

CHAPTER I

Introduction

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1.1 Introduction

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, through guaranteed employment, ensures that the most vulnerable sections of society have access to opportunities for income and self-reliance, thereby promoting economic and social justice. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is vital in ensuring that work is not just a privilege but a right for all.

1.2 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 was notified in September 2005, by the Government of India (GoI), which was subsequently renamed as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) in 2009. The mandate of the Act is to enhance the livelihood of the rural population by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. As per Section 3 of MGNREGA, every State Government was required to formulate an employment guarantee scheme for rural areas to give effect to the guarantee specified in the Act.

The MGNREGA was notified in 200 districts in the country in the first phase with effect from February 02, 2006, which was extended to an additional 130 districts in the financial Year 2007-08. The MGNREGA covered the entire country with effect from 01 April 2008, except for districts that had a hundred *per cent* urban population.

MGNREGA has been recognised by the GoI as the 'core of the core' Scheme for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) -1- No poverty.

1.3 Goals of MGNREGA

The goals of the MGNREGA are as under:

- Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities;
- Livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity;
- Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India;
- Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Schedule Castes (SCs) and Schedule Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation;
- Strengthening decentralised, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives;
- Deepening democracy at the grassroots by strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions;
- Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.

1.4 Adoption of MGNREGA in the State of Maharashtra

As per Section 28 of MGNREGA, the State Government had the option of implementing its existing enactment to provide employment guarantee for unskilled manual work to rural households, provided the same was consistent with the provisions of MGNREGA.

In Maharashtra, the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act was enacted in 1977, with the objective of securing the right to work by guaranteeing employment to all adult persons who volunteered to do unskilled manual work in rural areas in the State of Maharashtra.

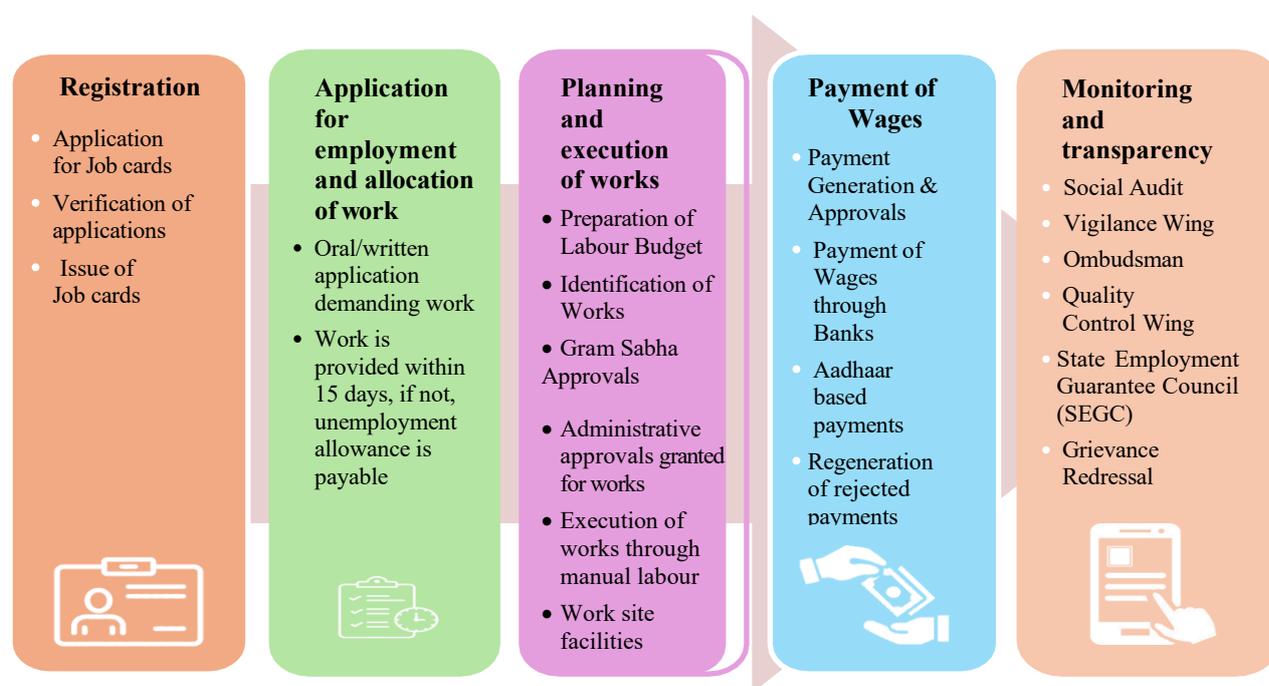
In terms of Section 28 of MGNREGA, the Government of Maharashtra (GoM) amended the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Act, 1977, from time to time to make it consistent with the provisions of MGNREGA. The amended Act is called the Maharashtra Employment Guarantee (Amendment) Act, 2014 (MEGA). The Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) formulated (January 1979) under MEGA, was renamed (July 2011) as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Scheme).

