

# The Positive Impact Of Mnrega Scheme On Unskilled Rural Labour During Pandemic Covid 19: An Empirical Study In Uttar Pradesh

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## ABSTRACT:

When the pandemic crisis was destroying the human life and job of all people working in the service sector, manufacturing sector, micro small and medium enterprises sector at the global level and factory workers were removed from factory owners due to a global lockdown near every country then in India labour either skilled or unskilled were facing many problems no hand and only one scheme at that time was stand-alone to provide local labour job, especially for unskilled labour of India. the mane of this famous scheme was MNREGA .it means mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act. In other words, work her hand in rural labour. The objective of this article is to study the impact of this scheme on rural and unskilled labour during COVID 19. and to study the benefit of working of labour to utilise the land and water-conserving system in India, especially in Uttar Pradesh. Especially it has allowed women of India to empower themselves and be ultimately happy by earning and increasing the GDP of the country.

## INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, direct pay work is an appealing tool for reducing poverty. Multiple goals have been sought after by employment programmes. They not only offer employment prospects in times of floods, droughts, and other natural calamities but also during poor agricultural seasons. They build rural infrastructure that facilitates further economic activity. By luring individuals into public works programmes and so reducing the labour supply and increasing the demand for labour, these programmes also increase market pay rates (Yadav et al 2022a). According to Dr M. S. Swami Nathan, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), which focuses on water management and soil conservation, has the potential to grow into the world's largest environmental food security

programme. Gandhi, Mahatma Any rural household with adults willing to perform unskilled manual labour is entitled to 100 days of employment per fiscal year under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 (MGNREGA (Yadav et al 2022b)). The passage of this Act is a critical step in the achievement of the right to employment. Enhancing the economic and social infrastructure in rural as it is also anticipated to improve people's livelihoods over time. Every enrolled person will receive an employment card from the Village Panchayat. The scheme's standout features include equal pay for men and women and payment of the statutory minimum salary of Rs. 200 (Yadav et al 2022c).

**An important feature of the MNREGA scheme for the welfare of labour in rural India**

The following time-bound promise is made: a. Employment will be offered within 15 days of **(a) job application.**

(b) The responsibility for paying the daily unemployment allowance in cash falls on the states if employment is not found within 15 days.

### **Decentralized planning:**

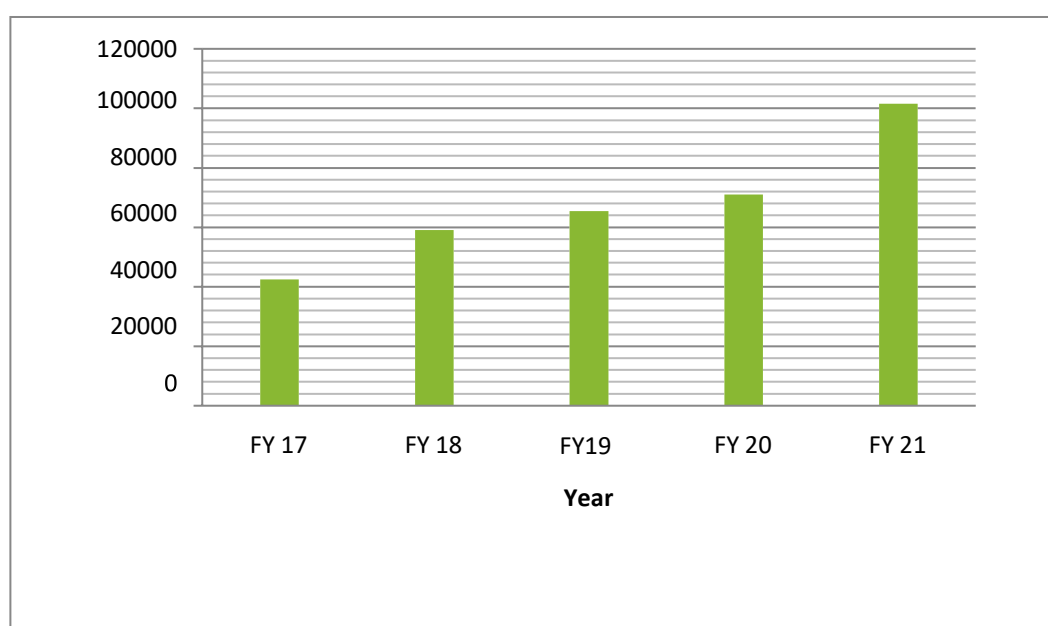
(a.) The household must submit a written or verbal registration request to the local gram panchayat.

(b.) The gram panchayat will give the household an employment card following proper verification. All adults living in the family who are willing to work under the NREGA will have their pictures on the job card.

