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Socio-economic status of MGNREGA availed population of Valsad, Gujarat

Anand K. Pandey

adarshlalit@gmail.com

Rofel Arts and Commerce College,
Vapi, Gujarat

Hemali Desai

adarsh.xcell@gmail.com

Rofel Arts and Commerce College,
Vapi, Gujarat

ABSTRACT

The MGNREGA is flagship programme of government of India which is unique in nature and implemented in rural areas of all districts of the country. Employment is the key factor for the reduction in the poverty and providing the sustained living standard of the people especially in rural areas. Valsad district was covered under the MGNREGA in the second phase in 2006. In the total population of district about 63% population belongs to the rural area. The agriculture and its allied activities are the major activities for livelihood of the people living the rural areas of the district. This study was found that MGNREGA had positive impact on income, expenditure and savings status of the beneficiaries. Before joining in MGNREGA, an average family income, expenditure and savings of the beneficiaries were Rs. 11,896, Rs. 6,809 and Rs. 2,226 respectively. However, after joining in MGNREGA, an average family income, expenditure and savings of the beneficiaries were reported to Rs. 15,242, Rs. 10,016 and Rs. 4,538 respectively. This study found that the beneficiaries were given an average of 78 days of employment per year under the program. However, this employment program aims to provide employment of 100 days a year. Overall, this program was involved much to improve the socio-economic status of population of Valsad district.

Keywords— MGNREGA, Poverty, Valsad District, Working Days, Migration

1. INTRODUCTION

Valsad, earlier known as Bulsar is one out of 33 districts of Gujrat state. Total area of this district covers 3008 square kilometers and total population was 1,705,678 as per census 2011. Valsad, Vapi, Pardi, Umargam, Kaparada and Dharampur are six talukas in this district. Population density of this Valsar district was 570 with population growth rate 20.92% and sex ratio of 922 female for every 1000male. Economy of this district is horticulture as well as industry based. This is a hub of horticulture in Gujrat. Mango especially Alphonso, papaya, guava, cucurbits, chikoo, banana and sugarcane are highly produced in this district (Nabard, 2021). Chemical, textile, paper and pulp industries are major sector of established industrie in this district covering almost 10716 medium and large-scale industries. This has also owned Asia's largst Common Effluent Treatment Plant situated in Vapi taluka (DCMSME, 2021). Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Gurantee Act (MGNREGA) guarantees at least 100 days of wage employment in every financial year to rural households whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work in the rural areas. The Act has been extended to all districts except the urban districts from 1stApril, 2008. According to the latest data available on official website of MGNREGA, 660 districts with 6849 blocks and 2,57,768 Gram Panchayats (GPs) were covered under this programme. The total job cards issued under this scheme are 12.67 crore and 25.03 crore workers are covered under this scheme in 2017-2018. Among this, workers from 11.23 crore households were employed in different works. In terms of person days generated under scheme was 166.21 crore in 2014-15, which increased to 203.66 crore in 2017-2018. The Valsad district is covered under the MGNREGA, in the second Phase (2006). At the end of 2017-2018, total cumulative number of 1.93 lakhs job cards issued under this programme in Valsad district. In the total issued job-card during this year, the highest job card issued in the Kapardataluka and lowest in Vapitaluka i.e., 53,468 and 7343 respectively. In 2017-2018, about 0.32 lakh employment provided to households who are covered under this programme. In terms of total person days, about 8.21 lakh days workers worked under this programme. At the end of the 2017-2018, total 2156 works were taken up, and out of this total 797 works were completed and remaining works were under progress. The MGNREGA is flagship programme of government of India, which is unique in nature and implemented in rural areas of all districts of the country since April, 2008. The numbers of studies were conducted by NGOs, researchers, institution etc. which evaluated the impact of MGNREGA on different parameters such as employment, food security and issue of migration of the rural poor households of the various regions of the country. The employment is the key factor for the reduction in the poverty and providing the sustained living standard of the people, especially

in rural areas. The rural people faced crucial problem of the disguised and seasonal unemployment, which ultimately adversely affected on livelihood of their family as whole. About 65% population belongs to the rural area in this District. The agriculture and its allied activities are the major activities for livelihood of the people living the rural areas of the district. Raghuwanshi and Shrivastav (2018) had made an attempt to assess the impact on implementation and effectiveness of the Act in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh, during the financial year 2016-17. This study had covered the objectives such as the impacts of MGNREGA related to natural resources include soil, water etc. and to create wage employment for the rural sustainable livelihood to raise productive capacity of the economy. The specific study in the context of Impact of MGNREGA programme on the employment, food security and migration in the Valsad district is not earlier reported.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was undertaken in Valsad district of Gujarat, which was covered under the MGNREGA during the second phase in year 2006. Among total 1,85,125 MGNREGA jobcard issued to the household in the rural area of Valsad district, 28,715 Job cards were active as per MGNREGA official web site: <http://nrega.nic.in>, at the end of 2015-16. A multistage random sampling method was used for selection of the sample in four talukas i.e. Dharampur, Valsad, Vapi and Umbergaon out of all six talukas through a defined questioner having general information like name, caste, religion, education etc.; habitation; child education; health; migration information; economic information. Collected information statistically analyzed with the help of SPSS and MS Excel.

