



Implementation Of Mgnrega In Rural Areas: Progress And Challenges

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Abstract:

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has emerged as a significant scheme for rural development and employment generation in India. The scheme aims to provide a guaranteed employment opportunity to rural households and to promote sustainable development in rural areas. Despite its significant achievements, the scheme also faces several challenges in terms of implementation, corruption, and inadequate funding. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), in its legal framework, is expected to increase livelihood security on a sustained basis by developing economic and social infrastructure in rural areas and help improve the quality of life for marginalised people by giving them access to all essential amenities required to contribute to their communities constructively. Majority of the beneficiaries responded that irregular payment of wages 31.11 per cent is a major problem, another 14.44 per cent of them reported measurement of works by Technical Assistance at the work sites, lack of facilities for medical treatment (13.89%), problems in paying bills (11.11%), no tents to shelter the old and children at the work sites (10%), lack of supply of working tools (8.33%), low wages (7.78%) and work is hard 3.33 per cent respectively in the study area.

Keywords: employment, perception, MGNREGS, rural development, awareness, problems and prospects, facilities,

Introduction:

MGNREGS has a five-tier structure of implementation starting from Gram Panchayat (GP) at the bottom to the Central Government at the top. GP is the nodal agency at the bottom level that has the authority to select, design and implement 50 per cent of the MGNREGS works. Selection, monitoring and supervision of works are done by the Gram Sabha (village council). GP has the responsibility to register households, issue job cards, receive applications for employment, provide employment and monitor the MGNREGS works. The rest 50 per cent may be undertaken either by the Block Panchayat or the District Panchayat or both. Block Panchayat monitors and coordinates the plans and works at the block level. Computer updating of MGNREGS works, muster roll entries etc. is done at the block level under the auspices of the MGNREGS

programme officer. District Panchayat, in addition to implementing non-mandatory works, coordinates MGNREGS activities at the district level. Besides, it has the responsibility to prepare both the district annual plan and the five-year perspective plan. These two plan documents are the basis which guides the implementation of MGNREGS at the village level. These documents are prepared at the district level in consultation with the GP and block Panchayats.

The Study used primary data. For in depth research, the Study covered three mandals which are located on the foot hill areas in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh, to analyse the impact of the MGNREGS programme. From each of these mandals, three villages were selected on the basis of the implementation of MGNREGS. From each village 20 sample respondents and each Mandal 60 sample respondents are identified and thus the total respondents covered under is 180. Data are collected from only those respondents who are willing to share the information.

The Specific Objectives of the Study are: (i) to analyse the socio-economic and demographic features of the sample respondents in the Study area. (ii) to examine the perceptions of the sample respondents regarding the execution process of works in the Study area. (iii) to identify the awareness levels relating to Provisions, Facilities and Management aspects of the MGNREGS in the Study area.

Salient Feature of the MGNREGS:

- Adult members of a rural household may apply for employment if they are willing to do unskilled manual work.
- Such a household will have to apply for registration to the local Gram Panchayat in writing or orally.
- The Act provides a 100 days wage employment guarantee at the prevailing minimum wages with a legal guarantee the 'right to employment' for rural unskilled labour. The 100 days of work figure was estimated because the agricultural season is only supposed to last roughly around 250 days and unskilled workers have no alternative source of income in the remaining parts of the year.
- The key element of MGNREGA is the provision of employment by the state to those people who are unable to find alternative employment, which provides a form of 'social safety net' to the rural unemployment people.
- Payment of wages to be made every week and in any case not later than a fortnight.
- The Act has the provision of reservation of 33 per cent of all working days for women workers in a financial year to a household.
- There is also clear instruction in the Act for equal payment of wages for men and women.
- The use of information technology in this programme is considered to bring about greater transparency through intensive monitoring and faster execution.
- The other important feature of the Act is that employment to the beneficiary will be given within 15 days of demand; payment will also be made within 15 days of work.
- The GP after due verification will issue a 'job card', after verification, the GP will issue a job card (contain details of the member) to the household with photograph free of cost within 15 days of application.
- It therefore proposes 'a right- based, job- oriented way' to growth and development – rather than being a resource-based employment scheme.
- The Act also specifies that the labour capital ratio in the public works programmes must be at least 60:40.
- The other important feature of the Act is that 100% wage cost is borne by Central Govt. 25% Material cost is borne by the State Government Unemployment allowance is borne by State Govt.

