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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TAIWAN'S REAL ESTATE BOOM TO THE BANK'S FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE <i>CHENG-WEN LEE, CHIA-JUI PENG & WEN-CHUAN FU</i>	1
2.	RELIGIOSITY EFFECTS: PREDICTORS OF SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT AMONG MUSLIMS IN INDIA <i>MOHAMMED SHAKEEL</i>	6
3.	OCCUPATIONAL ROLE STRESS IN BANKING SECTOR: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE <i>BULBUL KAR & DR. BISWADEEP MISHRA</i>	13
4.	EFFECTS OF THE GLOBALIZATION ON INDIAN ECONOMY <i>MOHD. IRFAN & DR. ANIL KUMAR YADAV</i>	19
5.	GREEN BUILDING IN INDIA: A MOVE TOWARDS SUSTAINABILITY <i>SHERIN CYRIAC & JITHIN JOY</i>	22
6.	FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF DISTRICT CENTRAL CO-OPERATIVE BANKS (DCCBs) IN HARYANA <i>HARDEEP KAUR</i>	27
7.	A STUDY ON CUSTOMER PERCEPTION TOWARDS THE SERVICES OFFERED IN RETAIL BANKING BY SOUTH INDIAN BANK VADAVALLI BRANCH, COIMBATORE CITY <i>LINDA MARY SIMON</i>	32
8.	TOWARDS THE NEED OF EFFICIENCY - SEEKING FDI FOR A FASTER AND MORE INCLUSIVE GROWTH IN INDIA <i>B. N. LALITHCHANDRA</i>	35
9.	ANALYSING INSOLVENCY RISK OF SELECTED INDIAN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS THROUGH CAMEL PARAMETER <i>MUKESH KESHARI</i>	39
10.	GENERAL PRACTICES OF CONSUMERS DURING PURCHASE AND USE OF TEXTILE PRODUCTS: A SURVEY REPORT <i>DR. MINAKSHI JAIN</i>	48
11.	INDIA IS AGEING: ARE WE PREPARED? <i>SNEHA BHAT</i>	52
12.	ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA) WITH REFERENCE TO THE STATE OF HARYANA <i>GEETIKA</i>	54
13.	THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT ON STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP, JOB SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE OF REGIONAL WORK CIVIL UNITS EMPLOYEES IN MALUKU TENGGARA BARAT REGENCY, MALUKU PROVINCE <i>BALTHASAR WATUNGLAWAR & BUDIMAN CHRISTIANANTA</i>	58
14.	OWNER FACTORS AFFECTING THE GROWTH OF MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES (MSEs) IN ETHIOPIA: A CASE STUDY IN SHIRE INDASELASSIE TOWN, TIGRAY <i>HAFTOM HAILE ABAY, DR. FISSEHA GIRMAY TEMANU & ARAYA HAGOS GEBREEGZIABHER</i>	66
15.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF RURAL CUSTOMER'S SATISFACTION AND CONSUMER AWARENESS FROM E-BANKING IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BRAHMAVAR <i>MALLIKA A SHETTY & SUMALATHA</i>	73
16.	FINANCIAL ANALYSIS OF FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT COMPANIES IN INDIA <i>DR. T. MADHU SUDANA</i>	78
17.	STATUS OF MUSLIM WOMEN ENTREPRENEUR IN INDIA: A MUSLIM MINORITY COUNTRY <i>DR. SABIHA KHATOON</i>	85
18.	NOVICE TO SPECIALIST - THROUGH TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT <i>MIHIR DILIP KALAMBI</i>	89
19.	THE FOUR CORNERS OF POLLUTER PAYS PRINCIPLE IN INDIA <i>SAMEER RAMNATH CHAVAN</i>	94
20.	COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NON-PERFORMING ASSETS AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS <i>AMAN GROVER</i>	97
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK & DISCLAIMER	107

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ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA) WITH REFERENCE TO THE STATE OF HARYANA

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), is the flagship programme of the Government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is the first ever law internationally that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The primary objective of the Act is augmenting wage employment and its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. The process outcomes include strengthening grass-root processes of democracy and infusing transparency and accountability in governance. Keeping this view, the authors have made an attempt to review the performance of MGNREGA as the main objective of this paper. It also explains the objectives, features, permissible works under this Act and funding pattern of MGNREGA.

