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A study on job performance problems of the workers in MGNREGA scheme

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Abstract

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was enacted to reinforce the commitment towards livelihood security in rural areas. The Parliament passed the MGNREGA in the monsoon season on August 23, 2005. The Act provides a legal guarantee 100 days of work in a financial year (1st April-31st March) to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work at a statutory minimum wage rate. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the largest ever public programme conceived and grounded in the human history. It is the most powerful initiative ever undertaken for the transformation of rural livelihoods. It goes beyond poverty alleviation and recognizes employment as a legal right. It creates the right to work. It is demand-driven. It has the potential to provide a „big push“ in Indian regions of distress. The present study was conducted in Kollam District of Kerala, to find out the personal problems by workers in MGNREGA Scheme. For this, six hundred MGNREGA workers were selected and information was collected with the help of structured Interview schedule and data was analysed with the appropriate statistical tools as; mean score; ranking ,F-Test and result were drawn from it. It was found that MGNREGA workers were perceived Job performance problems“Corruption” , “Seasonal employment” and “Lack of coordination of employees”.

Key words: MGNREGA , Job performance problems.



Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is the flagship programme of the Government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), notified on September 7, 2005, marked a paradigm shift from the previous wage employment programmes with its rightsbased approach that makes the Government legally accountable for providing employment to those who demand it. MGNREGA was launched on February 2, 2006 in 200 districts initially and expanded to cover all 614 districts across the country in rural areas The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of The country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.. It therefore becomes important to identify or shortlist some of the major problems being faced by MGNREGA household during adoption of MGNREGA. This Paper examines the job performance problems among the workers in MGNREGA Scheme.

Literature Review

AninditaAdhikari and Kartika Bhatia (2010)¹conducted a survey in Allahabad district (Uttar Pradesh) and Ranchi district (Jharkhand). They revealed that majority of workers ie 87 percent preferred payment through bank account and 13 percent preferred that payment through post office account. In Allahabad, there has been a recent trend towards shifting accounts of NREGA workers from post office to banks due to a charge levied by post offices for transfer of NREGA funds. The survey findings are in some way encouraging . It has been found that the direct transfer of wages into workers bank account is a substantial protection against embezzlement, provided that banking norms are managed in their own accounts.

Kamala Sankaran (2011)²has discussed the universalisation of payment of minimum wages as an obligation on the part of government to ensure the minimum rights of sustenance of workers.The NREGA wage rate must logically be a need based national minimum wage rate under NREGA. The author recommends that the crisis around the MGNREGA wage rate is an occasion to rationalise wages both under MGNREGA and the Minimum Wage Act (MWA) and to bring about a true need-based minimum wage, which is a prerequisite for the millions in the informal economy in India today. She suggested consultative process to be adopted for fixing need-based minimum wage rate to all the workers in NREGA.

¹Anindita.Adhikari, and Kartika. Bhatia, (2010), "NREGA Wage Payments: Can we Bank on the Banks?",*Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLV No.1, January-- 2010, pp. 30-37.

² Kamala Sankaran, (2011), "NREGA wages: Ensuring Decent Work", *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. XLVI, No. 7, February 12, pp-23-25.



Dev (2011)³ carried out a study with an intention to examine the impact of MGNREGA on the rural mass in six states of North Indian (Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh). The study finds that the MGNREGA scheme has helped in the reduction of child labour because of income generation and women's well being and empowerment. The study concludes that the programme has increased the income through higher wage rates, particularly by the way of increasing the agricultural wages accompanied by a decline in migration. Further, the study concludes that all these positive effects of the MGNREGA programme have helped in reducing the child labour in the agricultural sector and thereby increasing the participation of children in education.

Dreze (2007)⁴ looks at the corruption in rural employment programs in Orissa and how this has continued in a NREGS as well. However, he believes that there is tremendous potential of NREGA in the survey areas. Where work was available, it was generally found that workers earned close to the statutory minimum wage of ₹ 80 per day, and that wages were paid within 15 days or so. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the rural poor people, and there was an evident appreciation of it among normal labourers and other disadvantaged sections of the population. There is the hope among workers that NREGA would enable them to avoid long-distance seasonal migration. Further, there is plenty of scope for productive NREGA works in this area, whether it is in the field of water conservation, rural connectivity, regeneration of forest land, or improvement of private agricultural land.

