

Intervention of MGNREGS in Augmenting the Livelihood of Beneficiaries of Tumkur District: An Empirical Study

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Abstract

Indian agriculture has also come under significant adjustment pressure from market liberalization and globalization, resulting in rural households to look at alternative means for supplementing their livelihoods. To provide the rural people with better prospects for socio-economic development and transformation increased participation of people in the rural development programs. Rural development over the years has emerged as “a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people – the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the natural areas.

The concept of food security pertains to economic accessibility, availability, vulnerability, utilization, the necessary purchasing power to buy food, and also the biological absorption of food in the body. The agricultural sector has reached the saturation point as far as employment generation is concerned. The study found specific positive effects like an increase in income, consumption level, and reduction in indebtedness, improvement in access to healthcare, and standard of living. However, the scheme has many blemishes with its flawed implementation strategy that has messed up the spirit of this program. Thus MGNREGS has not only improved the livelihood but also contributed to the rural development by involving the local people in all its endeavors.

Keywords:Sustainability,Vulnerability,Livelihood,Globalization

Introduction

India perceives a renovation in the early twenty-first with development of agriculture and industries subsequently with big corporate houses entering into a retail business, land allocation for Special Economic Zones, the boom in information technology and IT-enabled services, agriculture and allied activities supporting livelihoods of nearly 70 percent of India's rural population. In recent years, land-based livelihood of small and marginal farmers are increasingly becoming unsustainable, since their land is not able to support the family's requirements and fodder for their cattle due to failure of timely rain leading to crop failures, increased debt, diminishing land resources and groundwater level, decline in agricultural and soil productivity, threatened loss of bio-diversity, natural resource degradation, widening economic inequality, etc. that have serious implication, on the livelihoods leading to unprecedented numbers of farmer suicides. Besides, Indian agriculture has also come under significant adjustment pressure from market liberalization and globalization, resulting in rural households to look at alternative means for supplementing their livelihoods. To provide the rural people with better prospects for socio-economic development and transformation increased participation of people in the rural development programs, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms, and greater access to credit are among many such events that need introspection.

Rural development over the years has emerged as "a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people – the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the natural areas. This group includes small and marginal farmers, tenants, laborers, and rural artisans and those dependent on here dietary occupations, etc. "The objectives of rural development encompass improved productivities, increased employment, higher incomes for target groups as well as providing minimum acceptable levels of food, clothing, shelter, education, and health. Growth with social justice is the objective of Indian economic planning. But the compulsions of the financial situation, as they unfolded themselves over the years, characterized by a high rate of population growth and less than the commensurate increase in food production, adverse weather, etc. made the pursuit of the growth aspect more imperative than the social justice aspect of development programs.

In recent years the Indian government has made considerable investments in the development of infrastructure like construction of roads, sanitation, electricity, water to every house, houses for the poor, telecommunication, etc. and has also passed various legislation to benefit rural citizens. For example, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee program which guaranteed employment to rural youths along with village development, under universal service obligation, each village should have a village public telephone installed and maintained by the service providers, the "Right To Information Act" passed recently was to make the government system accountable to the citizens. However, rural people are often unaware of such legislation, and they fail to leverage the benefit. At the same time, the corporate houses, private business houses, and mostly urban citizens are making effective use of many of the provisions put forth by the government. Thus, the benefits are inequitably distributed between the rural and urban areas. This rural-urban divide in accessing infrastructure services coupled with the inability of civil society organizations to

utilize the existing provisions has contributed to the slow growth of livelihood opportunities in rural areas.

Agricultural development and sustainability

Food security, climate change, employment, agricultural development, and sustainability are presently being debated as emerging issues in rural development. Sociological and economic issues are becoming pertinent in the process of socio-economic development and particularly in agriculture and rural development.

