

Awareness about MGNREGA Provisions: Some Facts from the District Pauri Garhwal Uttarakhand, India

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Abstract— Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (MGNREGA) has the potential to change the geography of poverty. This 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. The present study was conducted in Pauri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand. This study takes up the issues related to the awareness about an ambitious welfare programme targeting the rural population of India, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The study is based on a primary survey and finds a general lack of awareness about the basic guidelines and the legal entitlements among the intended beneficiaries.

Key words: Employment, Implementation, Households, MGNREGA

I. INTRODUCTION

The Indian government has taken up various poverty alleviation programmes comprising of wage employment programmes, rural housing schemes and a public distribution system have been initiated from time to time. Some were partially successful in addressing the issue of poverty whereas others suffered from major flaws in their implementation. National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-99; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99; Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) since September 2001; National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) since November 14, 2004 (SGRY and NFFWP now merged with NREGS 2005) were national level rural employment generation schemes. However these programmes could not provide social security to the rural poor.

Mobilization and awareness are among the major factors that determine successful implementation of poverty alleviating schemes including public employment programmes, cash transfers and microfinance interventions. However, majority of the rural population in developing countries have low levels of literacy. Thus, creating awareness among the rural masses about any of these development programmes has been a major concern among the policy makers in these countries.

One of the most demanding challenges for any anti poverty scheme to succeed is the task of generating awareness about the scheme among the targeted population. Without awareness about these schemes, there is always a possibility that full benefits may not accrue to the intended beneficiaries. According to Shah and Mehta (2008), lack of awareness amongst the potential beneficiaries is one of the main reasons behind the constrained impact of the aforesaid scheme.

A. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

As the Table 1, depicts that the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is an Indian job guarantee scheme, enacted by legislation on August 25, 2005. The Act received assent of the President on September 5, 2005 and was notified in the Gazette of India on September 7, 2005. The law was initially called the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) but was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA) on 2 October 2009. The Act was legalized and notified in 200 districts in the first phase with effect from February 2nd 2006 and then extended to an additional 130 districts in the financial year 2007-2008 out of it 113 districts were notified with effect from April 1st 2007, and 17 districts in Uttar Pradesh were notified with effect from May 15th 2007. The remaining districts have been notified under MGNREGA with effect from April 1st 2008.

Uttarakhand, the MGNREGA was initially launched in 3 districts i.e., Chamoli, Champawat and Tehri in 2006-07 (Phase 1). Two additional districts, i.e., Haridwar and Udham Singh Nagar were adopted in phase II (2007-08). In the last phase, all the remaining districts have been notified under the NREGS.

MGNREGA was applied to district Pauri Garhwal in the third phase and the implementation of MGNREGA scheme in the district commenced on April 1, 2008.

August 25 th , 2005	NREGA enacted by legalization
September 5 th , 2005	Assent of the President
September 7 th , 2005	Notified in the Gazette of India
February 2 nd 2006	Came into force in 200 districts
April 1 st , 2007	113 more districts were notified
May 15 th , 2007	17 more districts were notified
April 1 st , 2008	Notified in the remaining rural districts
October 2 nd , 2009	Renamed as MGNREGA

Table 1: Time-Line of MGNREGA

Source: compiled from various reports of MGNREGA

The essential features of MGNREGA

- Adult members of a rural household, willing to do unskilled manual work, may apply for registration in writing or orally to the local Gram Panchayat.
- The Gram Panchayat after due verification will issue a Job Card. The Job Card will bear the photograph of all adult members of the household willing to work under NREGA and is free of cost.
- The Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application.
- A Job Card holder may submit a written application for employment to the Gram Panchayat, stating the time

and duration for which work is sought. The minimum days of employment have to be at least fourteen.

