

Regarding Need to review the renaming and other amendments in MGNREGA-Laid

SHRI K. E. PRAKASH (ERODE): I like to express concern over the renaming and replacement of MGNREGA, and the weakening of the rural job guarantee. MGNREGA was not merely a scheme but a law that guaranteed employment to rural households. The name of Mahatma Gandhi symbolised dignity of labour and social justice. I speak not only as a MP, but also as someone from a rural farming community, and representing Erode, a rural agrarian constituency. In areas like mine, MGNREGA has been a vital source of livelihood for small farmers, landless labourers, and women. The new framework removes the legal guarantee of work and converts a right into a budget-dependent scheme. Earlier, the Union Government paid 100 percent of unskilled wages. The new 60:40 funding pattern shifts 40 percent of the cost to States, making employment dependent on State finances rather than need. Union funding is also capped through state-wise allocations fixed annually and raising concerns of unequal treatment of Opposition ruled States. The introduction of a compulsory 60-day blackout period during peak agricultural season, biometric authentication, and digital attendance systems risks exclusion and wage denial. I urge the Government to reconsider these changes and protect the legal right to work and rural livelihood security.