

## A Study on Personal 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 Thiruvananthapuram 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 personal problems “Lack of awareness” , “Low level of education” and “Lack of confidence”.*

**Keywords:** MGNREGA , Personal problems.

### INTRODUCTION:

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. After having a detailed analysis as well as examination of the information's gathered from the workers of MGNREGA scheme, informal discussion with the local people and results obtained through the analysis makes it quite clear that MGNREGA, the major ongoing programme in the study area though by and large producing positive impact, yet the programme could not provide positive 100 days of guaranteed employment on demand. MGNREGA scheme hence could not make a dent and big breakthrough in reducing poverty, unemployment and inequality. 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 personal problems among the workers in MGNREGA Scheme.

### LITERATURE REVIEW:

Leelavathi and K H Rao (2010) <sup>1</sup>compared the efficiency of fund management from March to May 2009 and March to May 2010 in Andhra Pradesh to assess effectiveness of the Electronic Fund Management System

<sup>1</sup> Leelavathi and Rao, K.H 2010, Planning and Implementation of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Andhra Pradesh: A process study, report by National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad, Monograph series -1.

(eFMS). It was evident that there was considerable improvement in performance both in terms of expenditure and employment generation due to non-parking of funds at any level of implementation.

The study conducted by Deepak S and M Sovna (2010)<sup>2</sup> reported that the state of Maharashtra showed very poor performance in terms of issue of job cards to the registered households, give less employment generation days (below 35 days) and payment of wages was less than the minimum wage. The works under MGNREGA were mainly concentrated on irrigation and water conservation activities since irrigation was the major problem of the state. He recommended that the linkage of employment guarantee scheme should be linked with other public work schemes to improve the skills among the workers thus giving them confidence to do any work.

Vijayamohanan N Pillai (2010)<sup>3</sup> in his study found that while the MGNREGA programme is being implemented in the letter, the spirit of the scheme seems to be missing in Kerala. In Kerala, all the stipulations seem to be strictly followed, yet one of the most important outcomes of the scheme, namely, 100 days of work, seems to be a distant dream. Further studies need to be conducted to understand the short fall in days of employment created. Since the average number of days of work through MGNREGA is about 30 days per worker, it needs to be explored as to what happens to wages that are slotted for the worker for the remaining 70 days of work. Another feature which stands out in the implementation of MGNREGA in the state is the overwhelming participation of women in the programme. The share of women in the number of person days generated is 86.9 percent in the state. This could well be one of the biggest support of the MGNREGA programme as the wages in the hands of women get translated into useful investments in the form of education for the children, health and asset creation for the household.

Dev (2011)<sup>4</sup> 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.

Soumya Mohanty (2012)<sup>5</sup> in his study reveals that there is little impact of MGNREGA on tribal livelihoods. Though MGNREGA is a well thought-out legislation and a powerful tool in the hands of the common people to get their basic livelihood, but its poor execution, deprives the rural poor from their basic rights. The study reveals that despite numerous problems, MGNREGA is a program that has started to make a difference in the lives of women and poor people. Both our executives and law makers should take due care that the scheme reaches the people who deserve it. Changes should be made at ground levels in the system. Due care should be given for effective implementation of the scheme.

K.K.Tripathy (2013)<sup>6</sup> in his study is of the view that there is a positive and direct correlation between timely payment of wages and registration of labour demand .Timely wage payments depend largely on apt and well-timed measurements of works. The main focus of MGNREGA should be a planned and systematic development of land and careful use of rain water, to sustainably enhancing their productivity and incomes of the poor. The performance of the MGNREGA has been severely skewed across states. The problem is delay in the payment of wages to the MGNREGA workers and this should be immediately addressed.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

The sample for the purpose of the study has been collected from the 600 respondents of MGNREGA workers in Thiruvananthapuram 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.

<sup>2</sup> Deepak, S and Sovna, M . (2010). 'Implementation of NREGA during Eleventh Plan in Maharashtra: Experiences, challenges and Ways Forward', Journal of Indian Agriculture Economics, Vol. 65, July –September 2010, pp 542-551.

<sup>3</sup> Vijayamohanan, N. Pillai . (2010). Mid Term Appraisal of the XI Plan of Kerala Study II Performance of 15 major Centrally Sponsored Flagship Programmes, report by Centre for Development Studies (CDS), Trivandrum, Kerala.

<sup>4</sup> Dev, S.M . (2011). NREGS and Child Well Being", IHD - UNICEF Working Paper Series Children of India: Rights and Opportunities, Working Paper 2011-004.

<sup>5</sup> Soumya Mohanty, (2012) . Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and Tribal Livelihoods: A Case Study in Sundargarh District of Odisha. National Institute of Technology Rourkela – 769008, Odisha, India May . A Dissertation Submitted for the Master Degree in Development Studies . Page 40-46.

