



Provisions of MGNREGS and workers awareness in Kerala

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Abstract

The success of any development programme depends on the levels of awareness about the programme by the beneficiaries, for whom the programme is proposed. The uniqueness of the MGNREGS lies in its rights based employment. It thus necessitates adequate awareness amongst the proposed beneficiaries about MGNREGS, particularly regarding the main provisions of the Act. There is high level of awareness with regards to provision of 100 days of work, provision of equal wage for men and women, role of Gramma Sabha, and provision of 33 % women participations and there is moderate awareness with regards to provision of avoidance of contractors and machinery, provision work site facility, provision of right to get the job within 15 days, provision of right to demand the job.

Key words: 100 days of work, equal wage for men and women, 33 % women participations, days, right to demand the job.

Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development is the flagship program of the Government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth and intended to cover up the short comings of the previous programmes. The Parliament passed NREGA in August 25, 2005. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every house hold whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled work (NREG Act, 2005).

Review of literature

Tata Institute of Social Science, (2011), in the study they 'An Evaluation of the MGNREGA in Kerala' tries to identify the awareness about entitlements with regard to each of the critical phases in programme implementation, viz. demand for work, right to get work within 14 days, right to timely payment, right to worksite facilities and so on. While information dissemination programmes were conducted in all the four districts during the initial stages of programme implementation, there has not been much of follow-up in this regard. It appears that these awareness generation programmes did not pay adequate attention to the critical entitlements provided under the Act. Saklani & Sharma, (2011), in their study shows that there are certain key areas requiring fine-tuning and strengthening for effective implementation of NREGS at the grassroot level. These include creating awareness, reducing the delay in wage payments, holding regular interactions between the officials and beneficiaries, establishment of proper grievance mechanism, strict monitoring and above all gearing up the official machinery. They suggest that for transparency mechanisms & better implementation, the process of social audit should be done before, during and after the work is undertaken. Singh, Negi & Dhanai, (2016), conducted a study in Pauri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. In this



study, they tried to bring out some of the facts regarding awareness about the details of MGNREGA among its intended beneficiaries. It has been found that people were often not aware of the basic guidelines regarding Job card issue, unemployment allowance, worksite facility, social audit and other legal entitlements. They opined that, through the mobilization, awareness among the rural households can be generated and this may ensure successful implementation of the MGNREGA.

Objectives

The present study is undertaken to measure the level of awareness about the main provisions of MGNREGS among the MGNREGS beneficiaries in Kerala.

Hypotheses of the study

- H₀ There is no significant difference between males and females regarding the awareness about MGNREGS.
- H₁ There is significant difference between males and females regarding the awareness about MGNREGS.
- H₀ There is no significant difference between APL and BPL workers regarding awareness level about MGNREGS.
- H₁ There is significant difference between APL and BPL workers regarding awareness level about MGNREGS.
- H₀ There is no significant difference between employees with previous work experience (regular workers) and employees without previous work experience (new workers) in respect of awareness about MGNREGS.
- H₁ There is significant difference between employees with previous work experience (regular workers) and employees without previous work experience (new workers) in respect of awareness about MGNREGS.

Methodology

The present study has been undertaken in the state of Kerala covering seven districts. Descriptive and analytical research design has been used for the study. The study uses both primary and secondary data. The present study has been done from a large sample of respondents from the seven districts of Kerala. The universe of the study was the registered MGNREGS workers of the Kerala state.

Results and discussion

The success of any development programme depends on the levels of awareness about the programme by the beneficiaries, for whom the programme is proposed. The uniqueness of the MGNREGS lies in its rights based employment. It thus necessitates adequate awareness amongst the proposed beneficiaries about MGNREGS, particularly regarding the main provisions of the Act. Previous studies reveal that the awareness among potential beneficiaries about certain provisions of MGNREGA scheme is very low, (Ministry of Rural Development, 2012). Therefore, the households are unaware of the benefits associated with this scheme. In this section, an assessment of the awareness levels among the sample MGNREGS workers on thirteen different aspects of MGNREGS which were derived through the review of literature and discussion with the experts was carried out. The levels of awareness of the workers have been determined



using 13 statements which deals with different aspects of MGNREGS, by adopting five point Likert scale. Score 5 is assigned for highly aware, 4 for moderate aware, 3 for somewhat aware, 2 for unaware, and 1 for highly unaware. Using the mean scores computed, three levels of awareness are identified. The variables with mean score greater than four or equal to four are 'high level', two or more but less than four is treated as 'moderate level', and less than two is treated as 'low level'. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1