Manoj P.K (2011)⁵ in his research paper “ MGNREGA Implementation in India: Problems, Prospects and Remedial Strategies with Special Reference to Kerala” opines that Kerala has got excellent potential to become a role model for the entire nation for systematic and corruption-free implementation of MGNREGA. The experience is so far being satisfactory, the Kerala model can be replicated in other states. The Act is quite meaningful and powerful for rural development and women empowerment for the entire nation. The author points out that in MGNREGS their should be a huge development potential in Kerala.

Methodology

The sample for the purpose of the study has been collected from the 600 respondents of MGNREGA workers in Kollam District. Data collected through structured questionnaire and collected data has been presented through different tables. Primary data are collected for this study. A Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling technique has been adopted for selecting the samples.

³Dev, S.M. (2011). NREGS and Child Well Being”, IHD - UNICEF Working Paper Series Children of India: Rights and Opportunities, Working Paper 2011-004

⁴.Dreze, J., (2007). NREGA: Dismantling the contractor raj, *The Hindu*, 20th November. Pp: 19-25.

⁵Manoj, P.K., (2012), “ MGNREGA Implementation in India: Problems, Prospects and Remedial Strategies with Special Reference to Kerala” Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee programme and poverty in India, vol 2, No 1, Jan-June pp. 01-05.



Objectives of the study

1. To identify the job performance problems associated with MGNREGA Scheme
2. To identify the job performance Problems of MGNREGA workers among Different Education Status
3. To identify the job performance problems of MGNREGA workers among different Caste Groups
4. To offer suitable suggestions on the basis of findings of the study.

Problems towards job performance of mgnrega workers

Workers of MGNREGA scheme disclosed that they are suffering from many problems while doing work under MGNREGA. The job performance problems were analyzed by using mean score which shows the extent of severity of the problems.

Table 1.1
Problemstowards job performance of mgnrega workers

| SL.NO | Job Performance Problems | MEAN SCORE | RANK |
|-------|-----------------------------------|------------|------|
| 1 | Poor information | 3.51 | V |
| 2 | Seasonal employment | 3.65 | III |
| 3 | Issuance of dated receipt | 3.02 | VII |
| 4 | Corruption | 4.02 | I |
| 5 | Delayed payments | 2.25 | XI |
| 6 | Issues associated with payments | 3.14 | VI |
| 7 | Issues relevant to job cards | 2.95 | VIII |
| 8 | Inadequate storage facilities | 3.63 | IV |
| 9 | Lack of coordination of employees | 3.80 | II |

Source: Primary data

The most important job performance problem of MGNREGA workers is “Corruption” as it scores the maximum mean score of 4.02 and is ranked I. This clearly indicates that the poverty alleviation programmers have a minimal effect on poverty levels in India due to corruption. The actual funds that reach the beneficiaries are very little as compared to the funds allocated for welfare schemes.

“Lack of coordination of employees” is ranked II with the mean score of 3.80. MGNREGA workers have given III rank for “Seasonal employment” with a mean score of 3.65. In the earlier wage employment programmes, employment was given only during lean seasons and was provided at the will of functionaries but in the case of MGNREGA, the most demarcating factor is that it provides employment any time as per the demand of the workers.



“Inadequate storage facilities” has been ranked IV with a mean score of 3.63. “Poor information” has been ranked V with a mean score of 3.51. “Issues associated with payments” is ranked VI with a mean score of 3.14. “Issuance of dated receipt” and “Issues relevant to job cards” have been ranked VII and VIII with a mean score of 3.02 and 2.95 respectively. Though it is obligatory as per the guidelines of MGNREGA that dated receipt has to be issued to the worker by the concerned panchayat secretary most of the respondents did not get dated receipt. “Delayed payments” is ranked XI with a mean score of 2.25.

Problems towards Job Performance of MGNREGA workers among different Education Status

The education of the MGNREGA workers were classified into five groups, namely, illiterate, primary, middle, high school and higher secondary school for evaluating the job performance problem. The mean values of different job performance problem variables were calculated under five different classifications of MGNREGA workers according to their qualification. The ‘F’ statistics was also calculated for the purpose of identifying the significant difference among the various classifications of MGNREGA workers on the basis of education. The resulted mean and ‘F’ statistics of each job performance problem variables are shown in table 1.2