<sup>6</sup> Tripathy, K.K. .(2013). 'Rural Wage Guarantee Implementation Challenges.' A journal on Rural Development Kurukshetra. VOL 61 .NO 4,,FEB 2013, PP.NO .12-16.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

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

## PERSONAL PROBLEMS:

MGNREGA workers disclosed that they are suffering from many personal problems while doing work under MGNREGA. These problems were analyzed by using mean score which shows the extent of severity of the problems.

**Table 1: Personal Problems of Mgnrega Workers**

Sl.No	Personal Problems	Mean Score	Rank
1	Lack of Confidence	3.40	III
2	Non availability of muster roll at worksite	2.30	VIII
3	Low wage rate	2.64	VI
4	Socio Cultural Barriers	3.02	V
5	Family Issues	2.47	VII
6	Low level of education	3.51	II
7	Lack of Awareness	4.00	I
8	No Personnel Recognition	3.16	IV

**Source:** Primary data

The above Table 1 explicitly explains the personal problems of the MGNREGA workers. In the study area it is noted that none of them were even aware of unemployment allowance and hence they did not make any effort for getting it. The major personal problem faced by MGNREGA workers is “Lack of Awareness “since it has been ranked first with a highest mean score of 4.00. Due to lack of awareness about various provisions of the Act, people are generally unaware of some basic entitlements under MGNREGA like job cards, minimum wages, unemployment allowance and receipt for applicant which is the main document to claim unemployment allowance. Second highly viewed personal problem of MGNREGA workers is “Low level of education “with a mean score of 3.51. while interacting with the beneficiaries of the programme it was brought to the notice that most of the people who work under this programme are either illiterate or have very low educational level “Lack of Confidence” is ranked third with the mean score of 3.40. “No personal recognition” is ranked IV with a mean score of 3.16, followed by “Socio Cultural Barriers” which is ranked V with a mean score of 3.02. “Low wage rate” is ranked sixth with the mean score of 2.64.” Family Issues” and “Non availability of muster roll at worksite” has been ranked seventh and eighth with mean scores of 2.47 and 2.30 respectively

## Personal Problems of MGNREGA workers among Different Education Status:

As far as MGNREGA scheme is concerned with different education status of people are working under this Scheme. For the purpose of analysis the education status are classified into five groups, namely, Illiterate, Primary, Middle, High school, Higher secondary school. An attempt was made to find out whether there is any significant difference in personal problems among different education status of the workers by using F-Test.

**Table 2: Personal Problems of Mgnrega Workers Among Different Education Status**

Sl.No	Personal Problems	Education Status					Total	F.Value	P.value
		Illiterate	Primary	Middle	H.S	H.S.S			
1	Lack of Confidence	3.35	3.44	3.41	3.35	3.33	3.40	.188	.945
2	Non availability of muster roll at worksite	2.27	2.21	2.39	2.19	2.44	2.30	.846	.496
3	Low wage rate	2.70	2.46	2.71	2.69	1.67	2.64	2.565*	.037
4	Socio Cultural Barriers	2.96	3.02	3.07	3.01	2.89	3.02	.241	.915
5	Family Issues	2.48	2.54	2.38	2.64	2.11	2.47	.889	.470
6	Low level of education	3.72	3.38	3.43	3.79	2.00	3.51	4.738*	.001

Sl.No	Personal Problems	Education Status					Total	F.Value	P.value
		Illiterate	Primary	Middle	H.S	H.S.S			
7	Lack of Awareness	4.06	4.09	3.95	3.84	4.22	4.00	.862	.486
8	No Personnel Recognition	3.27	3.24	2.98	3.43	2.67	3.16	2.116*	.077
	<b>Average mean score</b>	<b>3.10</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.04</b>	<b>3.11</b>	<b>2.66</b>	<b>3.06</b>		

Source: Primary data

\*Significant at 5% level

Table 2 indicates that Personal problems of MGNREGA workers is high for the variable “Lack of Awareness” among illiterate, primary, middle, high school, higher secondary school since they have the highest mean scores of 4.06, 4.09, 3.95, 3.84, 4.22 and 4.00.

However personal problems is low for the variable “Non availability of muster roll at worksite” among illiterate, primary and High school since it has the lowest mean scores of 2.27, 2.21 and 2.19. But among the Middle school the personal problem is low for the variable “Family Issues” since it has the least mean score of 2.38, and among the Higher secondary school the personal problem low is found for the variable “Low wage rate” with a mean score of 1.67.

High school level have the highest personal problems since they have the highest average mean score of 3.11. Followed by Illiterates with average mean score of 3.10. However personal problems is low among Higher secondary school level since it has the lowest average mean score of 2.66.

