

Role of MGNREGA in Rural Employment: A Study on Rupiabathan Village, Nalbari District, Assam

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ABSTRACT: The government of India initiated many employment generating programs to address unemployment problem in rural area, however it remains major challenge to India's development. The Mahatma Gandhi National Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) one of the major scheme which enhance the employment opportunity at rural areas. Basic aim of MGNREGA is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year. Many research studies revealed that programs have major impact on rural area, this study is an attempt to assess the impact and effectiveness of the Act in the Rupiabathan Village, district of Nalbari, Assam during the financial year 2017-18.

KEYWORDS: Employment, MGNREGA, Women Participation, rural employment

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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 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. ((E.D. Shetty, 2008; 67)

According to 2011 census report approx. 650244 villages in India. Agriculture is the main occupation of those people. In rural areas, Agriculture is not only seasonal; the existing farming is also primitive which is responsible for low labor and land productivity. The farmers, therefore, have to remain idle during the lean agricultural season. There is near an absence of organized industries in the rural sector. Thus seasonality of agriculture and its low productivity combined with absence of alternative opportunities are responsible for higher incidence of poverty in the rural sector. As a result, in rural India, poverty and unemployment are twin long pending problems. Though India has completed more than 60 years of independence poverty in rural India continues to increase day by day. . The nations cannot achieve its goal of reaching the higher stage of economic development unless and until these two problems are completely eradicated. So Government had implemented three major anti-poverty programs namely Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), National Rural Employment Program (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Program (RLEGP). With such objective the government of India introduced The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) in 2006 that guaranteed 100 days wage of employment in a year to every rural house. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) 2005 seems to be a more advanced and radical scheme which directly gives a right to employment. (IJHSSI, Volume 4 Issue 2 | February. 2015 | PP.58-71)

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Ahuja, R. U. (2011) have conducted a study for investigating the impact of implementation of MGNREGA on two districts of the state of Haryana in the period of 2010-2011. The research is conducted into two districts one is agriculturally advanced and the other is agriculturally backward. The main objective of their study is to investigate the differences in employment status, income, landholding size, herd size and other assets of the households of these two particular districts. They have taken 60 farm families from each district for their survey and found a significance difference in the extent of employment under MGNREGA works in both the districts. There is no dearth of literature for the understanding of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and also the implementation process of it in rural India.

Pankaj (2012), in his book "Right to Work and Rural India" states that MGNREGA is an unique scheme in the world to provide guaranteed right to work to majority of the poor population of the country.

Borah et al. (2014) in the paper titled "MGNREGA and its impact on Daily waged women workers: A Case Study of Sonitpur District of Assam" highlights the impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment and to identify the obstacles in implementing the scheme. The study also focuses income gains, social empowerment

etc. the paper also focuses that there exists barriers in implementing the scheme especially in the case of women empowerment.

Das and Darshana (2016) in the paper titled “Role of MGNREGA in Rural Employment: A study of Barpeta District of Assam, India” states that India is an agrarian country and most of the population of the country belongs to rural population. The planners and policy makers have launched several employment generation program like IRDP, NREP, RLEGP, JRY, SGSY etc. but still the rural population was facing with unemployment and poverty. To remove the problem of unemployment government came up with MGNREGA initiatives. MGNREGA has positive impact on employment pattern of women. The study emphasizes on the object and implementation of MGNREGA Act in rural areas and on the natural resources.

Saikia et al. (2017) in the paper titled “Impact of MGNREGA on Rural Livelihood in Assam with special reference to Kamrup District of Assam” highlighted the implementation process of MGNREGA and its impact on the rural livelihood. It states that MGNREGA is the game changing in the area of rural development but in Assam it is gaining momentum in a slower way. The paper also focuses the faulty implementation strategy has ruined the spirit of the program.

III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To know the object and implications of MGNREGA Act in rural areas.
2. To understand the Socio-Economic background of the respondents of the Respondents.
3. To study the impact of MGNREGA on employment of the Rupiabathan village.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The data for this study is based on primary data sources as well as secondary sources collected from field work, MIS report on MGNREGA and other sources like different reports of government, books, journals, periodicals, publications, unpublished doctoral dissertation. The study covers during the year 2017-18.

• STUDY AREA

Rupiabathan village came under Nalbari District, Assam. The Rupiabathan village is home of approx. 2000 people. 97% of the whole population are from general caste, 3% are from schedule caste (SC). There are approx. 200 households in the Rupiabathan village. It has 2 Gram Panchayat and 1 development block. The total area of Rupiabathan village is 136.63 hectares.

