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# **An Overview of MNREGA in Bikaner**

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To enhance livelihood security in rural areas of the country, an Act was passed on September 7, 2005 known as NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) with the joint collaboration of Govt. of India and United Nations Development Programme. The Act has provision to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members' volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Later this scheme was renamed as MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)

### **SALIENT FEATURES OF THE ACT**

1. Panchayat raj institutions have a principal role in planning and implementation of the Act.
2. Any adult members of the rural household family may apply for employment if they are willing to do unskilled manual work by applying to the local gram panchayat in writing or orally.
3. The gram panchayat will issue a job card with photographs of all adult members of the household, free of cost.
4. Employment will be given within 15 days of applying. If employment is not provided within 15 days, daily unemployment allowance in cash, has to be paid (liability of unemployment allowance lies on the state).
5. At least one-third of persons to whom work is allotted have to be women.
6. Wages are to be paid according to the minimum wages as prescribed under the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural laborers in the state, unless the centre notifies a wage rate which will not be less than Rs. 60 /- per day on weekly basis.

### **OBJECTIVES OF MNREGA**

1. To augment secure wage employment in rural areas in the country.
2. Sustainable development by strengthening natural resource management
3. To eradicate root causes of poverty like- draught, deforestation, soil erosion, floods and poor rural connectivity.
4. To strengthen the position of women in the development of rural economy.

To lead sustainable development, multiple inputs from other schemes and programs of Govt. need to be converged with MNREGA works. Conversions of works related to NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT will not only enhance the quality of work being executed but also promote livelihood opportunities for NREGS workers through creation of durable assets and value addition to assets created under MNREGA. Implementation of the convergence programs will be jointly monitored by MORD and concerned ministry/ department.

### **WORKS COVERED UNDER NREGA**

1. Water conservation
2. Draught proofing(including plantation and afforestation)
3. Flood protection
4. Land development
5. Miner irrigation, horticulture and land development on the land of SC/ST/BPL.
6. Land reform beneficiaries
7. Rural connectivity



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The shelf of project 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. A 60:40 wage and material ratio has to be maintained. Contractors and use labor displacing machinery is prohibited.

### CONTRIBUTIN OF MNREGA IN BIKANER

The Bikaner district was covered under NREGA from April 2008. Earlier it was covered under the SGRY scheme which was based on resources allotted by the centre. Bikaner district has a combination of Indira Gandhi Canal Network with the age old dunes. The subsoil water in some areas is not potable. The deep bored tube wells have enabled cultivation of wheat in some areas. The road network is good, yet, most villages are linked by graveled tracks. The study area of Bikaner is lying in the vicinity of modern Bhagirathi of Marusthali i.e. Indira Gandhi Canal or Indira Gandhi Nahar Pariyojna (IGNP)..

#### The salient features of the area are: -

1. A very high difference between summer and winter temperatures (from absolute values of about 50<sup>0</sup> C to 4-5 degrees with occasional frost-sometimes up to 0<sup>0</sup>C).
2. High diurnal variation of temperature.
3. Low and unreliable rainfall normally ranging from 100 to 400 mm per annum (Average rainfall in the area is 311.45mm per annum).
4. Correspondingly low humidity and high evapo-transpiration ratio (which reach 10 to 11mm/d in summer).
5. Frequent drought years.
6. High summer wind velocity averaging between 20 to 35 km/ h.
7. A widespread cover of blown sand with varying degrees of stabilization. Extensive areas of sand dunes, mostly stable with relative relief from a few m to over 50 m.
8. Corresponding sparse, xerophytes vegetation, which is very vulnerable to over exploitation, for uses such as animal grazing and fuel.
9. Saline to Highly saline ground water deep below the surface, perched ground water of better quality is found at places.

Despite these hostile conditions this part of the north-western Rajasthan is said to be one of the most populated desert in the world but now it is prone to increasing depredation of natural vegetation under the pressures of grazing, cultivation and settlement.

In the harsh climatic conditions, rain fed crop production is totally dependent upon the monsoon rainfall and is a big gamble to the people. The average yields of the crops are very low as compared to either rest of the Rajasthan or India as a whole. IGNP has a great impact on settlement and agriculture of the study area. In this background NREGA is a boon to the sustainable development.