Table 1.2

Problemstowardsjob performance of mgnrega workers among different education status

| SL. NO | Uneducated | Education Status | | | | | Total | F. Value | P. value |
|--------|-----------------------------------|------------------|---------|--------|------|-------|-------|----------|----------|
| | | Illiterate | Primary | Middle | H.S | H.S.S | | | |
| 1 | Poor information | 3.65 | 3.55 | 3.42 | 3.67 | 1.67 | 3.51 | 4.470* | .001 |
| 2 | Seasonal employment | 3.70 | 3.64 | 3.61 | 3.86 | 2.44 | 3.65 | 2.429* | .047 |
| 3 | Issuance of dated receipt | 2.96 | 3.05 | 2.87 | 3.58 | 2.33 | 3.02 | 3.805* | .005 |
| 4 | Corruption | 4.09 | 4.09 | 3.99 | 3.83 | 4.11 | 4.02 | .869 | .482 |
| 5 | Delayed payments | 2.29 | 2.21 | 2.14 | 2.62 | 1.78 | 2.25 | 2.492* | .042 |
| 6 | Issues associated with payments | 3.20 | 3.10 | 3.07 | 3.21 | 4.22 | 3.14 | 1.823 | .123 |
| 7 | Issues relevant to job cards | 2.86 | 2.94 | 2.95 | 3.15 | 3.00 | 2.95 | .662 | .619 |
| 8 | Inadequate storage facilities | 3.68 | 3.50 | 3.67 | 3.62 | 3.78 | 3.63 | .436 | .783 |
| 9 | Lack of coordination of employees | 3.90 | 3.72 | 3.82 | 3.62 | 4.44 | 3.80 | 1.488 | .204 |
| | Average mean score | 3.37 | 3.31 | 3.28 | 3.46 | 3.08 | 3.33 | | |

Source: Primary data



*Significant at 5% level

Table 1.2 shows that job performance problem is high for the variable “Corruption” among Illiterate, Primary and Middle level educated MGNREGA workers since they have the highest mean scores of 4.09, 4.09 and 3.99 respectively. Among the High School level MGNREGA workers, the highly viewed job performance problem variable is “Seasonal employment” since it has the highest mean score of 3.86. In Higher secondary school level MGNREGA workers the highly viewed job performance problem variable is “Lack of coordination of employees” since it has the highest mean score of 4.44.

However, job performance problems is low for the variable “Delayed payments” among Illiterate, Primary and Middle level since it has the lowest mean scores of 2.29, 2.21 and 2.14. But among the High school the job performance problem is low for the variable “Issues relevant to job cards” since it has the least mean score of 3.15, and among the Higher secondary school respondents the job performance problem is low for the variable “Poor information” with a mean score of 1.67.

High school level has the highest job performance problems since they have the highest average mean score of 3.46, followed by Illiterates with average mean score of 3.37. However job performance problems is low among Higher secondary school level since it has the lowest average mean score of 3.08.

Regarding the job performance problems among the MGNREGA workers at different levels of education, significant difference have been identified for the variables “Poor information”, “Seasonal employment”, “Issuance of dated receipt” and “Delayed payments” .since the respective ‘F’ values were significant at five percent level.

Problems towards Job Performance of MGNREGA workers among different Caste Groups

According to their community, the MGNREGA workers were classified into four groups namely, Other Backward Caste (OBC), Others, Scheduled Caste (SC) / Scheduled Tribes (ST) and General. The mean values of different Job performance problems variables were calculated under four different classifications of MGNREGA workers according to their caste. The ‘F’ statistic was also calculated for the purpose of identifying the significant difference among the various classifications of MGNREGA workers on the basis of caste. The calculated mean and ‘F’ statistics of each job performance problem variables are shown in table 1.3

