



Institute for Social and Economic Change

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ISEC Golden Jubilee Lecture Series

Mahatma Gandhi NREGS: Issues, Challenges and the Way Forward

by

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Abstract

More than a decade has passed since the enactment of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005. The scheme is expected to reduce the magnitude of rural poverty. However, many issues and challenges have been observed in the implementation of the scheme at a different scale, starting from panchayat to state and country. Hence, the lecture focuses on a comprehensive pan India assessment and reflect on employment, livelihoods, inclusiveness, and governance aspects of the scheme based on a study conducted at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. The lecture tries to trace out state-specific issues pertaining to the implementation process and effectiveness of the program and argues that the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA implementation has impacted differentially on wage employment opportunities, livelihood security, inclusiveness, and decentralized governance at the local level.

About Jyothis Sathyapalan

Dr. Jyothis Sathyapalan is currently a Professor at the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. He is an Economist by training and he earned his PhD on "the economics of biodiversity conservation in the Western Ghats of Kerala" from Institute for Social and Economic Change (ISEC) Bangalore. He has been working on Mahatma Gandhi NREGS and conducted a pan-Indian impact assessment of the scheme in 2020. He contributed methodology to assess the labour productivity for different activities under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS to estimate the schedule of rates (Rural-SOR). In the recent past he has contributed extensively to the "Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) as Lead Author (for Asia-Pacific Assessment, Global Assessment and Sustainable Use of Wild Species), as an expert to the Biodiversity Scenarios and Models Expert Group and Workshop on Modelling Nature Future Scenarios. Currently, he is a member of IPBES - Scenarios and Models Task Force. He is part of various committees constituted by the Ministry of Rural Development for conducting research and capacity building programmes for Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.