KEYWORDS

MGNREGA, Performance, Rural Employment, Households, Persons-days.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian government has taken up various measures to overcome the problem of poverty. Poverty alleviation programmes comprising of wage employment programmes, rural housing schemes and a public distribution system have been initiated from time to time. Some were partially successful in addressing the issue of poverty whereas others suffered from major flaws in their implementation. National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-99; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999- 2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) since September 2001; National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) since November 14, 2004 (SGRY and NFFWP now merged with NREGS 2005) were national level rural employment generation schemes. However these programmes could not provide social security to the rural poor. The Central Government launched NREGA on February 2, 2006. The Act guarantees the right to work to by providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. NREGA is the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment on an unprecedented scale. Its auxiliary objective is to strengthen natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development.

The outcomes include strengthening grassroots processes of democracy and infusing transparency and accountability in governance. NREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have 100 percent urban population. NREGA provides a statutory guarantee of wage employment and is demand driven which ensures that employment is provided where and when it is most needed. The legal mandate of providing employment in a time bound manner is underpinned by the provision of an Unemployment Allowance. The right to work brings security in people's lives. Today, labourers cannot count on employment being provided to them during the lean season. An employment guarantee gives labourers more confidence in the prospect of local employment, and discourages seasonal migration.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To explain the concept and evolution of MGNREGA;
- To discuss about the objectives and salient features of MGNREGA;
- To review the performance and current status of MGNREGA with reference to Haryana.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data collected for the study includes secondary data. The various sources used to collect secondary data include reports of MGNREGA, research papers, journals and the website of MGNREGA.

IV. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The Act received assent of the President on September 5, 2005 and was notified in the Gazette of India on September 7, 2005. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) on 2 October 2009. The Act was legalized and notified in 200 districts in the first phase with effect from February 2nd 2006 and then extended to an additional 130 districts in the financial year 2007-2008 out of it 113 districts were notified with effect from April 1st 2007, and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh were notified with effect from May 15th 2007. The remaining districts have been notified under MGNREGA with effect from April 1st 2008. Thus, the MGNREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population.

OBJECTIVES OF MGNREGA

MGNREGA is a powerful instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment. Its important objectives are:

1. Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India through providing employment opportunities;
2. Livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity;
3. Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India;
4. Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation;
5. Strengthening decentralized, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives;
6. Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions;
7. Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance;

SALIENT FEATURES OF MGNREGA

1. Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, may apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat.

2. The Gram Panchayat after due verification will issue a Job Card. The Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA and is free of cost.
3. The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application.
4. A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat, stating the time and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be fifteen.
5. The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.
6. Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid. Liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the States.
7. Work should ordinarily be provided within 5 km radius of the village. In case work is provided beyond 5 km, extra wages of 10% are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses.
8. Wages are to be paid according to the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural labourers in the State, unless the Centre notifies a wage rate which will not be less than Rs. 60/ per day. Equal wages will be provided to both men and women.
9. Wages are to be paid according to piece rate or daily rate. Disbursement of wages has to be done on weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case.
10. Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) have a principal role in planning and implementation.
11. At least one-third beneficiaries shall be women who have registered and requested work under the scheme.
12. Each district has to prepare a shelf of projects. The selected works to provide employment are to be selected from the list of permissible works. The different categories of permissible works are as follows:
 - Water Conservation and water harvesting;
 - Drought Proofing (including plantation and afforestation);
 - Irrigation canals including micro and minor irrigation works;
 - Provision of irrigation facility, horticulture plantation and land development facilities to land owned by households belonging to the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes or below poverty line families or to beneficiaries of land reforms or to the beneficiaries under the Indira Awas Yojana of the Government of India or that of the small farmers or marginal farmers as defined in the Agriculture Debt waiver & debt relief schemes or beneficiaries under the Scheduled Tribes & other traditional forest dwellers (recognition of forest right) Act 2006;
 - Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of tanks;
 - Land Development;
 - Flood control and protection works including drainage in water logged areas;
 - Rural Connectivity to provide all-weather access. The construction of roads may include culverts where necessary, and within the village area may be taken up along with drains;
 - Any other work which may be notified by the Central Government in consultation with the State Government.

