and promotion of fisheries in seasonal water bodies on public land.

Category C: Common Infrastructure for NRLM Compliant Self-Help Groups:

- Works for promoting agricultural productivity by creating durable infrastructure required for bio-fertilizers and post-harvest facilities including pucca storage facilities for agricultural produce.
- Common work sheds for livelihood activities of self-help groups.

Category D: Rural Infrastructure:

- Rural sanitation related works, such as, individual household latrines, school toilet units, Anganwadi toilets either independently or in convergence with schemes of other Government Departments to achieve 'open defecation free' status. and solid and liquid waste management as per prescribed norms
- Providing all-weather rural road connectivity to unconnected villages and to connect identified rural production centers to the existing pucca road network
- Construction of pucca internal roads or streets including side drains and culverts within a village

- Works for improving disaster preparedness or restoration of roads or restoration of other essential public infrastructure including flood control and protection works, providing drainage in water-logged areas, deepening and repairing of flood channels, chaur renovation, construction of storm water drains for coastal protection.
- Construction of Food Grain Storage Structures for implementing the provisions of The National Food Security Act 2013 (20 of 2013)
- Maintenance of rural public assets created under the Act.

Q20. What wage-material ratio needs to be maintained in the selection of works?

Cost of material component of projects including the wages of the skilled and semi-skilled workers taken up under scheme shall not exceed 40 per cent. 60:40 ratio for wage and material cost should be maintained at GP level for works executed by GP and for works executed by agencies other than GP, it should be maintained at block/intermediate panchayat level.

Q21. Can individual farmer's land be developed under MGNREGS?

Yes, individual farmer's land can be developed under MGNREGS.

Works creating individual assets shall be prioritised on land or homestead owned by households belonging to categories:

Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, nomadic tribes, de notified tribes, other families below the poverty line, women-headed households, physically handicapped headed households, beneficiaries of land reforms, the beneficiaries under the Indira Awaas Yojana, beneficiaries under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers.

After exhausting the eligible beneficiaries under the above categories, on lands of the small or marginal farmers as defined in the Agriculture Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme, 2008 subject to the condition that such households shall have a job card with at least one member willing to work on the project undertaken on their land or homestead.

Q22. Define negative works under MGNREGS?

The works which are not included in the list of permissible works and works which are non-tangible, not measurable, non-quantifiable, repetitive such as removing grass, pebbles, agricultural operation are not permitted.

Q23. List out the negative works of MGNREGA?

- Works which are non-tangible, not measurable, non-quantifiable repetitive such as, removing grass, pebbles, agricultural operations, shall not be taken up.
- Works like boulder pebble or shrub removal silt application and similar activities are not as a stand-alone activity. However, these can be a part of tasks in projects for converting uncultivable/barren/fallow lands into cultivable lands through one time land development activities.
- Agriculture inputs and agriculture operations are not allowed. Removal of weeds and watering may be considered only for forestry plantation and horticulture limited for a duration of 2-3 years. This should also be a part of the consolidated project to be assisted under MGNREGA.

- Expenditure incurred to finance non-permissible activities will be recovered from the person responsible for such expenses.
- Execution of pilot activity under MGNREGA is discouraged. However, pilots using MGNREGA funds, involving only a few Panchayats could be taken up only upon approval of the Ministry.
- MGNREGS funds cannot be used for land acquisition.
- Specified criteria to be followed while executing dug wells under MGNREGA.

Q24. How is the payment of wages made to the wage seekers?

The payment of wages shall, unless so exempted by the Central Government, be made through the individual savings accounts of the workers in the relevant banks or post offices.

Q25. What is the schedule for the disbursement of wage?

The disbursement of daily wages shall be made on a weekly basis or in any case not later than a fortnight after the date on which such work was done.

Q26. Can different wages be paid to men and women workers?

No. As per Para 31, Schedule II, there shall be no discrimination solely on the ground of gender and the provisions of the [Equal Remuneration Act, 1976](#) (25 of 1976), shall be complied with.

Q27. Is there any compensation for delay in payment of wages?

Para 29, Schedule II of MGNREGA 2005 has laid down a detailed procedure for establishing a delay compensation system. As per the system, MGNREGA workers are entitled to receive delay compensation at a rate of 0.05 per cent of the unpaid wages per day for the duration of the delay beyond the sixteenth day of the closure of the MR (Muster Roll).

Q28. Who constitutes Special Category of Workers (Vulnerable Groups) under MGNREGA?

The special category of worker is from:

- Persons with disabilities
- Primitive Tribal Groups
- Nomadic Tribal Groups
- De-notified Tribes
- Women in special circumstances
- Senior citizens above 65 years of age
- HIV positive persons
- Internally displaced persons
- Rehabilitated bonded labor

Q29. Who are Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) and what are the special provisions for them?

Primitive Tribal Groups live in forest and hills are highly vulnerable to hunger/starvation, malnutrition and ill-health. Appropriate programme flexibility should be adopted by the State Governments to ensure that the benefits of MGNREGS reach them.

Q30. What are the special provisions for De-Notified Tribes in terms of accessing MGNREGS works?