Review of Literature

Suresh Kumar J and D. Shobana (2024) in their paper opined that the evaluation of Indian Social Security Programs and Initiatives reveals a complex landscape marked by notable successes and persistent challenges. The critical role played by programs such as Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana in fostering financial inclusion and retirement security.

Neena Malhotra and Navdeep Kour (2023) study presented at the all-India level based on the women participation rate under MGNREGA. Kerala (92.85%), Tamil Nadu (74.02%) and Rajasthan (69.17%) show highest percentage while the lowest participation in Jammu Kashmir (17.72%) and Uttar Pradesh (17.13%) in 2011-12. In Kerala, the women participation rate increased from 65.62 per cent in 2006-07 to 92.85 per cent in 2011-12.

Sanjoy Singh M, Satish Modi and Raj Maurya (2022) study observed the influence of MGNREGA on job security, income production, governance, and how MGNREGA attempts to analyze the impact on the sustainable livelihood of rural poor in Annupur and Dindori districts of Madhya Pradesh. As a result of the studies on MGNREGA, it can be said that the social level of these tribal areas has benefited greatly from the Scheme.

Kishor Chandra Sahu (2017) the world largest poverty eradication programme launched by the Government of India, which aims at enhancing the livelihood security of rural poor by providing hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteers to do unskilled manual work with reservation of 1/3rd employment for women.

Ashok Kumar H (2016) opined that the scheme provides a legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage. The law was initially called “The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act”. MGNREGA is being implemented in Karnataka since 2006. Now it covers all the 30 districts of the State.

Prasad K.V.S (2012) has stated that the objective of the study was to explore the current status of MGNREGA, review the performance of MGNREGA and to explain the funding pattern of MGNREGA. The study concludes that MGNREGA serves as an effective safety net for the unemployed especially during famine and drought.

Gender of the Sample Respondents

Table 1 presents gender wise distribution of sample respondents in the study area. Majority of the sample respondents are females in all the sample mandals. The sample respondents belong to females are reported as 71.67 per cent in Makkuva mandal, followed by 68.33 per cent Badangi mandal and 60 per cent in Ramabhadrapuram mandal. The male respondents on the other hand are 28.33 per cent, 31.67 per cent and 40 per cent respectively. The data clearly shows that, a majority of 120 (66.67%) respondents are female and the rest of 60 (33.33%) are male respondents who are identified for the present study.

Table 1
Distribution of Sample Respondents by Gender

Gender	Badangi		Ramabhadrapuram		Makkuva		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	19	31.67	24	40.00	17	28.33	60	33.33
Female	41	68.33	36	60.00	43	71.67	120	66.67
Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	60	100.00	180	100.00

Source: Field Survey

Family Size of the Sample Respondents

The size of a family holds significant importance not only for the nation at large but also for the well-being and health of individuals, families, and communities. It directly influences the quality of life experienced by individuals. Quality of life encompasses more than just economic living standards; It extends to a broader spectrum of factors. Family size impacts fundamental human needs, income levels, economic growth, savings, as well as the quality and quantity of food and nutrition. Additionally, it affects land use, urban public systems, health particularly that of mothers and children and education, especially concerning children. In the present study the respondents have been divided into three categories relating to their size of the family and the data analysis is presented in Table 2. The average family size of the total respondents is observed to be 4.5. This is the same for Ramabhadrapuram mandal. The average family size for the other two mandals Badangi and Makkuva is found to be at 4.4 and 4.7 respectively.

The Badangi mandal has the highest share 55 per cent of respondents having 4 & above family members. Looking at the distribution of sample respondents by family size in Badangi, we can see that the share of those living as a family with 3 members is (25%), followed by 2 members (11.67%) and those living as a family with 1 member is 8.33 per cent. In Ramabhadrapuram mandal, the percentage of respondents residing with 4 & above family members is 53.33 per cent, whereas those residing in 3 members category are 26.67 per cent. The percentage of respondents residing in a family with 2 members in this mandal is 15 per cent. In Makkuva mandal, the share of respondents living in 4 & above member category is 53.33 per cent. In this mandal, the share of respondents living in a family with 3 members and 2 members is 33.33 per cent and 8.33 per cent respectively. The Study clearly shows that 96 (53.33%) of the respondents family size is 4 & above, whereas 51 (28.33%) of the respondents family size is three members, followed by 21 (11.67%) of the respondents family size is two members and the rest of 12 (6.67) respondents are having only one family member who are taken up for the present study.