Table 1: Awareness level among MGNREGS workers

Code	Provisions of MGNREGS	Mean	S.D	Awareness level
Aw1	Provision of 100 days work	4.84	.694	High
Aw2	33 percent women participation	4.20	.817	High
Aw 3	Equal wage for men and women	4.60	1.10	High
Aw 4	Right to demand the job	3.20	.937	Moderate
Aw 5	Right to get the job within 15 days	3.30	.915	Moderate
Aw 6	Provision of unemployment allowance	1.94	1.35	Low
Aw 7	Provision of work within 5 kilometers	2.32	1.31	Moderate
Aw 8	Provision of extra wages	2.30	1.28	Moderate
Aw 9	Provision of wages within 14 days	2.47	1.27	Moderate
Aw 10	Avoidance of contractors and machinery	3.85	1.13	Moderate
Aw 11	Role of Grama Sabha	4.22	.902	High
Aw 12	Work site facility	3.51	1.15	Moderate
Aw 13	Social audit	1.94	.966	Low

Source: Primary data. N=426

Table 1 shows that, the awareness level of the sample respondents is high for 'provision of 100 days of work' (M=4.84) followed by 'equal wage for men and women' (M=4.6), 'role of Grama Sabha' (M=4.22) and '33 % women participation' (M=4.20). The respondents have moderate awareness about 'avoidance of contractors and machinery' (M=3.86), 'work site facility' (M=3.51), 'right to get the job within 15 days' (M=3.30), and 'right to demand the job' (M=3.20), and the respondents have low awareness about 'unemployment allowance' (M=1.94), and 'social audit' (1.94).



Awareness level and profile of MGNREGS workers.

The awareness about the MGNREGS may be influenced by a set of variables including age, gender, economic status, membership in self help groups (SHGs), education, previous work experience etc. In order to understand whether profile variables have any significant role in the awareness level of MGNREGS workers, a set of hypotheses were formulated and tested.

Gender and awareness

Gender is an important element in determining the awareness level. It has its own influence on employment pattern. The problems encountered in availing employment may also influenced by the gender of the respondents. Men are generally considered to have more awareness than women. The results of earlier studies reveal that there is no significant difference between males and females with regards to awareness about MGNREGS (Sravanan, 2014), (Helaney,2014). In this context, it is worthwhile to analyse whether there is any significant difference between males and females with regards to awareness level in the study area. In order to test the difference between males and females with regard to awareness level about MGNREGS, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested using independent sample t- test. The results are shown in table 2

H₀ There is no significant difference between males and females regarding the awareness about MGNREGS.

H₁ There is significant difference between males and females regarding the awareness about MGNREGS.



Table 2

Gender and awareness level - t test

Variables	Male		Female		Independent sample t-test			Remarks
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	t value	d.f	P value	
Awareness about 100 days of work	4.66	1.02	4.87	.602	-2.38	424	.018	Rejected
Awareness about 33% women participation	4.18	.945	4.20	.790	-.185	424	.853	Accepted
Awareness about equal wage for men and women	4.33	1.41	4.65	1.03	-2.22	424	.027	Rejected
Awareness about right to demand job	3.07	1.07	3.23	.907	-1.34	424	.181	Accepted
Awareness about right get job within 15 days	3.16	1.04	3.33	.886	-1.35	424	.177	Accepted
Awareness about the provision of unemployment	2.15	1.49	1.90	1.32	1.43	424	.151	Accepted
Awareness about work within n 5 K.M	2.39	1.45	2.30	1.28	.510	424	.610	Accepted
Awareness about extra wages	2.39	1.42	2.28	1.25	.658	424	.511	Accepted
Awareness about wages within 14 days	2.47	1.36	2.47	1.25	.017	424	.986	Accepted
Awareness about avoidance of contractors& machinery	3.94	1.16	3.84	1.13	.684	424	.494	Accepted
Awareness about role Grama Sabha	4.07	1.22	4.25	.82	-1.58	424	.113	Accepted
Awareness about work site facility	3.32	1.23	3.55	1.13	-1.56	424	.119	Accepted
Awareness about social audit	2.00	1.17	1.93	.921	.538	424	.591	Accepted