The concept of food security pertains to economic accessibility, availability, vulnerability, utilization, the necessary purchasing power to buy food, and also the biological absorption of food in the body. A large population of the world is underfed and is suffering from malnutrition. Under nutrition is more than just access to food. Women and children from the weaker sections of the population are the worst sufferers. The significant reasons for food insecurity increase in population, low rate of growth in the agricultural sector, over-exploitation of natural resources, malfunctioning of the public distribution system, and natural calamities such as droughts and floods. Therefore, food security can be enforced by ensuring an increase in production and productivity of the agricultural sector, better targeting of the public distribution system, increase the purchasing power of the weaker sections, control of population explosion, to peck environmental degradation, liberal food export-import policy, etc.

Climate change is a significant challenge for agriculture and rural livelihood issues as our Indian agriculture is predominantly dependent upon the climate and weather. Production, distribution, and consumption all have a direct impact on agriculture due to changes in the environment. Consistent warming trends, intense extreme weather perforation all have led to the increase in risks and vulnerabilities and compelling rural people to migrate to cities as there is a guarantee of at least a meager income for a decent living which is sufficient enough to meet the basic demands of food, clothing, and shelter. This, in turn, has a drastic effect on both rural and urban development with under population in rural areas and overpopulation in urban areas.

The agricultural sector has reached the saturation point as far as employment generation is concerned.

People no more would like their future generation to continue with their traditional or hereditary occupation, whether it is agriculture or any other profession, as it is hardly promising in the future. Gen-X is compelled to come out and search for their employment for their livelihood as their future life seems to be dim. The expansion of the rural non-farm sector is the only hope and alternative for agricultural development in the future. The rural population is diversifying in non-agricultural enterprises. The non-farm rural activities include food processing, handicraft, handloom, and textiles, repairing shops, telephone booths, tourism, stationery shops, consumer durable shops, construction, trade and commerce, transport and other services The Economic Census 2005, identifies 17 non-farm activities like mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas, water, supply, construction, maintenance and repair, wholesale and retail trade, hotels and restaurants, transport and storage, financial intermediation, health and social. The share of rural non-farm enterprises is continuously increasing as regards their number, employment generation, and

its contribution to GDP. The most critical factors for agricultural non-farm enterprises are the lack of created education, skill, and training.

However, there are many challenges before these rural non-agricultural enterprises. The significant problems are:

- 1) Inadequate awareness, lack of knowledge, and skill.
- 2) Lack of initiative and interest.
- 3) Less coverage in media and government policy
- 4) The multiplicity of interventions and their spread of resources
- 5) Lackluster stakeholders' participation
- 6) Lack of proper monitoring and management information system
- 7) Inadequate machinery for program delivery.

After independence, India launched massive agricultural and rural development programs. However, the traditional institutions of caste, family, village, tribe, and other loyalties were on the process of conflict with the process of economic development. There was slow growth, and the desired results in rural development could be achieved but at a slower pace. Thus, the thriving of the agriculture and agricultural sector is critical for India's growth and global competitiveness. At present, agriculture growth has reached the optimum level of its land and water resources availability. The rate of growth in this sector is lagging behind the other areas of the economy. Experts are now suggesting the need for the second green revolution to make agriculture an attractive and viable economic activity.

Major Schemes of Rural Development in India:

- 1) The nine schemes of rural development in India are as follows
- 2) 20-Point Programme
- 3) Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- 4) Training Rural Youths for Self-Employment (TRYSEM)
- 5) Food for Work Programme (FWP)
- 6) National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)
- 7) Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)
- 8) JawaharRozgar Yojana (JRY)
- 9) Antyodaya Yojana
 - Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A survey of literature places a significant role in establishing the backdrop for any research work in social sciences. It is felt that the justification of the present study can be made by reviewing the available literature on the subject. MGNREGA has attracted a considerable amount of academic interest because of its features, size, and implications for rural India. The primary purpose of the review of literature about the evaluation of performances of NREGS is to give a proper orientation and perspective to the present work. The analysis of literature helped in understanding the entire process of MGNREGS planning and implementation related issues in India and particularly in Karnataka. Therefore, an attempt has been made to review the literature on the subject to establish the relevance of the present study.

A primary study conducted by Anshuman Saikia and Anjan Jyothi Bhorah (2017) in Assam to trace the problems faced by the beneficiaries and the impact of MGNREGS on rural livelihood. The study found specific positive effects like an increase in income, consumption level, and reduction in indebtedness, improvement in access to healthcare, and standard of living.

