
People's Participation at Grassroots Level Governance: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP): a Micro Study

¹Dr. Vadranam Suresh

²Dr. Kaushlendra Dixit

¹ Post Doctoral Fellow (ICSSR, New Delhi), Department of Politics and International Studies, School of Social Sciences, Pondicherry Central University, Puducherry India

² Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, National P.G. College, Bhongaon, Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh

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Abstract

Women in public Administration illuminates women's past and rising challenges, in an exceedingly male based public sector that are fundamental to practitioners, students, faculties of public administration and policy makers. Traditionally, women bear primary responsibility for the well-being of their families, which is the nucleus of the society. They play a constructive role in building up the country by contributing their labour in both organized and unorganized sectors. Women empowerment is the most frequently used term in development dialogue today. It is also the most nebulous and widely interpreted concepts. However, studies of the transformative role of PRIs have generally been the concern of policy-making institutions and there are actually very few academic works that specifically study the theoretical impact of this type of representation, which goes well beyond the federal and provincial level Policymakers in the developing world, quite often, argue for the need to increase quotas (reservations) for historically disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in the local governments. The Indian Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act allows for decentralized government at the local by instituting Gram Panchayats (village councils) to better serve the needs of the voters. More importantly, it allows for a randomized assignment of quotas for women in these councils to increase their political participation. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a "Silver Bullet" for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages.

Key Words: Decentralisation, Federal, Policy, Participation, Poverty, Representation

Introduction

Policymakers in the developing world, quite often, argue for the need to increase quotas (reservations) for historically disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in the local governments. The notion behind this is that filling up these seats will help in a targeted distribution of welfare programs and motivates the intended groups to increase their participation in the political process. Furthermore, World Bank (2001) finds evidence that when women partake in government activities, there is an augmentation of performance of the government, especially in the context of public works distribution. The Indian Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act allows for decentralized government at the local by instituting Gram Panchayats (village councils) to better serve the needs of the voters. More importantly, it allows for a randomized assignment of quotas for women in these councils to increase their political participation. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, malnourished children, anaemic pregnant women, farmer suicides, starvation deaths, migration resulting from inadequate employment, poverty, and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. In order to make solution of these problems and to provide livelihood security to rural unemployed, Government of India (GOI) enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. It is the biggest poverty alleviation programme in the world which is started with an initial outlay of Rs. 11,300 crores in year 2006-07 and now it is Rs. 40,000 crores (2010-11). This Act is now called as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The Act provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household will to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Thus, it is a universal programme. This minimum wage varies from state to state, in some states it is Rs. 80 whereas in other it is Rs. 125 or Rs. 120. According to the Act the minimum wage cannot be less than Rs. 60. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year. The main objectives of the present work are emphasis the implementation procedure of MGNREGA in the study village and Understanding the impact of MGNREGA on livelihoods.

Historical Perspective of MGNREGA

NREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Govt. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar RojgarYojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen RojgarYojana (SGRY) from 2001; National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) from 2004 were national rural employment schemes. Among these, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

Capacity Building Recommendations for Minority Participation

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme is the first programme to provide guaranteed livelihood security to India's rural poor. The MGNREGS is an innovative program to boost the rural economy, stabilize agricultural production and to provide livelihood security to the poor and thereby transform the scenario of poverty. The MGNERGA, by providing legal guarantee to work, marks a paradigm shift from all earlier wage employment programs. MGNERGA aims at ensuring livelihood security to rural poor through provision of gainful employment opportunities. It also attempts to create productive and durable assets for generation of employment and income on sustainable basis.

MGNERGA can address the problems of agriculture adequately and in the process generate 100 days of guaranteed employment to all the willing workers through participatory planning process. MGNERGA can play a key role in elimination of absolute poverty in the medium run and move towards achievement of sustainable livelihoods even while achieving the goal of sustainable agriculture in the long term. MGNERGA launched on February 2, 2006 from Anantapur in Andhra Pradesh. The Act covered 200 districts in its first phase, implemented on February 2, 2006, and was extended to 130 additional districts in 2007-2008. All the remaining rural areas have been notified with effect from April 1, 2008.

The participation levels are very low among the minority women in MGNREGS. They prefer skilled work in the place of unskilled. Though there is no ban on their participation still cultural taboo exists which does not motivate minority women to participate in MGNREGS. So, special awareness drive should be planned for their Inclusion in the programme. Wherever possible skill oriented trainings should be provided for these groups. In Eastern India, Muslim women participation levels are impressive. Therefore, the scope of MGNREGS works should be enlarged so that these women may

also participate had all women groups are supervised by women may encourage Muslim women to participate in MGNREGS activities.

