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Constraints facing the beneficiaries in participating Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

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"An Act to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country 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 and for matters connected there with or incidental there to."

Source: (NREGA Gazette document)

ABSTRACT

Twelve years since its inception, this law has shown extraordinary promise. It has brought the right to work to the front stage of the discussion on social protection. MGNREGA represents, a significant innovation in relation to the short-term and emergency based public work tradition. Among its innovation key ones include {a} self-targeting- this means that the programme does not target people living below the poverty line. It is the nature of the work provided manual and unskilled – that determine the demand for work. {b} any household can demand upto 100 days of work that should be provided within 15 days under the penalty of the state having to pay unemployment benefits. {c} the inclusion of social audits and social accountability mechanism to increase accountability and enhance social participation. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)– offering up to 100 days work each year to rural Indians – is the largest social protection programme in the world, in terms of the number of households covered. There is a lively debate around whether MGNREGA provides a vital social safety net for the poor or merely burdens the economy. Since 2006, it has expanded to cover all districts in India, providing work to 50 million rural households in 2012/13 at a cost of US\$8.9 billion. But no one has satisfactorily explained why, despite similar implementation mechanisms, there is such unevenness in outcomes. Major constraints faced by beneficiaries in MGNREGA were: employment of hundred days (per household per year) is too less in the present situation. The major suggestion was given by beneficiaries that temporary suspension of MGNREGA works during peak Agricultural season (93.33%).

Keywords— Rural development, Constraints, Poverty, Suggestion

1. INTRODUCTION

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was notified on 7th September 2005 and came into force on 2nd February 2006. This act renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act MGNREGA October 2nd 2009. MGNREGA is the first ever law, in the world that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The aim of the MGNREGA was to enhance the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The MGNREGA is a national law funded largely by the Central Government and implemented in all states of the country, creating a justifiable 'right to work' platform for all households in rural India. As per the law, employment is to be provided by the local government when work is demanded by any worker or group of workers registered under the MGNREGA. Women and men are paid an equal wage, which is the statutory minimum wage notified by the state government. There is much that the MGNREGA promises from the perspective of women's empowerment as well. It is also committed to ensuring that at least 33 per cent of the workers shall be women. A crèche is to be provided if there are more than five children under six years of age and that payment to the crèche in charge will not include as a component of the work measurement. MGNREGA can play a substantial role in economically empowering women and laying the basis for greater independence and self-esteem.

The distinct categories of permissible works are as follows:

- Water conservation and harvesting.
- Rural connectivity.
- Drought proofing (including plantation and afforestation).
- Canal irrigation including micro and minor irrigation works.
- Flood control and protection work.
- Minor irrigation, horticulture, and land development on the land of SC/ST/BPL/IAY and land reform beneficiaries.
- Renovation of traditional water bodies including desalting of tanks.
- Land development.

1.1 Objective

Being the largest employment generation programme rooted in an act guaranteeing the right to work for those who are willing to work, the MGNREGA is bound to play a major role in alleviating unemployment and unemployment by providing livelihood security. It would be interesting to study if the new wage employment programme has been able to fulfil its objectives and overcome the drawbacks of the earlier programme. The study explores about Attitude of beneficiaries towards MGNREGA. This study examines the attitude level of each household and other profile related MGNREGA. In this study, the effort was also made to find out constraint and suggestion made by beneficiaries about the programme. In this study, we have also tried to observe the socio-economic condition of people. The study has been designed with the following specific objectives:

- To study the profile of the beneficiaries.
- To study the constraints faced by the beneficiaries and also to obtain their suggestions for better implementation of the scheme.

Table 1: Progress Report on NRM/Water Related/All Plantation/PMKSY Works for FY: 2017-2018 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Sr. no.	Block	Number of Blocks	Number of NRM Works		%age of works On NRM works against total works	Expenditure on NRM work [in. Lakhs]	Expenditure all work [In. Lakhs]	%age of expenditure on NRM works against total expenditure
			Ongoing	Completed				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	$9=7/8*100$
1	Arvi	1	712	258	34.43	452.18	603.41	74.94
2	Ashti	1	737	222	49.61	403.37	497.53	81.07
3	Deoli	1	515	198	31.63	474.6	558.25	85.02
4	Hinganghat	1	452	176	30.57	412.83	500.68	82.45
5	Karanja	1	2093	605	55.99	861.16	1366.1	63.04
6	Samundrapur	1	643	253	56.04	368.22	407.25	90.42
7	Seloo	1	352	199	43.35	331.04	395.54	83.69
8	Wardha	1	384	88	30.14	311.65	391.59	79.59
Total		8	5888	1999	43.07	3615.05	4720.35	76.58

1.2 Methodology

The study entitled “ATTITUDE OF BENEFICIARIES TOWARDS MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT (MGNREGA)” was conducted in Wardha district of Vidarbha region. The study was conducted in Wardha and Hinganghat tahsils. The lists of MGNREGA beneficiaries was obtained from respective gram panchayat and from rojgar sanyojak who is mainly in the village and the villages having a maximum number of MGNREGA beneficiaries drawn were selected. Thus, 10 villages from two tehsils, each of the five villages were selected for the study. The 120 beneficiaries drawn from 10 villages, each of 12 beneficiaries from villages. The ex-post facto research design of social research was used.

