

## BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MGNREGA SCHEME: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF OBSTACLES AND CONSTRAINTS IN RURAL AREAS OF JODHPUR

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the obstacles and constraints in the effective implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in rural India. The primary objective is to identify the challenges that hinder the scheme's efficiency, focusing on delays in wage payments, wage discrepancies, discrimination, and logistical barriers. The study also explores structural constraints such as lack of information, transparency, grievance redressal mechanisms, and institutional monitoring. A quantitative approach was adopted, with data collected from 376 respondents across rural areas, analyzed using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to assess the significance of identified obstacles. The findings reveal that significant obstacles include delays in wage payments (74.73%), wages below the minimum wage (63.83%), and discriminatory practices based on gender and caste (79.79% and 74.47%, respectively). Moreover, constraints like lack of information (66.5%) and inadequate grievance redressal (55.9%) were identified as major barriers. The study concludes that these challenges significantly impact the scheme's implementation and require urgent attention to improve its performance and ensure its intended objectives of providing adequate employment and improving livelihoods in rural India.*

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**Keywords:** MGNREGA, Discrimination, Implementation Obstacles, Rural Employment, Social Constraints, Grievance Redressal, Institutional Monitoring.

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### Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was introduced in 2005 as a flagship program aimed at providing guaranteed wage employment to rural households in India. The primary objective of the scheme is to improve rural livelihoods, create sustainable economic opportunities, and reduce poverty by offering 100 days of wage employment annually to adult members of rural households willing to do unskilled manual labor. While MGNREGA has been widely recognized for its potential in empowering rural communities, the effective implementation of the scheme has faced several challenges. Despite its successes, the program has not been immune to issues related to delays in wage payments, discrepancies in the distribution of wages, and socio-economic barriers that hinder equitable access to employment opportunities.

This study focuses on identifying and analyzing the various obstacles and constraints that affect the efficient implementation of MGNREGA. Although the program has the potential to significantly improve rural employment and economic stability, several reports have highlighted systemic inefficiencies and challenges that undermine its intended impact. These include delayed payments, non-compliance with minimum wage regulations, issues with accessing financial institutions for wage disbursement, and pervasive discrimination based on gender, caste, and religion in work allocation. Additionally, structural

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issues such as lack of transparency, insufficient institutional monitoring, and inadequate grievance redressal mechanisms have contributed to a gap between the program's design and its actual implementation on the ground.

Through a comprehensive quantitative analysis, this paper aims to identify the key obstacles that hinder the smooth functioning of the MGNREGA scheme and their implications for its success. By examining the responses of rural households regarding the delays in wage payments, the quality of work assigned, and the presence of discriminatory practices, the study provides an evidence-based understanding of the gaps in the program. The findings of this research aim to inform policymakers and stakeholders in the rural development sector about the critical areas that require urgent attention for improving the operational efficiency of MGNREGA. Ultimately, addressing these obstacles is crucial for ensuring that MGNREGA fulfills its promise of providing sustainable livelihoods and equitable development opportunities in rural India.

### **Research Objectives**

- To identify and analyze the major obstacles in the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme.
- To examine the constraints that affect the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the MGNREGA scheme.

### **Research Significance**

The research is significant as it provides valuable insights into the operational challenges and social barriers in the implementation of MGNREGA, a flagship rural employment program in India. By identifying key obstacles such as delayed payments, discrimination, and logistical issues, the study highlights the urgent need for policy reform to address these barriers. Additionally, understanding constraints like the lack of transparency, information, and grievance redressal mechanisms can help inform future improvements to enhance the scheme's efficiency, ensuring it achieves its objectives of providing sustainable livelihoods and social equity in rural areas.

### **Review of Literature**

Salin & Leelavathi (2014) examine the impact of MGNREGA on women's participation in rural Andhra Pradesh, highlighting factors that influence women's engagement with the program. Key factors include proximity to work (within 5 kilometers), a minimum wage above private sector levels, and reduced exploitation risks. Workplace norms have been adapted to suit women, with piece-rate pay and the formation of women's organizations. MGNREGA's fixed working hours (7 hours/day) offer predictability, making it more accessible. The study emphasizes that women's increased economic independence through MGNREGA improves their ability to make decisions on health, education, and family welfare. It also suggests extending women's work hours to enhance the program's impact. Overall, MGNREGA is seen as a tool for women's empowerment and household well-being in rural areas.