However, the scheme has many blemishes with its flawed implementation strategy that has messed up the spirit of this program. Religion, casteism, nepotism, street biases, and favoritism play a dominant role in the issuance of distribution of job card, dominance of leading families, defective leadership and improper coordination among the stakeholders, delay in wage payments, illegal presence of contractors, lack of worksite facilities, and overall there was lack of information about the work of the scheme which has stood as significant impediment in this program. Thus, the researcher's regrets that the essence of the Act could not shine in the state of Assam as expected in the Act.

Dr.Subramanya M (2017), "A Case of MGNREGS Woman Workers of Ponamalle Tamil Nadu" reveals MGNREGS and women empowerment, this article main the objectives to ensure livelihood and food security by providing unskilled work to people through creation of sustainable assets, rural women are traditional homebound, the employment guarantee act played a significant role for curbing gender discrimination and empowering rural women. MGNREGS Act 2005 was brought into force by the Union Government in February 2006, a different scheme for the betterment of women empowerment and development rural population.

The scheme is attractive especially for women because it stipulates that one third of the total workers should be women, the act provides some exploit entitlements for women facilitate their full participation these include.

Ashok Kumar H (2016) reveals his studies on the Performance of MGNREGA in Mysore District, Karnataka. The research-based on the secondary source of three years of data focuses on the performance and progress of MGNREGA in terms of Job card issued, employment generation, and to assess the constraints faced by the beneficiaries and finally to assess the financial inclusion of MGNREGA in Mysore district. The study found that the performance of MGNREGA has brought many positive changes in improving the livelihood of the poor people along with the improvement in the infrastructure for sustainable growth, and the scheme has resulted in the decline of unemployment and increased agricultural production.

Gangadhar Reddy and Aswath G R, (2016) studies are based on the secondary sources about the progress, impact, performance of the Act in Karnataka. The study concludes that the MGNREGA has helped in enhancing the livelihood in rural areas by providing guaranteed employment to unskilled workers, helped in the creation of durable assets, reduced rural migration, and augmented the participation of marginalized groups.

V Salian and D. S Leelavathi (2014), "Implementation of MGNREGA: Issues and Challenges, observes that the performance of MGNREGS does not agree with the rate of poverty and unemployment in Karnataka. The paper compares the status of rural poverty and unemployment and the performance of the scheme in addressing issues above. The researcher identifies that the program has immensely contributed the gender neutrality in wages, helped

in the reduction of disguised employment of female workers, and improvement in the wages of unskilled workers in her studies on Sustainability of Rural Livelihoods and MGNREGA – A survey in District Mewat Harayana. The study depicts a holistic analysis of the livelihood activities, assets gained, and constraints faced by the beneficiaries by focusing on various queries related to awareness about the scheme, application, and registration for work, job cards, worksite facilities, record keeping social audits were all enquired. It was found during the study that landlessness, low regional geographic endowments, lack of formal education, and absence of adequate employment opportunities motivated people to join effectively in the scheme. The scheme has benefitted the marginalized poor as more number of BPL holders was on the record. However, some of the shortcomings observed during the study were lack of awareness of the Act both among the workers and Sarpanch, discrepancies in the issuance of job cards, low quality of work, execution of work was done irrationally, the redressal mechanism and vigilance monitoring committees were not traditional, lacunas in the deliverance of wages, absence of crèches, provided hardship for working mothers, were noticed during the study. Thus, the study regrets that the scheme conspicuously hides the ground realities and suggests that strengthening of community participation, people-centric orientation, and practical evaluation can undoubtedly change the rural edifice.

Background of MGNREGS:

The Maharashtra government was the first to introduce an Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) in the 1970s, which guaranteed work at slightly below the minimum wage. In 1980, the national version of the EGS program was named the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) without the guarantee element included. The enactment came out partly as a result of the sustained campaign by academics and activists across India. Significant efforts were made by campaign groups to highlight the crisis of food and work availability being faced by large numbers of marginalized communities in rural India. The NREGA, as finally enacted, was a diluted version of the “citizen’s draft.”