Out of 36 districts, the Scheme was implemented in 34 districts in the State, excluding the fully urbanised districts of Mumbai and Mumbai Suburban. Ministry of Rural Development, GoI guarantees at least 100 days of employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work, while GoM guarantees unskilled employment to labourers over and above 100 days, through State funds.

1.5 Overview of the Scheme

The overview of the Scheme implementation is given in **Chart 1.1**.

Chart 1.1: Overview of the Scheme implementation in the State

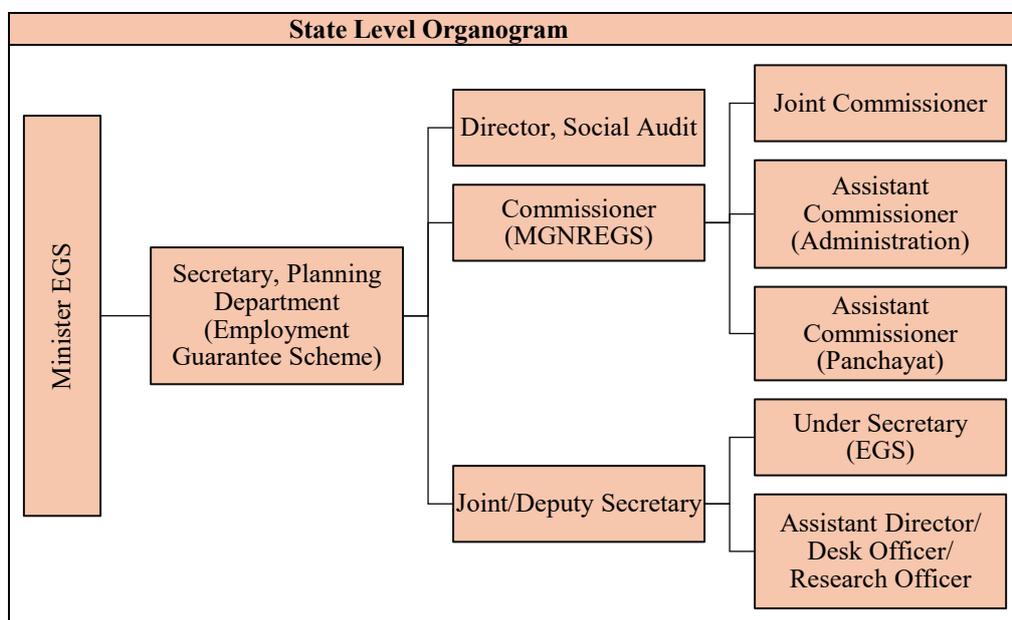


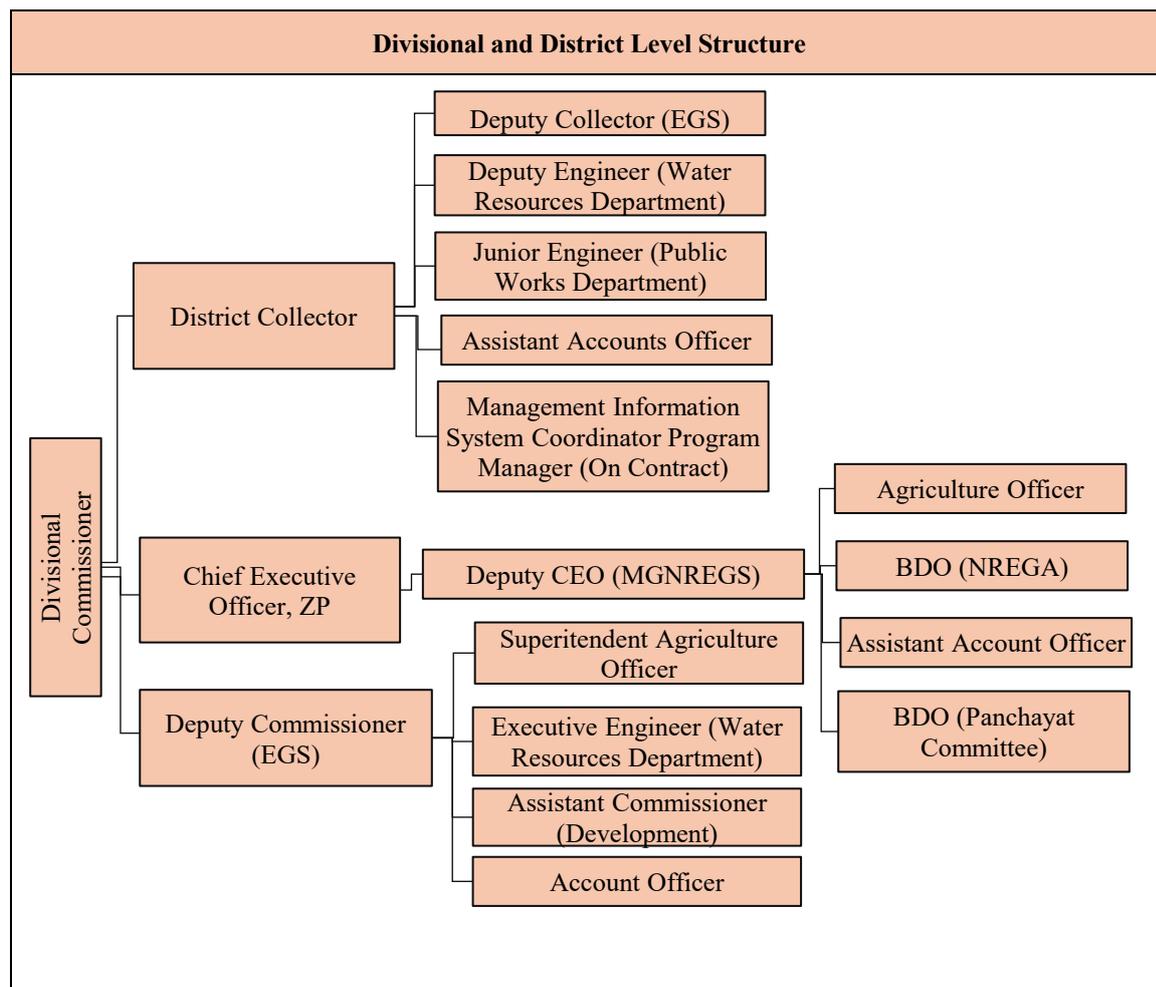
1.6 Organisational Structure

The Planning Department (EGS), Government of Maharashtra, is the Administrative Department which implements the Scheme in the State through the Commissioner, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), at Nagpur. The Director, Social Audit functioning under the Principal Secretary (EGS) was responsible for Social Audit of Gram Panchayats. The Divisional Commissioner at divisional level, District Collector at the district, Tahsildar at taluka, Chief Executive Officer of Zilla Parishad (ZP), Block Development Officer and Gram Sevak of Gram Panchayat (GP) were involved in the implementation and monitoring of the Scheme.

The Organizational structure at the State, District and Block level is represented in **Chart 1.2**

Chart 1.2: Organisational structure for implementation of the Scheme





1.7 Roles and responsibilities

The State Government designated (October 2006) the Collectors as District Programme Coordinators (DPCs) and the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of Zilla Parishads as Joint DPCs for the implementation of the Scheme in the districts.

The important roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders are given in **Table 1.1**.