Significance of the Study

The present study attempts to understand the implementation procedures of MGNREGS and its impact on livelihoods status of people in a Ganapathipattu Panchayat of Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu. This paper focuses on the role of GP to generate sufficient employment opportunities, the procedures for registration, issuance of job cards, and application for employment. This would enable us to understand and examine the institutional mechanisms under which the entire programme is being implemented. The problems and prospects of MGNREGA can then be better understood and accordingly, necessary measures can be devised to make the programme realize its set objectives. The outcome of the study will help in understanding the problem of implementation of the project. It will help in formulating the better policy and strategy for the future.

PanchayatuRaj System and MGNREGA

MGNREGA is a unique Act which recognizes the legitimate role of Panchayats in addressing their fundamental duty as expressed in the constitutional^{73rd} Amendment of providing “economic development and social justice” in their area. The recognition of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as the principal agency of implementation under MGNREGA has opened up enormous opportunities for decentralizing development respecting local solutions to local people. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was launched on 02.02.2006. It guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year to any rural household. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) under the ‘Ministry of Rural Development’ strives for the enhancement of rural livelihood by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. In sync with the choices of the work suggested in the act, shelf of projects chosen primarily consists of areas that address causes of chronic poverty such as drought, deforestation and soil erosion, so that the process of employment generation is maintained on a sustainable basis. The works happening are in flood control, rural connectivity, water conservation and water harvesting, renovation of traditional water bodies, drought proofing, irrigation canals, irrigation facilities to SC/ST, land development, etc.

The Core Objective of this Scheme:

Providing not less than one hundred days of unskilled manual work as a guaranteed employment in a financial year to every household in rural areas as per demand, resulting in creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and durability;

Strengthening the livelihood resource base of the poor;

Proactively ensuring social inclusion;

Strengthening of Panchayat Raj institutions (PRIs)

Salient Features of the Scheme

Provision of 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to each registered household in the Village Panchayat, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled labour

The Central Government bears 100% wage cost of unskilled manual labour. Material cost including wages of skilled and semi-skilled workers is borne by Central Government and by State Government in the ratio of 75:25.

No contractors or machineries are allowed.

The wage and material components have to be maintained at 60:40 ratios for all the works undertaken by Village Panchayat and other implementing agencies at the District level.

Out of the total works sanctioned, 50% should be allotted to Village Panchayats.

Adult members of rural households willing to do unskilled manual work may register orally or in writing with the Village Panchayat

Every rural Household is entitled to a job card so that they can apply and receive work.

To facilitate registration of new job cards and redressal of the grievances of workers, Rozgar Diwas (VelaivaippuDhinam) is organised in all Village Panchayats once a month. All workers shall have a right to participate in the Gram Sabha and decide the Shelf of works and the order of priority of works to be taken up under MGNREGS in their Village Panchayat. If the distance of worksite exceeds 5 kms, additional wage of 10% of existing wage rate is payable to meet the cost towards the additional

transportation and living expenses. However, in Tamil Nadu, worksites are being fixed in such a way that works are available within a radius of 2 kms. The wages for unskilled labour has been fixed based on the Rural Schedule of Rates. As per the revised Schedule-I of MGNREG Act, the Schedule of Rates for wages of unskilled labourers is so fixed that an adult person working for eight hours which include an hour of rest (i.e., 7 hours of work) will earn wages equal to wage rate.

Wages are equal to both men and women and the notified wage rate for 2016-17 is Rs.203 per day.

Disbursement of wages is done through Public Financial Management System (PFMS) and wages credited to the worker's accounts within 15 days.

One third of the beneficiaries should be women.

Work site facilities such as drinking water, first aid kit, shade etc., shall be provided.

Grama Sabha conducts the social audit in respect of MGNREGS through Village Social Auditors.

A Toll-Free Help line (1299) has also been provided in each district as part of Grievance redressal mechanism.

