

IMPACT OF SOCIAL SCHEMES ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF AAM AADMI – A STUDY ON MGNREGS AND FOOD SECURITY BILL

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Abstract *Aam aadmi has achieved tremendous transformation from the stage of isolation to the stage of decision maker in the era of globalisation. Increasing political concerns, neglecting the confidence on Aam aadmi has resulted in huge loss to the dictators. In view of the importance of Aam aadmi, a great change has occurred in terms of concern for Aam aadmi in the present era. Increasing initiations of social schemes including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and National Food Security Bill, 2013 are some of the best examples which show that the government is highly concerned for the development and as well as empowerment. In view of the emergence of two of the most popular schemes by the government, the present paper will critically examine the need for social schemes for Aam aadmi. Further, the paper also contributes the benefits of the schemes. Further, the challenges ahead for the successful implementation of the scheme have also been presented in the paper. The present paper is mainly based on the secondary data. The data pertaining to the opinions of the common people especially in rural India have also been considered. The paper provides the valuable observations on examining the impact of social schemes for the upliftment of Aam aadmi.*

Keywords *Aam Aadmi, Inclusive Growth, Food security, Mgnrega*

INTRODUCTION

Aam aadmi has been the initiator and as well as the dictator of the success or failure of performance of government. Earlier Aam aadmi was treated in the most negligent manner, but, the 21st century era has been rounding on Aam aadmi, where many social schemes have been introduced to impress and as well as achieve the support of Aam aadmi.

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW OF AAM AADMI

The word 'Aam Aadmi' is derived from two languages including Hindi and Urdu which narrates a common man. 'Aam' indicates common and aadmi in Hindi gives the meaning of man. The word 'Aam aadmi' was first popularised commercially by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) to highlight their strategy of concern for common man in India in 2004 and 2009 elections. Based on the success with the tag word of 'Aam aadmi', UPA government later applied in bringing 'Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme' in 2006. 'Aam aadmi' word is quite familiar with Indian context to represent an Indian with a view to compare the beneficiaries or for schemes. 'Aam aadmi' word later popularised by human rights activist Anna Hazare and Arvind Kejriwal. Later a party has been constituted by Arvind Kejriwal with the name called as

'Aam Aadmi Party' launched on November 26, 2012 having its headquarters at Ghaziabad.

According to Mr. Prakash & Acharia, common man is justified as anybody that has a stake in the system but doesn't have an effective say. Further, a common man is mostly treated as a representative of unorganised sector and also part of marginalised sections of the society.

NEED OF THE STUDY

Both MGNREGS and National Food Security Bill, 2013 were initiated under UPA Government with the main emphasis on providing survival and sustainability for Aam aadmi. As these two schemes are regarded as two eyes of Aam aadmi, the evaluation of these two schemes will help to understand the critical issues involved in the implementation. Further, the study is also important to analyse the challenges to the two schemes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study mainly emphasizes on the various social schemes that have been initiated for the betterment of Aam aadmi with special view on two of the most popular schemes. Further, the study will investigate the evolution and implementation of MGNREG scheme and National Food Security Bill. The

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Table 1: Social schemes initiated by GOI (period from 1954-2010)

