

**CRITICAL ISSUES**  
**For the fulfillment of the NREGA objective**

The NREGA objective can be fulfilled only if States implement it by ensuring conformity to processes prescribed under the Act. These include the following:-

**1. Registration**

All rural families in NREGA district may apply for registration for unskilled manual work.

**What must be done?**

- • Application for Registration by local rural household to Gram Panchayat (written or oral).
- • Registration to be of a household, but the names of all its adult members willing to do unskilled manual work may be registered.

**What must not be done?**

- • Refusing oral application.

**2. Verification of Application**

To ensure that locally domiciled rural families likely to seek unskilled manual labour are identified.

**What must be done?**

- • Verifying eligibility only in terms of local residence and adult status, not economic status. (NREGA is not confined to below poverty line families).
- • Verification to be completed within 15 days of application for registration.

**What must not be done?**

- • Registering only Below Poverty Line families.
- • Refusing locally domiciled but migrant families.
- • Denying registration on the basis of gender, caste and creed.
- • Inordinate delay in verification.

### **3. Issue of Job Cards**

Job Card is the basic legal document valid for five years, which enables the registered household to demand guaranteed employment.

#### **What must be done?**

- • One Job Card to be issued to a registered household as a whole.
- • The household Job Card will have the photograph and name of each registered adult member of the household on it.
- • Cost of Job Card including photograph to be borne on the programme.
- • must be issued within 15 days of application.
- • Job Cards must have space for entering vital data that must be regularly entered that includes:
  - Unique registration number
  - Days of employment demanded
  - Days worked
  - Amount paid
- • Job Cards issued to be entered in a Job Card register in the Gram Panchayat.

#### **What must not be done?**

- • inordinate time gap between registration and issue of Job Card.
- • issuing a Job Card to each individual.
- • including names of minors on Job Cards.
- • pricing the Job Card.
- • charging the cost of the photographs on the beneficiary.
- • Issuing Job Cards on work sites.

### **4. Application for employment**

- - To ascertain choices and perceptions of households regarding lean season employment.
- - To ensure exercise of the legal right to employment within the time specified of fifteen days.

- - To ensure that works are started where and when there is demand for labour, not on demand for works.
- - To monitor and record demand for employment.

### **What must be done?**

- • A written application to be submitted by the job card holder to the Gram Panchayat or the programme officer.
- • Gram Panchayat to issue a dated acknowledgement for the application for employment to count the 15 days within which employment has to be given.
- • Employment application to be entered in an employment register in the Gram Panchayat.

### **5. Allocation of employment**

To oversee the modality of allocation of employment.

### **What must be done?**

- • Work must be allocated within 15 days of demand. If applicant does not report for work no unemployment allowance payable, but he/she is not barred from re-applying for work.
- • Gram Panchayat must inform the applicant where to report to work.
- • The work site should be within 5 kilometers of the applicant's residence, else 10% of wages payable additionally.

### **What must not be done**

- • Delay in allotting employment. This will create the liability of the Unemployment allowance on the State government to be borne out of State government's own financial resources.

### **6. Selection of works**

Permissible Works: water conservation, land development, plantation and afforestation, roads... in that priority and any other work proposed by state governments that is labor intensive can be

notified by the Centre. 60:40 ratio to be maintained for wages and material ratio.

### **What must be done?**

- • All works sanctioned with physical/technical/financial details in public domain (notice boards/web).
- • Work identified and approved by Gram Sabha.
- • Work list approved by intermediated District Panchayat, displayed in Gram Panchayat.
- • Asset registers at GP with unique number to each work to prevent duplication.
- • Perspective Plans to be made for each district for five years to map existing resources to prevent duplication.
- • Technical estimates to be displayed at all work-sites in simple local language.
- • Progress report by Implementing Agency to local vigilance committee.
- • An Annual Labour Budget has to be prepared according to the following process:

**Gram Sabhas** to initiate the Planning process and recommend works and estimate likely quantum and season of labour demand for the districts Labour budget.

**Gram Panchayat** to consolidate recommendations of Gram Sabha & forward to the intermediate Panchayat level. GP must also indicate what works it would like to execute.

**Intermediate Panchayat** to consolidate Gram Panchayat Plans into Block Plans with addition of works that cut across gram panchayats; Programme Officer to scrutiny feasibility of works proposed and to ensure that they are adequate to meet likely employment demand.