Under Section 12 of the MGNREG Act, Government of Tamil Nadu has constituted the State Employment Guarantee Council to advise, evaluate and monitor the implementation of the scheme. In Tamil Nadu, the scheme was first notified on 2.2.2006 in 6 districts of the State and the scheme was extended to all the remaining districts, in a phased manner as per the table provided below:

The literature review carried out above reflects that though some researchers have done study on NREGS most of those are confined to economic aspect only. It is not comprehensive. Very few people have emphasized on implementation aspects of NREGS. Social aspects are not much highlighted. The present paper will discuss about the implementation and the impact of NREGS in Ganapathipattu Panchayat, Thindivanam Taluk of Villupuram district, Tamil Nadu.

Conceptual Framework

While doing study it will reflect upon the various aspects of NREGS. It will develop a link among various factors like peoples' need, social and economic aspects. The concepts which are used in study are defined below as per the NREGA operational guidelines. “**Adult**” means a person who has

completed his eighteenth years of age. **“Applicant”** means the head of a household or any of its other adult members who has applied for employment under the scheme. **“Household”** means the member of a family related to each other by blood, marriage or adoption and normally residing together and sharing meals or holding a common ration card. **“Minimum wage”**, in relation to any area, means the minimum wage fixed by the State Govt. under section 3 of the minimum wages Act, 1948 for agricultural labourers as applicable in that area. **“Unskilled manual work”** means any physical work which any adult person is capable of doing without any skill or special training. **“Livelihood”** means according to Carney (1998), “It is comprised of capacities, assets and activities required for means of living.”

Research Methodology

The study was carried out in Villupuram District. However, the study area was confined to Ganapathipattu Gram Panchayat of Thindivanam Block in Villupuram District using purposive sampling method, the study area was selected. For the selection of beneficiary respondents two stages were followed. In the first stage purposive sampling method was adopted for the selection of the study area. In the second stage, for selecting the sample respondents, random sampling was adopted for this study. A sample of 150 households both male and female was selected. Here, non-job card holder households were selected to explore the reasons for their non-participation in the MGNRES activities.

Data Collection

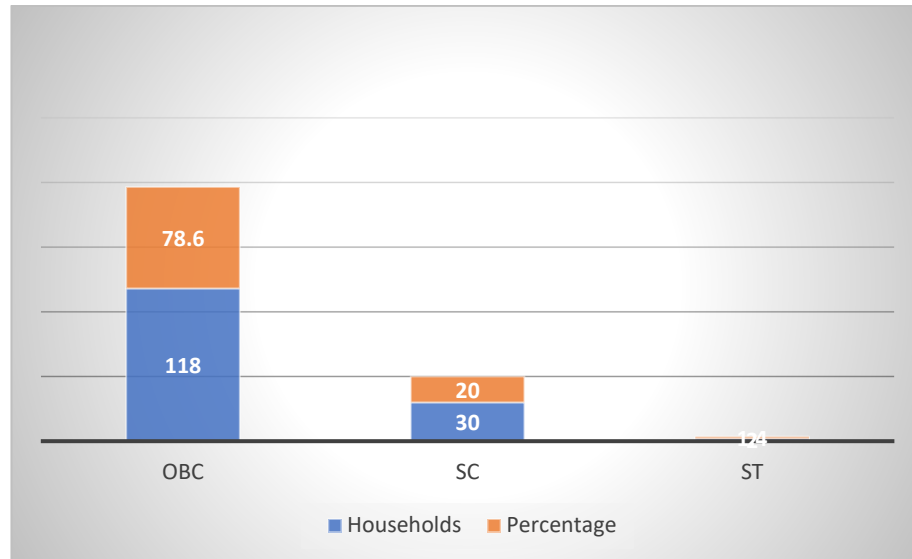
Data was collected both from primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected from all the stakeholders of NREGS. Questionnaire surveys with the different stakeholders engaged in NREGS in the study site were organised. Semi structured informal interviews also taken from selected households. The secondary data was collected from official records, policy documents, published reports of similar projects, journals and literature form social science discipline. Both qualitative and quantitative data was analysed in the backdrop of the project objectives. Quantitative data was tabulated and statistically analysed using SPSS software. Qualitative data was interpreted based on the information collected from the field.

Socio-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The sample households selected for the study cover households from various caste of Ganapathipattu Panchayat of Villupuram District of Tamil Nadu.

Caste of the Respondents

Caste and ethnicity plays a major role in any kind of development project. The presence of various castes and ethnicity creates a heterogeneity situation, which stands as a hurdle in the process of implementation (Mishra, 2007).