(c) Gram panchayats must be given at least 50% of the task to complete. At least one-third of those assigned to work are women, which promotes women's empowerment. must be female. b. Women made up 48% of the workforce in the 2008–2009 fiscal year. c. In 2008, Tamil Nadu (80%) and Kerala (84%) recorded the greatest levels of female engagement. Water conservation and water harvesting (30%), drought proofing (25%) flood control and protection (18%), land

development (15%), and rural connection are all permitted projects (12 per cent)

Many people began working in the MGNREGA scheme for daily pay to support themselves and their daily bread. There is a sizable reverse movement from urban to rural areas, which has increased the demand for employment in MGNREGA. Taking this into account, the government has allocated a large budget for the programme that would almost exceed 71000 billion in 2020 and one lakh billion in 2021, as stated in (figure 1). To ensure that people could find work easily and receive payment on schedule, the government raised its budget. The number of jobs has increased during the year 2020, which is proof that there is a significant labour force in rural areas (Yadav et al 2022d). Figure 2 illustrates how the number of works has increased to 202 lakhs from prior years. When compared to before Covid, the number of households has dramatically expanded (figure 3) to 68,81,176 people, and incomes have significantly increased (figure 5), which ultimately talks about the dependence of rural livelihood on the MGNREGA program, especially during Covid periods. The wages have increased from 160 in 2017 to 205 in 2020, and are projected to climb by another Rs. 260 in shortlyYadavav et al 2022e). See figure 1.



**Figure: I Budget allocation by Government towards MGNREGA during Pandemic year.**

Way to Increase Wages and Increase Work Duration from 100 Days to 200 Days?

Precautions Employed by MGNREGA Participants MGNREGA plays another significant function during Pandemic COVID-19, which is especially critical during COVID-19 periods.

It serves as a guide for creating the terms of engagement for employing labour in rural areas by applying best practices. It provides measures such as temperature monitoring, masks, hand washing facilities, minimum distances, maintaining sufficient hydration, etc. to ensure safe working conditions for employees. In the long run, it results in the production of enduring

Mission of MGNREGA Supporting Rural Livelihoods During the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Covid-19 epidemic began in 2019 and grew serious in the first year of 2020. Beginning in March 2020, the government announced a complete lockdown. It is a disaster to see how people are starting to move back to their villages from urban areas. Considering the current circumstances, larger as millions of people are anticipated to rely on MGNREGA for employment, the government had begun to consider extending the working week to 100, 150, or 200 days. (Yadav et al 2022g). With a budget of 50,000 crores, the Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan aims to hire migrant workers who returned home during the lockdown. The programme includes Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, and Odisha among its six covered states. It includes a provision allowing migrants to work for 125 days in 25 different types of jobs, including SSE, (Yadav et al 2022h)

The minister added that the government has been making every effort to pay programme

participants' wages in full, placing a strong emphasis on social audits of projects to promote accountability and transparency (Yadav et al 2022i). The government has allotted an all-time high of Rs. 1,11,500 crores for the current fiscal year. Of this, the states and UTs have already received roughly Rs 93,000 core. Records show that during the current fiscal year, job cards for more than 182.2 lakh new families have been issued under the programme (2020-21). This amount, which spans from April 1 to September 3, is noteworthy since it exceeds the annual increase for the previous seven years, for which data is accessible on the NREGA webpage. This represents an increase of 28.32% over the 64.70 lakh new work cards issued throughout the full 2019–20 fiscal year. It's crucial to note that the demand for new job cards coincides with a huge migrant population returning to their communities following the nationwide lockdown that occurred during the first wave of Covid-19 (Yadav et al 2022j). Of the 182.2 lakh new job cards, the highest number of wage seekers have been added in Uttar Pradesh (38.8 lakh), followed by Bihar (21.3 lakh), Despite being a centralized pan-Indian Act, the NREGA is implemented at the local level of Indian administration through decentralized procedures. State governments have also increased the implementation during and after the national lockdown due to the Central government's strong push. According to performance data, states like Mizoram, Tripura, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Andhra Pradesh outperformed other states in terms of hiring wage earners during the peak of the corona epidemic, which was from April to November 2020. It is obvious that a state with high capacity—in terms of its organizational and human resources, readiness, and ability to connect with civil society and potential beneficiaries—is better positioned for success than a state with poor capacity. implementation capacity in times of humanitarian disaster.

