

Case Studies (2025) Q. 11

11. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, MGNREGA was earlier known as National Rural Employment Scheme, NREGA. It is an Indian Social Welfare Program that aimed at fulfilling the 'Right to Work' provisions made in the Constitution. MGNREGA was launched in 2006 under Rural Employment Sector by the Ministry of Rural Development.

Main objective of the program is to give legal guarantee of wage employment to the adult members of rural households who are willing to do unskilled manual labour work subject to a maximum of 100 days per year for every household. Every rural household has the right to register under the scheme, job card is issued to the registered, Job Card holder can seek employment; State Government shall pay 25% of minimum wage for the first 30 days as compensatory daily unemployment allowance to the families and of wage for remaining period of the year. MGNREGA work was undertaken by various Gram Panchayats.

You have been appointed as an Administrator Incharge of the District. You have been given the responsibility of monitoring MGNREGA work undertaken by various Gram Panchayats. You are also given the authority to give technical sanctions to all MGNREGA works.

In one of the Panchayats in your jurisdiction, you notice that your predecessor has mismanaged the Program in terms of :

- (i) Money not disbursed to actual job-seekers.**
- (ii) Muster Rolls of the Labourers not properly maintained.**
- (iii) Mismatch between the work done and payments made.**
- (iv) Payments made to fictitious persons.**
- (v) Job Cards were given without looking into the need of person.**
- (vi) Mismanagement of funds and to the extent of siphoning of funds.**
- (vii) Approved works that never existed.**

(a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how do you restore the proper functioning of MGNREGA Program in this regard ?

(b) What actions would you initiate to solve the various issues listed above ?

(c) How would you deal with the above situation? (250 words, 20 marks)

Directions: Intro----- Stakeholders involved + Ethical issues + Explain each sub-question + Conclusion.

Introduction:

Give a basic and brief introduction about the situation of the case - Severe administrative and ethical crisis, serious mismanagement and corruption, etc.

Main Body

Key stakeholders involved

- District Administrator
- Subordinates and Gram Panchayat officers
- MGNREGA Workers
- Ministry of Rural Development.
- State and local government

Ethical issues involved

- Corruption and misuse of public funds
- Transparency & Accountability
- Dishonesty and falsification of records
- Abuse of official position
- Conflict between public interest and private interest
- Breach of fiduciary responsibility
- Violation of the right to livelihood.

(a) What is your reaction to the above situation and how do you restore the proper functioning of MGNREGA Program in this regard?

As District Administrator, should take immediate action to tackle the situation as a serious case of administrative negligence, financial irregularity and possible corruption, while ensuring genuine beneficiaries are not penalised.

To restore the proper functioning -

- Stop further leakage by temporarily reviewing suspicious payments and works
- Conduct a preliminary fact-finding inquiry
- Order social audits and physical verification of completed and ongoing works
- Ensure that genuine workers receive their pending wages at the earliest.
- Strengthen transparency through Gram Sabha oversight & grievance redressal mechanisms.

(b) What actions would you initiate to solve the various issues listed above?

- Money not reaching actual workers - Verify beneficiary accounts and payment

records.

- Improper muster rolls – Job card verification, cross-check attendance with workers, etc.
- Work-payment mismatch – Conduct technical measurement and revaluation; recover excess payments and initiate disciplinary action.
- Fictitious beneficiaries – Verify identity and bank details; cancel fraudulent entries and recover funds.
- Improper job cards – Re-verify household eligibility and ensure universal access for genuinely needy rural households.
- Non-existent works – Physical verification, cancellation of fraudulent records.

(c) How would you deal with the above situation?

- Correct – Financial Audit & Social audit, Verification of job cards, Direct benefit transfer
- Prevent – Geotagging of attendance & works, strengthen Gram Sabha,
- Punish – Disciplinary proceedings, suspension, recovery of losses and criminal prosecution.

Conclusion:

Give a positive and balanced conclusion.

Probity, accountability, transparency, compassion and public interest - every rupee spent under MGNREGA translates into legitimate employment and durable rural assets, thereby restoring public confidence in the administration.