Performance of the MGNREGA Programme in Telangana State: With Special Reference to Nalgonda District

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A B S T R A C T

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a flagship programme by the government of India started on February 2, 2006. As per the scheme, each rural household gets 100 days of guaranteed employment (unskilled work) every year. Although the major objective of this scheme is to provide livelihood security for rural households, it also facilitates the creation as well as maintenance of rural infrastructure, employment generation and reduces migration to cities and towns for work. This paper is an attempt to overview the performance of MGNREGA on employment generation, migration, disbursement of payments, average income etc., in Nalgonda district. To perform the objective of the paper primary data and secondary data has been analysed. The finding of the study reveals that MGNREGA play an important role in employment generation, the gap between the registered candidates and employed candidates can be found and its impact on migration through the sample survey in the Nalgonda district.

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INTRODUCTION

MGNREGA is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. It directly reaches the lives of the poor and supports their growth. The main function of the programme is to provide employment to job seekers in rural areas of the country. Under this scheme guaranteed wage employment is provided in the financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

MGNREGA is the first ever law at national level, that guaranteed wage employment to the rural poor. The primary objective of it is to boost their wage employment. Its auxiliary objective is to strengthen natural resource management, through this scheme. The maintenance of natural resources is highly essential for a sustainable development. As the two-third of the population lives in rural areas, such kind of initiatives have immense importance. As employment under MGNREGA is legally conditioned, a minimum wage is to be paid for the labour work and if the government fails to provide employment over a period of 15 days, it has to provide unemployment allowances to those people.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Ghosh Dilip Kumar (2021): From this paper, it is very much clear that the delivery mechanism of government sponsored EGP failed to deliver the benefits of the programme. That is though funds were allotted and available; they were not utilized efficiently. Guidelines designed by the Central Government were also not adequately adhered. In addition, the insensitivity of the system towards the cause of women persists very much. Further, with the existing delivery mechanism, particularly at state and sub-state levels it will be nearly impossible to achieve the target of 100 days of employment in a year through manual work.

Ambasta Pramathesh, Vijay Shankar (2020), have examined if the reforms suggested are put into place. The paper emphasizes on the provision of adequate resources and setting up systems for continuous monitoring and evaluation at every stage of the programme to ensure quality.

Shah Amia, Mehta Aasha Kapurth (2019), this paper explains that, since NREGS has been in operation for about two years, it is still too early to evaluate its success. It also communicates about the hurdles faced during the implementation of NREGS, and suggestions on possible solutions. It may, therefore, be useful to identify lessons from MEGS while exploring the reform process.

Khera Reetika, Nayak Nandini (2017), this paper presents some findings related to women NREGA workers from a field survey in 2008 in six north Indian states, where interviews were conducted with a random sample of 1060 NREGA workers, and in which 32 per cent of sample workers were women. It highlights that, though employment works opened under the NREGA in India have had a significant impact on the lives of women and men workers over a three-year study period, in the case of women, it was relatively low. And that the problems still remain in the nature of implementation across states, highlighting the lack of crèches for women with young children and the illegal activities of contractors.

RESEARCH GAP: It is understood that many studies are undertaken on the performance of MGNREGA in Karimnagar, Siddipet and other districts of Telangana, but very few studies are undertaken on studying the performance of MGNREGA in Nalgonda district for 11 years. Hence this study fulfils this gap.

RESEARCH QUESTION: The study explores the possibility of answering the following questions:

- Do all the registered candidates get work?
- Do the registered candidates get 100 days of employment?
- Does the payment disburse on time?
- Chances of malpractices and problem of migration.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

- To study the performance of MGNREGA in Nalgonda District.
- To examine the Gender wise income levels and disbursement of payments.
- To examine the generation of employment & migration.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study comprises both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through questionnaires and direct interviews. The secondary data are collected through journals, articles, editorials, and official websites of the state and central governments etc., Sampling: 100 respondents. Research techniques: For the purpose of analysis, ANOVA, and chi-square tests are being used.

Hypothesis:

H0: There is no significant difference in the average income levels of males and females.

H1: There is a significant difference in the average income levels of males and females.

RESULTS

PROFILE OF NALGONDA:

Nalgonda a district of Telangana state has 31 mandals, which is the highest number compared to other districts. The district shares boundaries with Suryapet, Rangareddy, Yadadri and Nagarkurnool districts and with the state boundary of Andhra Pradesh.In 2006 the Indian government named Nalgonda one of the country's 250 poorest districts. It is one of the 33 districts in Telangana currently receiving funds under the Backward Regions Grant Fund Programme (BRGF).