• SOURCES OF DATA

The study uses both primary and secondary data. The secondary data has been collected from the various published and unpublished sources, official website of MGNREGA, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India, books, referred journals, various monitoring and evaluation reports of the Ministry of Panchayats and Rural Development (Govt. of India), Government of Assam Report, various operational guidelines and notifications of the Ministry (Govt. of India), report from different institutions like World Bank, National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Statistical Handbook of Assam, 2011, Census of India 2011 and from unofficial sources. On the other hand, the primary data has been collected by conducting sample surveys through a structured interview schedule from beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of MGNREGA work of Rupiabathan Village.

• UNIT AND UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY

Rupiabathan village is the universe and 25.00% household of the village is a unit of the study and 50 household were selected on the random basis.

• TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF DATA COLLECTION

Primary data collected from 50 respondent of the Rupiabathan Village of Nalbari District on random basis along with observation and informal discussion also made for data collection.

• PRESENTATION OF DATA

Primary data were classified and presented in tabulation form.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.0 Demographic features of sample households in Rupiabathan District

| Attributes | Total Respondents | Respondents | Percentage |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|
| Age (Years) | | | |
| Below 30 | 50 | 22 | 44.00% |
| 31-39 | | 14 | 28.00% |
| 40-59 | | 12 | 24.00% |
| 60-above | | 2 | 4.00% |
| Family Size (No.) | | | |
| 1-2 | 50 | 5 | 10.00% |
| 3-4 | | 18 | 36.00% |
| 5-6 | | 17 | 34.00% |

| | | | |
|---------------------------|----|----|--------|
| 7-8 | | 10 | 20.00% |
| Literacy | | | |
| Illiterate | | 4 | 8.00% |
| Primary | | 15 | 30.00% |
| High School | 50 | 9 | 18.00% |
| Higher Secondary | | 11 | 22.00% |
| Graduation & above | | 11 | 22.00% |
| Caste Distribution | | | |
| General | | 47 | 94.00% |
| SC | 50 | 2 | 4.00% |
| OBC | | 1 | 2.00% |
| Sex | | | |
| Male | 50 | 32 | 64.00% |
| Female | | 18 | 36.00% |

Source: Field Survey conducted from January 2019 to March 2019

Table 1.1 Occupational Distribution of Sample Households

| Occupation | Respondents | Percentage |
|----------------|-------------|------------|
| Wage Labour | 15 | 30.00% |
| Govt. Employer | 7 | 14.00% |
| Cultivators | 8 | 16.00% |
| Ex-Serviceman | 2 | 4.00% |
| Private Job | 7 | 14.00% |
| Business | 5 | 10.00% |
| Un-employee | 6 | 12.00% |
| Total | 50 | 100.00% |

Source: Field Survey conducted from January 2019 to March 2019

It can be summarized that the people of the Rupiabathan village are not so backward. Their living condition is not so good. Main occupation of the people of Rupiabathan village is cultivation and wage labour. Though some of the people are engaged in some government as well as private job. But those who depends on agriculture and those who are daily wage labour they faced many difficulties in every sphere of life. Their monthly income can't fulfil their basic needs. Majority of the people educated up to primary level and some of the people are still illiterate.

VI. MAJOR FINDINGS

• MGNREGA AND RURAL EMPLOYMENT

According to the report of Office of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), Nalbari an amount of Rs. 9,98,400 for implementation of the schemes as enclosed against Dakhin Pakowa Gaon Panchayat of Nalbari Development Block of Nalbari district under MGNREGA 2017-2018. Whereas a list of 6 nos. of schemes are received from BDO/PO, Pachim Nalbari Development Block.

Table 1.2 Category of work under MGNREGA during 2017-2018

| No. of GaonPanchayat | Category of work | Name of Scheme | Implementation Agency | Estimated amount | Probable Person Days |
|----------------------|--------------------|---|-----------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| 28 No | Bundh | Construction of Bundh cum road | G.P. | 9,60,000.00 | 3090 |
| 31(3) No | Land Development | Earth filling | G.P. | 3,67,800.00 | 1720 |
| 21 No | Bundh | Construction of Bundh | G.P. | 4,87,800.00 | 1893 |
| 21 No | Rural Connectivity | Construction of sand gravelling road | G.P. | 6,07,700.00 | 2035 |
| 31(3) No | Land Development | Construction of protection wall and earth filling | A.P. | 9,06,400.00 | 1600 |
| 31 (3) No | Land Development | Construction of protection wall | G.P. | 8,62,000.00 | 1727 |
| | | | TOTAL | 41,91,700.00 | |

Source: Data provided by Chamata Development Block, Nalbari

87 Household of Nalbari district provided Employment equal to 100 Days in the Financial Year 2017-2018
 Work Demand Pattern During the Financial year : 2017-2018 of Nalbari district of Assam is April- 15328, May – 19463, June- 15160, July-12974, August-13270, September- 11841, October-16113, November-14529, December-14996, January-15620, February- 23570, March- 19260
 This study covers a period of financial year 2017-2018



