



International Journal of Research in Finance and Management

P-ISSN: 2617-5754
E-ISSN: 2617-5762
IJRFM 2022; 5(1): 25-28
Received: 10-10-2021
Accepted: 08-12-2021

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Participation of various socio-economic groups in MGNREGA: A study of Rajasthan

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Abstract

In a developing country like India poverty and rural unemployment have been pressing problems for decades. In this regard, the Government of India launched a number of schemes from time to time. Most of these schemes primarily aim at improving economic security of the rural population. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA) came into force on February 2, 2006 and was implemented in phased manner. One of the important objectives of MNREGA is to ensure employment and livelihood security of households living in rural areas of the country. It aims at providing not less than hundred days of unskilled manual work in a financial year to every household in the rural areas. Since its inception MGNREGA has ensured employment generation for the marginalized poor people, along with attaining multiple other objectives such as creation of durable community assets, better organization and skill up-gradation of workers owing to its community participation. The first objective of this paper is to examine the participation of various socio-economic groups in MGNREGA in Rajasthan. The second objective of this paper is to examine the participation of the women's in MGNREGA in rural areas. This study found that in the both lower caste people participated more intensively.

Keywords: MGNREGA, implemented, generation

Introduction

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, (NREGA) which is enacted in 2005 as a rural wages employment. As per NREGA Act 2005, "An Act to provide for enhancement of livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wages employment in every financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work and for matter connected these with or incidental thereto".

Therefore NREGA is an Act to provide a legal guarantee of 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. He/She will set the minimum wage rate notified for agriculture labour in the state until the central government notifies a minimum wage rate, which in any case shall not be less than Rs. 60 per day. Women are empowered through provision of one-third women reservation under NREGA. The wages employment Schemes under NREGA, 2005, is called National Rural employment guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

NREGS, which was launched on February 2, 2006 in 200 most backward districts in the first phase, has been expanded to 330 district in the second phase. The remaining 226 districts have been notified on September 28, 2007 where the scheme has come in to effect from April 1, 2008. As against the employment demanded by 2.61 crore rural households, 2.57 households have been provided wage employment during 2007-08. Employment provided to rural households 1.47 crore person per day in allover India in January, 2009. According to the press released by Ministry of Rural Development Government of India, the ratio of women labour is 38.3 of total employed, whereas, the ratio of SCs and STs is 30.19 per cent and 5.62 per cent respectively.

The average per capita consumption expenditure for rural and urban population as per 61st Round (2004-05) is Rs. 558.78 and Rs. 1052.36 respectively. NSSO data also reveals that rural population on an average spends about 55 per cent of its consumption on food and remaining 45 per cent on non-food items. NSSO data also reveals that rural poor (Below PL) and spending 31 to 35 per cent of their total consumption expenditure on non-food and remaining an food items on the basis of monthly per capita expenditure (MPCES), (NSSO, report No. 508: level and pattern of consumer expenditure 2004-05).

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Therefore, consumption expenditure on food and nonfood item is absolutely very low and earning through wages employment scheme like NREGS will be significantly effect of the rural households and especially women labour.

Review of Literature

Kim Bonner, Jenifer Daum *et al* (2012) ^[10] have given many suggestions based on their studies with respect to the scheme as (a) The MoRD (Ministry of Rural Development) should collect data on the ratio of number of days of work demanded to the number of days provided. (b) The MoRD should create a composite success indicator to understand the MGNREGA progress with an independent evaluation system. (c) To promote more participation of women.

Hirway *et al* (2010) observe that three critical features that make NREGS as a distinct scheme from the other centrally sponsored employment guarantee programmes. First, it leads to empowerment of the workers by guaranteeing them basic entitlements like work on demand, payment of minimum wages, timely payment of wages, worksite facilities, etc. Second, it strengthens the decentralized democracy by giving power in the hands of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and making their functioning transparent and accountable. Third, the scheme strengthens the livelihoods of people, ultimately leading to labour intensive, broad-based and sustainable development. The study also undertook a detailed assessment of the employment, income and output multipliers (using the SAM approach) generated by the scheme within the context of a Gujarat village, *viz.*, Nana Kotda in Sabarkantha district. The increased output and multipliers have been estimated based on the increase in value of output from agriculture and other related activities such as animal husbandry, construction and self-employment in non-agriculture created through asset creation in the form of desilting of check dams in the village.

Subhashish Dey (2010) ^[12] while evaluating NREGA in Birbhum district in West Bengal found that, the annual demand for work was close to 200 days, whereas since inception of the programme has created a demand only for 20 days a year. Diganta Mukhrjee, Uday Bhanu Sinha (2011) ^[11] examined the labour supply from the poor households in their paper, suggests that to avoid the adverse production effect arising out of reduction of labour supply from the poor households, a direct policy which increases the agriculture productivity is needed. They also have advised increased mechanization in agriculture activity, which in-turn should help for reduction in labour requirement in agriculture.