Das, S. K. (2013) - "A Scanning of the MNREGA's Performance in Assam" Assam was chosen as the case study because of its unique challenges in implementing the MNREGA. The above statement highlighted the program's strong benefit in decreasing emigration, decreasing food insecurity, and increasing income. Women in rural areas were able to exert more influence and make better decisions after they were required to join the labour force. However, several obstacles prevented the plan from being effectively implemented, including inadequate worker amenities and the use of unregistered contractors. Several initiatives and adjustments were suggested in the study to help overcome these obstacles and boost the project's effectiveness.

Katharina Raabe, Regina Birner, et al. (2010): This study utilised Process-Influence Mapping, a novel participatory research technique, to gain insight into the governance difficulties experienced during the implementation of MNREGA. The study looked specifically at problems with large social safety net programmes like MNREGA, such as elite entrapment, leakage, and corruption. By analysing administrative procedures and identifying the underlying factors contributing to inadequate management and misappropriation of funds, this study sought to examine potential policy options for modifying the implementation of the MNREGA.

Dinesh, Bhurelal, and Patidar (2012): In 2012, Patidar, Bhurelal Gupta, and Dinesh conducted study on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in India. Extensive social safety net efforts, such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), were emphasised along with the problems that arose from their implementation, including elite capture, information leaks, and corrupt practises. To better understand the difficulties associated with programme implementation and governance issues, this study used the participatory research approach of Process-Influence Mapping.

Sarita Verma, Swati Rai, and Indira Bishnoi (2012): This study was carried out in the Uttar Pradesh village of Khota Mahawa with the intention of evaluating MNREGA's effectiveness. Participants showed a high level of knowledge about how to sign up for the programme, get a job card, work their required 100 hours per year, and set up a bank account to receive their paychecks, according to the study's findings. Still, it highlighted two major problems that beneficiaries face: waiting longer than expected for their wages and having trouble creating a bank account. The research showed that Gramme Pradhans made a significant contribution to the transmission of MNREGA information despite these obstacles. The findings suggest that the MNREGA has the potential to play a substantial role in reducing rural poverty by creating new job opportunities.

Khera R. (2011) - 'Wage Payments: Live without Pay?Khera's article examines the problem of late wage payments under the MNREGA, or MNREGA. The study recommends a more streamlined payment process, modelling it after the effective methods used in the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. Several states including Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and West Bengal were visited on the ground to form this suggestion. Keeping muster rolls and other records up-to-date and accurate is an integral part of the streamlining process.

### Research Gap

From reviewing the previous literature it can be seen that a thorough investigation of the MNREGA implementation issues and challenges in the rural areas of Jodhpur district is necessary. This entails looking into problems including sluggish wage payments, fraud, and administrative obstacles, as well as how they affect the program's actual results. For effective policy suggestions, it is essential to pinpoint implementation process bottlenecks and flaws.

### Research Methodology

The study adopts a quantitative research methodology using survey-based data collection. Respondents from rural areas of Jodhpur district were surveyed to assess the impact of various obstacles and constraints on the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test to determine the significance of the identified obstacles and constraints in the scheme's implementation.

### Data Analysis

**Table 1: Frequency and Percentage of Analysis of Challenges and Issues in MGNREGA Implementation**

S. No.	Question	Yes (Count)	Yes (%)	No (Count)	No (%)	Don't know (Count)	Don't know (%)
1	Is there any delay in wage payment?	281	74.73%	71	18.88%	24	6.38%
2	Is the wage paid less than the minimum wage?	240	63.83%	100	26.60%	36	9.57%
3	Do you feel the tasks given were too much compared to the wage paid?	180	47.87%	160	42.55%	36	9.57%
4	Did you face any problem accessing the post office or bank accounts for wage payment?	220	58.51%	120	31.91%	36	9.57%
5	Was the work assigned to you less than your full work ability?	200	53.19%	140	37.23%	36	9.57%
6	Have you observed any false names in the muster roll?	250	66.49%	80	21.28%	46	12.23%

7	Have you observed any gender discrimination in the allocation of work?	300	79.79%	50	13.30%	26	6.91%
8	Have you observed any caste or religion-based discrimination in the allocation of work?	280	74.47%	60	15.96%	36	9.57%
9	Have you noticed any partiality in payment distribution?	260	69.15%	90	23.94%	26	6.91%

Table 1 outlines several key challenges and issues faced by respondents in the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme. A notable concern is the delay in wage payments, with 74.73% of respondents reporting that they experience delays in receiving their wages. This issue is further exacerbated by the fact that only 18.88% of respondents reported receiving payments on time, highlighting the need for more efficient financial management within the scheme. Another significant obstacle is the wages being paid below the minimum wage, with 63.83% of respondents indicating that the wages they receive are lower than the legally mandated minimum wage, signaling a mismatch between the intended goals of MGNREGA and the actual wages provided to workers.