### ORGANISATION AND THE SYSTEM OF IMPLEMENTATION OF NREGA IN BIKANER

1. In Bikaner district there are 805 villages, 219 Gram Panchayat and 5 Panchayat samities. The district is divided into five blocks i.e. Bikaner, Dungargarh, Kolayat, Lunkaransar and Nokha. Each block has a program officer who is hired on a contractual basis on a monthly salary of about Rs. 10000. At the village level the NREGA program has Rozgar Sahayak also on contract with a monthly salary of Rs. 2500. In addition approximately two/three data operators are employed at the block level for data entry.

2. At the district level, the deputy commissioner implements the scheme through DRDA (District Rural Development Authority). The deputy commissioner is referred to as the district program coordinator

3. The deputy commissioner of Bikaner is the chief executive officer of the scheme in the district. The fund allocation from the central Govt. is based on the budget estimate and the list of works recommended



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4. Broadband connectivity is available at the block level for storage and sharing of information that can be accessed on the internet.

### IMPLEMENTATION

1. The funds are available to various gram panchayats. They can either implement the works by themselves; assign them to PWD, irrigation department, health, forest or other governmental agencies. As contractual work is not permitted, other agencies are not keen to take up projects/ works under NREGA. Most works are executed by the panchayats under suitable assistance from the engineering staffs hired under NREGA at the block / district level. Payment to workers is based on measurement of the work done. These measurements are mostly based on the group of 5 men/ women working as a group.
2. Job card holders who desired to work give an application to the Sarpanch who has the works duly approved by the program officer at the block. Most works start on monthly basis. Those who apply for work must be given work within 15 days. Otherwise, they have to be given unemployment allowance which is approximately 50 % of the daily wages which Rs. 100 /-

In Bikaner, NREGA programs are oriented towards the following

1. Water storage for drinking and agriculture.
2. Digging of taals(ponds) to store water in the rainy season.
3. Constructing village tracks of local gravel.

Since the inception of NREGA following work activities are going on to achieve the target:-

**Rural Connectivity (Table 1.1A)**

	Work completed	Going on
<b>Nos.</b>	343	5684
<b>Km.</b>	565	19750
<b>Expenditure (in lacs Rs.)</b>	2825	26449.63

**Water conservation and water harvesting (Table 1.1B)**

(Digging of new tanks / ponds, percolation tanks, small checks dams etc.)

	Work completed	Going on
<b>Nos.</b>	273	2055
<b>Cu. Mt.</b>	21.50	160000
<b>expenditure (in lacs Rs)</b>	3225	10504.4

**Drought proofing (Table 1.1C) (afforestation and tree plantation)**

	Work completed	Going on
<b>Nos.</b>	10	531
<b>Hect.</b>	50	2305
<b>Expenditure (in lacs Rs)</b>	50	378.5



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**Micro irrigation works.** (Table 1.1D) (Minor irrigation, canals and others)

	Work completed	Going on
<b>Nos.</b>	30	260
<b>Km.</b>	60	378
<b>Expenditure (in lacs Rs)</b>	750	1290.65

**Provision of irrigation facilities to land owned by-** SC, ST, Beneficiaries of Land reforms and Indira Awas Yojna and others (Table 1.1E)

	Work completed	Going on
<b>Nos.</b>	2500	11306
<b>Hect.</b>	1400	7391
<b>Expenditure (in lacs Rs)</b>	1750	8428.90

**Renovation of traditional water bodies** (desilting of tanks /ponds, desilting of old canals and traditional open tanks) (Table 1.1F)

	Work completed	Going on
<b>Nos.</b>	0	475
<b>Cu. Mt.</b>	0	5800000
<b>Expenditure (in lacs Rs)</b>	0	2139.91

To complete the above mentioned works the following table depicts the position of employment generation in Bikaner upto 2009-10 (Table 1.2)

S.N.	No of registered household	Bikaner	Rajasthan
1.	No of registered household	308882	9156166
	A. SC	44244	
	B. ST	2998	
	C. OTHERS	2,61,640	
2.	Job card issued	308882	9156166
3.	Employment provided		
	A.HOUSEHOLD	139812	4711533
	B.PERSONS	1,95,798	68,12,731
	C.PERSONDAYS	59,15,276	20,70,48,529
	D.WOMEN	30,35,035(61%)	69% (40%N.AV.)
4.	No. of families completed 100 days	99808	2,08000
5.	No. of families beneficiaries of land reforms/Indira Awas Yojna	79260	----
6.	On going works	8968	2,72,595

Source:- GOI,MORD



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Period wise Employment provided (2009-10) (Table 1.3)

