

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantees Act (MGNREGA) and Rural Migration in India

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Abstract: Migration from rural to urban areas is occurring due to several reasons in India. Lack of employment opportunities in rural areas is one of the major reasons of migration to urban areas. Since independence, Government of India has introduced several programs with the aim of preventing migration from rural to urban areas, generating adequate employment opportunities and creating durable assets and infrastructure facilities in rural areas. One such major milestone program is MGNREGA introduced in February 2006 with the main objective of enhancing the livelihood security in rural areas through providing 100 employment guarantee days with minimum wage for every rural household who are willing to do unskilled manual work. This study investigates that how does the MGNREGA program impact on migration and employment in rural areas in Ranga Reddy district, Telangana State. It also discusses features of migration households and the performance of MGNREGA program at grass root level. The MGNREGA is the flagship welfare programme of the UPA Government and the largest of its Kind in India. MGNREGA will have significant positive impact on seasonal Rural – Urban Migration by providing rural workers with employment during the lean season MGNREGA income provides a significant value addition to meet the higher order needs critical for their survival or growth and development of their family. Thus public work offering relatively Predictable employment Opportunities are particularly effective in slowing Rural migration in Indian.

Keywords: MGNREGA, Education, Rural migration, Performance, India.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) though notified on 7 September, 2005, was implemented in all the rural districts of India in April 2008. It is the biggest employment providing programme ever started in a country for the development of its rural areas. It aims at providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work.

This Scheme is different from the earlier employment programmes launched by the Government of India. This scheme is on one hand demand-driven and on the other, treats employment as a right of the rural households. Thus, the scheme provides income directly to the unskilled workers in the rural areas. The MGNREGS has shown a significant improvement in different aspects. The number of households associated with MGNREGA works has been increasing consistently, the number of days for which employment has been provided have also increased. Another important aspect of MGNREGS is the increasing participation of women in it. It not only provides employment to them but by giving wage rate equal to that of a man, it has empowered the women economically as well as socially.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the flagship welfare programme of the UPA Government was passed by the Parliament in August 2005 and came into effect on 5th September 2005. It has been derided by many as yet another instance of a large chunk of public money being flushed down the drain in pointless rural development works. Reports of schemes consisting of the NREGA workers digging ditches and then re-filling them at work sites, of workers not being paid their wages, of inflated muster rolls with non-existent workers and large amounts being swindled out of the programme which is amply funded by the Centre, and most recently, the gruesome murder of Lalit Mehta, a social activist whose work had exposed corruption in

the NREGA scheme in Jharkhand do nothing to change the negative image of the programme. There is an article every week pointing out the regions where NREGA has failed miserably. However, though the picture is certainly not as rosy as the Bharath Nirman advertisements would like us to believe, there are some places where NREGA is being implemented very well, where it is a life-line for its workers, and the success stories in these places should be highlighted more to serve as a model for the rest of the country.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 covered 200 districts-known as Phase I districts, and in 2006-07 this was extended to cover 130 additional districts known as the Phase II districts. During 2006-07 against the total available funds of Rs. 12073.56 Crore with the states, Rs. 8823.36 Crore was utilised. The average fund utilisation per district was Rs. 44.12 Crore in 2006-07. For 2007-08 the government made a budget provision of Rs 12000 Crore. Out of this Rs. 8303.82 Crores have been released up to 14th November 2007. Out of this, Rs. 5365.99 Crore have been released to the Phase I 200 districts and Rs. 2937.92 Crore have been released to the Phase II 131 districts. During 2006-07, 2.12 Crore households had demanded employment, out of which 2.10 Crore households were provided employment. During the year 90.51 Crore person days of employment was provided under the programme. Averages of 45.2 lakh person days of employment per districts have been generated. Out of total 90.51 Crore person days, the share of Scheduled Castes was 22.95 Crore person days (25.36%) and Scheduled Tribes was 32.99 (36.45%) constituting a total of 55.94 Crore person days for SCs/STs which comes to about 62%. As per the NREGA, the share of women person days should be 1/3rd and the same was 36.79 Crore person days, which is about 41%. During 2007-08 (up to September 2007), 1.97 Crore households have demanded employment and 1.88 Crore households have been provided employment. A total of 56.14 Crore person days of employment has been generated under the Programme. Out of this, the share of Scheduled Castes is 14.70 Crore person days (26.18%) and Scheduled Tribes is 18.44 Crore person days (32.84%) constituting a total of 33.14 Crore person days, which is about 59.03% of total. The share of women is 26.61 Crore person days, which is 47.40%.

