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## Impact of MGNREGA on Migration in Karnataka – An Empirical Study

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### Abstract

The Government of India has launched many poverty alleviation and employment programs, especially for rural people. But due to several shortcomings observed in the wage employment programs it did not live up to the expectations of the people in addressing the problem of unemployment and poverty eradication. The present study is to study the migration status before and after the implementation of the MGNREGA program and to examine the impact of the MGNREGA programme on the migration of respondents from rural to urban areas in the study area. The study shows that the number of migrants after the implementation of the MGNREGA was reduced as compared to before the implementation of the program. It means that MGNREGA has a significant impact on alleviating rural poverty by enhancing livelihood security. In this context, there is a need for more effective implementation of the scheme.

*Keywords: Employment, Poverty Rural-Urban and Migration,*

### INTRODUCTION

After independence, the government launched many poverty alleviation and employment programs, especially for rural people. But due to several shortcomings observed in the wage employment programs it did not live up to the expectations of the people in addressing the problem of unemployment and poverty eradication. Against this backdrop, the Act was enacted in 2005 and came into force on February 2, 2006. Initially, it was introduced in the 200 most backward districts and then on April 1, 2008, it was implemented in all. Currently, MGNREGA is being implemented in all the notified rural areas of the country.

The Employment Guarantee Act, a clear improvement on previous programs, gives a new opportunity to reverse this trend and revive the rural economy. Support of the planning section under its implementation is therefore critical for the country. Several scholars have tried to look into the implementation aspects of MGNREGA since the launching of MGNREGA viz., rural wage formation and its consolidation processes, attendance of labour in public and private works and shortage of labour in private works and the impact of MGNREGA on agricultural productivity, rural-urban migration, rural poverty, etc.

In rural India, 69 per cent of the total population lives and 67 per cent of households are in rural areas. Most of these rural poor are engaged in agriculture as wage laborers or at least as farmers. There is ample evidence to suggest a slowdown in agriculture. Bhalla (2004) pointed out that the agricultural employment growth rate in several states is negative. Thus, although agriculture is still an important activity in rural areas, it is unable to provide adequate employment. Rural workers suffer due to excessive seasonality of employment, lack of wage employment opportunities and low wage rates. These poor rural families resort to temporary or permanent migration to extend their working days and cope with the risks.

Bhagat (2009) is of the view that the push and pull factors have dominated much of the understanding of migration. Jaswal (2009) finds out that migration has reduced by more than half since MGNREGA was introduced. In this background, the present study is set for the following objectives.

### **OBJECTIVES:**

- To study the migration status of before and after implementation of the MGNREGA program in the study area.
- To examine the impact of the MGNREGA programme on the migration of respondents from rural to urban areas in the study area.

### **HYPOTHESIS:**

- There is a significant relationship between reducing the problem of out-migration and the implementation of the MGNREGA program.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on primary data and secondary sources of data. The present research was conducted in Karnataka. The present study was focused on four MGNREGA Phase-1 districts of Karnataka namely Bidar, Chitradurga, Gulbarga and Raichur districts. These districts are among the 200 most backward districts in the country and representatives of the poorest/backward districts where MGNREGA was implemented (2006). Based on stratified-random sampling techniques, the primary sources of data were collected from 400 beneficiaries in the Bidar, Chitradurga, Gulbarga and Raichur districts of Karnataka. The data collected from primary and secondary sources were analyzed by using statistical techniques like Average and Chi-Square Test were used to analyze the data.

## Analysis and Discussion

Poverty may lead to the migration of people to search for an income source, especially among landless labours and small farmers. Due to their debts and the huge gap between income and expenses, they can move from one place to another to find work to retain their livelihood, if they cannot earn in their villages. Crop loss, the lean season for agriculture, poverty, higher wage rate attractions, drought, flood etc are reasons for migration. Rural-urban migration plays an important role in urbanization on the one hand, but in contrast to the negative effects such as declining in social welfare through overcrowding, overburdened infrastructure, and increase in urban poverty, crime and regional concentration of wealth. Labor migration involves a migrant alone or a full family, as a whole community in accordance with the needs and economic status of the migrants also migration is seasonal or permanent depending on the availability of work at migration sites. In this context, the following table 1 depicts the status of migration in the study area.

