Centre releases 7,300 crore rupees to states and UTs under MGNREGA

Rural Development Minister conducted a detailed review of all flagship schemes of the Rural Development. He desired that MGNREGS works in Non-Containment Areas with adequate focus on social distancing, must be resumed in an efficient manner. The Minister said, the focus should be on creating durable assets relating to irrigation and water conservation.

Minister expressed satisfaction that over 93 thousand Self Help Group members are engaged in manufacturing of cotton protective face covers as well as sanitizers and are also running community kitchens across the country.

Under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana ( Gramin), over 800 crore rupees has been released to the States. He advised that around 40 lakh beneficiaries of this scheme who have received second and third instalment of funds must be assisted in a proactive manner to quickly complete their housing units.

About MGNREGA

MGNREGA History:

In 1991, the P.V Narashima Rao government proposed a pilot scheme for generating employment in rural areas with the following goals:

- Employment Generation for agricultural labour during the lean season.
- Infrastructure Development
- Enhanced Food Security

This scheme was called the Employment Assurance Scheme which later evolved into the MGNREGA after the merger with the Food for Work Programme in the early 2000s.

Objectives of MGNREGA:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has the following objectives:

- Provide 100 days of guaranteed wage employment to rural unskilled labour
- Increase economic security
- Decrease migration of labour from rural to urban areas

MGNREGA differentiates itself from earlier welfare schemes by taking a grassroots-driven approach to employment generation. The programmes under the act are demand driven and provide legal provisions for appeal in case, work is not provided or payments are delayed. The scheme is funded by the central government which bears the full cost of unskilled labour and 75% of the cost of material for works undertaken under this law. The central and state governments audit the works undertaken under this act through annual reports prepared by CEGC (Central Employment Guarantee Council) and the SEGC (State Employment Guarantee Councils). These reports have to be presented by the incumbent government in the legislature.
A few salient features of the scheme are:

- It gives a significant amount of control to the Gram Panchayats for managing public works, strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions. Gram Sabhas are free to accept or reject recommendations from Intermediate and District Panchayats.
- It incorporates accountability in its operational guidelines and ensures compliance and transparency at all levels.
- 60:40 LABOUR Material RATIO

Ever since the scheme was implemented, the number of jobs has increased by 240% in the past 10 years. The scheme has been successful in enhancing economic empowerment in rural India and helping overcome the exploitation of labour. The scheme has also diminished wage volatility and the gender pay gap in labour.