Table 1: **Candidates registered under MGNREGA**							
YEAR	**REGISTERED**		**BENEFITED**		**%BENEFITED**		**AVERAGE INCOME per Day**	
	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
2011-12	349446	337112	4602	7487	1.32	2.22	117.10	116.37
2012-13	370401	357377	3609	5098	0.97	1.42	133.01	131.31
2013-14	387954	373682	25746	42359	6.63	11.33	114.15	109.09
2014-15	400114	385357	137872	192768	34.45	50.02	105.54	103.89
2015-16	412218	397932	144881	198836	35.14	49.96	115.53	114.17

2016-17	419953	405290	141060	191320	33.58	47.2	126.28	123.34
2017-18	428891	413955	130064	181768	30.32	43.91	126.10	123.34
2018-19	435382	419945	121549	178616	27.91	42.53	128.69	127.85
2019-20	439952	424012	115966	165647	26.35	39.06	138.23	133.77
2020-21	463994	442737	169708	215281	36.57	48.62	158.81	151.15
2021-22	474742	451614	150351	193574	31.67	42.86	153.65	147.18
Total	4583047	4409013	1145408	1572754	24.08	34.47	128.83	125.59

MGNREGA IN NALGONDA DISTRICT:

MGNREGA was started in Nalgonda in 2006 with total registered candidates of 449162 out of which 227792 are male and 221370 are female. According to the 2022 report, the total number of registered candidates increased to 9,26,356 of which 4,74,742 are male and 4,51,614 are female (Table 1).

Nalgonda district consists of 38 blocks for MGNREGA works, among which Miryalaguda block has the highest number of registered candidates with 46,743.

From table 1 it can be observed that the number of candidates registered is 45,83,047 which implies that the demand for work has been increasing. All the registered candidates do not get work. On an average of 11 years of MGNREGA, only 24.08% of male registered candidates get work and only 34.46% of the female registered candidates get work. Females are the most benefitted when

compared to men. The average of income of males is more than the average income of females in all the years.

Average income levels of males and females when tested (table 1(a)), it reveals that there is no significant difference in average income levels at 1% (0.00104) and 5% (0.00052) significant levels. Hence it is understood that there is not much difference in average income between males and females.

From table 1, it can be observed that: (i) the number of candidates registered per year from 2011 to 2022 gradually increased, which implies that the demand for work has been increasing.(ii) Females are the most benefitted when compared to men. (iii) Average income of males is more than the average income of females in all the years.

(iv) All the registered candidates do not get work. On an average of 11 years of MGNREGA, only 24.08% of male registered candidates get work and only 34.46% of the female registered candidates get work.
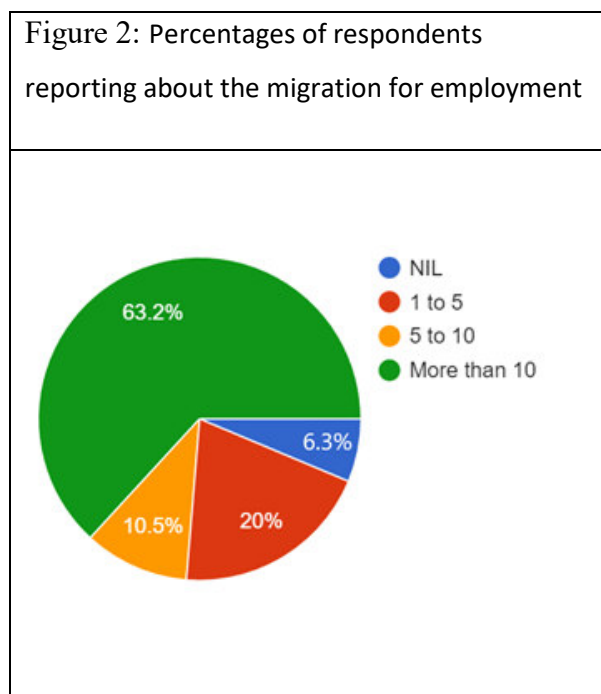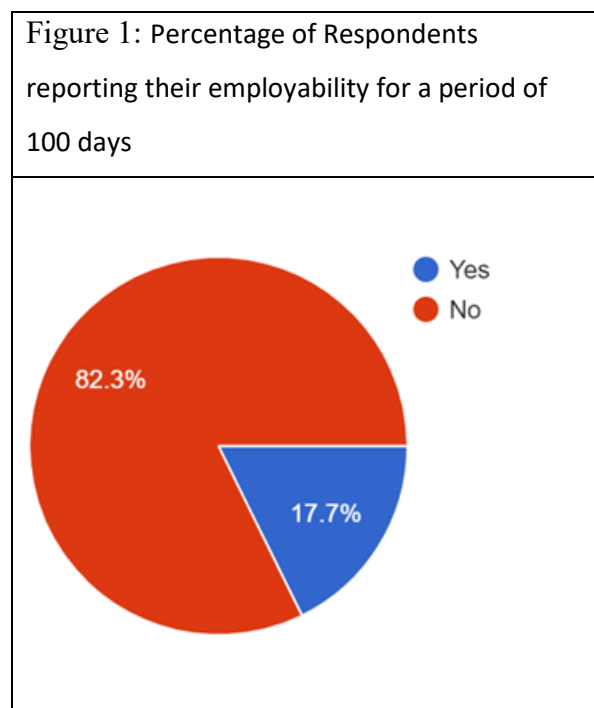
Table 2: Weekly Disbursement of Payments