Table 1.1: Roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders

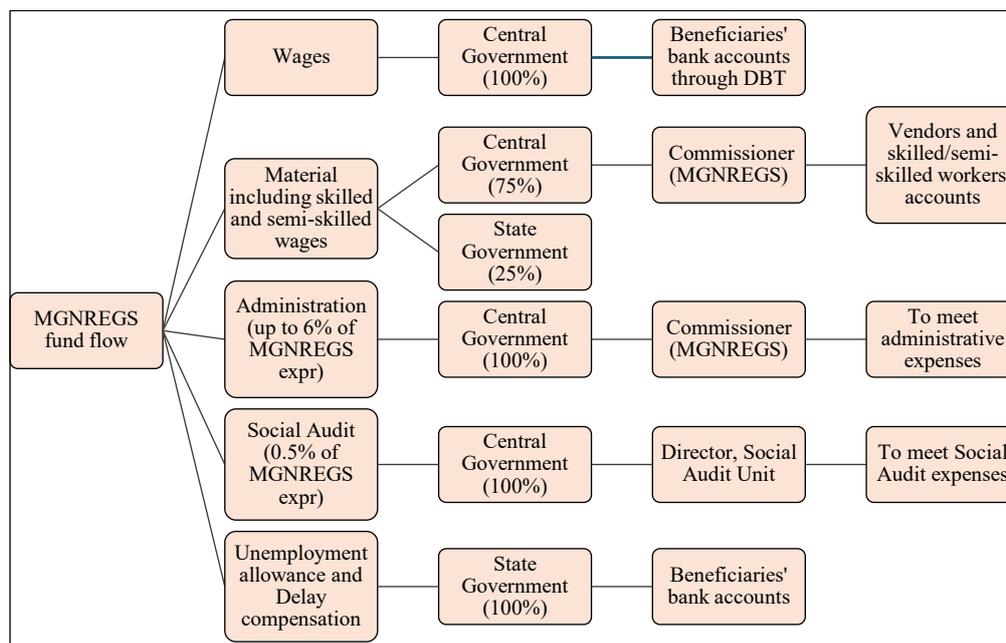
Level	Designated Officers	Roles and responsibilities
State	Secretary (EGS), Employment Guarantee Scheme	To constitute State Council for regular monitoring and review of the implementation of the Act, establish employment guarantee fund, to make available necessary staff and technical staff to District Programme Co-ordinator and the Programme Officer, issue orders for release of funds, issue instructions for the implementation of the Scheme.
	Commissioner, (MGNREGS), Nagpur	Co-ordinates with DPC, consolidates district Annual Action plan and Labour Budget, maintains accounts of employment guarantee

Level	Designated Officers	Roles and responsibilities
		fund, furnishes utilisation certificate to Government of India.
District	District Collector	Responsible for implementation of the Scheme at district level as per the Scheme, assist Zilla Parishad in discharging its functions under the Scheme, redress the grievances of the applicants.
	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Zilla Parishad (ZP)	To assist the DPC in implementation of the Scheme, approval to Annual Action plan and Labour Budget, to supervise and monitor the projects taken up at the Block level and District level.
Block/Taluka	Block Development Officer and Tahsildar are designated as Joint Programme Officer and Programme Officer. The Deputy Engineer, Public Works Department, Taluka Agriculture Officer, Range Forest Officer and officers of the Social Forestry were also designated as POs.	The Programme Officer and Joint Programme Officer assist the Panchayat Samiti in discharging its functions under the Scheme, monitor the projects taken up at Gram Panchayat and by other implementing agencies. The Block Development Officer and Tahsildar are responsible for payment of unemployment allowance to the eligible households, ensuring prompt and fair payment of wages to all labourers employed under the Scheme, taking prompt action on the objections raised in the social audit, dealing promptly with all complaints that may arise in the implementation of the Scheme.
Gram Panchayat (GP)	Village Development Officer/ Gram Sevak	Responsible for identification of the projects in GP considering the recommendations of Gram Sabha, prepare a development plan and maintain a shelf of possible works, allocate work to the applicant, and issue of job cards.
	Gram Rojgar Sahayak (GRS)	To oversee the process of registration, distribution of job cards, providing dated receipts against job applications, allocation of work to applicants, facilitating gram sabha meetings and social audits, recording attendance of labourers, updating job cards.

1.8 Funding pattern

The Scheme is implemented as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme on a cost-sharing basis between the Government of India and the State Government. The GoI bears the entire cost of wages for unskilled manual workers, and up to 75 per cent of the cost of materials including wages for skilled and semi-skilled workers (material component). The State Government bears 25 per cent of the cost of material component. The State Government also bears the total expenditure of compensation allowance for delayed payment of the wages to the workers, unemployment allowances and administrative expenses of the State Employment Guarantee Councils (SEGC). The funding pattern under the Scheme between Government of India and State Government is exhibited in **Chart 1.3**.

Chart 1.3: Funding pattern under the Scheme between Government of India and State Government



During the period 2019-20 to 2023-24, an expenditure of ₹13,518.30 crore was incurred under the Scheme in the State.

1.9 Management Information System (NREGASoft)

National Informatics Centre (NIC) in collaboration with the Ministry of Rural Development has developed a workflow based, web-enabled application known as NREGASoft which provides for recording of all transaction and details of different processes in the implementation of the Scheme. The NREGASoft captures details of workers such as name, address, bank account number *etc.*, job card details, work execution details such as work estimates, physical progress of works, expenditure on materials and labour, wages payable, unemployment allowance payable, *etc.*

NREGASoft also generates alerts for the implementing agencies informing them of important transactions, various apparent irregularities *etc.* and it is the responsibility of the implementing agencies to take necessary corrective action expeditiously.

