

Concerted Water Conservation Thrust under MGNREGS

Ministry of Rural Development

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Posted On: 27 APR 2018 12:24PM by PIB Delhi

With near universal geo-tagging of assets and payment of wages and materials through the Electronic Fund Management System (EFMS), a transparent Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) has made concerted efforts to create durable assets. The thrust has been on Natural Resource Management (NRM), both on community and individual beneficiary lands of small and marginal farmers. Due to these concerted efforts, 143 lakh hectares have benefitted through Water Conservation efforts under MGNREGS over the last 3 years. This includes construction of over 11 lakh farm ponds in the last 2 years, large scale Water Conservation Schemes and vermi composting pits. National evaluation by Institute of Economic Growth, New Delhi and assessment of individual beneficiary schemes for livelihood by Council for Social Development have indicated improvements in productivity, acreage, incomes and water table through MGNREGS works. All State Governments have taken keen interest to use MGNREGS as a livelihood resource even under individual beneficiary schemes for poultry sheds, goat sheds, dairy sheds etc. 90 days of wage labour under Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) housing and Rs. 12,000/- for household toilet wherever SBM Resources are not available has been provided under PMAY-G.

Considering the importance of Water Conservation especially during April to June period of peak demand for work in rural areas, the Government of India has released adequate funds for large scale thrust on completing 43.62 lakh Natural Resource Management works which are under implementation. It has also urged the States to accord maximum priority to Water Conservation works during the first quarter of 2018-19 including River Rejuvenation. Successes in River Rejuvenation have encouraged MGNREGS to undertake similar works in other States as well. The Hon'ble Prime Minister on the National Panchayati Raj Diwas on April 24, 2018 has exhorted Gram Panchayat Pradhans to lead a Community owned movement for Water Conservation using MGNREGS resources to insulate villages from vagaries of monsoon. On the 25th April 2018, Hon'ble Prime Minister has urged all the Chief Secretaries of States in the Pragati Review to assign top most priority to Water Conservation works under MGNREGS in the April to June period. There are no fund constraints in any State and technical training to field functionaries for Natural Resource Management has been given under the Samarthyaa Capacity Development Programme in partnership with Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Department of Land Resources and Central Ground Water Board as part of the thrust on 2,264 stressed Blocks under Mission Water Conservation.

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