Scheme	Ministry	Launched on	Provisions
Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana			Death and disability insurance for rural landless households
Bachat Lamp Yojana	Mo P		Reduce the cost of compact fluorescent lamps
Central Government Health Scheme	Mo HFW	1954	Comprehensive medical care facilities to Central Government employees and their family members
Deen dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme	Mo SJE	2003	Create an enabling environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, social justice and empowerment of persons with disabilities.
Gramin Bhandaran Yojana	Mo A	March 31, 2007	Creation of scientific storage capacity with allied facilities in rural areas to meet the requirements of farmers for storing farm produce, processed farm produce and agricultural inputs. Improve their marketability through promotion of grading, standardisation and quality control of agricultural produce.
Indira Awaas Yojana	Mo RD	1985	Housing for the rural poor
Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana	Mo WCD	2010	A cash incentive of Rs. 4000 to women (19 years and above) for the first two live births
Integrated Child Development Services	Mo WCD	October 2, 1975	Tackle malnutrition and health problems in children below 6 years of age and their mothers
Integrated Rural Development Program	Mo RD	1978	Self-employment program to raise the income-generation capacity of target groups among the poor
Janani Suraksha Yojana	Mo HFW	2005	One-time cash incentive to pregnant women for institutional/home births through skilled assistance
Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya	Mo HRD	July 2004	Educational facilities (residential schools) for girls belonging to SC, ST, OBC, minority communities and families below the poverty line in Educationally Backward Blocks
Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana	MoST	1999	Scholarship program to encourage students to take up research careers in the areas of basic sciences, engineering and medicine
Livestock Insurance Scheme (India)	Mo A		Insurance to cattle and attaining qualitative improvement in livestock and their products.
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act	Mo RD	August 25, 2005	Legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of Rs. 120 per day in 2009 prices.
Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme	Mo SPI	December 23, 1993	Each MP has the choice to suggest to the District Collector for, works to the tune of Rs.5 Crores per annum to be taken up in his/her constituency. The Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament can recommend works in one or more districts in the State from where he/she has been elected.
Midday Meal Scheme	Mo HRD	August 15, 1995	Lunch (free of cost) to school-children on all working days
National Literacy Mission Programme	Mo HRD	May 5, 1988	Make 80 million adults in the age group of 15 - 35 literate
National Pension Scheme		January 1, 2004	Contribution based pension system
National Scheme on Welfare of Fishermen**	Mo A		Financial assistance to fishers for construction of house, community hall for recreation and common working place and installation of tube-wells for drinking water
National Service Scheme	Mo YAS		Personality development through social (or community) service
National Social Assistance Scheme	Mo RD	August 15, 1995	Public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of undeserved want
Pooled Finance Development Fund Scheme			
Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana	Mo RD	July 23, 2010	Integrated development of Schedule Caste majority villages in four states

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana	Mo RD	December 25, 2000	Good all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages
Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana	Mo A	August 1, 2007	Achieve 4% annual growth in agriculture through development of Agriculture and its allied sectors during the XI Plan period
Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana	Mo LE	April 1, 2008	Health insurance to poor (BPL), Domestic workers, MGNREGA workers, Rickshaw pullers, Building and other construction workers, and many other categories as may be identified by the respective states
RNTCP	Mo HFW	1997	Tuberculosis control initiative
Sabla or Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls	MWCD	March 8, 2011	Empowering adolescent girls (AGs) of 11–18 years with focus on out-of-school girls by improvement in their nutritional and health status and upgrading various skills like home skills, life skills and vocational skills. Merged Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls (NPAG) and Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY).
Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana	Mo RD	September 25, 2001	Providing additional wage employment and food security, alongside creation of durable community assets in rural areas.
Swabhiman	Mo F	February 15, 2011	To make banking facility available to all citizens and to get 5 crore accounts opened by Mar 2012
Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana	Mo RD	April 1, 1999	Bring the assisted poor families above the poverty line by organising them into Self Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilisation, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.
Swavalamban	Mo F	September 26, 2010	Pension scheme to the workers in an organised sector. Any citizen who is not part of any statutory pension scheme of the Government and contributes between Rs. 1000 and Rs. 12000/- per annum, could join the scheme. The Central Government shall contribute Rs. 1000 per annum to such subscribers.
Udisha	Mo WCD		Nationwide training component of the World Bank (External website that opens in a new window) assisted Women and Child Development Project (External website that opens in a new window). Udisha has been cleared with an outlay of about Rs.600 crores for five years. UNICEF is also a technical collaborator in the Project. The programmes aims to train child care workers across the country.
Voluntary Disclosure of Income Scheme**		June 18, 1997	Opportunity to the income tax/ wealth tax defaulters to disclose their undisclosed income at the prevailing tax rates.
National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)	Ministry of Rural Development (Mo RD)	June 2011	This scheme will organize rural poor into SHG groups and make them capable for self employment. The idea is to developing better livelihood options for the poor.

Source: Ministry of Social welfare, Government of India

study is also aimed to bring out the challenges ahead for the executors of the scheme. Finally, the study will present the findings and suggestions on the basis of field survey results.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The study is based on the secondary data sources. Primary data are mainly limited to observation and personal interview with select respondents who have been benefiting from the scheme. Secondary data have been collected from the reports of FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations), Ministry of Rural and Social Welfare, reports of MGNREGA, and Gazettes of Government of India. Further, references from existing research works, articles, journals, and website sources are also used for the study.

SOCIAL SCHEMES IN INDIA

Since from 1947, the republican government of India has been a source of inspiration for many countries due to its successful implementation of social schemes. Especially, post-independence has brought the government to give a great concern on the various people who have been involved in different traditional and low income achieved wage jobs. Some of the important schemes which have been implemented by the Government of India since independence are specified in Table 1.