Respondents Experience:	Male	Female	Disbursement of payments on time			
			Male		Female	
			Yes	No	Yes	No
	74	21	8	66	4	17
<1 year	12	-	4	30	-	7
2-3 years	26	10	4	22	4	6
>3 years	12	2	-	15	1	2

Table 3: Number of Registered and Employed Candidates:

Respondents Experience:	Male	Female	Registered candidates				Employed for MGNREGA			
			Male		Female		Male		Female	
			Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No

	74	21	74	-	21	-	19	54	6	18
<1 year	12	-	12	-	-	-	8	25	-	8
2-3 years	26	10	26	-	10	-	4	21	5	6
>3 years	12	2	12	-	2	-	7	8	1	4

As per the MGNREGA scheme, payments have to be settled on a weekly basis. From table 2, it can be observed that most of the respondents (83) have opined that the disbursement of weekly payments has not been done on time. Out of the total population, 'below one year' of experience male beneficiaries (30) have opined the above condition. Therefore it is understood that need of implementing agencies to initiate weekly payments on time.

Table 3 shows that most of the respondents (72) have opined that the registered candidates are not getting work and only 25 respondents opined that they are being employed under this scheme. Out of the total respondents with an experience of more than 2 years, 39 respondents opined that they are not being employed and only 17 respondents opined that they are employed under this scheme.

Figure 1: Percentage of Respondents reporting their employability for a period of 100 days

Figure 2: Percentages of respondents reporting about the migration for employment

Approximately around 82.3% of the respondents say that they do not get work for 100 days as per the MGNREGA Act and only 17.7% of the respondents get 100 days of work.

According to the survey, 63.2% of the respondents say that more than 10 people have left for cities for work, 10.5% of respondents 5 to 10 people, 20% of the respondents 1 to 5 people have left to cities for work. Only 6.3% of the respondents say that there were no people leaving to cities in search of work as per their knowledge.

Malpractice in the MGNREGA:

1. Over 45.2% of the respondents say that major malpractices takes place from the leader of the groups.

2. Fake signatures, musters when works are allotted.

3. Bribe by the officials for being registered and allotting works.

4. Allocating MGNREGA works for the personal works of local leaders.

CONCLUSION

- The number of registered candidates has been increasing for the past 11 years but the percentage of benefitted candidates is decreasing from 2016-17.

- Females benefitted more when compared to men.

- Delay in the disbursement of weekly payments.

- According to the study around 73% of the registered candidates do not get 100 days of work according to the MGNREGA act.

- Unemployment allowances were not given according to the act.

- Over 93.7% of the respondents say that around 5-10, people have left for cities for work which reflects the failure of one of the objectives of the MGNREGA programme.

- The reduction of the approved labour budget from 1425 lakhs in 2012-22 to 1000 lakhs in 2022-23 can be a reason for the reduction of beneficiaries, which is an effect of the reduction of the budget by the union government from 98000crore to 73000crore works for MGNREGA.

SUGGESTIONS

In order to make a successful and low complained programme and also have an impact on the reduction of migration, after completion of a case study of Nalgonda district, some suggestions may be put forward. These are as follows:

- The period of employment should be increased from 100 days to 365 days so that workers may do their work with the sense of job availability.

- The wage rate should be fixed at the market rate.

- The payments should be on-time to the workers, and the mode of payments should be under the strict vigil of higher authorities.

- According to secondary data monthly social audits should be mandated at gram panchayat levels also.

- The corrupt practices, which came to the noticed, should be given punishments.

- In most cases the leader of the group attempts malpractices like fake registration, fake musters etc. In order to counter this, the leaders should be removed and replaced with government officers.

- Employment should be increased with the increase in the demand for work.

- Budget should be revised from 73,000 crores to 2.64lakh crores as recommended by PAEG (people's action for employment guarantee) and NSM (NREGA sangharsh Morcha).

Thus, there is an urgent need to make a thorough study to know the performance at every level of the implementation of this programme. So that this programme is marked as a source of employment generation, poverty alleviation, women empowerment, social justice, restrictions of migration etc. If the suggestions are implemented the working performance of MGNREGA would certainly improve.

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