**Table – 1: Migration Status of before implementation of the MGNREGA programme**

Migration Status	Bidar	Chitradurga	Gulbarga	Raichur	Total
Living place to other cities of the same district	21 (21.0)	33 (33.0)	25 (25.0)	29 (29.0)	<b>108</b> <b>(27.00)</b>
Other districts	37 (37.0)	35 (35.0)	31 (31.0)	29 (29.0)	<b>132</b> <b>(33.00)</b>
Other states	13 (13.0)	15 (15.0)	17 (17.0)	11 (11.0)	<b>56</b> <b>(14.00)</b>
Non-migrants	29 (29.0)	17 (17.0)	27 (27.0)	31 (31.0)	<b>104</b> <b>(26.00)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>400</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Primary data.

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentages

Table 1 shows that out of 400 respondents, 74 per cent of the respondents migrated to other places whereas 26 per cent of the respondents did not migrate to any other places and were attached to their villages, cultures and traditions. Out of 296 respondents, 27 per cent of the respondents migrated to the living place to other cities of the same district, 33 percent of the respondents migrated to other districts and 14 per cent of the respondents migrated to other states in search of work for their livelihood.

## REASONS FOR MIGRATION

There are many reasons for individuals' migration across places. The reasons for migration have been presented in Table 2.

**Table – 2: Reasons for Migration for before implementation of MGNREGA**

Reasons	Bidar	Chitradurga	Gulbarga	Raichur	Total
Poverty	38	45	39	38	<b>160</b> <b>(54.00)</b>
Unemployment	18	21	18	17	<b>74</b> <b>(25.00)</b>
Drought and floods	6	7	7	6	<b>27</b> <b>(9.00)</b>
Better opportunities	9	10	9	8	<b>36</b> <b>(12.00)</b>
Total Migrants	71	83	73	69	<b>296</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Primary data.

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentages

Table 2 shows the reasons for migration before the implementation of MGNREGA. Among the migrated respondents (296), 54 per cent of the respondents migrated due to poverty, 25 per cent of the respondents migrated due to unemployment, 9 per cent of the respondents migrated due to drought and floods and 12 per cent of the respondents migrated due to better opportunities in the urban area. The data clearly shows that poverty is the major reason for the migration of the people in the study area.

**Table – 3: Migration Status of after the implementation of MGNREGA**

Migration Status	Bidar	Chitradurga	Gulbarga	Raichur	Total
Living place to other cities of the same district	12 (12.0)	17 (17.0)	12 (12.0)	14 (14.0)	<b>55</b> <b>(13.75)</b>
Other districts	18 (18.0)	22 (22.0)	15 (15.0)	12 (12.0)	<b>67</b> <b>(16.75)</b>
Other states	6 (6.0)	8 (8.0)	7 (7.0)	5 (5.0)	<b>26</b> <b>(6.50)</b>
Non-migrants	64 (64.0)	53 (53.0)	66 (.0)	69 (69.0)	<b>252</b> <b>(63.00)</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>100</b> <b>(100.0)</b>	<b>400</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Primary data.

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentages

Table 3 shows the migration status of after the implementation of MGNREGA. The number of respondents who migrated after the implementation of the MGNREGA programme was 37 per cent as against 74 per cent before the implementation of the programme. It indicated the MGNREGA programme's vital role in the arrest of

rural-urban migration. Out of 148 migrated respondents, 13.75 per cent of the respondents migrated to the living place to other cities of the same district, 16.75 per cent of the respondents migrated to other districts and 6.50 per cent of the respondents migrated to other states in search of work for their livelihood.