- The Gram Panchayat will issue a dated receipt of the written application for employment, against which the guarantee of providing employment within 15 days operates.
- Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work, if it is not then daily unemployment allowance as per the Act, has to be paid liability of payment of unemployment allowance is of the States.
- Work should ordinarily be provided within 5 km. radius of village. In case work is provided beyond 5 km., extra wages of 10 per cent are payable to meet additional transportation and living expenses.
- Wages are to be paid according to the Minimum Wages Act 1948 for agricultural labourers in the State, unless the Centre notifies a wage rate which will not be less than Rs. 60/ per day. Equal wages will be provided to both men and women.
- Wages are to be paid according to a piece rate or daily rate. Disbursement of wages has to be done on a weekly basis and not beyond a fortnight in any case.
- At least one-third of the beneficiaries shall be women who have registered work under the scheme.
- Worksite facilities such as crèche, drinking water, shade have to be provided.
- At least 50 per cent of works shall be allotted to Gram Panchayats for execution.
- A 60:40 wage and material ratio have to be maintained. No contractors and machinery are allowed.
- The Central Government bears the 100 per cent wage cost of unskilled manual labour and 75 per cent of the material cost-including the wages of skilled and semi skilled workers.
- Social audit has to be done by the Gram Sabha.

B. Works allotted under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA

- Permissible works predominantly include water and soil conservation, afforestation and land development works. The focus of the Scheme is the following works on the priority basis
- 1) Water conservation and water harvesting
 - 2) Drought proofing, including afforestation and the plantation;
 - 3) Irrigation canals, including micro and minor irrigation works;
 - 4) Provision of irrigation facility, plantation, horticulture, land development to and owned by the STs/SCs;
 - 5) Renovation of traditional water bodies;
 - 6) Land development;
 - 7) Flood control and protection works, including drainage in waterlogged areas;
 - 8) Rural connectivity to provide all weather access;
 - 9) Any other works notified by the Central or State Government.

This paper takes up the issues related to the awareness about rural ambitious welfare programme, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), to the Pauri Garhwal District of the state of Uttarakhand. The study is based on a primary survey which was conducted in year 2014-15.

II. METHODOLOGY

The present study was conducted in Pauri Garhwal district. The district consists of 15 blocks. Out of these blocks, Bironkhal, Rikhanikhal and Yamkeshwar block was selected purposively because these blocks are far away from the district head quarter. From these three blocks, three Gram Panchayat (GP) was selected randomly from each block and there was total 9 Gram Panchayat. Then 15 MGNREGA job card holders were randomly selected from each of the selected Gram Panchayat. In this way, the ultimate sample which consisted of 135 beneficiaries shown in table-2. Primary data were collected from the selected beneficiaries using specially structured interview schedule designed for the study purposes

Block	Gram Panchayat	Benefisaries
Bironkhal	Aroli	15
	Shandhar	15
	Jiwahi	15
Rikhanikhal	Gheri	15
	Gutetha	15
	Sinala	15
Yamkeshwar	Borgaon	15
	Kasyali	15
	Vithyani	15
Total		135

Table 2: Block wise selection of Gram Panchayat and benefisaries

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Majority of the respondents (37.78 per cent) were of 46-60 years of age group, followed by 12.59 per cent in the age group of 18-30 years, 28.89 per cent in age group of 31-45 and 20.74 per cent were above 60 years. 34.07 per cent beneficiaries were male while 65.93 percent female. 28.89 per cent of the respondents belonged to schedule caste and 71.11 per cent to general, 74.81 per cent of the respondents were literate and 25.19 per cent respondents were Illiterate. 46.67 per cent respondents were BPL card holders, 51.11 per cent respondents were APL card holders and rest 2.22 per cent had Antodaya Cards. 42.96 per cent respondents were Kaccha house and rest 57.04 per cent have Pakka house. Majority of the respondents (42.96 per cent) had their monthly income of Rs.1000-2000, while 20.74 per cent had monthly income Upto Rs.1000, 22.96 per cnet had monthly income 2001-5000 and rest had monthly income of above Rs. 5000 per month.