3. FINDINGS

58% male and 42% female were beneficiaries among all sampled MGNREGA beneficiaries. They were 65% beneficiaries' fall in the age group of 35 years to 55 years and all belongs to Hindu religion. Caste wise classification implies that, majority (78.5%) beneficiaries were from Scheduled Tribe (S.T). Only 14% and 7.5% beneficiaries were from Socially and Economically Backward Caste (SEBC) and Scheduled Caste (SC) respectively. Among the total selected beneficiaries, 65.0% was illiterate. Furthermore, beneficiaries who were literate, the level of education was found to be low (i.e. 25.0% had taken education upto primary only). So, the education level of the selected beneficiaries was found to be not satisfactory. This was found that after joining in MGNREGA, the basic facilities such as electricity, bathroom and toilet were increased significantly. Before joining MGNREGA, about 74.5% beneficiaries had bathroom, 31.5% had toilet and only 3.5% had drainage facilities at home. However, after joining MGNREGA, these percentages were increased to 99.0%, 98.5% and 21.0% respectively. This was also found that there was significant impact of MGNREGA on intensity of migration. Before joining in MGNREGA, about 23.5% beneficiaries were migrated for various purposes such as employment (14.5%), for higher education (8.5%) and social reason (0.5%). But after joining in MGNREGA, only 6.0% beneficiaries have migrated to another village, town or city. Among the total beneficiaries who have migrated, no one was migrated for employment, which indicates the high positive impact of MGNREGA on employment generation. This was also found that MGNREGA had positive impact on income, expenditure and savings status of the beneficiaries. Before joining in MGNREGA, an average family income, expenditure and savings of the beneficiaries were Rs. 11,896, Rs. 6,809 and Rs. 2,226 respectively. However, after joining in MGNREGA, an average family income, expenditure and savings of the beneficiaries were reported to Rs. 15,242, Rs. 10,016 and Rs. 4,538 respectively. This study was reported that the data on income, expenditure and savings were not normally distributed because the significance values of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests were reported to greater than 0.10. So, it is decided to use non-parametric test such as Wilcoxon Signed Rank test to check level of significance in difference in monthly average income, expenditure and savings before and after joining MGNREGA. The values of this test were found to -10.41, -11.48 and -11.02 with associate significance value of 0.000. Hence, we had concluded that there is statistically significant positive impact of MGNREGA on income, expenditure and savings of the beneficiaries of MGNREGA. Among total beneficiaries, the proportion of going to a private hospital for illness or any other health related treatment was only 1%, which increased to 18% after joining the program. Thus, it can be said that joining this employment-oriented program has improved their financial capacity and as a result the percentage of those seeking treatment in private hospitals or clinics had increased. About 76% beneficiaries had get information about this programme through Gram Panchayat, 36% from Friends/relatives, 27% from Gram Panchayat Sahayak and 25% from Media. Hence, Thus, it can be said that Gram Panchayat plays a very important role in job creation and its awareness by including the unemployed in this programme. The main reason behind not getting the work immediately is found to be "unavailability of work". This study found that the beneficiaries were given an average of 78 days of employment per year under the program. However, this employment program aims to provide employment of 100 days a year. It was also found that the data of employment days in a year was found to not normally distribute according to Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests of Normality. Taluka-wise analysis of an average employment days under this programme shows that Vapitalukas was ahead in providing higher employment days under this programme followed by Umbergaontaluka. Average employment days under this programme in Vapi, Umbergaon, Dharampur, and Valsad talukas were 83, 79, 75 and 74 respectively. It is also found that difference in average days according to talukas was statistically significant as the Kruskal-Wallis test was reported to 12.75m with significance value of 0.005. It has been found that the workers working under this program were paid an average daily wage of Rs. 189. Wage rate according to the type of work was found to be not statistically significant. An average rate given to the workers working under the head of Water Conservation, Road, Land Development, Plantation and Others are reported to Rs. 190, Rs. 189, Rs. 190, Rs. 188 and Rs. 187 respectively. This study is supported the earlier reports of Sruthi V. and Vezhaventhan D. (2018); Karim Abdul and Khanuja S.S. (2017); Kumar P. (2013); Shah, V.D., *et.al.* (2011); Sankaran K. (2011); Jha R., *et.al.* (2011); Sharma D. D., Mahendra D. S. (2011); Ahuja, Rani U. *et.al.* (2011); Vanik A. (2008); Prasad M. R. (2008); Joshi V., *et.al.* (2008); Jean, *et.al.* (2008); Shah M. (2007). Overall this programme was involved much to improve the socio-economic status of population of Valsad district.

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