The following table shows the distribution of panchayat samiti-wise list of randomly selected 10-gram panchayats and 10 villages from two panchayats of Wardha.

Table 2: Distribution of Selected Villages

Sr.no	Wardha	No of job card	No of respondents	Sr.no	Hinganghat	No of job card	No of respondents
1.	Ashta Neri	174	12	1	Kingaon	188	12
2.	Bhugaon	144	12	2	Bothuda	194	12
3.	Selu Kate	187	12	3	Jangona	200	12
4.	Jaulgaon	89	12	4	Kutki	182	12
5.	Mandavgad	124	12	5	Daroda	340	12
Total		718	60	Total		1104	60

2. STUDY THE PROFILE OF THE BENEFICIARIES

Table 3: Variables selected for the study with their operational definitions and measurements

Sr. No	Variable	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age	1. Young { up to 35 }	27	22.50
		2. Middle {36-50}	70	58.34
		3. Old {above 50}	23	19.16

2.	Education	1. Illiterate	08	06.66
		2. Primary school	09	07.50
		3. Middle school	22	18.34
		4. High school	50	41.66
		5. Higher secondary	27	22.50
		6. College	04	03.34
3.	Caste	1. Open	19	15.83
		2. OBC	59	49.16
		3. SC/ST	42	35.00
4.	Size of family	1. Small { up to 3 member }	29	24.16
		2. Medium { 4-6 member }	67	55.84
		3. Large { more than 6 }	24	20.00
5.	Type of family	1. Nuclear	87	72.50
		2. Joint	33	27.50
6.	Occupation	1. MGNREGA	13	10.83
		2. MGNREGA+Labour	69	57.50
		3. MGNREGA+ Agriculture labour+ Animal husbandry	15	12.50
		4. MGNREGA+ Farming +Animal husbandry+ other	23	19.17
7.	Landholding	1. Landless	20	16.66
		2. Marginal { up to 1 ha }	34	28.34
		3. Small { 1.01 to 2ha }	31	25.84
		4. Semi-medium { 2.01 to 4 ha }	30	25.00
		5. Medium { 4.01 to 10 ha }	05	04.16
		6. Big { above 10.01 ha }	00	00.00
8.	Annual income	1. Up to Rs 20,000	13	10.83
		2. Rs 20,001 to Rs 50,000	46	38.34
		3. Rs 50,001 to Rs 1,00,000	61	50.83
9.	Social participation	1. Low { up to 0.48 }	24	20.00
		2. Medium { 0.48- 2.50 }	74	61.66
		3. High { above 2.50 }	22	18.34
10.	Extension contact	1. Low { up to 14 }	22	18.34
		2. Medium { 14-20 }	80	66.66
		3. High { above 20 }	18	15.00
11.	Source of information	1. Low { up to 49 }	23	19.16
		2. Medium { 50-68 }	84	70.00
		3. High { above 68 }	13	10.84
12.	Economic motivation	1. Low { up to 19 }	18	15.00
		2. Medium { 20-26 }	82	68.34
		3. High { above 26 }	20	16.66

The important findings of the study are as under:

More than half (58.34%) of the respondents belonged to the middle age group (36 to 50 years) followed by slightly more than one third (22.50%) in the young age category that is up to 35 years. The majority 41.66 per cent of beneficiaries had high school level of education, while 35.00 per cent of beneficiaries belonged to schedule caste/ schedule tribe and 49.16 per cent of the MGNREGA beneficiaries were from other backward class. More than half (55.84%) of beneficiaries belonged to the medium-sized family. Less than three fourth (72.50%) of beneficiaries belonged to the joint type of family, while 57.50 per cent of them were dependent on MGNREGA + labour. Further 19.17 per cent of them were engaged in MGNREGA + Farming + Animal husbandry + other, for their livelihood. Half (50.84%) of the beneficiaries were small and semi-medium land holding category, The 16.66 per cent beneficiaries have landless because of they haven't possessed any land so they entirely depend on MGNREGA and other work. Nearly half (50.83%) of the beneficiaries had annual income ranging from `50,001 to 1,00,000, Majority of beneficiaries (61.66%) of the beneficiaries had used medium social participation about Two third (66.66%) of the respondents had medium level of extension contact, More than two-thirds (70.00%) of the respondents had used medium sources of information while Majority 68.34 per cent of the MGNREGA beneficiaries had medium economic motivation.