**Table –4: Reasons for Migration for after the implementation of MGNREGA**

Reasons	Bidar	Chitradurga	Gulbarga	Raichur	Total
Poverty	25	34	23	21	103 (69.6)
Unemployment	0	0	0	0	0 (0.00)
Drought and floods	4	5	4	4	17 (11.50)
Better opportunities	7	8	7	6	28 (18.90)
<b>Total Migrants</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>148</b> <b>(100.0)</b>

Source: Primary data.

Note: Figures in brackets represent percentages

Table 4 shows that among the migrated respondents (148), 69.6 per cent of the respondents migrated due to poverty followed by 17 per cent of the respondents who migrated due to drought and floods and about 28 per cent of the respondents migrated due to better opportunities in the urban area. One important observation is that unemployment is not a reason for migration after the implementation of the MGNREGA programme in the study area

**Table – 5: Migration of the respondents before and after the implementation of MGNREGA**

District	Migration status	No of Migrants			Total Migrants	Non-migrants
		Living place to other cities of the same district	Other districts	Other states		
Bidar	B	21	37	13	71	29
	A	12	18	6	36	64
Chitradurga	B	33	35	15	83	17
	A	17	22	8	47	53
Gulbarga	B	25	31	17	73	27
	A	12	15	7	34	66
Raichur	B	29	29	11	69	31
	A	14	12	5	31	69
Total	<b>B</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>104</b>
	<b>A</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>252</b>

Source: Primary data.

Note: Figures in brackets represent the percentage of the total.

B - Before Implementation of MGNREGA

### A - After Implementation of MGNREGA

Table 5 shows the migration of the respondents before and after the implementation of MGNREGA in the study area. The data show that the number of migrants after the implementation of MGNREGS was reduced as compared to before the implementation of the programme. It's indicated that the programme has been effective in arresting the rural-urban migration to a considerable extent.

### TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

- There is a significant relationship between reducing the problem of out-migration and the implementation of the MGNREGA programme.

To test the above-stated hypothesis, migration status and reasons for migration variables were used. In this connection, tables (1 to 5) focus on the migration of the respondents before and after the implementation of the MGNREGA programme in the study area. Table 6 shows the results of the Chi-Square test about the significant relationship between reducing the problem of out-migration and the implementation of the MGNREGA programme.

**Table – 6: Result of the Chi-Square Test for an opinion about the Migration status of the respondents before the implementation of the MGNREGA Programme**

Opinion		Observed N	Expected N	Residual	Chi-Square Value	Asymp Sig
Before	Yes	296	200.0	96.0	92.160	.000*
	No	104	200.0	-96.0		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>				
After	Yes	148	200.0	-52.0	27.040	.000*
	No	252	200.0	52.0		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>400</b>				

Note: Significant at 1% level

Source: Estimated from the primary data

Table 6 clearly shows that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is accepted because the chi-square test revealed the significant difference between these two groups of frequencies of migration status of the respondents before and after the implementation of the MGNREGA programme in the study area. The number of migrants is significantly higher compared to non-migrants before the implementation of the MGNREGA programme. But, after the implementation of the programme the number of non-migrants is significantly higher compared to migrants in the study area. The Chi-Square Value is 27.040 which is statistically significant at the 1 percent level of significance. It means that the number of migrants after the implementation of the MGNREGS was reduced as compared to before the implementation of the programme and statistically it was confirmed from the chi-square test that the number of migrants to other places has reduced significantly. It's indicated that the programme is effective in substantially decreasing the rural-urban migration in the study area.

Hence, there is a significant relationship between reducing the problem of out-migration and the implementation of the MGNREGA programme.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that the MGNREGA program plays an important role in solving the problem of unemployment and poverty in rural areas. Because poverty and unemployment are two major problems in rural areas. Most of the poor live in rural areas. The high rate of poverty is directly related to the large scale underemployment and prevalence of unemployment. Rural workers suffer from extreme seasonality of employment, lack of wage employment opportunities, low wage rates, discrimination between men and women etc. The study shows that the number of migrants after the implementation of MGNREGA was reduced as compared to before the implementation of the program. It means that MGNREGA has a significant impact on alleviating rural poverty by enhancing livelihood security. In this context, there is a need for more effective implementation of the scheme.

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