Furthermore, workload was another area of concern, as 47.87% of respondents felt that the tasks assigned to them were disproportionately heavy in relation to the wages paid. This perception of an unfair work-to-wage ratio could undermine the morale and overall effectiveness of the scheme. In addition, accessing wage payments through post offices or banks posed challenges for 58.51% of respondents, highlighting logistical barriers that hinder the smooth distribution of wages.

The issue of false names in the muster roll was observed by 66.49% of respondents, suggesting that the integrity of the record-keeping process could be compromised. This finding underscores the importance of ensuring accurate documentation and transparency in the scheme's operations. Similarly, gender discrimination in the allocation of work was noted by 79.79% of respondents, pointing to persistent inequalities in how work is distributed between male and female workers. Similarly, caste or religion-based discrimination in work allocation was reported by 74.47% of respondents, indicating the need for stricter enforcement of equitable work distribution practices. Finally, concerns about partiality in payment distribution were raised by 69.15% of respondents, suggesting that favoritism may play a role in how wages are disbursed under the scheme, which calls for more rigorous oversight and fair distribution mechanisms. These challenges reflect the gaps in the efficient implementation of MGNREGA and highlight areas that require immediate attention for improving the scheme's effectiveness.

To find the significant impact of obstacles on the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme following hypothesis is framed;

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Obstacles do not have a significant impact on the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme.

**H<sub>A2</sub>:** Obstacles have a significant impact on the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme.

**Table 2: One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test Obstacles while implementation of the MGNREGA scheme**

	N	Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>		Most Extreme Differences			Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Absolute	Positive	Negative		
Is there any delay in wage payment?	376	1.44	.497	.371	.371	-.311	7.198	0.000
Is the wage paid less than the minimum wage?	376	1.41	.493	.386	.386	-.296	7.490	0.000

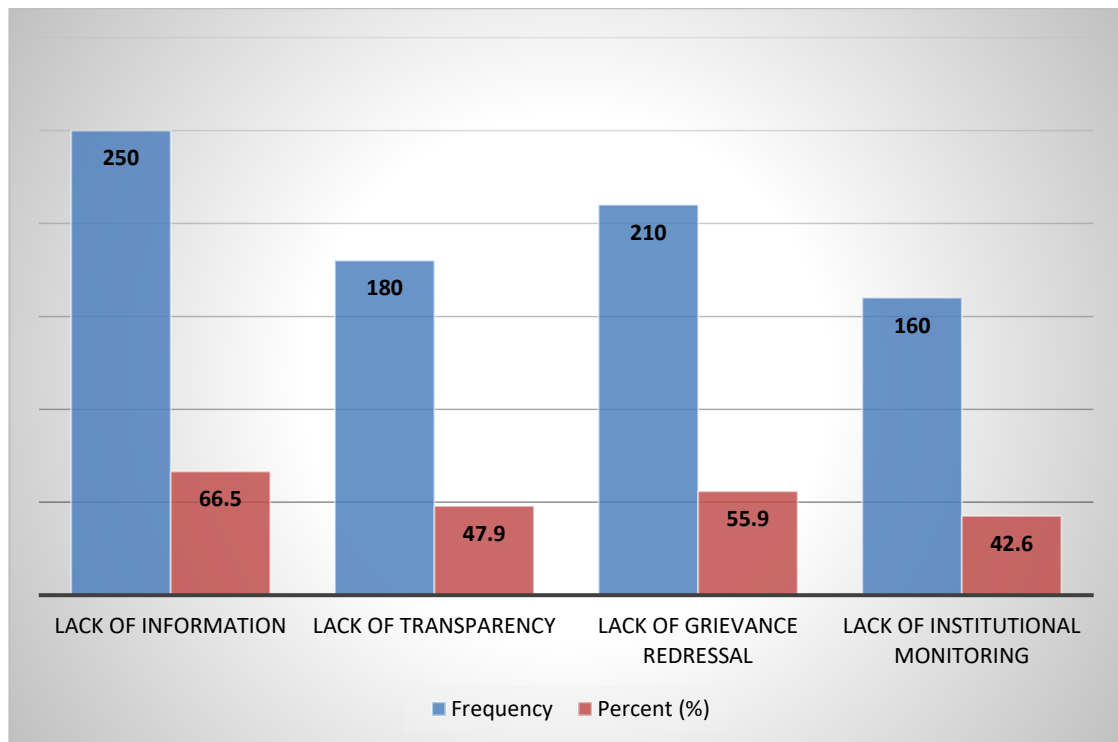
Do you feel the tasks given were too much compared to the wage paid?	376	1.78	.722	.255	.255	-.225	4.952	0.000
Did you face any problem accessing the post office or bank accounts for wage payment?	376	2.00	.747	.222	.222	-.222	4.308	0.000
Was the work assigned to you less than your full work ability?	376	1.87	.783	.245	.245	-.187	4.752	0.000
Have you observed any false names in the muster roll?	376	1.10	.316	.529	.529	-.378	10.264	0.000
Have you observed any gender discrimination in the allocation of work?	375	2.01	.640	.297	.297	-.295	5.751	0.000
Have you observed any caste or religion-based discrimination in the allocation of work?	376	1.87	.841	.277	.277	-.206	5.368	0.000
Have you noticed any partiality in payment distribution?	376	1.94	.696	.261	.252	-.261	5.063	0.000