Photo: Land Development under MGNREGA
Source: Field study



Photo: Interview with the Respondents
Source: Field study

Table 1.3 Distribution of Respondents according to types of Government

| Types of Govt. Facilities | Respondents | Total Respondents | Percentage |
|---|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| BPL Card | 23 | 50 | 46.00% |
| APL Card | 27 | 50 | 54.00% |
| Indira Awas Yojna | 5 | 50 | 10.00% |
| Atal Amrit Yojna Health Card | 8 | 50 | 16.00% |
| Atal Pension Yojna | 2 | 50 | 4.00% |
| Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme | 32 | 50 | 64.00% |

Source: Field Survey conducted from January 2019 to March 2019

Reason of joining MGNREGA

MGNREGA act was introduced with an aim of improving the power of the rural people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living below poverty line in rural India. It attempts to bridge the gap between the rich and poor in the country. People of Rupiabathan Village join MGNREGA because of various reasons. Following table make it clear about that.

Table 1.4: Distribution of the Respondents on the basis of reason of joining MGNREGA

| Reason of Joining MGNREGA | Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|
| Primary wage earning opportunity | 19 | 38.00% |
| Guaranteed employment for 100 days | 18 | 36.00% |
| Work available at doorstep | 9 | 18.00% |
| Government provided employment | 4 | 8.00% |
| Total | 50 | 100.00% |

Source: Field Survey conducted from January 2019 to March 2019

Benefit of Job Card

Those who get Job Card they many way express their satisfaction as they benefited with the scheme. Details is given in following table

Table 1.5: Distribution of the Respondents according to the benefit of Job Card

| Types of benefit | Respondents | Total Respondents | Percentage |
|-------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|
| Income Increase | 45 | 50 | 90.00% |
| Rural urban migration for job | 6 | 50 | 12.00% |
| Savings increases | 43 | 50 | 86.00% |
| Empowering women | 48 | 50 | 96.00% |

Source: Field Survey conducted from January 2019 to March 2019

Table 1.6 Distribution on the basis of process of implementation of MGNREGA in Rupiabathan

| Attributes | Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| Caste and Religion Discrimination | 0 | 0% |
| Gender Discrimination | 0 | 0% |
| Nature of payment | | |
| Daily | 8 | 16.00% |
| Weekly | 28 | 56.00% |
| Fortnight | 8 | 16.00% |

| | | |
|---|----|--------|
| Monthly | 6 | 12.00% |
| Hours of work per day | | |
| 8hrs | 32 | 64.00% |
| 7hrs | 12 | 24.00% |
| 6hrs | 4 | 8.00% |
| 5hrs | 2 | 4.00% |
| Provision of Employment Allowance | | |
| Yes | 18 | 36.00% |
| No | 32 | 64.00% |
| Employment Allowance(Monthly) | | |
| 300/- | 4 | 22.22% |
| 600/- | 3 | 16.66% |
| 900/- | 4 | 22.22% |
| 1200/- | 7 | 38.88% |
| Difficulties found in MGNREGA work sit | | |
| Yes | 12 | 24.00% |
| No | 38 | 76.00% |
| Types of difficulties | | |
| Delay in wage payment | 4 | 33.33% |
| Wage payment less than minimum wages | 3 | 25.00% |
| Availability of drinking water | 1 | 8.33% |
| Availability of first aid kit | 0 | 0.00% |
| False name in Muster Roll | 4 | 33.33% |

Source: Field Survey conducted from January 2019 to March 2019

VII. CONCLUSION

In summing up it can be said that providing an employment opportunity and poverty alleviation remains one of great challenge to developing countries like India, however government attempts to control over the problem of rural area. The study primarily aims to analyses the objectives, socio economic background, benefit as well as the prospects of strategies of MGNREGA in rural employment. The study has been carried out in the Rupiabathan village of Nalbari district of Assam. MGNREGA playing pivotal role in rural employment generation and developed standard of living in Rupiabathan village. MGNREGA has brought productive changes in the respondents in terms of house, increase monthly household income, education, increase monthly expenditure on food items, improvement in fuel use for cooking, improvement in the source of drinking water, improvement in the use toilet facility, improvement on lighting etc. The women participation ratio in program has been increased in the Rupiabathan village. But in some cases women get less wage than men. It is found that MGNREGA helps to generating wage employment in Rupiabathan village of Nalbari district. MGNREGA is executed in a proper way as in Rupiabathan village, it can reduce poverty at the bottom. But it is found that some of the respondents get unemployment allowance but some of them were not aware about that. Those who get unemployment allowance they also not getting equal amount of money because of corruption. The administration needs to show more seriousness in the point of view towards the MGNREGA scheme.

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