Table 2
Distribution of Sample Respondents by Family Size

Size of the Family	Badangi		Ramabhadrapuram		Makkuva		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
1	5	8.33	3	5.00	4	6.67	12	6.67
2	7	11.67	9	15.00	5	8.33	21	11.67
3	15	25.00	16	26.67	20	33.33	51	28.33
4 & above	33	55.00	32	53.33	31	51.67	96	53.33
Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	60	100.00	180	100.00
Average Size	4.4		4.5		4.7		4.5	

Source: As ex ante

Family System

The family plays a fundamental role in shaping an individual's socialization process. Further, the family assigns an initial status to the individual before they establish their own status. The type of family a person is a part of has a substantial impact on their personal and social life. For instance, a nuclear family comprises of a single married couple with or without other relatives differs from joint families consist of two or more married couples with or without other relatives. The breakdown of this distribution is outlined in Table 3. An analysis of the family system of the respondents shows that most of the respondents stay in the nuclear family. The share of those staying in nuclear family is 92.22 per cent for total sample. Such share is the highest in Ramabhadrapuram mandal amongst the selected mandals. The share of respondents residing in nuclear family is 95 per cent in Ramabhadrapuram mandal followed by 91.67 per cent in Makkuva mandal and 90 per cent in Badangi mandal. In the study area the share of respondents residing in joint family is 7.78 per cent. Such share is 10 per cent in Badangi mandal followed by 8.33 per cent in Makkuva mandal and only 5 per cent in Ramabhadrapuram mandal.

Table 3
Distribution of Sample Respondents by Family System

Family System	Badangi		Ramabhadrapuram		Makkuva		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nuclear	54	90.00	57	95.00	55	91.67	166	92.22
Joint	6	10.00	3	5.00	5	8.33	14	7.78
Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	60	100.00	180	100.00

Source: As ex ante.

General Problems at Work Site

Information was gathered from the beneficiaries on different problems faced by them at work sites. These results are presented in Table 4. The problem relating to irregular payments accounted for 38.33 per cent, another big problem they faced was lack of facilities for medical treatment (16.67%), TA Measurements (13.33%), low wages and no tents for resting shelters to the old people and children at the work sites (each 8.33%), problem in paying bills and lack of working tools supply (each 6.67%) and work is hard only (1.67%) in Ramabhadrapuram mandal, while the corresponding figures for Badangi mandal are 23.33, 11.67, 21.67, 5, 10, 16.67, 8.33 & 3.33 per cent and in Makkuva mandal 31.67, 13.33, 8.33, 11.67, 10, 10, 10 & 5 per cent respectively. The problem in measurement of works by Technical Assistance at the work sites is very high (21.67%) in Badangi mandal. However, the proportion of beneficiaries who reported the problems of irregular wage payment are lower in Badangi mandal (23.33%). Across the total sample, majority of the beneficiaries responded that irregular payment of wages 31.11 per cent is a major problem, another 14.44 per cent of them reported measurement of works by Technical Assistance at the work sites, lack of facilities for medical treatment (13.89%), problems in paying bills (11.11%), no tents to shelter the old and children at the work sites (10%), lack of supply of working tools (8.33%), low wages (7.78%) and work is hard 3.33 per cent respectively in the study area.

Table 4
General Problems at Work Sites

Response	Badangi		Ramabhadrapuram		Makkuva		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Low Wages	3	5.00	5	8.33	6	10.00	14	7.78
Irregular Payment	14	23.33	23	38.33	19	31.67	56	31.11
No Medical Treatment	7	11.67	10	16.67	8	13.33	25	13.89
Working Tools are not Provided	5	8.33	4	6.67	6	10.00	15	8.33
Work is hard	2	3.33	1	1.67	3	5.00	6	3.33
No tents	6	10.00	5	8.33	7	11.67	18	10.00
Problems in paying bills	10	16.67	4	6.67	6	10.00	20	11.11
TA Measurements	13	21.67	8	13.33	5	8.33	26	14.44
Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	60	100.00	180	100.00

Source: As ex ante

Respondents' Suggestions for Improvements

The beneficiaries suggestions for further improving MGNREGS works in the study area is shown in Table 5. A large proportion of the beneficiaries from the Ramabhadrapuram mandal (35%) suggested the need for providing higher wages in MGNREGS works followed by Makkuva mandal (25%) and Badangi mandal (11.67%) beneficiaries with the same feeling. About 26.67 per cent of the beneficiaries belonging to Badangi mandal suggested to increase the number of working days under MGNREGS whereas 21.67 &

16.67 per cent in Makkuva & Ramabhadrapuram have the same suggestion. Similarly, a considerable proportion of the beneficiaries from Badangi mandal suggested for providing regular wage payments under MGNREGS works. Of the six aspects, three aspects in Badangi mandal suggested on aspects like increase in number of working days, providing working tools at the work site and stop the irregular payment of wages, two aspects; provide facilities for medical treatment and Remove wage discrimination between male and female in Makkuva mandal and only one aspect suggest i.e., increase in wage rate in Ramabhadrapuram mandal.