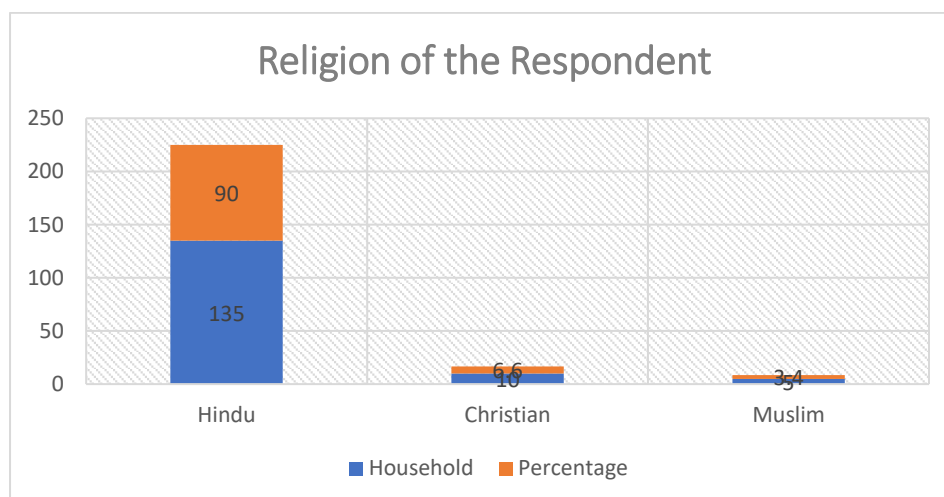


Source: Primary Data

The above figure shows that out of 150 households, majority (78.6%) of the households are belonging to OBC population. The rest of the households distributed among SC, ST. They are respectively 20% and 1.4%. It reflects that the Studied Panchayat is numerically dominated by OBC communities.

Religion of the Respondents

Religion of the households plays a vital role in rural development. The ideological differences based on various religions influence the implementation process of any project.



Source: Primary Data

The above figure shows that religion of respondents, majority of the households (90%) belonging to Hindu religion. The rest 10% is Christian and there are no Muslims.

Main Source of Livelihood

S.No	Main Source of livelihood Status of Respondent	Male	%	Female	%
1	Coolie	20	14.1	0	0
2	Farmer	85	60.2	0	0
3	Coolie and MGNREGA	20	14.1	32	21.3
4	Farmer and MGNERGA	11	7.8	75	49.9
5	MGNERGA	0	0	43	28.8
6	Foreign	3	2.4	0	0
7	Business	2	1.4	0	0
Total		141	100	150	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that main source of livelihood status of people of Ganapthipattu Panchayat under MGNREGA. Maximum 14.1 % of males were participated coolie and MGNREGA work and minimum 7.8 % of males were participated agriculture work and MGNERGA work Female 49 % were participated agriculture and MGNERGA work. Minimum 21.8% of females were participated coolie work and MGNERGA work. So here table shows that none of them fully dependent upon the MGNERGA and partially they were participated for the livelihood.

Distribution of job card holder according to caste, religion, educational qualification, landholder and BPL card holder

Caste	OBC	SC	ST	GEN
Male	17%	5.60%	0	0
Female	78.6	20%	1.4	0
Educational Qualification	illiterate	Primary	Middle	High school
Male	50%	18.3%	28%	3.70%
Female	36.60%	20.80%	42.70%	0.00%
Ration Card				
BPL	100%	100%	100%	0%
APL	0	0	0	0
Card Holders				
Male	17%	5.6%	0	
Female	78.6%	20%	1.4%	

Source: Primary Data

The above table shows that among the job-card holders the majority (78.6%) is OBC community. Majority of Male 50% were illiterate and females were 36.6%. There are (100%) Household had BPL

card holders of all caste community. Thus, there is need for improvement, as maximum number of male respondents in this Panchayat village have not got job card till yet. Among the non-job card holders, many families are belonging to the economically weaker sections like women headed households, senior citizens and poorer sections while the rich, influential people, authorizing committee itself getting much benefits on the name of poor and unemployed youths.