In addition construction of Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra as Village Knowledge Resource Centres and Gram Panchayat Bhawan at Gram Panchayat level has also been notified by the Central Government.

The shelf of projects has to be prepared on the basis of priority assigned by Gram Sabha. At least 50% of works have to be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution. The cost of material component of projects including the wages of the skilled and semi-skilled workers taken up under the Scheme shall not exceed forty percent of the total project costs. Contractors and use of labour displacing machinery are prohibited. Work site facilities such as crèche, drinking water, shade have to be provided. The shelf of projects for a village will be recommended by the Gram Sabha and approved by the Zila Panchayat.

- At least 50% of works will be allotted to gram Panchayats for execution.
- Permissible works predominantly include water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development works.
- A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained. No contractors and machinery is allowed.
- The Central Government bears the 100% wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 % of the material cost including the wages of skilled and semi skilled workers.
- Social Audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha at least once in every six months.
- Grievance redressal mechanisms have to be put in place for ensuring a responsive implementation process.
- All accounts and records relating to the Scheme should be available for public scrutiny and to any person desirous of obtaining a copy of such records, on demand and after paying a specified fee.

CURRENT STATUS OF MGNREGA

In financial year 2014-15, (upto December, 2014) 3.77 Crore households were provided employment and 120.88 Crore person-days of employment were generated. The enhanced wage earnings have led to a strengthening of the livelihood resource base of the rural poor in India; 72 percent of funds utilized were in the form of wages paid to the workers. Self targeting in nature, the programme has high work participation for marginalized groups like SC/STs (40%) and Women (49%) in 2014-15 (upto December, 2015). Total works undertaken were 62.72 lakh in the same period, of which 53 percent relates to Water Conservation, 12 percent for the provision of Irrigation facility to lands owned by SC/ST/BPL/S&M Farmers and IAY beneficiaries, 22 percent for Rural Connectivity, 9 percent for Land Development, 4 percent for Any other activity approved by MoRD and 0.37 percent for Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Sewa Kendra. Women participation in financial year upto December, 2014 was 49% and the participation of SC & ST in financial year upto December, 2014 is 40%. With special reference to Haryana, the following tables show the current status of MGNREGA:

TABLE 1: WORK STATUS OF DISTRICTS OF HARYANA FOR YEAR 2014-15

S No.	District	FINANCIAL YEAR 2014-2015			
		No. of Works started	No. of Works started whose estimated completion date is over	Out of Coln(20) No. of Work Completed	Work Completion Rate
1	2	3	4	5	6=(Coln(5)*100/Coln(4))
1	AMBALA	536	446	24	5.381
2	BHIWANI	1014	555	39	7.027
3	FARIDABAD	52	31	3	9.677
4	FATEHABAD	1543	1226	230	18.76
5	GURGAON	97	57	7	12.281
6	HISAR	2840	2655	262	9.868
7	JHAJJAR	797	757	46	6.077
8	JIND	514	413	17	4.116
9	KAITHAL	392	177	12	6.78
10	KARNAL	892	743	75	10.094
11	KURUKSHETRA	728	622	15	2.412
12	MAHENDRAGARH	817	255	32	12.549
13	MEWAT	504	429	180	41.958
14	PALWAL	365	343	31	9.038
15	PANCHKULA	526	268	83	30.97
16	PANIPAT	381	126	51	40.476
17	REWARI	202	120	39	32.5
18	ROHTAK	266	205	30	14.634
19	SIRSA	1725	1501	129	8.594
20	SONIPAT	193	148	7	4.73
21	YAMUNANAGAR	800	423	128	30.26
	Total	15184	11500	1440	12.522

In the above table, work status for different districts of Haryana for the year 2014-15 is given. This shows that the total number of works started in the said year is 15184 and the work completion rate comes out to be 12.522%.