**Table 1-Average days of employment provided per HHs in FY 2020-2021 up to (March 25, 2021)**

State	Average days of Employment
Mizoram	92.84
Tripura	73.11
Meghalaya	67.93
Ladakh	65.00
Kerala	61.88
Madhya Pradesh	61.14
Rajasthan	59.72
Chhattisgarh	57.65
Manipur	57.05
Sikkim	55.76
Odisha	54.64

Arunachal Pradesh	53.98
Jammu And Kashmir	52.48
Himachal Pradesh	52.27
West Bengal	51.62
Andhra Pradesh	51.08
India	49.94
Tamil Nadu	48.55
Karnataka	48.33
Jharkhand	45.68
Uttarakhand	45.40
Nagaland	45.14
Bihar	43.65
Gujarat	42.10
Uttar Pradesh	41.28
Maharashtra	39.66
Haryana	38.77
Punjab	38.55
Telangana	37.63
Assam	35.58
Andaman And Nicobar	33.14
Lakshadweep	29.53

Goa	25.81
Puducherry	22.06

Source: nrega.nic.in.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Even though there is much research that has been done on MNREGA when we study the role of MNREGA in the upliftment of labour in rural India during pandemic time then a short of literature is available in this sector one data from (Aseedri Ujhla 2022) has given on the upliftment of labour by the MNREGA and professor Ravinder Chaudhary from the TISS in 202221 has given humanitarian effect of MNREGA during Lockdown The Central government appears to have been inspired to reposition the welfare architecture as the cornerstone of the aspirational Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan (Self-Reliant India) in response to this increased policy commitment to it. Campaign). In other words, whether on purpose or accidentally, NREGA has evolved into the most effective political tool for achieving the core objectives of humanitarian action—saving lives, reducing human suffering, and minimising the disastrous effects of catastrophes on the economy and society. A cursory peek at the NREGA performance data reveals that during the peak of the corona epidemic, person-days April and October 2020, NREGA had given more than 253 crore person days of percent remarkable accomplishment that represented an in-person -days per cent over the same period the year prior. However, the person days created by crores inclusion of the FY 2020–21 up to March 25, 2021, totalled 372.2 crore, an increase of 40% over the FY 2019–20. The contribution NREGA has made to reducing the social and economic impact of the Corona pandemic in India is amply supported by this (yadav et al 2022k).

## OBJECTIVE

- To study the impact of the pandemic in India and Indian migrant workers.

- To study the role of MNREGA during Pandemic 19 for improving the quality of life of labour in rural India, especially in Uttar Pradesh.
- Some recommendations for better performance of MNREGA in future.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Even for fulfilling this objective secondary data has been taken from various government reports submitted in the budget 2022 and different ministries like panchayat raj, farmland farmer's welfare, and food processing ministry. Figures and tables have been adopted from some reputed journals that have government submissions or some government projects that have well primary data about the financial years some literature and variable has been taken from magazine journal and other information from newspaper like the workers tribune, business standard time of India, and the Dainik Jagran. The author has self-cited some of his former data in this research article for making it more utilisation (Yadav et al 2022l)

New Delhi: The programme has been praised as a "lifesaver" for that worker that went to other states but due to the lockdown declaration they returned to their home state last year, and they became jobless so the Uttar Pradesh government decided to give some minimum wages and on this basis, they will have to work form land reform, local roads making, pond receivable etc. This is the most recent proof that one of the safety nets accessible to workers in the unorganised sector is MNREGA (the wire 2022).

Meanwhile, the union minister has charge of the financial department Mrs Nirmala Sitharaman, has mentioned 68000 crores in the pool of Rural and MNREGA scheme in the financial years 2021-22 in MNREGA (yadav et

al 2022m). this was a historical boosting budget donation in the welfare of labour and through MNREGA. This NREGA record-breaking funding underscores that, in addition to budgetary support, a proactive political commitment is necessary to unleash the

NREGA's transformative potential in rural India and avert the humanitarian crisis. The government claims that its recent announcement will contribute to producing nearly 300 crore person-days overall.

**Table 2 compares household employment and personals created until March 25 for the fiscal years 2020–21 and 2019–20.**

	FY 2019-2020	FY 2020-2021 Upto March	% of Increase
HH worked	54826655	74542971	35.96
Person days	2653749300	3722676190	40.28

Source: nrega.nic.in. Accessed on April 10, 2021

**Table 3-Comparison of Household provided employment and person-days generated with previous year from April to October FY2020-21 with the previous year**

	April to October FY 2019-20	April to October FY 2020-21	% of Increase
HH worked	21633171	38954832	80.07
Person days	1597724969	2530667811	58.39

Source: nrega.nic.in. Accessed on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2020

From table 2 it has been clear that The government of Uttar Pradesh and other mind states admired the scheme in a report which has the theme "Implications of COVID-19 on Uttar Pradesh on Climate, Energy, Development Perspectives and Emissions," which was delivered by CM of Uttar Pradesh Mr Yogi Adityanath last year. The state government's work guarantee programme for rural residents, known as MGNREGA, has pre-counteracted a low wage that each worker can survive easily on this payment (minimum wage). It was introduced in 2006 by the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) administration, which is overseen by Congress (Ghosh et al 2010).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced labourers to return to their homes, and the MGNREGA plan

of guaranteed employment saved their lives, the report stated( Business standard 2022), (times of india 2022).