Implementation of MGNREGA

NREGA is distinctive for its unique vision to redefine avenues of providing employment opportunities to the deprived in rural India. But the possibility and efficient chances of employment largely comes with the better level of awareness as it marks the level of accessibility. This issue of awareness emerges one of the hindrances to the local community. It thus necessitates sufficient awareness amongst the intended beneficiaries regarding provisions like guaranteed days of employment, unemployment allowance, minimum wages, availability of complaint register, etc. However, the situation in this front is not very encouraging in the study area. As most of the worker respondents are illiterate and belong to the economically poor class, the extent of awareness about NREGA has emerged out to be a major concern in all the Panchayat. Around 93% of the villagers are aware about the NREGS. Among them the majority are the OBC (78.6%) But workers' awareness on how to apply for job cards, awareness about minimum wages and demand for work was reportedly very low. Around 7% villagers are not at all aware about NREGS. Those who are aware about it out of them only 41% of the respondents are aware of the number of minimum days of employment guaranteed to each household under the scheme. Only 54% households in this panchayat are having job cards.

The procedural and implementation aspects of NREGA have never been free from confronting some basic challenges like general awareness, understanding policy nittygritty, sufficient access etc. Having given the socio - economic background of the respondents, the structural issues such as transparency, maintenance of documents and accountability were difficult things to actualize from the workers' point of view. When asked whether beneficiaries knew about the time span of getting employment from the date of the submission of applications under the NREGA, only 20 per cent respondents revealed that they were aware of any such guidelines like to get employment within the 15 days from the date of application for jobs

There is no proper execution of works. Hence, it is a matter of concern that throughout the GP, the approved works are not always publicly displayed. It was revealed by the villagers that there was no Gram Sabha meeting regarding the activities of NREGS. Even maximum numbers of people are not

aware about Gram Sabha meeting, which reflects non-participation of villagers or community in decision making. The villagers used to work in any work assigned by the contractor. The internal understanding between contractors and JE used to confine the work in paper only site account registers in respect of receipt and issue of materials to the work and Temporary advance register in respect of advance availed for payment of wages had not been maintained, despite their mandated requirement for departmental execution. MGNREGA guidelines permit execution of road projects providing all weather connectivity in rural areas. However, during field work it was observed that the road remains kutcha and incomplete and is not able to provide all weather access.

Most of the population said that only road work has been undertaken in their Gram Panchayat which is incomplete due to conflicts among villagers as well as between members of panchayat office.

The data from the field reflected that there is huge irregularity in payment of wages. While only 28% of beneficiaries claimed that they received the wages within a month, the rest claimed that there is no certainty in getting wages. But they received it mostly after 2 months. The contractors were quite conscious while paying the wages. They used to delay in paying wages to those labourers who are illiterate and no voice. It is observed from the field that around 81% of the beneficiaries are not having the minimum wages fixed by the centre. While the MGNREGA guidelines permit equal wages for equal work, it is not happening as per the views of few villager's widow and old women are receiving lesser wages in comparison to men. Now MGNREGA has become very organized. The bank accounts are opened in the name of the wage workers. The money is directly transferred to the accounts and there is no one in between. But in the study area, around 46.35% of the beneficiaries have not opened their account either in bank or in post office while 53.65% beneficiaries have account. It may be due to lack of interest or lack of awareness. According to some villagers, if there is regular work and regular payment, we will be interested to open account. Around 67.07% of the beneficiaries have received their wages directly through cash while 32.93% beneficiaries received their wages through account transfer. Reading out of the muster roll at the time of payment is mandatory under the MGNREGA. However, the situation is not very encouraging in this regard. All the respondents have pointed out that the muster roll is not read out.

Any studies on MGNREGS would sound incomplete if it doesn't talk about worksite facilities. A proper working condition is a primary necessity for ensuring safety and efficient condition for workers which particularly in the case of women is much more important. According to MGNREGS guidelines, it is mandatory to have basic facilities such as safe drinking water, first-aid kits, shades, period of rest and

also crèche facility. But it was observed during field work that except drinking water no other facilities were arranged near worksite. Even some respondents claimed that in some cases drinking water was also not available. While discussing worksite facilities like shade, some of the respondents claimed that the trees near to worksite were used and treated as shady shelters. Thus, manipulation by the local implementing agencies and absence of any monitoring mechanism at the same time resulted in the creation of unsafe and substandard working conditions.

Around 45% households (males) are the non-job cardholders. This may be due to their lack of interest to work under the MGNREGS as they have greater mobility for alternative money making job opportunities even at a distance place. Among the sample non-job card holder households around 50% households have already applied for job cards. The waiting time after the applications for job cards as reported by the respondents vary between 5 to 24 months. The reasons for non-issuance of job cards may be due to several factors such as relative socio-political and economic strength of the households in the village, awareness level, close relationship with the PRI functionaries' etc. Those who have not applied for job cards may be due to lack of interest and awareness.