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NRECS) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The plan notified on 7th September 2005, one of the flagship programs of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government has become operational throughout the country from first of April 2008. It aims at better 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 home whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The choice of works suggested in the Act addresses causes of chronic poverty like drought deforestation and soil erosion so that the process of employment is maintained on a sustainable basis. State Governments, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), as well as non-government organizations, would be involved in implementing the law.

The objective of the Act:

The objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

Objectives of the study:

1. To evaluate the respondents' awareness level and experiences about MGNREGS.
2. To collect the respondents' opinion about the working nature of MGNREGS.
3. To investigate the various constraints faced by the respondents in effectively utilizing the scheme. and
4. To assess the overall impact of the program on the respondents and their family members.

Methodology:

Research is a process wherein information has to be searched out in proper and sequential order to conclude. In this process, something new may get discovered, or old may be rejected or reinterpreted. Keeping these ideas in mind, the study or research on socio-demographical characteristics of beneficiaries of MGNREGA in Tumkur district undertaken. There are various methods and techniques of data collection applied for the present study. Unless the methodology is correct, the analysis and conclusions may not be scientific, and biased conclusions have no utility for policies and programs. For this purpose, descriptive and analytical methods employed.

Tools of data collection:

The researcher has made use of qualitative tools in his study. This study comprises of primary and secondary data. The primary data will be collected through the in-depth interview and participant observation.

Method of data collection:

The data collected through a structured interview schedule. Initially, a good rapport established with the beneficiaries, and after taking into their confidence, the responses elicited.

Universe:

Based on the reports of MGNREGS from 3 phases, Tumkur district is selected for the study. For the effective scheme implementation and administrative purposes, the district is divided into five taluks comprising Tumkur, Korategere, Madhugiri, Pavagada, and Sira. Each taluks two panchayat selected for the study.

Sampling and sample size:

For the study, the total size of the sample comprises two hundred fifty beneficiaries belonging to SC and ST community, respectively (500 samples) and simple random sampling method, will be used for the selection of the respondents.

Limitation and Scope:

The study has certain limitations as to the number of selected village panchayaths, and beneficiaries are limited to SCs and STs and who have been involved in the scheme for three years. Therefore, there is still considerable scope for conducting an in-depth survey at various levels besides the workers at sites in the villages. The probing into the aspect of social audit of the works undertaken would undoubtedly provide useful insights into the process of implementation of MGNREGS and its effectiveness.

Statement of the problem

Seventy percent of India's population depends on the agricultural sector. Among them, the majority are the small farmers and marginal farmers holding little junk of lands resulting in the cultivation of cash crops economically non- viable. As a result, the farmers live challenged lives even under ideal conditions such as years of good monsoons and yields. Their existence is already economically fragile as they are often genuinely in debt, owing to continued borrowings for purchasing seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides. In years of lack or over rain, when their crops fail, the consequences are more harmful. They incur new loans, with the idea that good harvest one can enable them to repay all past debts. Frequently, even after a good harvest, small farmers fail to benefit, as unstable market conditions or a glut in the market result in inadequate returns for their produce. After settling debts, the amount left to them is not at all sufficient for the long year before them. They have other expenses such as those on health that have to be met by them. When these exceed all limits, migration, or even suicide, becomes the only option.

Thus, the growing agrarian crisis has led to severe human and material costs. It has resulted not only in weakening food and nutritional security but also in the lifestyles and livelihoods of thousands of peasants and workers dependent on it. Hence, we need to devise a suitable methodology to assess the progress made so far in improving the condition of agriculture in the country.

Impact of MNREGA on Rural People's Food security and livelihood:

Any policies and programs have three types of effects on the society-short term, medium-term, and the long run. It may also affect a given society at three levels-the value system, the institutions, and the processes. MGNREGS is one of the most recent Acts of India, and there is limited empirical evidence to present any observation regarding the medium term and long term effects as it is still in the infancy stage. We also have an insufficient basis to discuss the nature of the impact of this Act upon the values or institutions. But there are enough studies to help us in finding out the short term as well as the procession aspects of the impact this step by the Indian state in the context of empowerment of the rural poor, particularly the more vulnerable sections like women, SCs and STs. This act was introduced to improve the purchasing power of the country people, primarily semi or un-skilled work to people living below the poverty line in rural India. Generating productive assets, protecting the environment, empowering rural women, reducing rural-urban migration, and fostering social equity, among others. MNREGA promotes conditions for inclusive growth ranging from underlying wage security and recharging rural economy to a transformative empowerment process of democracy with its rights-based framework and demand-driven approach the impact of MNREGA on Rural People as tremendous thereby giving a pivotal role to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in planning, monitoring and implementation in the process of rural development.