**District Panchayats** to approve the labour budget with addition of works that cut across Intermediate panchayats.

District Labour budget to contain Shelf of Projects to be ready at each implementing level with necessary approvals and must mention executing agency for each work.

- • At least half the works in value should be executed by gram panchayats.
- • District labour budget for the succeeding financial year to be ready by December of each year.
- • District labour budget to be approved by the State Employment Guarantee Council and sent to GOI for enabling release of budget.

### **What must not be done**

- • Contractor- based works.
- • Concocted works records.
- • The priorities of the Gram Panchayat are not to be superseded by block and district Panchayats, though they may add to the shelf of projects inter Gram Panchayat, inter block and departmental works.
- • Use of machinery.
- • Exceeding 40% of material component.
- • Taking up any other work than prescribed in schedule I of the Act. Centre will not finance this.

## **7. Execution of works**

### **What must be done?**

- • Only job card holders should be employed on works.
- • Numbered Muster rolls should be issued for each work by Programme Officer (this is a check on false muster rolls).
- • Muster rolls must mention Job Card numbers of workers (this is a check on false names and contractors).
- • Maintenance of the muster roll should be by the executing agency.
- • Muster rolls should be read out on the work site during regular measurement to prevent bogus records and payment of wages below prescribed levels.
- • Schedule of rural rates, if work is paid on task basis, must take into account the productivity capacity of unskilled manual labour.

- • Regular measurement and supervision of works by qualified technical personnel on time.
- • Recording measurement in authenticated measurement books.
- • Regular maintenance of measurement books.
- • Reading out measurement detail to workers.
- • Provision of adequate quality of work site facilities for women and men labourers.
- • Creation and maintenance of durable assets with foremost priority to water conservation measures and plantation.

#### **What must not be done?**

- • Inflate Muster Rolls with bogus names. •
- • Book non-working persons or skilled labour as unskilled labour and pay him/her out of a portion of the labouring persons' wage.
- • Delay in measurements.
- • No temporary (*kachcha*) muster roll should be used under any circumstance.
- • Minors not employed on works.

### **8. Payment**

Minimum wages for State agricultural labourers to be paid unless Centre notifies a wage rate.

#### **What must be done?**

- • Payment must be made within a week and on no account be delayed beyond a fortnight
- • Payments must be made publicly known.

#### **What must not be done?**

- • Lower payments than due to a worker based on his/her work.

### **9. Transparency**

#### **What must be done?**

- • Establishing adequate audit and evaluation mechanisms.

- • Ensuring widespread institution of social audit and use of findings.
- • Establishing an effective grievance redressal mechanism at the village, block district and State levels.

## **10. Staffing to implement NREGA**

Instructions to States have been issued suggesting they recruit key personnel that include the following staff:

- - Fulltime block level programme officers
- - An administrative assistant for each GP
- - A technical assistant per 10 GPs
- - Data entry operators at block level
- - Technical assistants and accounts assistant at block level

## **11. Monitoring and reporting system:**

### **What must be done?**

- • Operationalise MIS: NIC has developed generalised software that enables States, if they want, with appropriate modifications, to collect village and household based data on all aspects of NREGA operations.
- • Progress reports can also be generated.
- • Make critical data available in public domain.
- • Ensure field monitoring: States also need to put in place a system of regular monitoring and verification at their level to obtain concurrent feedback on the quality of implementation processes and introduce suitable correctives.
  - 2% monitoring by State level officers
  - 10% monitoring by District level officers
  - 100% monitoring by Block level officers
- • States need to ensure that State schemes under Section 4 of NREGA are notified by July 2006.

### **What not to do**

Collect and report unverified, unauthentic information.

## **12. Fund release and utilisation**

Adequate funds have been placed with each district.

All requests for funds by districts and States are processed by examining the following:

- • the reported demand for employment, checked against job cards,
- • demanded and issued,
- • employment provided and average turnout at work sites (as
- • reported by the State and observed field visits),
- • the manner in which Job Card registration and demand for
- • employment are being processed at the field level (as seen from reports of area officers and NLMs),
- • and fund availability (as computed and reported by State).

State and districts should transfer funds to blocks and Gram Panchayats on the basis of demand for employment and not on the basis of demand for works.