Ethics & Morality · GS - IV

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?**

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EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
2025	GS - IV	Ethics & Morality

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
20	~250 words

Answer Hint

Public money, corruption, ghost beneficiaries, financial irregularity, social audit, transparency, accountability, DBT, muster rolls, geo-tagging, verification, recovery, disciplinary action, grievance redressal, citizen participation

Model Answer

(a) Reaction and Restoration

I would treat the matter as a serious failure of financial and administrative integrity because it deprives vulnerable rural households of their legitimate entitlement. My immediate response would be evidence-based rather than punitive or politically motivated.

First, I would secure all records, freeze suspicious transactions where legally permissible and conduct a preliminary verification. Simultaneously, genuine beneficiaries would be protected from disruption of legitimate employment.

(b) Actions on Specific Issues

1. Conduct physical verification of works and beneficiaries.
2. Match muster rolls, job cards, attendance records and wage payments.
3. Verify bank accounts and identify fictitious beneficiaries.
4. Use geo-tagged photographs and work-site inspection to establish whether sanctioned works actually exist.
5. Conduct Gram Sabha-based social audits and publicly disclose expenditure.
6. Recover misappropriated public money through due process.
7. Initiate disciplinary and, where warranted, criminal proceedings against responsible officials or persons involved.
8. Correct erroneous job cards and ensure genuine workers receive employment and wages.
9. Establish periodic third-party and surprise inspections.

(c) Long-Term Approach

I would introduce risk-based monitoring, digital attendance and payment verification, grievance redressal mechanisms and capacity-building for Panchayat officials. However, technology should supplement rather than replace social audit and field verification.

Conclusion

The objective is not merely to punish past wrongdoing but to restore trust and ensure that every legitimate worker receives the entitlement guaranteed under the programme. Transparency, accountability and

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community participation should become permanent safeguards against leakage.

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