Table 1 clearly indicates that over a period time, through different ministries, Government of India has been implementing various schemes for the economic upliftment and support to the Aam aadmi.

Initiation of MGNREG Scheme

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA) was notified on September 7, 2005 and the mandate of the Act is to provide 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. The act has been initiated by the government to ensure that 'Aam aadmi' can get the following benefits.

1. Social protection for the most vulnerable people living in rural India by providing employment opportunities
2. Livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets, improved water security, soil conservation and higher land productivity
3. Drought-proofing and flood management in rural India
4. Empowerment of the socially disadvantaged, especially women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Schedules Tribes (STs), through the processes of a rights-based legislation
5. Strengthening, decentralised, participatory planning through convergence of various anti-poverty and livelihoods initiatives
6. Deepening democracy at the grass-roots by strengthening Panchayath Raj Institutions
7. Effecting greater transparency and accountability in governance.
8. Thus, MGNREGA is a powerful instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment.

Initially, the scheme was initiated in 200 districts in the first phase with effect from February 2, 2006 and then extended to an additional 130 districts in the financial year 2007-2008 (113 districts were notified with effect from April 1, 2007 and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh (UP) were notified with effect from May 15, 2007). The remaining districts have been notified under MGNREGA with effect from April 1, 2008. Thus, the MGNREGA covers the entire country with the exception of districts that have a hundred percent urban population.

Performance of MGNREG Scheme

Table 2 indicates performance of the scheme from its inception.

Table 2 clearly specifies the performance of the schemes for the economic upliftment of Aam aadmi. The scheme was initiated in 200 districts for the period of 2006-07 and by the end of 2008-09 period; the scheme was extended to all rural districts. The scheme has benefited to a maximum of 5 crore people and it indicates the greatness of world's biggest social employment and empowerment scheme. Further, 1200 person days work has been assigned. Among the persons who took part in the scheme, it was observed that the contribution of scheduled castes and tribes was comparatively better as the rate is in between 18-28%. Further, the scheme has given huge benefit to the unemployed and unskilled women. Maximum of 48% of the women were benefited by the scheme. The scheme has succeeded in providing a maximum of 54 average person working days. Further, when it comes to works taken up so far, it is observed that 1.46 crore works are taken up and among these, a total of 87 lakhs was

Table 2: Performance of MGNREGA

Details of participants (in crores)	Performance of the scheme since inception						
	2006-07 (200 districts)	2007-08 330 districts	2008-09 All rural districts	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	Total from 2006-2012
Number of households	2.1	3.4	4.5	5.3	5.5	5	--
PERSON DAYS							
Total	91	144	216	284	257	209	1201
SCs	23 (25%)	40 (27%)	64 (29%)	86 (31%)	79 (31%)	66 (32%)	358 (30%)
STs	33 (36%)	42 (29%)	55 (25%)	59 (21%)	54 (21%)	38 (18%)	281 (23%)
Women	36 (40%)	62 (43%)	104 (48%)	136 (48%)	123 (48%)	105 (50%)	561 (47%)
Average person-days per employed household	43 days	42 days	48 days	54 days	47 days	42 days	--
Works (in lakhs)							
Works taken up	8.4	17.9	27.8	46.2	51	73.6	146
Works completed	3.9	8.2	12.1	22.6	25.9	14.3	87

Source: NREGS report on performance of the scheme (2006-2012)

completed. It shows that the success rate of completion of work is 59.6%.

NEED FOR FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

Food security refers to the availability of food and one's access to it. A household is considered food secured when its occupants do not live in hunger or fear of starvation. According to United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), "Food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life". According to United States Department of Agriculture, food security includes at a minimum (1) the ready availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods, and (2) an assured ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways (that is, without resorting to emergency food supplies, scavenging, stealing, or other coping strategies).

IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY IN INDIA

Traditionally, India is considered as the agricultural based country, as the majority of Indians are engaged in agriculture for employment. Agriculture in India has a long history dating back to ten thousand years. Agriculture and allied sectors like forestry and logging accounted for 16.6% of the GDP in 2007, employed 52% of the total workforce and despite a steady decline of its share in the GDP, it plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic development of the nation. The agricultural output, however, depends on monsoon as nearly 60 per cent of area shown is dependent on rainfall. Today, India ranks second worldwide in farm output. India is the largest producer in the world of milk, cashew nuts, coconuts, tea, ginger, turmeric, and black pepper. It also has the world's largest cattle population (281 million). It is the second largest producer of wheat, rice, sugar, groundnut and inland fish. It is the third largest producer of tobacco. India accounts for 10% of the world fruit production with first rank in the production of banana and sapota. The recent developments in the other sectors minified this major sector's growth. India's population is growing faster than its ability to produce rice and wheat. Increasing population resulted in the limited scope for expansion of arable land, as the lands became hot cakes for the realtors. All these resulted in growing concern for food security in India.

