CHAPTER IV
Registration of Beneficiaries, Issue and Management of Job Cards

The Mahatma Gandhi NREGA is an exceptional national employment scheme that ensures the right to work as a legal right for adult member of every rural household in India. It is a people oriented programme, which is primarily directed towards the poor in rural India and their fundamental right to work with dignity. It has been widely acknowledged all over India and is highly regarded as a boon to the poor in rural India (Nayak, Behra & Mishra 2009). Many macro and micro level organisations are involved in the formulation and implementation of the programme. In the implementation of the scheme on ground level, the lead role is played by the Gram Panchayat through Gram Sabha. All previous employment programmes used to provide work when governments decided to provide work, not when people demanded work. Mahatma Gandhi NREGA has changed that. The old practice of jab kaam khulega, tab kaam milega has changed to jab kaam maangege, tab kaam khulega. For this, it is required that very close attention is paid towards generating awareness among potential wage seekers and a system is being set up to facilitate and rigorously record registration for work, issuance of job cards and application for work. In this chapter, various provisions regarding the Registration, issue of Job Card and its management, allotment of job and the process of employment record keeping are discussed in detail.

4.1 Eligibility:
The MGNREGS is open to all the households in the rural area of the country. In Section 1(2f) of MGNREGA, households are defined as 'members of a family related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and normally residing together and sharing meals or holding a common ration card'. A nuclear family which comprises of mother, father and includes any person who is largely dependent on the head of the family is a Household. A single member family including single women headed houses also means household. According to the act, all the members of the households who are willing to do unskilled manual work may apply for registration. The household will be issued the job card after
the process of registration is done. The job card is the key document recording workers entitlements under MGNREGA.

4.2 Process of Household Registration under MGNREGA:
Following is the process for Households to get registered under MGNREGA for work:

I. Application for Registration:
- All adult members of households may apply for registration.
- Applicants should be resident of the same Gram Panchayat where he is applying for.
- Migrant families can also apply.
- Application can be given on plain paper to the local Gram Panchayat.
- Application should contain the names of those adult members of the household, who are interested to do unskilled manual work. Other particulars such as age, sex, caste etc. should also mention in the application.
- The State government may also make available printed forms.
- An oral request for registration can be made by the wageseeker personally.

II. Verification:
The Gram Panchayat will start verification process immediately after receiving the application for registration. The verification process shall be completed within a fortnight,

The following verifications will be done by the Gram Panchayat:
  a) Whether the applicant is local residents in the concerned Gram Panchayat
  b) Whether the household is really an unit as stated in the application
  c) Whether the members whose name are appear in the application are adult members of the households

III. Registration:
After completing the verification, the Gram Panchayat enter all details in the ‘Registration Register’ of Gram Panchayat. Every registered household will be allotted a
unique registration number. The validity of registration is five years which can also be renewed from time to time.

Registration copies will be sent to the Programme Officer for the purpose of reporting to the Intermediate Panchayat and District Panchayat, which will also be useful for further planning, tracking and recording.

Gram Sabha of registered workers helps in expressing opinions collectively and period specific demand for work by MGNREGA workers.

If any person submits incorrect information regarding his name, status etc, he will become ineligible. The Gram Panchayat will refer the matter to the Programme Officer in this case. After verifying the facts independently and giving opportunity to be heard, the Programme Officer may direct the Gram Panchayat to cancel such registration and job card. The cancellation list should be presented to the Gram Sabha and also will have to be made public.

4.3 Job Card:

The job card is the legal instrument of registered households under MGNREGA which provides entitlement for MGNREGA. Along with ensuring transparency it also protects workers against fraud.

- After verification of application, Gram Panchayat should immediately issue Job cards to every household. All the entries in job card should be signed by Authorised officer.
- After the Job card is handed over to the applicant, it must be ensured that the job card is always in the custody of the household. If it is taken by implementing agencies for some reason, it should be returned on the same day. If the Job card is found in the possession of any panchayat then it will be considered as punishable offence.
- It is necessary for all applicants to attach photographs to the job card. Apart from registered member, no other person’s photographs will be affixed nor any details
will be recorded in Job card. Job card related cost, including the photographs will be borne as part of program cost.

- A copy of all the job cards is maintained by Gram Panchayats.
- The validity of Job card is five years. If there is any change in Job card, household should report immediately. An annual updating exercise will also be undertaken by Gram panchayat. All the changes i.e. additions and deletions, made in registration register will be read out in gram sabha. The list will also be sent to the Programme officer.
- To promote awareness regarding MGNREGA, the entitlements of workers and other vital features of the act will be printed on the reverse of the job card.
- Individual identity slips will be allotted to each registered member of the family. Registration number of the household and the details given in the identity portion of job card will be mentioned in Identity slips.
- The mobile number of job card holders will be mentioned in MIS and SMS alerts would be sent in time of critical events.
- In case of loss or damage, job card holder can apply for duplicate job card to the Gram Panchayat.
- Missing entries or delay in entries in job card will be considered as violation and punishable. In case of any grievance against the non-issuance of a job card, the person may report the matter to programme officer or grievances redressal cell. All complaints shall be disposed off within 15 days.
- In the case of mass dislocation of rural population which resulted in the event of natural calamities the adult members of rural households of the affected areas may:
  i. Request for registration and get job card issued by gram panchayat or programme officer of the area of temporary location.
  ii. Submit written or oral application for work to the Programme officer or the Gram Panchayat of the area of temporary location.
- After re-establishment, the job cards issued will be re-endorsed at the original place and will be clubbed with the original job card. While computing hundred
days of guaranteed employment, the number of days of employment will also be counted.

