
This policy analysis of a guaranteed wage employment programme's implementation was based on primary and secondary data. The study revealed that MGNREGA has used its information dissemination mechanisms to generate awareness amongst its beneficiaries regarding various provisions of the Act. The gender component of the programme has improved socio-economic conditions of the women workers; their wages are on par with men and they choose what items to spend them on.

However, the implementation of the programme suffered from many lacunae. Administrative agencies prescribed under the Act such as Central Employment Guarantee Council, National Management Team, Punjab State Employment Guarantee Council and State Vigilance Cell had not been constituted. Awareness of the people regarding their rights and entitlements under MGNREGA was low due to the apathetic attitude of the officials towards information dissemination. By and large lip service was paid to transparency and accountability mechanisms such as proactive information disclosure, social audit and Vigilance and Monitoring Committees; the real essence of the concept was found missing. Shortage of MGNREGA implementation officials at the district and block level led to overburdening the existing staff, delay in preparation of work proposals and wage payments to the workers. Further, inadequate training handicapped the implementation staff. Since 2012, no Ombudsman had been appointed in the district for redressing the grievances of the workers.

The study recommends that implementation agencies such as Central Employment Guarantee Council and State Employment Guarantee Council must be in place. Staff appointments should be as per the norms and officials must be trained. Grievance redressal mechanisms should be fully in place to redress the beneficiary’s grievances.