1.10 GeoMGNREGA

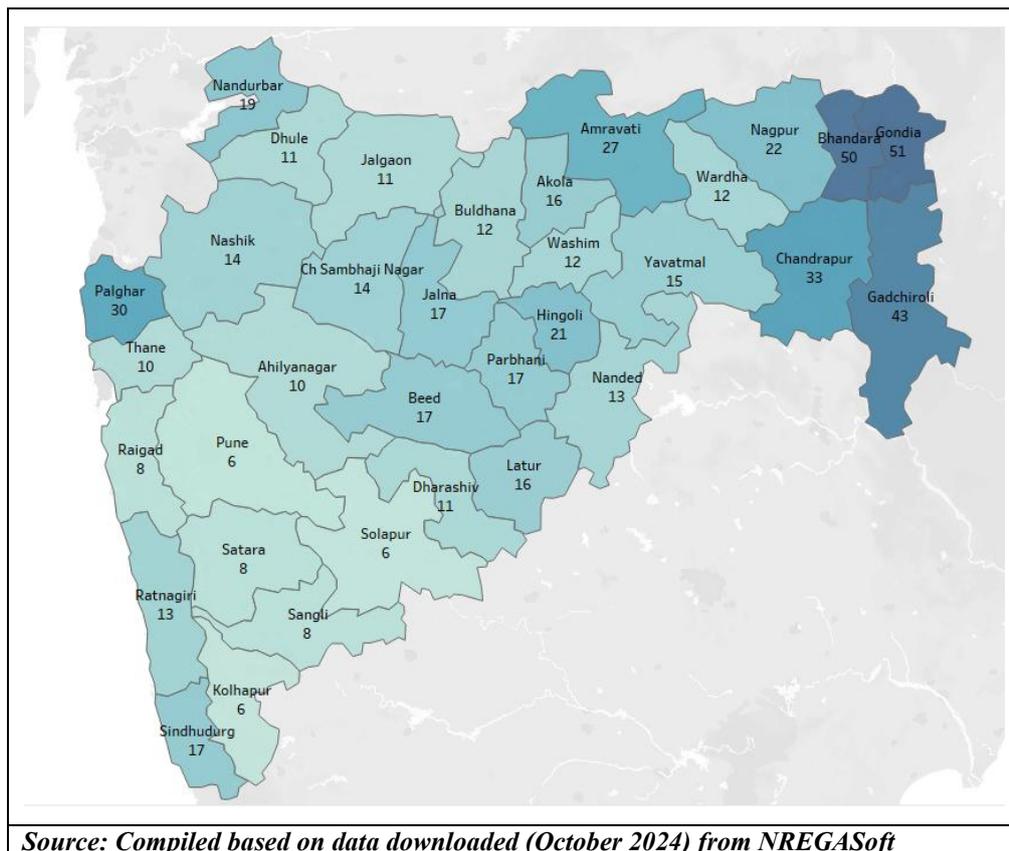
With an objective to improve the transparency and to enhance the visibility of the programme, the Ministry of Rural Development started implementation of GeoMGNREGA for geotagging of assets created under the Scheme in partnership with National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). GeoMGNREGA follows a systematic creation of database on assets using technological interventions like mobile based photo geo-tagging and a GIS based information system for online recording and monitoring. The BHUVAN geoportal of NRSC has been customized for this purpose. The location of each asset is geotagged along with two photographs. Assets are geotagged in three stages *i.e.* before work starts, (stage-I), during

work (stage II) and after completion (stage III). Operating procedure has been established to enable a smooth exchange of data as services between NREGASoft and Bhuvan geoportal, while ensuring data integrity and security.

1.11 Trend of households availing employment in the State

A general trend of the percentage of households that availed employment *vis-à-vis* households registered in Maharashtra during the period 2019-24 is shown in **Chart 1.4**.

Chart 1.4: District-wise trend of percentage of households which availed employment *vis-a-vis* households registered



Source: Compiled based on data downloaded (October 2024) from NREGASoft

As seen from **Chart 1.4**, the Scheme is more popular in eastern Maharashtra, with the percentage of households that availed employment *vis-à-vis* households registered being highest in Gondia district, whereas Pune was the lowest at six per cent.