Food Security is one of the main objectives in inclusive growth in agriculture in India. Traditionally, India was built with strong agrarian economy; the majority of the people derive their livelihood directly or indirectly from agriculture, even as the share of economic output generated by agriculture has sharply diminished. It is important to observe that

agriculture, unique among sectors of production, plays the dual role of providing an enormously important source of livelihood and of producing the means of life. India's largest contribution to the fulfillment of the right to food outside its borders may be that it has succeeded in doing so and thus avoided competing with food-importing countries.

In spite of the significant progress that India has made in food production and sufficiency over the last 50 years, most rural population/ communities have to deal with uncertainties of food security on a daily basis year after year, most often generation after generation. In 2006, MSNBC (Microsoft & National Broadcasting Corporation) channel broadcasted that in the world more than one billion people who were overweight, and an estimated 800 million who were undernourished. In India, the second-most populous country in the world, 30 million people have been added to the ranks of the hungry since the mid-1990s and 46% of children are underweight. In aggregate, over one-fifth of India's population suffers from chronic hunger. Food security has been the rising concern for the country in the recent past with the growing fluctuation in agricultural output. Increasing chronic hungers and decreasing out put became the major concern.

ROLE OF NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY BILL ON AAM AADMI

The main objective of National Food Security bill is to provide for food and nutritional security in human life cycle approach, by ensuring access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices to people to live a life with dignity and for mattes connected there with or incidental thereto. The initiation of food security bill has provided huge benefit to the Aam aadmi to ensure that he is entitled to avail food atleast 2 times a day. Due to the contribution of government in achieving food at very cheap price and other cereals, Aam aadmi has been provided a special provision of receiving five kilograms of food grains per person per month at subsidised prices specified in Schedule I from the State Government under Targeted Public Distribution System.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

Though the schemes were introduced in keeping the view of Aam aadmi and his basic essential needs, the two schemes have been facing the problems since its inception.

With reference to MGNREG scheme, the implementation in all the states and especially in rural places are under severe scanner. Excessive delayed cases in states like Kerala, West Bengal and Maharashtra are showing defame of the scheme. Further, the scheme has also achieved one of the most fraudulent schemes in failure in giving the benefit to

the beneficiaries. As per the recent report, a total value of 55,000 crores was recorded as misused. Though the scheme has great objective of providing justice to the needy people, it is also observed that there is a huge challenge ahead in strengthening the performance of the scheme.

Achieving insured food security is the major goal for nation in achieving inclusive growth. But, various problems are creating obstacles to achieve the food security in India. Apart from this, there are so many challenges that are creating hurdles to the development of food security in India. Some of the important challenges for the nation to achieve food security include the heavy increasing rate of population. Excessive growth in population rate will largely affect on the funding of the scheme by the government. Further, declining rural economy and increasing malnutrition cases also put questions over the functionality of the National Food Security bill. Bringing National Food Security Act to be implemented in India is a big challenge to the present government. Government's promise to providing rice and cereals at a cheap rate in the era of high inflation may cause severe effect on economy. Even till now, the nation's production is not able to meet the supply to the needy rural people who are suffering from undernourishment. Giving the benefits to 'Aam aadmi' and to focus on inclusive growth and ensuring food security are the major goals for the government still to be achieved in the depreciating 11th five year plan period.

FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS

The MGNREGA has given rise to the largest employment programme in human history and is unlike any other wage employment programme in its scale, architecture, and thrust. Its bottom-up, people centred, demand-driven, self-selecting, and rights-based design is distinct and unprecedented. But due to lack of proper implementation and failure in monitoring has created the problem in achieving the goal of providing guaranteed employment for Aam aadmi. Further, the initiation of National Food Security Bill especially in the era of declining economic growth and rising inflation is questioning its sustenance in the long period. Effective improvement in the execution and initiating new development in terms of monitoring, enhancing the benefits to wider sections will further strengthen these two schemes to provide happiness and welfare of 'Aam aadmi'.

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