Source: Primary data



Table 2 shows the result of the t- test administered on the collected data. Since the P value is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected in respect of two variables. Hence, there exist significant difference between male and female with regards to (1) 'awareness about 100 days of work' (male=4.66: female=4.88) and (2) 'awareness about equal wage for men and women' (male=4.34: female=4.66). The female groups' awareness is significantly higher than males. This finding is inconsistent with the earlier findings that there exist no difference between males and females. Unlike the generally held belief that males are more aware than females, here females are more aware than the male group. As the P value is greater than .05, the null hypotheses in respect of the remaining 11 variables are accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between male and female with regard to these variables. Both males and females have equal level of awareness about these 11 variables.

Economic Status (APL and BPL) and awareness level.

Economic status may have an influence on the level of awareness. A classification generally accepted for grouping people on the basis of economic status is whether they belong to the APL or BPL. The person with better economic status (APL) tends to have better opportunities for education, social interaction and exposure than with people with low economic status (BPL). In order to test whether there is any significant difference between APL and BPL groups with regards to the awareness level about MGNREGS, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested using independent sample t test. The results are shown in table 3

- H₀ There is no significant difference between APL and BPL workers regarding awareness level about MGNREGS.
- H₁ There is significant difference between APL and BPL workers regarding awareness level about MGNREGS



Table 3 Economic Status (BPL-APL) and awareness level- t test

Variables	BPL		APL		Independent sample t- test			Remarks
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	t value	d.f	p value	
Awareness about 100 days of work	4.81	.739	5.00	.000	-1.79	424	.074	Accepted
Awareness about 33% women participation	4.16	.817	4.47	.774	-2.60	424	.009	Rejected
Awareness about equal wage for men and women	4.55	1.17	4.92	.266	-2.26	424	.024	Rejected
Awareness about right to demand job	3.18	.940	3.34	.918	-1.10	424	.270	Accepted
Awareness about right get job within 15 days	3.25	.930	3.66	.705	-3.07	424	.002	Rejected
Awareness about the provision of unemployment	1.94	1.38	1.92	1.19	.110	424	.913	Accepted
Awareness about work within n 5 K.M	2.32	1.33	2.30	1.16	.116	424	.907	Accepted
Awareness about extra wages	2.23	1.29	2.11	1.15	1.15	424	.251	Accepted
Awareness about wages within 14 days	2.48	1.28	2.41	1.18	.375	424	.708	Accepted
Awareness about avoidance of contractors& machinery	3.81	1.18	4.20	.661	-2.39	424	.017	Rejected
Awareness about role Grama Sabha	4.20	.938	4.34	.586	-.985	424	.325	Accepted
Awareness about work site facility	3.49	1.18	3.69	.911	-1.21	424	.226	Accepted
Awareness about social audit	1.93	.961	1.98	1.00	-.301	424	.763	Accepted

Source: Primary data



Table 3 shows the result of t- test administered on the collected data. Since P value is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected in respect of four variables. Hence, there exist significant difference between the workers belong to the BPL and APL categories with regards to (1) 'awareness about 33% women participation' (BPL=4.16: APL=4.47), (2) 'awareness about equal wage for men and women' (BPL=4.55: APL=4.92), (3) 'awareness about right to get the job within 15 days' (BPL=3.25:APL=3.66), and (4) 'awareness about avoidance of contactors and machinery' (BPL=3.81: APL=4.20). The workers belong to the APL category have more awareness than workers of BPL categories. The finding is consistent with the general belief that people who are better off economically are more aware about MGNREGS than economically poor counterparts. As the P value is greater than .05, the null hypotheses in respect of the remaining nine variables are accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between the workers of BPL and APL category with regards to these variables. Bothe APL and BPL have equal level of awareness about these nine variables.

Previous work experience and awareness level

Employees with previous work experience (regular workers) are expected to have more awareness about the provisions of MGNREGS than new workers. In order to test the significant difference between the workers with previous work experience (regular workers) and employees without previous work experience(new workers) with regard to the awareness level about MGNREGS, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested using independent sample t test. The results are shown in table 4

- H₀ There is no significant difference between employees with previous work experience (regular workers) and employees without previous work experience (new workers) in respect of awareness about MGNREGS.
- H₁ There is significant difference between employees with previous work experience (regular workers)and employees without previous work experience (new workers) in respect of awareness about MGNREGS.