TABLE 2: TOTAL WORK STATUS OF DISTRICTS OF HARYANA SINCE INCEPTION OF MGNREGA

S No.	District	Total			
		No. of Works started	No. of Works started whose estimated completion date is over	Out of Coln(24) No. of Work Completed	Work Completion Rate
1	2	3	4	5	6=(Coln(5)*100/Coln(4))
1	AMBALA	3518	3413	2607	76.384
2	BHIWANI	4225	3666	2761	75.314
3	FARIDABAD	214	192	143	74.479
4	FATEHABAD	5565	5087	3923	77.118
5	GURGAON	391	346	261	75.434
6	HISAR	10571	10374	7136	68.787
7	JHAJJAR	1736	1695	919	54.218
8	JIND	2217	2110	1518	71.943
9	KAITHAL	1683	1445	1229	85.052
10	KARNAL	2881	2732	1702	62.299
11	KURUKSHETRA	2011	1905	1153	60.525
12	MAHENDRAGARH	6528	5950	5416	91.025
13	MEWAT	3064	2989	2615	87.487
14	PALWAL	1324	1301	922	70.869
15	PANCHKULA	2583	2311	1996	86.37
16	PANIPAT	1775	1451	1292	89.042
17	REWARI	1312	1224	1107	90.441
18	ROHTAK	1331	1267	1018	80.347
19	SIRSA	10480	10243	7596	74.158
20	SONIPAT	981	936	647	69.124
21	YAMUNANAGAR	3821	3435	2618	76.215
	Total	68211	64072	48579	75.819

In the above table, total work status for different districts of Haryana since the inception of MGNREGA is given. This shows that the total number of works started till today is 68211 and the work completion rate comes out to be 75.819%.

V. SUMMARY

Since its inception, the Act has generated 1112.03 Crore person-days. The average wage earned has risen from Rs. 65 per person day in 2006 to Rs. 100 by 2011. The Number of households has increased significantly from 3.39 Crores in 2007-08 to 5.49 Crores in 2010-11 and upto December'2014 MGNREGA has provided employment to 3.77 Crore households generating 120.88 Crore person-days. Total Job Cards issued were doubled during the study period i.e. 6.48 Crores in 2007-08 and 12.07 Crores in 2014-15. The number of Districts have also increased from 330 to 626 during the period from 2007-08 to 2014-15. In 2009-10, number of person-days created was 283.59 Crores which declined to 257.15 Crore person-days in 2010-11. In total person-days, Scheduled Castes' share has increased significantly from 27 per cent in 2007-08 to 31 per cent in 2014-15. The share of Scheduled Tribes in total person-days created has declined from 29 per cent in 2007-08 to 25 per cent in 2008-09 and during 2014-15 it was 21 per cent. Women-days increased significantly from 61.15 Crores in 2007-08 to 122.74 Crores in 2014-15. Budget outlay was Rs.12000 Crores in the year 2007-08 and increased to Rs.40100 Crores in 2014-15.

The enhanced wage earnings have led to a strengthening of the livelihood resource base of the rural poor in India; 72 percent of funds utilized were in the form of wages paid to the workers. Self targeting in nature, the programme has high work participation for marginalized groups like SC/STs (40%) and Women (49%) in 2014-15 (upto December, 2014). Total works undertaken were 62.72 lakh in the same period, of which 53 percent relates to Water Conservation, 12 percent for the provision of Irrigation facility to lands owned by SC/ST/BPL/S&M Farmers and IAY beneficiaries, 22 percent for Rural Connectivity, 9 percent for Land

Development, 4 percent for Any other activity approved by MoRD and 0.37 percent for Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendra. Women participation in current financial year upto December, 2014 was 49 percent and the participation of SCs & STs in current financial year upto December, 2014 is 40 percent.

VI. CONCLUSION

India's MGNREGA is the only Act which gives its rural people such a right and that too in the era of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization (LPG). It has a vital role to play because of its humane approach. It serves as an effective safety net for the unemployed especially during famine and drought. It has enabled them with sufficient purchasing power and they are able to at least to supports their basic necessity i.e. food. The Act has confined the rural poor to their areas and stopped migration to the cities. It is not only giving rural livelihoods but also involving them in other non-agricultural work. This has helped in handling disguised workers. Employment in other non-agricultural work will also improve the rural infrastructure i.e. rural asset building. It will ultimately lead to sustainable development.

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