**Table 1.3****Problemstowardsjob performance of mgnrega workers among different caste groups**

| SL.N O | Job Performance Problems | Caste Group | | | | | F.Value | P.value |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------|--------|---------|-------|---------|-------------|
| | | OBC | Others | SC/ ST | General | Total | | |
| 1 | Poor information | 3.39 | 3.50 | 3.71 | 3.45 | 3.51 | 1.370 | .251 |
| 2 | Seasonal employment | 3.59 | 3.50 | 3.76 | 3.90 | 3.65 | 2.174* | .090 |
| 3 | Issuance of dated receipt | 2.92 | 2.73 | 3.23 | 3.43 | 3.02 | 5.374* | .001 |
| 4 | Corruption | 4.12 | 4.08 | 3.97 | 3.75 | 4.02 | 2.500* | .059 |
| 5 | Delayed payments | 2.18 | 2.19 | 2.42 | 2.23 | 2.25 | 1.195 | .311 |
| 6 | Issues associated with payments | 3.15 | 3.07 | 3.21 | 3.15 | 3.14 | .308 | .819 |
| 7 | Issues relevant to job cards | 3.00 | 2.85 | 3.08 | 2.91 | 2.95 | .627 | .598 |
| 8 | Inadequate storage facilities | 3.62 | 3.79 | 3.40 | 3.70 | 3.63 | 2.301* | .076 |
| 9 | Lack of coordination of employees | 3.78 | 3.93 | 3.67 | 3.79 | 3.80 | 1.205 | .307 |
| | Average mean score | 3.30 | 3.29 | 3.38 | 3.36 | 3.33 | | |

Source: Primary data

*Significant at 5% level

Table 6.6 indicates that job performance problem is high for the variable “Corruption” among the Other Backward Caste, Others and Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes since they have the highest mean scores of 4.12, 4.08, and 3.97 respectively.

Among the General Category of MGNREGA workers, the highly viewed job performance problem variable is “Seasonal employment” since it has the highest mean score of 3.90.

However, job performance problem is low for the variable “Delayed payments” among the Other Backward Caste, Others, Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes and General since they have the lowest mean scores of 2.18, 2.19, 2.42 and 2.23 respectively.

Scheduled Caste / Scheduled Tribes category have the highest job performance problems since they have the highest average mean score of 3.38, followed by General category with average mean score of 3.36. However, job performance problems is low among Others since it has the lowest average mean score of 3.29.

The significant difference among the different caste groups of MGNREGA workers were noticed in the case of job performance problem variables namely “Seasonal employment”,



“Issuance of dated receipt”, “Corruption” and “Inadequate storage facilities”, since the respective ‘F’ values were significant at five percent level.

Suggestions

The yearly plan for works under the scheme should be designed keeping the seasonal aspects under consideration. This will not only reduce the opportunity costs of working under the MGNREGA Scheme, but also help to generate more gainful employment opportunities under the scheme. Due to late payment, some participants have started to work in non-MGNREGA works where payment is regular and wage rates are relatively higher. The shortage of qualified staff at all levels is the main reason for delay in payment. Therefore, it has been suggested to make an appropriate arrangement to ensure timely and regular wage payment to MGNREGA. There is a delay in making the payment of wages in the case of some workers. To avoid this, appropriate steps are to be taken by the government to maintain the uniformity in wage payment.

Findings

- ❖ The highest job performance problems of MGNREGA workers is to ‘Corruption’ as it gets a highest mean score of 4.02 followed by ‘Lack of coordination of employees’ with the mean score of 3.80. However the lowest job performance problems of MGNREGA workers is ‘Delayed payments’ (2.25) and ‘Issues relevant to job cards’ (2.95).
- ❖ The study reveals that job performance problems are high among MGNREGA workers with low level of education. Job performance problem is high among the high school level MGNREGA workers since it has the highest mean score of 3.46, followed by illiterate with the mean score of 3.37. F-test has revealed that the job performance problems among the MGNREGA workers at different levels of education, significant difference have been identified for the variables “Poor information”, “Seasonal employment”, “Issuance of dated receipt” and “Delayed payments” .since the respective ‘F’ values were significant at five percent level.
- ❖ Job performance problem is high among SC/ST category MGNREGA workers followed by general category since they have the highest mean score of 3.38 and 3.36 respectively. The significant difference among the different caste groups of MGNREGA workers are noticed in the case of job performance problem variables namely “Seasonal employment” , “Issuance of dated receipt” , “Corruption” and “Inadequate storage facilities” ,since the respective ‘F’ values are significant at five percent level.

Conclusion

In spite of some problems, MGNREGA Scheme is one of the most popular wage employment programmes among women. The programme has begun to make a difference in the lives of rural poor people. The overall impact of MGNREGA Scheme on women’s lives is quite positive in many ways, whether it is by enhancing their economic independence and self-confidence, contributing to



food security, helping to reduce distress migration, or festering better awareness of minimum wages. The role of MGNREGA Schemes as a tool of women's empowerment deserves much more attention than it has received so far. The MGNREGA Scheme is playing a vital role in the eradication of poverty in India by providing employment to rural people and it reflects the Government of India's new resolve to strengthen the rural economy and livelihoods of the poor.

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