The significant dimensions of the impact of NREGA can be summarized as the following that there is increased legitimacy on their rights to work, and this can be a challenge to poverty as there are increased employment opportunities even during the lean or non- seasonal time. Due to no discrimination, we can find that men, women, irrespective of caste or creed, there is higher participation. The better wages compared to market rate and flexible timings and

choice of their time encourage various people to participate in the scheme. This scheme has declined migration as the jobs are at your doorstep, and all necessary amenities are provided at a worksite along with medical facilities. Since the villagers are involved in various developmental activities, they can give their fuller potentiality and thereby can create assets, and this also propels the village to develop extensively. Thus MGNREGS has not only improved the livelihood but also contributed to the rural development by involving the local people in all its endeavors.

Findings of the study

This chapter presents a summary of the results, conclusion, and suggestions based on the data analyses of the previous sections. The study focused on understanding the impact of MGNREGS on the farmers. In this process, the study attempted to understand the level of awareness of the scheme, the problems they faced while working, and overall the impact on their social and economic life. The study also elicited their response to the working nature of the scheme.

1. It highlights the gender composition of the beneficiaries in MGNREGS. It is found from the table that the majority of the recipients were males with 58 percent, and females accounted for 42 Tumkur districts.
2. The age composition of the beneficiaries in MGNREGS. The majority of the beneficiaries belonged to the age group of 36-45 accounting to 28.0 percent, followed by 26-35 years with 23.6 percent; however, in the scheme. However, there's encouragement for elderly citizens to participate, but we find that senior citizens showed a negligible percentage in participating in the Scheme.
3. Highlights the educational status of the beneficiaries in MGNREGS. It is found that 47.6 percent were illiterates and among the majority of them replied that though they did not go to school but could sign and read slowly so they can be considered as literates.
4. Majority of the family composition of the beneficiaries in MGNREGS. The majority of the beneficiaries were from a nuclear family, with 57.8 percent and Single families formed 22.4 percent. Then the Joint family 19.8 percent. All the beneficiaries from the nuclear family outnumbered those from joint families. The family has considered as a pillar of Indian society in olden days joint family acted as insurance to the needy.
5. Illustrates the marital status of the beneficiaries. It is evident from the table that the majority of them were married, forming 68.0 percent, and those unmarried constituted 14.2 percent. In all the five Taluks also married were found in more number. In India, marriage is considered a sacrament and a must to complete one's life.

Suggestions:

1. There is satisfaction among the beneficiaries concerning the choice and execution of tasks. So people should be given an opportunity in the selection of work
2. Throughout the study, many responded that the authorities did not provide any tools or implements for a job, and only those who had could go for work. So to increase the participation of the people, it would be better if they are provided with tools.
3. During the study, many protested lack of infrastructural facilities like that they had carry water, food and other necessary implements which cumbered with many difficulties so the

work site facilities should possess minimum necessary facilities like provision of drinking water, rest place, crèches, medical facilities.

4. The duration of several days needs to be enhanced as in a year just a hundred days may not be beneficial for those who are economically weak, and this will hardly suffice their socio-economic empowerment.

5. One of the primary complaints is a delay in wage payment which needs to be looked upon

6. There is a discrepancy in the issue of job cards and providing relevant information that needs to be checked. Frequent evaluation and cross-checking need to be done.

Conclusion:

Thus, MGNREGS has been successful in creating employment through which it has also led to food security, increased standard of living, change in employment status, freedom for money lenders, and sustainable development. Sociological and economic issues are becoming pertinent in the process of socio-economic development and particularly in agriculture and rural development.

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