It was made obvious how important MGNREGA is for giving unorganised employees a source of income when finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved an additional allocation of Rs 40,000 crore for the plan last year. These workers lost their jobs or were unable to find work as a result of the shutdown (the tribune 2022).

According to Sitharaman, "it will contribute to generating over 300 crore person days overall, meeting the need for extra work, including returning migrant workers in the monsoon season as well." The salaries under MGNREGA

are minimum pay compared to what these migrants were making in cities, yet they nevertheless believe that it is enough to support their families through COVID-19-related crises, according to the Gujarat government's assessment (Singh R. et al 2007), (Harish Singh 2012).

The minimum salary under the MGNREGA has increased from the previous wage of Rs 198 per day to Rs 224 per day. Fortunately, they were able to save more money by staying in their own village, as opposed to spending it on travel and rent, according to the study, which was produced by the state's climate change department in collaboration with IIM Ahmedabad and IIT Gandhinagar (Chand Ramesh 2022).

## RECOMMENDATION

The report used instances of villages in the tribally predominate Dahod district, which provided the greatest number of employment under the plan at the time, to illustrate the "good function of MGNREGA in assisting those vulnerable to pandemic sustain livelihood."

According to the article, "about one lakh" migrant workers returned to their communities in Dahod after the COVID-19 shutdown last year. According to the Indian Express, despite the government's efforts to create employment prospects, "MGNREGA has proven a lifesaver" for these labourers (Mani Sobha et al 2013). During the Covid-instigated national lockdown, the country's flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Work Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) emerged as a vital source of employment for wage seekers, particularly the returnee migrant labourers (Ayier et al 2009).

This fiscal year has already produced 344 crore person-days of employment, a record level (2020-21). It has increased by roughly 44% over the same time last fiscal (Indumathi 2012). As a result of the assistance MGNREGA gave to migratory workers returning to their communities, 1.69 crore new employment cards were given this year as opposed to 69

lakhs the year before (Bhalla et al 2007). Additionally, this has led to the creation of almost 72 lakh durable and practical assets. With the combined efforts of the Union and state governments, 4.29 crore assets have been geo-tagged (Yadav et al 2022p). According to Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, who made the announcement at a programme last week, "the total person-days created under the MGNREGA during the current financial year includes 52% women person-days." In order to promote transparency and accountability, the government has been working to ensure that MGNREGA workers' wages are paid in full and places a strong emphasis on social audits projects (yadav et al 2022o).

The flagship programme has received an all-time high allocation of Rs. 1,11,500 crores during the current fiscal year. The states and UTs have already received an amount of roughly Rs 93,000 core. The government's resolve to get more funding for the programme in the event (yadav et al 2022n)

## CONCLUSION

From the above sectors, we have seen that all sectors when suffering from national wide lockdown then Indian unskilled labour were doing some constructive work to help the positive support to their family, generating income, creative work forming lands, pond and It may sound extreme and difficult, But once this happens, a more secular and all-encompassing policy—ONE NATION, ONE NREGA—could also unleash the untapped entrepreneurial energies of the rural poor, institutionalise associational forms of community bargaining power, and encourage more equity in the emerging market structures in our villages (yadav et al 2022), resulting in new types of multiplier-accelerator effects of income support welfare programmes. As the second wave of the coronavirus has transformed into a Tsunami that is cruelly murdering individuals in different regions of the country, social supervision programmes

like MGNREGA are crucial to maintaining people's faith in life and livelihoods (Yadav et al 2021a). In other words, we must acknowledge that MGNREGA must be combined with innovative governance reforms to successfully address the unprecedented humanitarian tragedy.

## RESULTS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The pandemic has made decentralised government more crucial. Gram Panchayats should be given sufficient funding, authority, and responsibility to approve projects, deliver work as needed, and approve wage payments to prevent payment delays. MGNREGA has stepped in to support the country in its fight against rising poverty. To maximise its usability, reach, and value, even programmes like Swachh Bharat and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are being combined (yadav et al 2021b). Demand for MGNREGA employment has increased due to the size of reverse migration. Taking into account the MGNREGA's reach and effect on the rural poor The plan should increase working hours and pay in order to give rural residents a stable means of subsistence. Speaking at the 22nd meeting of the Central Employment Guarantee Council, Tomar stated, "In this current financial year 2020–21 under the shadow of COVID-19 pandemic, Mahatma Gandhi NREGS has performed its vital role in giving paid employment to the wage seekers. Tomar claims that during the current fiscal year, women made up roughly 52 per cent of all person days created, reflecting their strong participation in the programme. "To date, employment has been created for a total of 344 crore person-days, which is a record-high number. This is a 44 per cent increase over the same period last year, he said. The minister reaffirmed that, should it be necessary, the government is determined to make arrangements for additional funding for the programme.

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