S.N.		BIKANER	RAJASTHAN
1.	Less than 15 days Household employed	31,391	9,37,705
2.	More than 15 days Household employed	1,08,421	37,73,828
3.	100 days completed No. of families	99808	208000
4.	100 days completed(women)	7800	

Source:-Office:Jila Parishad (rural development cell), Bikaner

### Analysis:-

Since Bikaner is deprived of any permanent source of water, neither Perennial River nor enough precipitation contributed in the development of the area. So the development activities has affected adversely. The western part, in which the study area lies, receives low average rainfall. Droughts and famines are the regular features in this part of Rajasthan. The main source of water in Bikaner is the groundwater and the water from IGNP. So top priority is given to water conservation and water harvesting, renovation of traditional water bodies and related work. Indra Gandhi canal water is being taken to the fields. Sum of Rs. 10504 lacs.(table 1.1B) are proposed to spend on digging of new tanks, ponds, percolation tanks and small checks dams under MNREGA.

Under MNREGA about 1,60,000 cu.mt. water storage capacity through digging new tanks/ponds, percolation tanks has been proposed out of which 21.50 cu.mt. water storage capacity has completed till Dec.09. So the main focus is on deepening of canals and constructing water harvesting system, renovation of traditional water bodies with desilting of tanks/ponds, desilting of old canals, desilting of traditional open wells are also in priority along with water conservation with the proposed expenditure of Rs.2139.91cr. (table 1.1F) under NREGA

There is also a provision to provide irrigation facilities to land owned by SC, ST and beneficiaries of Indra Awas Yojna who are not capable for batter irrigation facilities due to paucity of funds. Till now under MNREGA 1400hect. Land is benefited with the expenditure of Rs.1750/-lacs (table 1.1E) and work is going on 73.94hect. with due expenditure of Rs.8428.90lacs. and this is going to facilitate about 11306 SC and ST families. Micro irrigation works are also in progress with the expenditure of Rs.1290.65lacs (table 1.1D). Work on drought proofing including afforestation and tree plantation is also going on with Rs.378.5lacs.on 2305hect. (1.1C)

A well developed and systematic infrastructure contribute not only in the enhancement of income but also it make capable to an administrative body to utilize its natural and human resources optimally i.e. better natural resource management which is the prime object of MNREGA. Therefore rural connectivity has also been kept on priority to strengthen the infrastructure so that other works could easily be performed. Numerous tracks are being constructed under MNREGA, some of these tracks will later enable the prime minister's road construction projects to be implemented and provide tarmac roads. Upto Dec. 09 565km track has been completed with the expenditure of 2825 lacs Rs. (table 1.1A)

As far as position of employment generation is concerned about 1 lac 40 thousand household are provided employment. (Table 1.2) This is 2.97% of the total household provided employment in Rajasthan against 3.37% registered household. 61% women labour are engaged with NREGS lower than state level (69%) but more than national level (40%). In case of period wise employment provided under MNREGA the no. of families completed 100 days are 99808 .No. of women completed 100 days is 7800 till now (table 1.3). Work category wise most of the labour force are engaged in water conservation and water harvesting and renovation of traditional water bodies. About 2,31,000 laborers from 1,98,000 families got their job under NREGA and are paid wages through banks/post office on the basis of length of task (office: Jila Parishad, Bikaner).

Since NREGA is nascent stage in Bikaner, it is too early to assess the actual impact of this public policy initiation at macro level but impacts of NREGA can be seen in future.



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1. Active role of PRIs in implementation.
2. Increased participation of women workforce/ women empowerment.
3. Increase in bargaining power of working class in private sector.
4. Creation of rural assets.
5. Development of rural infrastructure.
6. Sharp decline in migration as majority of workers used to move to Gujarat/MP
7. Increase in awareness of workforce about the basic entitlements.
8. Increased participation of local habitants.

## CONCLUSION

Apart from MNREGA many more development schemes like SGSY, PMGSY, BADP, and IAY, MID DAY MEAL etc. are running under PRIs but majority of workers are preferring work under NREGA due to direct job availability, duly payment of wages and transparency in working system. Although it may lead to a wide spread corruption and enormous wastage of public investment, exploitation of laborers but these type of hurdles can be tackled by a vigilant society to monitor the programme. Till now 805 vigilant committees are formed in which 621 complains were registered, 412 cases have disposed. Hence NREGA is a significant development towards the eradication of poverty, create employment opportunities, and check migration and development of rural assets and infrastructure. It is a guaranteed employment act where the role of grass root level organization PRIs to develop awareness and capacity among local people is significant to make it successful.

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