Pranati Gogoi Hazarik (2009) ^[9] while examining the women empowerment facilitated by MGNREGA in Assam state observed that the scheme has emerged as very powerful tool for addressing gender issues. It was found that the programme has a positive impact on women empowerment. Also the author concluded that (a) Women had more access to wage employment. (b) It created an atmosphere for inclusive development. A research paper by Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (2009) evaluating the scheme in Tamilnadu observed two interesting things, (a) the involvement of Self Help Group (SHGs) members improved the awareness of people towards the scheme. (b) People worked for NREGS had mostly agriculture as their primary activity. NREGS works substituted agriculture in

these areas therefore; agriculture was the most affected category.

R, Uma Maheshwari (2009) In Jharkhand, it was so late to payment the NREGS worker, Tapas Soren, a tribal committed Self-immolation. It is shown that dalit and tribal families in the West-Godavari district of Andhra-Pradesh, whose villages will be affected by the Polararam dam project, face a peculiar problem and on receiving compensation for land given to the project the non-tribal land-lords have stopped cultivation and work under the NREGS has been terminated because the land will shortly be submerged, even for contracts completed under the NREGS, there are discrepancies in the amount of work done and the wages the villagers have received.

Richard Mahapatra, Neha Sakhuja *et al* (2008) deal with the opportunities and challenges related to the scheme and observed that demand for works under the act was very low and many states were unable to provide livelihood to poor people. Also the authors said that, the emphases on development of productive assets like water harvesting were less in nature. As the observation of researchers suggested that majority of work was not completed, the completion and maintenance of work should be made compulsory. The All India Report on Evaluation of NREGA (2008), a survey of twenty districts, observed that eighty percent of households expressed that they did not get the work within the stipulated 15 days' time; neither were they paid the unemployment allowance. The survey also revealed that the number of families spending less on food has come down drastically where as there is a rise in number of families who are spending more on food and nonfood items.

Dreze and Oldige (2007) While the NREGS made rapid inroads into the rural economies of the country, there have also been concerns about the slow pace of its implementation on the one hand and the varying levels of work participation in many states on the other. It was noted that when many states have reportedly doing better, with 87 days of employment per rural households during 2006-07. On the other hand, in the initial years, states like Kerala was at the bottom layer of NREGS performance, the main reason being the lack of effective demand for NREGS employment and the low levels of wages paid under NREGS *vis a vis* the general agricultural wage rates that exist in the state. The huge wage gap across NREGS, agriculture as well as non-agriculture sectors in the state has acted as a major factor dissuading the male workers in participating in the scheme. In contrast, the Tamilnadu story seemed quite interesting as it had shown a significant rise in women participation (81%) in the scheme during 2006-07 when the national average was near about 40%. Whereas, in West Bengal, the state had developed an ambivalent attitude towards NREGS from the beginning.

Auran Jacob, Richard Varchese (2006) ^[5] In case of Maharashtra and West-Bengal the case of total person-days in initial stage created was very low. But in spite of that Maharashtra and West-Bengal created only 4 and 6 person days in 2006-07. The reason behind low person-days in West-Bengal, for its part, had an ambivalent attitude towards the main implementation problem in Kerala was due to improper estimation of labour requirements. It is also seen that while implementation has been largely fair and corruption free, the scheme needs to be more efficiently and effectively used so as to meet long-term requirements of the state Kerala and its people.

Objectives of the Study

- To examine the participation of various socio-economic groups in MGNREGA in Rajasthan.
- To examine the participation of the women’s in MGNREGA in rural areas.

Methodology

The present study is analytical study to examine the implementation of MGNREGA scheme. This research study

is based on primary data. The primary data will be collected with the help of structured questionnaire. The Jaipur district is purposively selected for the research work. For the purpose of analysis a sample of 100 households randomly selected. For the analysis purpose, this study uses simple tabulation, graphical, average and percentage methods.

Results and Discussion of the Study

Table 1: Performance of MGNREGS working days in last three years across different Per-Capita income class

Range of Per Capita Income	Average Per HH MGNREGS Working days 2014-15		Average Per HH MGNREGS Working days 2015-16		Average Per HH MGNREGS Working days 2016-17	
	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan
5414-6150	45	17	100	20	30	41
6151-9000	44	17	92	19	29	42
9001-15000	42	17	87	19	28	42
15001-20000	40	17	81	19	27	41
20001-28417	32	17	75	18	27	42
28418-53865	0	17	0	19	0	42

Source: Primary data from field survey, 2017

The above table 1 reveals the performance of MGNREGS work in different years across different per capita income class. In the year of 2014-15 the average MGNREGS working days are 17 in all per-capita income strata for Patan village. But in Banskho village the average MGNREGS working days is around 40 and this average MGNREGS working days has a declining trend with increasing of per-capita income class. In the year of 2015-16 the average is 19 in Patan village. In case of Banskho village it is almost more than 80 for most of the per-capita income class.

This is also interesting to note that in this year the MGNREGS working days has a declining trend with the increasing of per-capita income range. In the year of 2016-17 the average MGNREGS working days are around 42 in case of Patan village where as in Banskho village it is around 28. In case of Banskho village in the year of 2015-16 the working days in MGNREGS was more than 80 but just after this year the working days in MGNREGS falls drastically. In the case of Patan village we get just opposite result of Banskho village.

