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## RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (2005) IN TAMIL NADU

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**Abstract:** Future of rural development in India is sustainable and feasible. Rural development is the main pillar of the nation's development. In the last few years there has been paradigm shift in the strategy for rural development by focusing on decentralization through speedy and effective devolution of financial and administrative powers to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Though Panchayat (local self government) was initiated more than a decade, the recent initiative taken by the government in order to improve the quality of the life of Rural Community is National Rural Employment Guarantee Act.

**Keywords:** MNREGP, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development.

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**Introduction:** "The real India lives in the Villages. Unless we are able to uplift the tribal's and the backward classes, India faces a dark future."-Swami Vivekanda.

To begin with 'Agriculture is the back bone of Indian Economy'. Agriculture extends its full support and plays a predominant role in uplifting our Economy. A majority of people depend on their livelihood on agricultural sector, if this is the real condition that exists since from the time of society existed, utmost care should be taken as far as Rural Development is concerned. India is a land of villages. A vast majority of people depend for their livelihood on farm and non-farm activities. Since independence period many initiatives have been taken by Indian government to fight back poverty in rural areas and provide dignified life to the rural people. In post independence era both the central and state governments took many efforts in order to develop socio-economy condition of the rural masses.

To enhance the proper livelihood to the people in rural areas, Indian government has initiated definite strategies to meet the demands of the people. As far as rural development is concerned, strategy means approach adapted for the distribution of benefits of public programmes. One of the crucial things is that, the strategy must be so designed that the desired results are created through programmes. Rural development strategy is that designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group-the rural poor. As mentioned earlier there has been enormous effects have been taken by government to improve the quality of life of the rural people on par equal with urban people. The government aims at providing all the facilities to the people in villages. Hence this paper, tries to bring clear sketch about Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005(MNREGP), which was introduced to eradicate the unemployment in rural areas, at least providing 100days of work to the people who have no source of income. This paper also addresses the contemporary

status, its success and areas which need to be focused to make it more successful.

**Rural Development:** It refers to process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development does not only emphasizes on development only on agriculture perspective but also all other sectors like Education, infrastructure and entrepreneurship etc.

Hence we try to develop the rural community of the nation, serious and enormous effort have to be put up to give light to the marginalised sections.

**NREGP- Historical Perspective:** The NREGP programme is the first of its kind which promised the 100days guaranteed employment to the weaker sections of the nation. Prior to this there were many schemes implemented for the rural development, but this programme is meant exclusively for providing employment for the rural people. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is the eye-opener scheme that promotes the growth of the rural community. The policy aims at providing at least one hundred days of guarantee wage employment in a financial year to every house hold whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The act came into force on February 2, 2006 and it was not implemented in all states, it was introduced in one part of the nation and other parts<sup>4</sup>. The reason for implementing it one by one is the government will experiment the functioning of a particular policy or programme in that particular areas, hence based on the success of the implemented area. Initially it was introduced only in 200 backward districts of the nation and followed by other districts in the subsequent years. In April 2008 it was introduced in the left out states.

The feature of this policy is different from that of other employment guarantee schemes is this act also insists 33% of women participation.

**Success Of NREGP In Tamil Nadu:** Tamil Nadu is

one of the developing states in India. Since the time of Independence Tamil Nadu as a state have developed in all sectors. It's no wonder to know that it has not only developed in urban parts but also there is an unimaginable development in the rural areas too. As soon as the act got implemented by the Union Government, Tamil Nadu like other states took utmost care in proper implementation of the act in all the districts. The village panchayats play significant role in implementing the scheme. In Tamil Nadu it was implemented in the year 2005.

This scheme has provided lot job opportunities to the rural masses to enhance their livelihood in better way. Primarily, In order to ensure transparency and also to restrict mishandling the money by the government officials in each district should consists of four member committee which includes President and Vice-President of the village panchayat, SC/ST ward members, two persons from graded self-help groups and finally a representative from Panchayat Level Federation. This committee will monitor the functioning of the scheme in the respective villages.

In improving the better monitoring government has order for social audit at regular intervals. This social audit was ordered by Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu Jayalalitha has order for the formation of social audit Society of Tamil Nadu to intervene the works done under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the audit persons does not include not only the government appointed officials but also to involve five educated persons from each village panchayat working under the scheme for the audit work. This social audit society was introduced in order to prevent the fake reports produced by the government's staffs showing all the people who have applied were given job under this scheme.

The one of the reason of success of this NREGP is provided job opportunities without qualifications, because the government itself provided the job opportunities to the people. It involved women folks more than the men folks. We can say that this scheme have enriched the rural masses. Women utilised the scheme more than that of men in order empower themselves and support the men in enjoying their livelihood. Most of the districts in Tamil Nadu have benefitted through this scheme.

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Involvement of NGO's and SHG in proper implementation of this scheme is vast. NGO's were in great support to identify the people without any job and also they went to several villages and created awareness about the scheme to the rural masses. It is found that Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are the states in India which holds the top two positions in providing job opportunities to the rural people. Tamil Nadu has employed 59.37 lakh households, according to the report on January 2014.

Initially, daily wages of the employees where only Rs.100/day, but with effect from February 2011 it was increased to Rs.119/day. By increasing the daily wages, it pulled number of persons to get job opportunities to unskilled labourers. Since many people were involved the success of NREGP has reached its heights in the state of Tamil Nadu. And also Tamil Nadu is the only state which still keeps cash payments to the workers directly without involving any E-methods. The state has witnessed the difficulties among the workers in getting their wages through bank because of the long process involved.

Even though there are many acts and schemes introduced by the government of India the act, MGNREGA have tasted the success when compared to other schemes.

**Conclusion:** This act has a great impact in empowering the rural society. The job opportunities were provided only in the areas where maximum number of manual efforts can be put in without involving any machines. Being reached the desired the goal, if the problematic areas were focused this scheme will be complete success and rural community will get profit out of this. It also improved their social as well as economic status. It would be even better if number of days would be increased from 100 days to maximum days whichever is possible by the government, it should be helpful for the people as well as for the government to administer the scheme. Regular monitoring has to done to withhold its standard. It's part of the government to

Maintain genuinely. Each and every move about the scheme should be made transparent to the people. If proper care taken, this act will be more successful, also useful for the rural masses.