The data reveals that a large number of the beneficiaries (23.89%) suggested for an increase in wage rate who are participating in different MGNREGS works followed by increase in number of working days per worker (21.67%), another important suggestion made by the beneficiaries is for strict implementation of MGNREGS provisions relating regular payments (19.44%), Provide working tools (13.89%), Provide medical treatment (12.22%) and Remove wage discrimination between male and female (6.11%) in the study area. The analysis relating to the suggestions made by the beneficiaries ultimately reveal the need for raising the wage rates given under MGNREGS and also the payment of wages at regular stipulated time periods.

Table 5
Beneficiaries Suggestions for Strengthening of MGNREGS

Response	Badangi		Ramabhadrapuram		Makkuva		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Increase wages	7	11.67	21	35.00	15	25.00	43	23.89
Increase working days	16	26.67	10	16.67	13	21.67	39	21.67
Provide medical treatment	8	13.33	5	8.33	9	15.00	22	12.22
Provide working tools	12	20.00	7	11.67	6	10.00	25	13.89
Remove wage discrimination between male and female	4	6.67	2	3.33	5	8.33	11	6.11
Regular payment should made	13	21.67	10	16.67	12	20.00	35	19.44
Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	60	100.00	180	100.00

Source: As ex ante

Awareness about the other Facilities to be provided at Worksite

Certain amenities like clean drinking water, shelter for children, break time, and a first aid kit stocked with necessary medical supplies for treating minor injuries and other health risks related to the job must be supplied in accordance with the MGNREGS. Details regarding the execution/ availability of these amenities in the three selected mandals are outlined in Table 6. The implementation of the provision of safe drinking water at work site is found relatively high in case of Ramabhadrapuram mandal (98.33%) compared with Makkuva (96.67%) and Badangi (95%) mandals. Out of four provisions, two provisions namely safe drinking water and First Aid Box to the injured persons are considerably more in Ramabhadrapuram mandal. One woman should be deputed to look after 5 or more children registered higher in Badangi mandal. The provision of maintaining shade for small children & period of rest is more in Makkuva mandal compared with counter parts.

On the whole, 96.67 per cent of the beneficiaries reported that the provision of safe drinking water was provided by the concerned officials during the MGNREGS works. The provision of First Aid Box with adequate medicinal material at work places reported at 86.67 per cent and Shade for small children and periods of rest is 85.56 per cent. The provision of maintaining Aya to look after the children of the working women constitutes only 6.11 per cent among the total sample It is regrettable that in numerous work settings, the responsibility of keeping a First Aid Box is neglected by the relevant authorities. It is imperative that

these officials should prioritize the implementation of this crucial and fundamental requirement. Therefore, the concerned officials must ensure that the provision of hiring a caregiver to supervise the children of female employees at the workplace is diligently fulfilled.

Table 6
Awareness of the Other Facilities to be Provided at Worksite

Response (Yes)	Badangi		Ramabhadrapura m		Makkuva		Grand Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Safe Drinking Water	58	96.67	59	98.33	57	95.00	174	96.67
Shade for small children and periods of rest	49	81.67	52	86.67	53	88.33	154	85.56
First Aid Box to the injured persons	52	86.67	54	90.00	50	83.33	156	86.67
One woman should be deputed to look after 5 or more children	5	8.33	2	3.33	4	6.67	11	6.11
Total	60	100.00	60	100.00	60	100.00	180	100.00

Source: As ex ante

Conclusion

It is suggested to the Government of India to link the MGNREGA scheme with other major rural initiatives so that rationalization of objectives across several schemes may be achieved. The village administration should be brought down to Taluka or lower level so that all the development programmes under MGNREGA can reach the villages situated at a distance from Development Block. The success of the programme depends upon its proper implementation. 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 on different provisions of MGNREGS amongst the people.

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