4.4 Job Allotment:

4.4.1 Application for Work:

a. The application for work should be given to Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer. Every adult member of a registered household whose name appears in the job card will be entitled to apply for work under MGNREGA.

b. Applicant must apply for at least 14 days of continuous work but there is no upper limit on applying for the number of days of employment, or on number of days of employment actually provided to him subject to the aggregate entitlement of the household in a given financial year.

c. Application for job can be made in oral or written. An oral application can be made through a telephone or mobile or Interactive Response System or through any other means authorised by the state government. Application for work can be given on plain paper or in printed format which will be provided free of cost by the Gram Panchayat. Written Applications for work must state the following:

1. The Registration number of job card.
2. The date from which employment is required.
3. The number of days of employment required.

d. Through multiple channels like anganwadi workers, school teachers, ward members, self-help groups, common service centres etc, the provisions for submitting applications for work must be kept available. Other means of registering demand can also be introduced by DPC.

e. In order to indicate willingness to work, the workers can also present themselves at the Gram Panchayat office or at the site where work is going on. This will be recorded by Gram Rojgar Sahayak in the prescribed form and in the register of employment.

f. Applications may be submitted in advance of the date from which employment is sought. Same person can submit multiple applications provided that the corresponding periods for which employment is sought do not overlap.
g. During the year, a single application may be given for different periods. Even several applicants may also submit joint applications. It can be given by them or by an entity which have been authorised by the DPC.

h. It is necessary for the Gram Panchayat or Programme Officer, as the case may be, to accept valid applications and to issue a dated receipt to the applicant. If they refuse to accept the application or provide dated receipt, then it will be treated as an infringement.

i. Gram Panchayat will intimate the applicants who are provided with work. Information will be given by means of a letter or by a public notice board of GP office. An SMS shall be sent to workers who have given their mobile numbers.

j. Information of new applications and number of work demanded shall be conveyed to the Gram Panchayat at least once a week. Simultaneously GP shall specify the number of applicants employed and the period of employment, in that gram panchayat.

k. GP should also inform how many cannot be employed with the reason. The programme officer will ensure that the persons who can’t be employed will be provided employment in the neighbouring panchayats. NREGASoft will facilitate this process.

4.4.2 Employment Guarantee Day:

It is suggested that in each GP, a particular day of the week should be marked down as ‘Employment Guarantee Day’ for processing work application and related activities. Some activities like disclosure of information, allocation of work, payment of wages, payment of unemployment allowances etc. may be included but these should not be restricted to this particular day. Application should be accepted any time.

Work application received on employment guarantee day should be forwarded immediately to the PO. All the operations of employment guarantee day should be held in an open public space, with all provisions for proactive disclosure of information like muster rolls, employment list, unemployment allowances etc.
The dates for employment guarantee day at block, district and state level will be fixed at each level and widely publicized to encourage participation of people. All records and registers should be made available to all individuals or groups and they may allow to do scrutiny of the ongoing works. Individuals may submit requests for scrutiny of documents of completed works which shall be made available in the next employment guarantee day.

4.4.3 Timely Allocation of Work:

I. Request for work would normally be made to the GP. The GP should first allocate the ongoing works. In case there is no ongoing work then GP should start a new work from the approved shelf of projects by following the prioritisation as decided by Gram Sabhas of the GP. In case the GP is not able to provide employment due to insufficient approved shelf of projects, he must inform the PO. The PO after verification may provide works in adjacent GPs, by following the same principle viz. to offer ongoing works first.

If for the works allocated, line departments are the Implementing Agencies, PO will ensure that the concerned Implementing Agency gets the funds needed for that work. Concerned Gram Panchayat shall be intimated about the work allotted so that it can consolidate the employment data in the Employment Register at the GP.

II. GP/PO shall intimate the applicants who are provided work at the address given by applicants in the job card by proper means of communication, and also by a public notice displayed at the offices of the GP and the PO.

III. As per Para 9(1) Schedule I at least one labour intensive public work which is suitable for Particularly Vulnerable Groups specially the aged and the disabled shall be kept open at all times to provide work as per demand.

IV. While providing employment, women who have registered and requested for work under the Scheme shall be given priority in such a manner that at least one third of the beneficiaries shall be women. (Schedule II, para 15).

V. If the PO allots work after receiving the request for employment, he must inform the GP so that the employment data is consolidated in the Employment Register at the GP level and the applicant card holders are informed. The GP will also inform
the PO that employment allotments made. This information sharing should be done on a prescribed proforma on a weekly basis.