History of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

MGNREGA, since its inception in year 2005, is one of the biggest poverty alleviation programme in the world. The act provides a **legal guarantee for 100 days of wage employment in every financial year to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual labour at the statutory minimum wage rate**. The programme also aims at providing of livelihood security for the poor through creation of durable assets. However, the main objective of MGNREGA is **to augment wage employment with a secondary objective of strengthening**, “natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion” & thereby encourages sustainable development (Ministry of Rural Development, 2010). In special case such of the works which are not included in the permissible work list, state government by making use of Section 1(ix) of schedule 1 of MGNREGA act may add new categories of works on the basis of consultation between state and central government.

Journey of MGNREGA

Table 1.1: Table Showing Time-Line of MGNREGA Programme

Aug. 2005	Feb. 2006	April 2007	April 2008	Oct. 2008	16 Feb. 2009	Oct. 2009	Till the date
NREGA legalised	Came into force in 200 districts	130 more districts included	Universalization of the scheme	Wage transaction through bank/post offices	MOU with the postal department	Name changed to MGNREGA	No change in nomenclature

Source: www.nrega.nic.in

Since the Legalisation of MGNREGA in the year 2005, the Programme was implemented in 200 most backward districts of the country in February 2006. In the year 2007, 130 more districts were brought under MGNREGA and within a year the act got universalized by bringing the entire country under its horizon. The programme was renamed as MGNREGA in October 2009.

MGNREGA - A Brief Overview

- Mahatma Gandhi national rural employment guarantee act (MGNREGA) was enacted by legislation on Aug 25, 2005 and is the largest public program in India, initiated by the UPA government. It started in 2005-06 with 200 districts and slowly extended to another 130 districts in 2007-08 and to all remaining 285 rural districts in 2008-09. Under this act every adult member of rural household is entitled to at least 100 days guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, if volunteered to do unskilled manual work. Here all rural families are entitled to apply for participation and get job card issued. Some of the salient features of MGNREGA are as follows:
- All adult members of a rural household willing to do unskilled manual work have the right to demand employment.
- Such a household will have to apply registration to the Gram Panchayat.
- After verification, the Gram Panchayat will issue a Job Card with photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under the programme.
- The Job Card must remain in the custody of the household.
- Job Cardholder can apply for work to the Gram Panchayat which will issue him/her a dated receipt of the work application.
- Employment will be provided by the Gram Panchayat (local self governing body) within 15 days of work application, failing which unemployment allowance will be paid.
- Disbursement of wages has to be done weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight.
- Wages will be paid at the wage rate to the wage earners through their Bank/Post office accounts. 10
- An annual shelf of works to be prepared in advance for each year.
- A ratio of 60:40 for wage and material costs should be maintained at GP level.
- No contractors/and no labour-displacing machinery shall be used in execution of works.
- Panchayati Raj Institutions will have a principal role in planning, monitoring and implementation At least one-third of the workers should be women.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

National Tribunal (2006) studied 100 days programme of NREGP in districts of Madhya Pradesh and reported that tremendous hurdles were faced at the first stage of registration and acquiring of the job cards. Women headed household and joint families are the main disadvantages in accessing the benefits of the programme as it is applicable only to the head of the household. Here every individual has actually received the benefits of work.

Mathur (2007) argues in favour of MGNREGA that it has marked the beginning of momentous changes in the lives of the rural poor. He shows that migration was less than in several villages in Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Orissa and Rajasthan, was less than minimum wage were raised in many states, the participation of women increased significantly even in the districts of Rajasthan and Uttara Pradesh.

P.S. Srikantha Murthy, and S. Indumati (2011) Using macro level data on MGNREGA performance in drought-prone states of Karnataka and Rajasthan as well as in irrigation-dominated state of Andhra Pradesh, this study has revealed that the impact of MGNREGA wage on the economic scarcity of labour is relatively modest when compared with the impact of hike in non-farm wages. Even though the provision of food security through public distribution system has contributed to the economic scarcity of labour, the relative hike in non-farm wages is contributing to higher economic scarcity of labour rather than PDS and MGNREGA wages. The study has suggested subsidies for farm mechanization should be provided in order to sustain food and livelihood security in the droughtprone as well as irrigation-dominant states of India.