Characteristics	Categories	No (%)
Age	18-30 year	17 (12.59)
	31-45	39 (28.89)
	46-60	51 (37.78)
	Above 60	28 (20.74)
Sex	Male	46 (34.07)
	Female	89 (65.93)
Caste	SC	39 (28.89)
	General	96 (71.11)
Education	Illiterate	34 (25.19)
	Literate	92 (74.81)
Card Holding	BPL	63 (46.67)
	APL	69 (51.11)
	Antodaya Card	3 (2.22)

Land Holding	Irrigated (Nali)	220
	Unirrigated (Nali)	580
House type	Kaccha	58 (42.96)
	Pakka	77 (57.04)
Monthly Income	Upto Rs 1000	28 (20.74)
	Rs 1000-2000	58 (42.96)
	Rs. 2001-5000	31 (22.96)
	Above 5000	18 (13.33)
Wages under MGNREGA they are getting (Rs. Per day)		158

Table 3: Socio-demographic profile of the Beneficiaries

The perusal of the Table-4 shows that 17.78 percent of the total respondents were in no employment during the year 2014-15. This was followed by 28.89 percent respondents who got up to 20 days, 37.7 percent respondents got 21-40 days, 12.59 percent got 41-60 days employment and rest 2.96 percent had 61-80 days employment. Any of the sample beneficiaries were not completed 100 days of employment during the year 2014-15. This further confirms that there was very poor participation of respondents working under MGNREGA. The main reason behind very low participation may be lack of awareness and information regarding MGNREGA.

Number of Days	Block 1	Block 2	Block 3	
No employment	10	8	6	24 (17.78)
Up to 20	7	22	10	39 (28.89)
21-40	21	13	17	51 (37.78)
41-60	6	2	9	17 (12.59)
61-80	1	-	3	4 (2.96)
81-100	-	-	-	-
Completing 100 days	-	-	-	-
Total				135

Table 4: Employment pattern of beneficiaries under MGNREGA in the selected blocks,

Source: Primary data

The awareness level working under MGNREGS are presented in Table 5. Majority of the respondents i.e., 87.41 percent reported well aware about the per day wage under the Act. 82.96 percent also well aware about the number of days works in a year. Only 20 percent beneficiaries know that the Job Card (JC) should be issued within 15 days of application, due to cause of lack of awareness/ information about the MGNREGA. About 22.96 percent beneficiaries were aware about the Employment which will be given within 15 days of application for work; about 39.26 percent are aware about unemployment allowance as per the Act, only 19.26 percent beneficiaries know the social audit in the Act. The pattern of problem was found almost same in all the blocks under the study area as observed at the aggregate level.

S. No.	Awareness for the basic guideline	Name of Block			Total (%)
		Bironkhal	Rikhnikhal	Yamkeshwar	
1	Job Card should be issued within 15 days of application	9	7	11	27 (20)
2	Employment will be given within 15 days of application for work	5	8	18	31 (22.96)
3	Number of days of works in a year	38	33	41	112(82.96)
4	Unemployment allowance as per the Act	16	11	26	53 (39.26)
5	Per day Wage	42	37	39	118(87.41)
6	Worksite facilities	11	9	16	36 (26.67)
7	Social audit	4	3	19	26 (19.26)

Table 5: Awareness level of the Beneficiaries under MGNREGA

IV. CONCLUSION

Mobilization and awareness are among the key components for successful implementation of any welfare intervention especially in rural areas. Where, literacy and exposure to media is often less as compared to the urban areas. Well laid guidelines should always be backed up by continuous mobilization and creating awareness among the local masses. In this study, we have tried to bring out some of the facts regarding awareness about the details of MGNREGA among its intended beneficiaries. It has been found that people were often not aware of the basic guidelines regarding Job card issue, unemployment allowance, worksite facility, social audit and other legal entitlements. As a concluding remark, through such mobilization, awareness among the rural households can be generated and this may ensure successful implementation of the MGNREGA.

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