Previous work experience and level of awareness of employees't- test

Variables	Workers with previous work experience		New workers		Independent sample t- test			
	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	t-value	d.f	P value	Remarks
Awareness about 100 days of work	4.84	.707	4.84	.689	.023	423	.982	Accept
Awareness about 33% women participation	4.02	.919	4.33	.715	-3.81	423	.000	Reject
Awareness about equal wage for men and women	4.52	1.20	4.66	1.10	-1.33	423	.183	Accept
Awareness about right to demand job	2.91	.964	3.14	.862	-5.56	423	.000	Reject
Awareness about right get job within 15 days	3.28	.931	3.31	.906	-.323	423	.747	Accept
Awareness about the provision of unemployment	1.78	1.28	2.05	1.40	-1.92	423	.055	Accept
Awareness about work within 5K.M	2.08	1.24	2.49	1.34	-3.23	423	.001	Reject
Awareness about extra wages	2.12	1.22	2.43	1.29	-2.47	423	.014	Reject
Awareness about wages within 14 days	2.21	1.25	2.66	1.25	-3.37	423	.000	Reject
Awareness about avoidance of contractors& machinery	3.64	1.28	4.01	1.00	-3.39	423	.001	Reject
Awareness about role Grama sabha	3.99	1.10	4.40	.687	-4.72	423	.000	Reject
Awareness about work site facility	3.23	1.09	3.58	1.19	-1.34	423	.180	Accept
Awareness about social audit	1.86	.976	2.00	.957	-1.48	423	.140	Accept

Source: Primary data



Table 4 shows the result of the t- test administered on the collected data. Since the P value is less than .05, the null hypothesis is rejected in respect of seven variables. Hence, there exist significant difference between workers with previous work experience (regular workers) and workers without previous work experience (new workers) with regards to (1) 'awareness about 33% women participation' (regular workers=4.02: new workers =4.33) and (2) 'awareness about right demand job' (regular workers=2.91: new workers =3.14), (3) 'awareness about the work within 5 K.M'(regular workers=2.08: new workers=2.49), (4) 'awareness about extra wages'(regular workers=2.12: new workers =2.43), (5) 'awareness about wages within 14 days' (regular workers=2.21: new workers =2.66), (6) 'awareness about the avoidance of contractors and machinery' (regular workers=3.64: new workers =4.01), and (7) 'awareness about role of Grama Sabha'(regular workers=3.99: new workers =4.40). As the P value is greater than .05, the null hypotheses in respect of the remaining four variables are accepted. Hence, there is no significant difference between workers with previous work experience and new workers with regards to these 4 variables. Both regular workers and new workers have equal level of awareness about these 4 variables. From the table, it is clear that the new worker's awareness is significantly higher than workers with previous work experience. This may be due to the fact that the new workers are joining in the scheme with clear knowledge about the specialty of the MGNREG Scheme

Findings

1. There is high level of awareness with regards to provision of 100 days of work, provision of equal wage for men and women, role of Granma Sabha, and provision of 33 % women participations the mean value is greater than 4.
2. There is moderate awareness with regards to provision of avoidance of contractors and machinery, provision work site facility, provision of right to get the job within 15 days, provision of right to demand the job, as the mean value is between 3 and 4.
3. It is found that the workers have least awareness about the provision of unemployment allowance (M=1.94), and the provision of 'social audit' (M=1.94).
4. The significant difference was noticed in respect of awareness about MGNREGS between males and females. The awareness of females is higher than males.
5. It is found that there was significant difference between APL and BPL workers with respect of awareness level.
6. It is found that there is significant difference between workers with previous work experience (regular workers) and workers without previous work experience (new workers) with regards to awareness level. The new worker's awareness level is significantly higher than the awareness of workers with previous work experience.
7. As per the impact assessment model of MGNREGS, the awareness about MGNREGS is the most important factor which leads to value creation as it is having highest path coefficient ($\beta=0.392$) followed by effectiveness of implementation procedure ($\beta=0.368$).
8. As per the impact assessment model, there is no significant relationship between awareness level of employees and economic impact ($\beta =0.024$).



Suggestions

1. Since the workers are least aware about the unemployment allowance, social audit etc., there should be continuous efforts towards creating adequate awareness on different provisions of MGNREGS amongst the people.
2. Creating awareness is necessary not only to motivate the people to work under the scheme but also to encourage them to participate in its planning and implementation.

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