The significant difference among the education status of the MGNREGA workers were noticed in the case of personal problems variables namely, “Low wage rate”, “Low level of education”, “No personal recognition” since the respective ‘F’ values were significant at five percent level.

#### **Personal problems of MGNREGA workers among different Caste Groups:**

According to different caste groups, 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 personal 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 personal problem variables are shown in table 3.

**Table 3: Personal Problems of Mgnrega Workers Among Different Caste Groups**

Sl.No	Personal Problems	Caste Group					Total	F.Value	P.value
		OBC	Others	SC/ ST	General				
1	Lack of Confidence	3.30	3.33	3.53	3.49	3.40	1.740	.158	
2	Non availability of muster roll at worksite	2.26	2.33	2.37	2.21	2.30	.486	.692	
3	Low wage rate	2.59	2.64	2.70	2.64	2.64	.238	.870	
4	Socio Cultural Barriers	3.14	2.83	3.14	2.93	3.02	2.961*	.032	
5	Family Issues	2.32	2.50	2.58	2.57	2.47	1.443	.229	
6	Low level of education	3.30	3.46	3.78	3.65	3.51	3.606*	.013	
7	Lack of Awareness	4.09	4.10	3.90	3.75	4.00	2.663*	.047	
8	No Personnel Recognition	3.08	3.01	3.33	3.34	3.16	1.898	.129	
	<b>Average mean score</b>	<b>3.01</b>	<b>3.02</b>	<b>3.16</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>3.06</b>			

Source: Primary data

\*Significant at 5% level

Table 3 indicates that personal problem is high for the variable “Lack of Awareness” among the Other Backward Caste, Others, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, General since they have the highest mean scores of 4.09, 4.10, 3.90 and 3.75.

However personal problem is low for the variable “Non availability of muster roll at worksite” among the Other Backward Caste, Others, Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, General since they have the lowest mean scores of 2.26, 2.33, 2.37 and 2.21.

SC and ST category have the highest personal problems since they have the highest average mean score of 3.16.

Followed by General category with average mean score of 3.07. However personal problems is low among OBC and Others since they have the lowest average mean score of 3.01 and 3.02 respectively.

The significant difference among the different caste groups of MGNREGA workers were noticed in the case of personal problem variables namely "Socio Cultural Barriers", "Low level of education" and "Lack of Awareness", since the respective 'F' values were significant at five percent level.

### **SUGGESTIONS:**

The success of all public welfare programmes depends upon awareness generation among its beneficiaries. Much of the pitfalls of MGNREGA implementation can be overcome if proper processes and procedures are put in place. Thus, there should be continuous efforts towards creating adequate awareness campaigns to educate the people about the different provisions of MGNREGS programme. Creating awareness is necessary not only to motivate the people to work under the MGNREGA scheme but also to encourage them to participate in its planning and implementation of the works. All these efforts could help in making the MGNREGA scheme demand driven.

### **FINDINGS:**

- ❖ Personal problems of MGNREGA workers is high for the variable 'Lack of awareness' with the mean score of 4.00 followed by 'Low level of education' and 'Lack of confidence' with the mean score of 3.51 and 3.40. Personal problem is low for the variable 'Lack of motivation' and 'Family issues' with the mean scores of 2.30 and 2.47.
- ❖ The study revealed that problems perceptions is high among MGNREGA workers with low level of education. Problem perception is high among the high school level educated MGNREGA workers since it has the highest mean score of 3.11. The significant difference among the different educated MGNREGA workers are seen in the case of personal problems variables namely, "Lack of Family Support", "Low level of education", "No personal recognition" since the respective 'F' values were significant at five percent level.
- ❖ Personal problem is high among SC/ST category MGNREGA workers which is followed by general category since they have the highest mean score of 3.16 and 3.07. OBC and Others category workers have low personal problems. This may be due to various benefits and concessions they enjoy. The significant difference among the different caste groups of MGNREGA workers are noticed in the case of personal problem variables namely "Socio Cultural Barriers", "Low level of education" and "Lack of Awareness", since the respective 'F' values were significant at five percent level.

### **CONCLUSION:**

In fact MGNREGA is conceptually a very important national programme initiated at the level of the central government, but its record of implementation reveals that there are wide spread complaints of corruption and pilferage of funds and very low level of utilization of budgeted provision. To trim down the family problems cooperation must be given by family members and adequate facilities must be provided to every beneficiary at the worksite. To improve the socio-economic status or condition of rural people living below poverty line, a smooth path-way is necessary for gaining the maximum number of benefits. Thus to achieve the goal of programme. The problem lies not in the Act, but in its defective implementation by the state governments. In many states its implementation is characterized by such defects like the involvement of the middlemen, political and bureaucratic exploitation, misuse of funds, muster roll manipulation, lack of transparency etc. which need to be strictly controlled. The prospects of the Act seem to be quite bright provided it is properly executed.

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