VI. Generally the applicant is provided work within 5 Kms. of his residence. In case some applicants are being directed to report for work beyond 5 kms., the workers are required to be paid 10 per cent of the wage rate as extra wages to meet additional transportation and living expenses. In NREGASoft, wages payable are calculated on the basis of distance of the worksite from place of residence. Preference should be given to women especially, single women and older persons to work on worksites nearer to their residence.

VII. Schedule II, para 14 entrusts the Gram Panchayat and PO with the responsibility of ensuring that in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme, every applicant is provided unskilled manual work within fifteen days of receipt of an application or the date from which he seeks work in case of advance application, whichever is later.

VIII. NREGASoft tracks the gap between date from which work has been sought and the date from which work has been allocated and the date of opening of work. On the basis of these, the number of days for which unemployment allowance is due is calculated in NREGASoft. The rules framed by State Government regarding payment of unemployment allowance to the workers have to be followed. This will be monitored by the State Government, DPCs and POs and required remedial measures including getting prepared an adequate shelf of projects in respective GP. Reports on payment of unemployment allowance and remedial measures taken will have to be part of the essential set of reports for the purpose of monitoring at the State level.

4.5 Unemployment Allowance:
The Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer shall be responsible for providing wage employment to the applicant within 15 days of the date of receipt of the application. In the case of advance applications, employment will be provided from the date that employment has been sought, or within 15 days of the date of application, whichever is later. If a Gram Panchayat is unable to provide employment within 15 days, it will be the
responsibility of the Programme Officer to do so. The employment allotted by the Programme Officer will be intimated to the Gram Panchayat and vice versa.

If an Implementing Agency directed by the Programme Officer does not start work on time upon receiving a request for work, or does not employ the persons directed to it for work, alternative arrangements to ensure employment for those applicants will be made by the Gram Panchayat or by the Programme Officer.

According to Section 14(d) of the Act, the District Programme Coordinator will ensure that applicants are provided employment as per their entitlements by coordinating with the Programme Officers and the Implementing Agencies. In case of failure on part of Programme Officer to provide employment, the District Programme Coordinator will make appropriate arrangements for employment.

An applicant is entitled to a daily unemployment allowance, if he or she is not provided employment within fifteen days of receipt of his/her application seeking employment:

i. The unemployment allowance will not be less than one-fourth of the wage rate for the first thirty days and not less than one-half of the wage rate for the remaining period of the financial year.

![Rate of Unemployment Allowance](image)
ii. As per the authorization given by State Government, the Programme Officer or
Gram, Block or District Panchayats shall sanction and disburse the unemployment
allowance payable to the household. State Government shall:
   a. Under section 7 (2) of Act, specify the rate of unemployment allowance
      payable
   b. Frame the rules governing the procedure for payment of unemployment
      allowance
   c. Make necessary budgetary provision for payment of unemployment allowance
iii. Ideally, on ‘employment guarantee day’ the unemployment allowances should be
     paid at the Gram Panchayat level.
iv. Every payment of unemployment allowance shall be made or offered within 15
days from when it becomes due.

If there is any delay, the recipients shall be entitled to get the compensation based on
the same principles as wage compensation under the Payment of Wages Act, 1936. As per
Section 8(2) of MGNREGA, District Programme Coordinator shall report every case of
non-payment or delayed payment of unemployment allowance in the Annual Report
submitted to the State Government along with the reasons for such non-payment or
delayed payment.

According to Section 8(3) of MGNREGA, all measures to make the payment of
unemployment allowance to the concerned household shall be taken by the State
Government as fast as possible.

State Government's liability to pay unemployment allowance to a household during any
financial year shall finish as soon as:
   a. The Gram Panchayat or the Programme Officer directs the applicant to report for
      work or depute at least one adult member of their household; or
   b. No member of the household of the applicant had turned up for employment and
      the period for which employment is sought comes to an end
c. Within the financial year, the adult members of the household of the applicant have received in total at least one hundred days of work.
d. The wages and unemployment allowance taken together by the household of the applicant is equal to the wages for one hundred days of work during the financial year.

Similarly, an applicant shall not be eligible to claim the unemployment allowance payable under this Act for a period of three months, but shall be entitled to seek employment under the Scheme at any time in the following cases:

a. If an applicant does not accept the employment provided to his/her household;
b. If an applicant does not report for work within fifteen days of being notified by the Programme Officer or the implementing agency to report for the work; or
c. If an applicant continuously remains absent from work, without obtaining a permission from the concerned implementing agency for a period of more than one week or remains absent for a total period of more than one week in any month;

4.6 Record of Employment:

- Every agency who is making payment of wages must record the amount paid and number of days for which payment has been made, on the job card.
- A copy of the muster role of the every work shall be send by Gram panchayat to the programme officer.
- The household vise employment data will be compiled by the Gram panchayat in Employment Register.
- At gram panchayat level, the task of coordinating the employment data will be done by Gram panchayat whereas at block level, Programme officer will be responsible for the same.
- The Programme officer will be in charge for ensuring the mechanism for timely sharing information between these two levels. The District Programme Coordinator will be informed immediately in case of any problems in this regard.

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