Raju Narayana Swamy (2013) reviewed the high percentage of women participation in the scheme clearly projects that the programme to a great extends has been beneficial for the women. This social protection which the Act ensures the promotion of gender equality empowers women and reduces social exclusion.

Chakraborty's (2007) paper also indicates that the existing institutional arrangement in poorer states is not good enough to implement die NREGA in an effective manner. He observes that keeping the spatial dimension of die implementation in mind, the importance of the smooth flow of funds for implementation of projects in accordance with the demand, capacity building at

the village level, right to information to enable social audits effectively, accountability of functionaries and an effective grievance redressal mechanism assume critical importance. It has also made an attempt to diagnose the interstate variation in performance regarding implementation of the Act.

Sudha Narayanan (2008) in her case study on implementation of NREGA finds out that in Tamil Nadu the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has brought about major changes in the lives of women. She observes that childcare is a problem for many of the working women specifically for young mothers. However, she found that around 70% of the women surveyed reported that there were no childcare facilities at the worksite. Children suffer from harsh weather or sickness at the worksite. So to overcome this problem she has suggested that a creche is needed at the worksite and at least a minimum level healthcare facility should be implemented at the worksite area.

P C Jaffer's (2008) paper examines the implementation issues and the immediate impact of the NREGA on rural population in Gulbarga district of Karnataka. As an IAS officer and being associated with the implementation of the Scheme the author says that the scheme is successful in Gulbarga district in creating an impression in the minds of the people that it would help in minimizing pilferages and ensure the benefits of government programmes reach the real beneficiaries. Moreover, the scheme has an impact in raising the standards of living and agricultural wage level in the villages and has led to the creation of durable community assets.

Bhattacharya and Sudarshan (2008) have made an empirical study on the implementation of NREGA in Abu road block of Sirohi district of Rajasthan. They have shown that the scheme has met with partial success in the block under study. Among deficiencies they have focused on the non-receipt of minimum wages by all the participants and complete absence of creche facilities in the worksites.

Lalith Mathur (2008) in his article "fulfilling the promise" argues that perhaps for the first time in a government programme which has been acknowledged as a pioneering legislation. He also opined that the poor can expect to earn a lively wage without loss of dignity and demand the work as a right.

ABHISHEK THAKUR (2011) The research study is about "Changing wage and relation: A study of MGNREGA and its impact on wage and work relations in Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh". The objective of this study is to understand the sources of livelihood in this area and the impact of MGNREGA on their sources of livelihood. This study also attempts to understand the changing daily private wage rate after the implementation of MGNREGA and compare it to the time before its implementation. In addition to this, the study also attempts to understand the impact of MGNREGA on the changing relationship between farmers and labourers and on the pattern of agriculture. The places chosen for the study are 4 villages under Seoni and Keolari Blocks in the Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh.

Research Objective Of The Study :

1. To Study The Labour Migration In India.
2. To Identify That MGNREGA Is An Alternative To Migration.
3. To Examine The Relation Between Migration And Education.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology adapted to construct this seminar paper has been based on the secondary data only; such data is made available from various journals, books, news-papers and inter-net sources.

Labour Migration in India

Labour migration seldom involves the migrant alone. The decision to migrate is often taken within the household, with consideration of wider family and or community context. The stereotype of the individual male labour migrant is somewhat misleading in the context of India a considerable proportion of migrants are women and many migrant take their families with them. In general it is not the poorest of the poor who migrate. Migration requires capital to cover the costs of the Journey and potential unforeseen problems along the way or during the stay social networks for example knowing the employer or people in the area of destination and access to information especially work opportunities. The meaning of labour migration in India as well as its drivers vary from place to place and from migrant to migrant, it is very difficult and often problematic to generate Nevertheless it has increasingly been considered an important development issue in the country as shows the recent setting up of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Among the

migrant in the rural areas, nearly 91 percent have migrated from the rural areas and 8 percent have migrated from the urban areas, whereas among the migrants in the urban areas, nearly 59 percent migrated from the rural areas and 40 percent from urban areas. The reason for migration for male migrant was dominated by employment related reasons, in both rural and urban areas. Nearly 29 percent of rural male migrants and 56 percent of urban male migrants have migrated due to employment related reasons. A higher percentage of the persons were found to be engaged in economic activities after migration; for males the percentage of workers have increased from 51 percent before migration to 63 percent after migration in rural areas while for females, it has increased from 20 percent to 33 percent in rural areas. For rural males, self-employment has emerged as main recourse to employment after migration. The share of self employment in total migrants have increased from 16 percent before migration to 27 percent after migration while the share of regular employees and casual labour remained almost stable in both before and after migration.