From the above discussion, it is concluding that the MGNREGS, which was introduced in giving justice to the common man, has failed in meeting the desired needs. There is no denying that MGNREGA has turned to be a big pot for the intermediaries rather than true beneficiaries. Here, the real beneficiaries are the people in the chain who get the money for distributing to the poor people. They should be called the true beneficiaries. Thus, the implementation was done half-heartedly. There is an urgent need to remove the corruption in the delivery system. We should work out a mechanism by which the MGNREGA wages reaches the workers directly

MGNREGA and Livelihoods Status

MGNREGS is the most significant scheme to uplift the overall quality of life of rural households. One of the major objectives of the scheme is the improvement of the income levels and enhancement of livelihood security in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every registered household. However, the data from the field reflected that there is little impact of MGNREGA on livelihoods of People. By comparing the annual income of beneficiaries before MGNREGA and after MGNREGA, it is found that there is increase of 28.52% in income of the beneficiaries. Like that there is increase of 47.42% in expenditure of the beneficiaries. Before the implementation of MGNREGA the villagers were generally spending 64.24% from their income while after the implementation of this scheme they are spending 73.69% of their income.

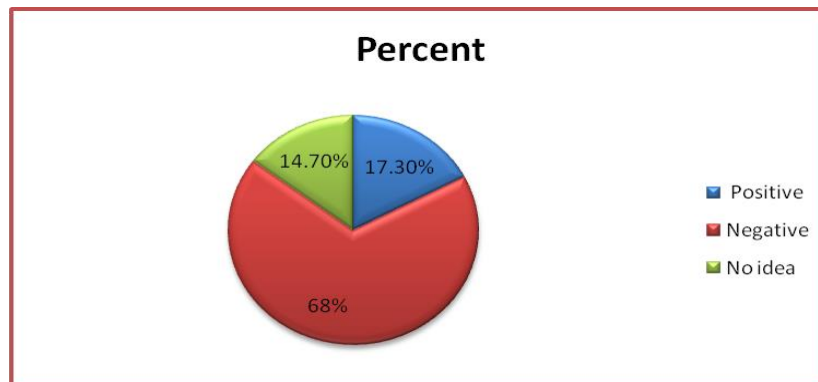
Source Wise Annual Income Expenditure Before and After MGNREGA

Source of expenditure	Before MGNREGA	After MGNREGA
Food	69.13%	59.29%
Clothing	7.68%	8.28%
Health Cooking fuel education Transport	3.46%	3.57%
Social/religious function	0.99%	1.24%
Alcohol	0.90%	1.20%
Electricity bill	2.14%	2.63%
Phone bill	3.95%	4.55%
Agri.Equipments and seeds	1.91%	2.19%
Household assets	0.35%	2.55%
Recreation	2.36%	2.31%
Maintenance of House	1.38%	2.04%

Source: Primary Data

The above data shows that due to change in income there is also change in expenditure. Generally, the expenditure of villagers was more on food items. Around 69.13% of their expenditure used to go to food. But after the implementation of this scheme the expenditure on food items gradually shifted to non-food items which include both luxury and necessity items. For this the expenditure on food items is gradually decreasing (59.29%) and on non-food items is increasing. This reflects that there is some impact on tribal livelihoods but this impact is considered as very little. This is because no proper and regular work which is the direct result of poor implementation.

On the issue of asset creation nothing much is observed from the field. Except road work no other works are being taken here. In all three Panchayat including Adhikuppam, Akkiyanikuppam, Aandipalayam and Ganapathipattu, people had expressed their disappointments with MGNREGA works. Here, the following diagram shows that maximum numbers of respondents (68%) have the negative opinion on MGNREGA.

Figure Positive and Negative Response on MGNREGA

Sources: Computed

According to some villagers, whatever the poor gets from MNREGA work spends only to feed his stomach and also in alcohol for few days, nothing left for saving, clothing, and maintenance of house as well as children's education.

Impact on Migration

By securing livelihood, MGNREGA also mitigates seasonal/distress migration which has been a significant source of employment and income for a large proportion of rural population. But there are two types of risks associated with work in under NREGS. First in most of cases Second, as per the wages are paid on piece rate basis and depending on his /her performance, a worker may get even less than the minimum prevailing market wage rate. The provisions under the scheme, a household should get minimum 100 days of employment. But, the GP fails to provide 100 days of employment to job seekers. Such limited and irregular supply of works restricts the job-seekers from working under NREGS. Regular employment opportunities also motivate many of them to migrate to other states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.