Table 2: Participation of different social groups in MGNREGS across different land holding class

Land Size (Bigha)	Total working days in 2016-17		ST		SC		OBC		GENERAL	
	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan
0-2	310	417	164 (53)	0 (0)	58 (19)	249 (60)	60 (19)	0 (0)	28 (9)	168 (40)
2.01-4	453	546	197 (43)	0 (0)	0 (0)	462 (84)	256 (57)	0 (0)	0 (0)	84 (16)
4.01-6	331	619	157 (47)	0 (0)	30 (9)	544 (87)	119 (36)	0 (0)	25 (8)	75 (13)
>6	305	502	253 (83)	0 (0)	0 (0)	418 (82)	30 (10)	0 (0)	22 (7)	84 (18)

Source: Primary data from field survey, 2017

Tables 2 postulate that how participation of different social groups in MGNREGS varies across different land holding class. The study found that that participation of MGNREGS work increases with increasing land holding class (except highest land holding) in case of Patan Panchayat. In case of lowest land holding class among the total participation in MGNREGS work SC has participated 249 days (60%) and general participation 168 days (50%). In case of all land holding class the SC group has participated majorly in MGNREGS work and their participation rate is more than 80 from 2 Bigha and above. In Banskho village study found that all type of social group are present in sample HH.

In case of lowest land holding class among 310 working days the participation of different social groups are for ST 164 days (53%) for SC 58 days (19%); for OBC 60 days (19%) and for general 28 days (9%) for land holding status 0-2 Bigha. Now for other land holding status the participation share of working days of different social groups are 43% (ST) and 57% (SC) for land holding class 2.01-4 Bigha. In case of land 4.01-6 Bigha the participation rate are 47% (ST) and 9% (SC), 36% (OBC) and 8% (General) lastly for highest land holding class the participation rates are 83 % (ST), 10% (OBC) and (7%).

Table 3: Participation of different social group in MGNREGS across different per –Capita Class

Range of Per Capita Income	Total working days in 2016-17		ST		SC		OBC		GEN	
	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan
5414-6150	30	123	30 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	123 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
6151-9000	147	378	28 (20)	0 (0)	0 (0)	252 (67)	119 (80)	0 (0)	0 (0)	126 (33)
9001-15000	817	752	440 (53)	0 (0)	58 (7)	544 (72)	291 (36)	0 (0)	28 (4)	208 (28)
15001-20000	270	371	163 (60)	0 (0)	30 (11)	203 (55)	55 (20)	0 (0)	22 (9)	168 (45)
20001-28417	135	252	110 (81)	0 (0)	0 (0)	126 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	25 (19)	126 (50)
28418-53865	0	166	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	84 (52)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	82 (58)

Source: Primary data from field survey, 2017

In the above table 3 shown how different sources of per capita income varies across different per-capita income class. It can be seen from the above table that most of the sample household (HH) belong to per capita income class 9001-15000 in both the villages. In the case of Patan village the lowest per-capita income of the SC group participate

100% in MGNREGS. This is also interesting to mention here that as the per-capita income class increases the SC groups participate at lower rate before it increase again in highest per capita income class. So finally conclude that lower class participation in MGNREGA is more campered to general caste in both villages.

Table 4: Participation of male and Female in MGNREGS across different per-capita income class

Range of Per Capita Income	Average MGNREGS Working days 2016-17		Average Per HH Male Working days		Average Per HH Female Working days	
	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan	Banskho	Patan
5414-6150	30	41	0	7	30	35
6151-9000	29	42	6	9	23	33
9001-15000	28	42	2	10	26	31
15001-20000	27	41	4	3	23	38
20001-28417	27	42	0	0	27	42
28418-53865	0	42	0	9	0	32

Source: Primary data from field survey, 2017

The above table 4 has shown the participation of male and female in MGNREGS work in the year of 2016-17 across different per-capita income strata. From the above two tables it can be said that female participation is higher than the male participation in both villages namely Banskho and Patan for every per-capita income class. This is indicating positive impact on women empowerment in terms of women participation in the MGNREGA scheme. So finally this study concludes that the female participation is greater in both villages.

Conclusion

This study tried find out the participation of various socio-economic groups in MGNREGA. This study found that MGNREGA has some impact on the level of income across different land holding and per capita income class in both villages. In another interesting result found that in the first two years (2014-15 & 2015-16) Banskho village showed a wonderful performance in MGNREGA programme. But in last year (2016-17) Patan village also performed well, in fact, it is better than Banskho village. To look at the social group’s participation in MGNREGA the lower caste people participated more intensively in both the village. In Patan Panchayat mainly SC dominate in MGNREGA participation and Banskho village ST dominates in MGNREGA participation. So, in general the lower cast household mainly participates in MGNREGS work. This study found another interesting result that the women’s participation in MGNREGA is very high in both the villages.

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