Table 4: Constraints faced by the beneficiaries in MGNREGA

S. no.	Constraints	Frequency	Percentage
1	Employment of hundred days (per household per year) is too less in the present situation	110	91.66
2	Lack of medical facilities near the work site	95	79.16
3	Continuous work is not provided	85	70.83

4	Low wage rate	80	66.66
5	Delay in payment of wages	77	64.16
6	Non-availability of supporting staff	76	63.33
7	Same wage rate is given for all kinds of work	73	60.83
8	Unemployment allowance is not provided in case of delay in job	71	59.16
9	Difficulties in the withdrawal of payment from the bank	68	56.66
10	Wages are not provided according to MGNREGA act	62	51.66

Major constraints faced by beneficiaries in MNREGA were: employment of hundred days (per household per year) is too less in the present situation (91.66%), lack of medical facilities near the work site (79.16%), Continuous work is not provided (70.83%), low wage rate (66.66%), Delay in payment of wages (64.16%), Non availability of supporting staff (63.33%), Same wage rate is given for all kinds of work (60.83%), Unemployment allowance is not provided in case of delay in job (59.16%), Difficulties in withdrawal of payment from bank (56.66%), Wages are not provided according to MGNREGA act (51.66%).

Table 5: The suggestion was given by the MGNREGA beneficiaries

Sr. no	Suggestions	Frequency	Percentage
1	Allowed work in offseason	112	93.33
2	Delays and denial in payment of wages is the primary concern which needs to be addressed".	87	72.50
3	Provide employment opportunities for skilled labour	85	70.83
4	Increase in wage payment should be the main factor for successful implementation of the scheme	80	65.00
5	They emphasized the need to address the issue of corruption in the scheme	76	63.33
6	Use of biometric system and collaboration with UIAID to provide unique identity codes to the rural poor.	73	60.83
7	Work should be related with agriculture sector and allied field	70	58.33
8	Demanded that the social audit in gram panchayat should be conducted by the third party,	67	55.83
9	The issue regarding enlarging the scope of works under MGNREGA can be addressed	64	53.33
10	The major work which should be done by manually need to do by on manually not by machinery.	62	51.66

The major suggestion was given by beneficiaries that temporary suspension of MGNREGA works during peak Agricultural season (93.33%). Due to this more work get available to the beneficiaries along with MGNREGA. The beneficiaries also suggested that to derive the scope of work for skilled workers in their specified field (70.83%). "Delays and denial in payment of wages is the primary concern which needs to be addressed"(72.50%).

The survey also shows that in the respondents' perception, the number of days of work they got was far less than the 100 days of entitlement (80.00%). This leads to people losing faith in MGNREGA and going for other private works where regular work is more likely.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- Majority of the beneficiaries were from middle age group, were literate or had up to the secondary level of education, had the medium and nuclear type of family and were from OBC/other and SC & ST category.
- Majority of the beneficiaries had membership in one or more than one social organization, `50,001 to `1,00,000 of annual income and were marginal or had medium to semi medium size of landholding.
- For the majority of beneficiaries, MGNREGA alone or MGNREGA in addition to labour was the major occupation.
- The beneficiaries mostly participate in the informal organization so their social participation is medium level.
- Beneficiaries had the medium economic motivation and high extension contact.
- Majority of the beneficiaries had moderate to favourable attitude towards MGNREGA.
- Out of twelve independent variables, ten variables viz., education, caste, family size social participation, land holding, annual income, occupation, source of information, extension contact and economic motivation showed significant influence on their attitude towards MGNREGA, where age, types of family failed to show any significant influenced on their attitude towards MGNREGA.
- Major benefits realized by beneficiaries in MGNREGA were: enhancing livelihood security in rural areas, uplift of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, reducing rural-urban migration, economic empowerment of women and good education to children due to increasing in income.
- Major constraints faced by beneficiaries in MGNREGA were: employment of hundred days (per household per year) is too less in the present situation, lack of medical facilities near the work site, the unemployment allowance is not provided in case of delay in job, continuous work is not provided, the same wage rate is given for all kinds of work and delay in issuing job card.

3.1 Implications

- The study revealed that caste, social participation, land holding, annual income, occupation, and economic motivation were significantly related with the attitude of beneficiaries towards MGNREGA. Due manipulation of these characteristics, where ever possible, may be made to shape the attitude towards more favourableness for those beneficiaries who have a less favourable attitude.
- Beneficiaries expressed some constraints which hinder the beneficiaries in availing the benefit of MGNREGA. Efforts should be made to lessen the magnitude of such constraints.

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