

# Impact Of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) In Rural Livelihood In The District Of Bongaigaon In Assam

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## *Abstract*

National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (or, NREGA, later renamed as the "Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" or MGNREGA), is an Indian labor law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'. This act was passed in September 2005 under the UPA government of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.

It aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

## **Introduction:**

The act was first proposed in 1991 by P.V. Narasimha Rao. It was finally accepted in the parliament and commenced implementation in 625 districts of India. Based on this pilot experience, NREGA was scoped up to cover all the districts of India from 1 April 2008. The statute is hailed by the government as "the largest and most ambitious social security and public works programme in the world". In its World Development Report 2014, the World Bank termed it a "stellar example of rural development".

The MGNREGA was initiated with the objective of "enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work". Another aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds and wells). Employment is to

be provided within 5 km of an applicant's residence, and minimum wages are to be paid. If work is not provided within 15 days of applying, applicants are entitled to an unemployment allowance. That is, if the government fails to provide employment, it has to provide certain unemployment allowances to those people. Thus, employment under MGNREGA is a legal entitlement.

MGNREGA is to be implemented mainly by Gram Panchayats (GPs). The involvement of contractors is banned.

Apart from providing economic security and creating rural assets, NREGA can help in protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration and fostering social equity, among others."

The law provides many safeguards to promote its effective management and implementation. The act explicitly mentions the principles and agencies for implementation, list of allowed works, financing pattern, monitoring and evaluation, and most importantly the detailed measures to ensure transparency and accountability.

### **About Bongaigaon District**

The district of Bongaigaon was created on 29 September 1989 from parts of Goalpara and Kokrajhar districts and was latter further divided to make Chirang district. Bongaigaon district occupies an area of 1,093 square kilometres (422 square mile). Bongaigaon district is surrounded by Barpeta in the east, the Brahmaputra in the south and Kokrajhar in the north and west corner and share international border with Bhutan in the north.

The places that are worth visiting in Bongaigaon are eco-park, Bagheswari temple, tea garden, and Suryapahar.

In 2006, the Indian government named Bongaigaon one of the country's 250 most backward districts (out of a total of 640). It is one of the eleven districts in Assam currently receiving funds from the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF).

Bongaigaon district has three subdivisions: Bongaigaon, Bijni, and North Salmara. In 2004, parts of the Bongaigaon district (mainly areas under Bijni subdivision) were given over to form the Chirang district, under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) with its district headquarters at Kajalgaon.

There are four Assam Legislative Assembly constituencies in this district: Bongaigaon, Bijni, Abhayapuri North, and Abhayapuri South. Bijni is in the Kokrajhar Lok Sabha constituency, whilst the other three are in the Barpeta Lok Sabha constituency.

Bongaigaon is one of districts of Assam in India, Bongaigaon District population in 2022 is 811,019 (estimates as per aadhar uidai.gov.in Dec 2020 data). As per 2011 census of India, Bongaigaon District has a population of 738,804 in 2011 out of which 375,818 are male and 362,986 are female. Literate people are 434,078 out of 237,114 are male and 196,964 are female.

People living in Bongaigaon District depend on multiple skills, total workers are 255,806 out of which men are 197,542 and women are 58,264. Total 66,767 Cultivators are depended on agriculture farming out of 62,471 are cultivated by men and 4,296 are women. 24,914 people works in agricultural land as labor, men are 19,359 and 5,555 are women. Bongaigaon District sex ratio is 966 females per 1000 of males.

**Objectives of the study**

To find out the impact of MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) on rural livelihood among the people of Bongaigaon district.

**Data Collection and data analysis:**

**Table 1: Job Cards through MGNREGA in the district of Bongaigaon, Assam for the financial year of 2020-21**

| Total households applied for job card | Total job cards issued | Total job cards (SC) | Total job cards (ST) | Total job cards (non-SC/ST) |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 135073                                | 124841                 | 8057                 | 2004                 | 114780                      |

It has been observed from the above table that in the district of Bongaigaon of Assam, MGNREGA has created job cards for 124841 households, out of 135073 households which is more than 90%. Further, out of total job cards created, 6.45 % belongs to SC, 1.60 % belongs to ST and 91.94 % belongs to non-SC/ST. Hence, it can be said that the impact of MGNREGA in improving rural livelihood is quite impressive.

**Table 2: Demand and allocation for work**

| Total households demanded work | Total persons demanded work | Total households allotted work | Total persons allotted work |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 57794                          | 93808                       | 57794                          | 93808                       |

From the above table, it is observed that there is a satisfactory proportion between demand and allocation for work. Out 57794 household that demanded job under MGNREGA, 100% (57794 households) have been allocated work. Similarly, out of total persons i.e., 93808 persons demanded work, 100% (i.e., 93808 persons) have been allocated work under MGNREGA.

#### **Conclusion:**

From the above discussion, we can conclude that MGNREGA has given rise to the largest employment programme to the people in rural area of the district of Bongaigaon of Assam and it is providing a legal guarantee for wage employment. The scheme is people centric, demand driven as a great share of responsibility for the success of MGNREGA is lying with the wage seekers.

Further social audit which is an integral part of MGNREGA and this has created an accountability of performance on to the stakeholders as well as on the workers.

#### **References:**

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2. Bernstein. H., Crown. B., Johnson. H., Rural Livelihoods: Crises and Responses
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#### **Weblinks:**

1. [www.sirdassam.gov.in](http://www.sirdassam.gov.in)
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