

ABSTRACT

After independence India, ushered into the era of planned development and one of the major thrust of the successive Five Year Plans has been to generate employment opportunities so that the problem of unemployment might be tackled. The government has made several efforts both in terms of starting new and innovative schemes as also providing funds to generate employment in the rural areas. However, despite that the problem of unemployment could not be tackled and rather it is becoming graver. This highlighted the need of more concerted efforts towards solving the problem of unemployment in India and the need to devise some right-based employment programme was realized. This culminated into the enactment of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Programme in 2005.

The significance of MNREGA lies in the fact that it creates a right-based framework for wage employment programmes and makes the government legally accountable for providing employment to those who ask for it. This Act was introduced with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primarily semi or unskilled work to people living in rural India whether or not they are below the poverty line. It was initially called NREGA but was renamed on October 2, 2009 as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

The MNREGA can never meet its objectives without the active participation of people in its implementation. And in this context, transparency and social accountability has an indispensable role to play as a tool in the hands of the poor to fight leakages, claim entitlements and make the MNREGA meaningful for themselves. Transparency means that decisions taken and their enforcement are done in a manner that follows rules and regulations. It also means information is freely available and directly assessable to those who will be affected by this decision. Social accountability is a process of engagement with government to check the conduct and performance of public officials and service providers. The Act developed a new relation between officials and citizens as service providers (panchayat functionaries) and client (beneficiaries) to ensure transparency and social accountability in implementation. The supposition of this thesis has an attempt to review the transparency and accountability in implementation of MGNREGS. The thesis demonstrates this relation through study of six blocks of three districts by

secondary and primary data generated from beneficiaries, panchayat functionaries, block and district programme officials of the Scheme.

Key Words: MGNREGA, transparency, social accountability.