District Programme Coordinator (DPC) may estimate the number of nomadic tribes in the district and authorise the POs to issue special job cards, which will be honoured in any Gram Panchayat in the district. The nomadic tribes can take up work in any Gram Panchayat. Bank accounts should be opened for the nomadic tribes in a bank with core banking facility and an ATM/Debit Card.

Q31. What is the name of the web-enabled application the Central Government has developed and what are its chief advantages?

The name of the programme is NREGA Soft. The advantage of managing implementation of MGNREGA through [NREGA Soft](#) is that it enables capturing data in real-time (or near real time) from the field which helps in quick and easy analysis (which is also almost in real time). Based on the analysis, the system triggers alerts which provide opportunities to implementing and supervising authorities for timely corrective action.

Q32. What is State Employment Guarantee Fund (SEGF)?

Sub-section 1 of Section 21 of MGNREGA provides for the establishment of State Employment Guarantee Fund (SEGF) (also referred to as “State Fund”) for the purpose of implementation of MGNREGA scheme in an implementing State. The SEGF has an in-built capacity to track the usage of funds down to the GPs. The central share of MGNREGA fund is released to SEGF for onward allocation of funds to the districts/ Panchayats/ Programme Implementing Agencies (PIAs) of the respective State. The salient features of SEGF are as below:

- SEGF funds shall be utilized in accordance with the provisions of the Act and Rules framed thereunder by the Central Government and instructions issued by Ministry of Rural Development from time to time.
- SEGF pools resources from Centre (Central Share) and State (State Share) and cause its deployment within the districts as per their fund requirements. Interest accruing on account of MGNREGA funds should be a part of the SEGF and shall be spent only in accordance with instructions of the Central Government.
- The SEGF shall ensure district-wise effective fund management under MGNREGA. The agency designated for fund management in a State should have a status different from the State Government. Generally, the State Funds are managed by self-regulating Societies registered under the Societies Registration Act.

Q33. What are the types of complaints under MGNREGA?

The complaints received in the Ministry are broadly on the following issues:

- Non-involvement of Gram Sabha in selection of works
- Non-issuance of Job Cards
- Non-availability of worksite facilities like crèche, drinking water, first aid box etc.
- Non-payment of Unemployment Allowance
- Not providing works within the time-frame
- Delay in payment of wages under MGNREGA
- Irregularities in selection of beneficiaries

- Delay in completion of projects
- Purchase of material without following prescribed procedure
- Embezzlement /Misappropriation of funds
- Involvement of contractors
- Execution of inadmissible works.

Q34. What is social audit?

Social Audit is the critical stock taking of any programme or scheme by the community with active involvement of the primary stakeholders. It includes audit of the quality of works being executed at different levels along with the details of disbursements made, the number of labourers employed and materials used. The people in coordination with local administration will conduct social audit.

Q35. What is the objective of Social Audit?

The basic objective of social audit is to ensure public accountability in the implementation of projects, laws and policies.

Q36. What is the frequency of conduct of Social Audits?

As per Para 25(c) of Schedule I social audit should be conducted at least once in every six months. As per Para 25(b) of Schedule I, concurrent social audit shall be done for all works every month.

Q37. What is Ombudsman?

The word ‘ombudsman’ derives from the Swedish word ombudsman which in turn is based on the Old Norse “umboosmaor” meaning representative. An Ombudsman is one who advocates for fairness, equity and administrative efficiency.

Q38. Who selects Ombudsman and what is the process?

On recommendation of Selection Committee comprising Additional Chief Secretary of the State (Chairperson), Representative of Union Ministry of Rural Development, eminent Civil Society Person nominated by Union Ministry of Rural Development and Principal Secretary / Secretary of Department dealing with Mahatma Gandhi NREGA (Member Convener), State Government appoints ombudsman. The Selection Committee shall prepare a panel of suitable persons who shall be considered for appointment as ombudsman. The panel of names suggested will be put up in the public domain and comments/suggestions will be invited. No person who is a member of a political party shall be considered for appointment as ombudsman.

Q39. What are the powers of Ombudsman?

- Receive complaints from MGNREGA workers and others on specified matters, consider such complaints and facilitate their disposal in accordance with law
- Issue direction for conducting spot investigation
- Initiate proceedings Suo motu in the event of any need arising within his jurisdiction that may cause any grievance.
- Engage experts for facilitating the disposal of the complaint.
- Suggest redressal, disciplinary and corrective actions

- Report findings to the District Programme Coordinator (DPC) of the district and the Secretary, State Nodal Department.

Q40. What are the duties of Ombudsman?

- Ombudsman will be responsible for proper processing of complaints and grievances made or reported to him/her.
- Ombudsman will furnish a report every year containing a general review of activities of the office of the Ombudsman during the preceding financial year to the Chief Secretary (CS) and the Secretary, State Nodal Department along with such other information as may be considered necessary by him/her.
- Ombudsman will compile a list of 'awards' between April and March of each financial year in respect of every MGNREGA Authority complained against and report it to the Chief Secretary of the State and the State Nodal Department. Text of awards shall also be displayed on the MGNREGA website by the State Nodal Department.

Source: https://nrega.nic.in/Circular_Archive/archive/nrega_doc_FAQs.pdf

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