

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2207
ANSWERED ON:22.08.2013
WATER RESOURCES WORK UNDER MGNREGS
Jagannath Dr. M.

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the percentage of work related to water resources undertaken under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS);
- (b) whether works related to water resources under the Scheme has a significant impact on improving groundwater levels, increasing water availability for irrigation and drinking purpose;
- (c) if so, the details thereof;
- (d) whether the Government propose to replicate it in other States/UTs; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN 'ADITYA')

(a) to (c): Apart from providing wage employment on demand, creation of durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor are also important objectives of the Act. Schedule -I of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act lists the category of works on which the schemes formulated by State Governments under Section 4(1) of the Act shall focus upon. These primarily include water harvesting and irrigation, flood control and protection, land development, plantation, environmental protection and conservation, horticulture, livestock, water and soil conservation works, drought proofing, afforestation etc. Since inception of MGNREGA, about 53.4% of the works taken up were for works relating to Water conservation and 13.3% relating to provision of irrigation facility to land owned by individual beneficiaries. Micro-level studies indicate that the water conservation structures, desilting of traditional water bodies, plantations and other works taken up under MGNREGA, have improved water percolation and helped recharge groundwater. This has also led to a rise in groundwater levels and water availability.

(d) & (e): The provisions in Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) are effected through Schemes formulated by States under Section 4(1) of the Act. Panchayats have been given a pivotal role in the planning and implementation of projects under MGNREGA. Section 16(1) of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) provides that Gram Panchayats shall be responsible for identification of projects in the Gram Panchayat area to be taken up under the scheme as per the recommendations of the Gram Sabhas and Ward Sabhas. Section 13(1) of MGNREGA provides that the Panchayats at district, intermediate and village levels shall be the principal authorities for planning and implementation of the schemes made under the Act. Hence, it would be the prerogative of the States to decide on the nature of works to be taken up by them depending on their order of priority.