The above discussion reveals that though MGNREGA is a well-thought-out legislation, a powerful tool in the hands of the common people to get their basic livelihood, but its poor execution deprives them from their basic rights. While the target is to guarantee 100 days of employment to each household, this GP has not achieved this target. The way in which MGNREGA should function is not happening in the study area. Job cards are not reaching the beneficiaries. The unemployment allowance for the failure to provide employment within 15 days of application as per the guidelines of MGNREGA was not followed. Though there is a little change in expenditure pattern of households but it fails to stop the flow of distress rural-urban migration, restricting child labour, alleviating poverty, and making village self-sustaining through productive assets creation as only incomplete road works being taken here. Therefore,

a well thought out effort is necessary to address these problems of MGNREGA in this Gram Panchayat. To make the Act more effective for securing the desired objectives of rural poverty eradication and livelihood security, there is an urgent need to ensure citizen participation in all stages of the implementation process. A proper mechanism should be developed to check the corruption in distribution of job cards, assured timely payment of actual wage and substantial asset creation.

Summary and Conclusion

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. Rural poverty and unemployment in India have grown in an unprecedented manner during the last few decades. There is a growing incidence of illiteracy, blind faith, hungry people, malnourished children, anaemic pregnant women, farmer suicides, starvation deaths, migration resulting from inadequate employment, poverty, and the failure of subsistence production during droughts. In order to make solution of these problems and to provide livelihood security to rural unemployed, Government of India (GOI) enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2005. It is the biggest poverty alleviation programme in the world which is started with an initial outlay of Rs. 11,300 crore in year 2006-07 and now it is Rs. 40,000 crore (2010-11). This Act is now called as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA. The Act provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household will to do public work related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. Thus, it is a universal programme. This minimum wage varies from state to state, in some states it is Rs. 80 whereas in other it is Rs. 125 or Rs. 120. According to the Act the minimum wage cannot be less than Rs. 60. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year.

Findings

Maximum 14.1 percent of males have participated coolie and MGNREGA work and minimum 7.8 percent of males have participated agriculture work and MGNREGA work Female 49 per cent have participated agriculture and MGNREGA work. Minimum 21.8 percent of females have participated coolie work and MGNREGA work. So here, none of them fully dependent upon the MGNREGA and partially they were participated for the livelihood Majority (78.6%) of the households are belonging to OBC population. The rest of the households distributed among SC, ST. They are respectively 20 percent and 1.4 percent. It reflects that the Studied Panchayat is numerically dominated by OBC communities.

As most of the worker respondents are illiterate and belong to the economically poor class, the extent of awareness about NREGA has emerged out to be a major concern in all the Panchayat. Around 93 per cent of the villagers are aware about the NREGS. Among them the majority are the OBC (78.6%) But workers awareness on how to apply for job cards, awareness about minimum wages and demand for work was reportedly very low. Around 7 percent villagers are not at all aware about NREGS. Those who are aware about it out of them only 41 per cent of the respondents are aware of the number of minimum days of employment guaranteed to each household under the scheme. Only 54 per cent households in this panchayat are having job cards. According to some villagers, whatever the poor gets from MNREGA work spends only to feed his stomach and also in alcohol for few days, nothing left for saving, clothing, and maintenance of house as well as children's education.

Suggestions

- The success of the programme depends upon its proper implementation. Much of the pitfalls of MGNREGA implementation can be overcome if proper processes and procedures are put in place. Thus, there should be continuous efforts towards creating adequate awareness on different provisions of MGNREGS amongst the people. Creating awareness is necessary not only to motivate the people to work under the scheme but also to encourage them to participate in its planning and implementation.
- The leadership style should be democratic in nature. This will facilitate greater community participation, information sharing, expression of opinion by the rural mass, and development of social networks
- There is also the important role of the Govt. in implementation of MGNREGS. Thus the Govt. must take immediate steps to stop corruption in its implementation by which the MGNREGA wages reaches to the workers directly. We can surely ensure that the money goes to those who need it.
- There should be the ability and willingness of local Govt. and Panchayat to plan works and run the programmes effectively.
- A proper monitoring mechanism should be developed that can assured correct procedure in job card.

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