MGNREGA Is an Alternative to Migration

One of the significant objectives of the MGNREGA is to arrest out- migration of unskilled landless labour force from the rural areas to urban areas by ensuring up to 100 days of wage employment within their native jurisdiction so that these guaranteed wage employment can be judiciously and rationally utilized by the landless peasants during lean and distress seasons. As far as possible the work site is to be within a five Km radius of the applicant's village. In case it is not it must be provided within the Block and the labourers must be paid 10 percent of their wages as extra wages to meet the additional travel and living expenses MGNREGA too could become a predictable source of local employment and therefore reduces distress migration. In this respect MGNREGA contrasts with previous employment programmes such as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana or Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana MGNREGA will have significant positive impact on seasonal rural-urban migration by providing rural workers with employment during the lean season. The lack of exact official data on migration is a matter that should be corrected as soon as possible as it is quite important to quantify this as accurately as possible as rural-urban migration can become quite a problem for both the source and destination areas.

Relation between Migration and Education

The villagers tend to migrate along with their families hoping that they might be able to employ their children in cities. This is not only exposing the children to the hazards of child labor but also leading to children dropping out of school during the academic year which shows the how migration was directly connected to lack of education for children. People did say that if there were residential schools for 10 – 14 year old children then more parent would keep their children in school. It was found that some of the villagers spent their MGNREGA income to improve the quality of education of their wards by paying the admission fee, purchasing books, providing tuitions, buying of school uniform, bicycle etc. Due to the construction of a connecting road children got better connectivity to go to school by bicycle or on foot and now children are more regular in terms of attending the school. There is a clear tendency of using the additional wage income for the education of children, It builds a case of inherent demand for children's better education Most of the MGNREGA benefited families utilized their income for accessing children's education or supplementing with additional facilities to improve the quality of education.

Impact of Migration on Agriculture

The MGNREGA income in wages has two dimension. The families owning small agricultural land which is insufficient to generate food security for the whole of the year or create additional surplus of cash to meet other basis needs, families are supplementing agricultural income with wage income of MGNREGA. There are large numbers of small land holding families having low agricultural produce; MGNREGA income provides a significant value addition to meet their higher order needs critical for their survival or growth and development of their family. There are families who are completely landless and depend on wage labour look for work in agriculture sector or civil works. In the off season of agriculture sector or civil works. In the offseason of agriculture, such families migrate to towns. Civil works opened up in village have given them option to earn in the village even if the wage rates are lower in the MGNREGA civil works. Even if the younger

family members migrate as skilled laborers, middle aged unskilled family members prefer to stay in the village and work under MGNREGA. This apart the guaranteed employment under MGNREGA has restrained the usual seasonal labour migration which had become the mainstay of farming in agriculturally progressive but labour starved states.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study has concluded that the farmers owning large size of landholdings and more number of livestock are not much interested in participating in MGNREGA works as they are busy in their own activities. The farmers who have small land and livestock resources are more inclined to work in MGNREGA and their participation is also more. Thus, MGNREGA is providing livelihood security to the resource-poor rural people. The study has also revealed that in an agriculturally-backward area participation in economic activities is more for non beneficiaries as compared to beneficiaries but in agriculturally-developed area, situation is just reverse. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP) in India that was launched in the year 2005 as a social security measure aimed at providing employment security to the poor in villages. The MGNREGA was also meant to use this labour to construct rural infrastructure that is clearly wanting in India. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act guarantee 100 days of work to all households. The aspect of MGNREGA where it can be used to curb rural migration is conditional on that it is being implemented well in that region, otherwise if work is not supplied if wages aren't paid on time and if money is just being siphoned off , then workers will have no incentive to stop migration.

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