As shown in Table 2, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z values for all the obstacles tested, including delays in wage payments, wages below the minimum wage, excessive workloads, issues with accessing payment channels, false names in the muster roll, gender discrimination, caste or religion-based discrimination, and partiality in payment distribution, are highly significant, with p-values (Asymp. Sig.) all equal to 0.000, which is less than the standard significance level of 0.05.

Given that the p-values for all the obstacles are significant, we reject the null hypothesis (H0) and accept the alternative hypothesis (HA2). This implies that the obstacles identified—such as delays in payments, wage discrepancies, access issues, and discrimination—do have a significant impact on the implementation of the MGNREGA scheme. These obstacles not only affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme but also influence its ability to achieve its intended objectives of providing adequate employment and improving livelihoods in rural areas. Thus, the analysis confirms that addressing these challenges is crucial for enhancing the performance and success of MGNREGA, ensuring that the scheme fulfills its role in rural development.

**Table 3: Frequency table of Valid Constraints**

Valid Constraints	Frequency	Percent (%)
Lack of information	250	66.5
Lack of transparency	180	47.9
Lack of grievance redressal	210	55.9
Lack of institutional monitoring	160	42.6



**Graph 1: Frequency graph for Valid Constraints**

Table 3 and Graph 1 present the frequency distribution of various valid constraints in the implementation of MGNREGA. A significant number of respondents (66.5%) identified a lack of information as a major constraint, suggesting that better communication and awareness campaigns are needed to improve the scheme's outreach. Transparency in the implementation process was also highlighted as a constraint by 47.9% of respondents, indicating concerns about the openness and clarity of procedures related to the scheme. The lack of a grievance redressal mechanism was noted by 55.9% of the respondents, suggesting that people may not have adequate channels to address issues or complaints. Additionally, 42.6% of respondents pointed out the lack of institutional monitoring as a key challenge, which may hinder the effectiveness of the scheme and its ability to address local issues. These constraints reflect critical areas that need to be addressed to enhance the efficiency and trustworthiness of the MGNREGA program.

### Conclusion

The analysis reveals that significant obstacles, including delays in wage payments, wages below the legal minimum, workload discrepancies, and discrimination based on gender and caste, undermine the effectiveness of MGNREGA. Additionally, structural constraints such as the lack of information, transparency, and grievance redressal mechanisms further hinder the implementation of the scheme. These challenges not only affect the efficiency of MGNREGA but also limit its ability to meet its goals of rural employment generation and poverty alleviation. Addressing these obstacles through policy reform and enhanced transparency is crucial for the program's success.

### Suggestions

- Implement a more transparent wage payment system with real-time updates to reduce delays and discrepancies.
- Strengthen institutional monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms to ensure fair implementation and equitable work distribution.

### Limitations

The study is limited to a specific region, and the results may not be fully generalizable to all rural areas across India due to regional variations in the implementation of MGNREGA.

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