

MGNREGA: Issues and impacts – A case study in Kumra-Kashipur Gram Panchayat of North 24 Parganas, West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. (MGNREGA) is a job guarantee scheme, provides a legal guarantee for 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work related unskilled manual work. The study has been conducted in the village, Kashipur, in the North 24 Parganas district. The primary objectives in the study were to identify the obstacles in the implementation of the scheme. The study mainly focuses on the issues, impacts, and the development, socially and economically by the NREGA programme in the village under study. During investigation it was observed that, unlike their male counterpart, the female workers of Kashipur village significantly earn more money from the scheme as studied. This can be a way of women's empowerment. Moreover, it is also important to say that, women's are also empowering day by day with regard to inter and intra-household decision making and creating of community assets, too.

Key Words : MGNREGA, Women Empowerment, Impact of MGNREGA Programme Rural Employment, Income

INTRODUCTION

Poverty and unemployment have been the annoyance of India for long, their reduction has been one of the major goals of India's development planning from the very beginning of the planning era in 1951-52 and the planning process has been sensitive to the needs of the poor. Actually, economic growth, promotion of human development and targeted programmes of poverty alleviation have comprised the three-pronged strategy of Government of India to empower people to address the multi-dimensional nature of poverty (Menon, 2008)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. (MGNREGA) is a job guarantee scheme, enacted by Legislation on August 25, 2005. The scheme provides a legal guarantee for 100 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 of Rs. 60 per day.

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This act was include with an aim of improving the purchasing power of the rural people, primary, semi or unskilled work to people living in rural India whether or not they are below to the poverty line (Internet, 2010).

The MGNREGA has shown a significant improvement in different aspects. The number of households associated with MGNREGA works has been increasing consistently, the number of days for which employment has been provided have also increased. Another important aspect of MGNREGS is the increasing participation of women in it. It not only provides employment to them but by giving wage rate equal to that of a man, it has empowered the women economically as well as socially. The MGNREGA is an Indian law that aims to guarantee the “right to work” and ensure 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 works. (Ahuja, 2011)

Aims and Objectives:

The present study is relating to the ethnographic view from the perspective of social-cultural anthropology of MGNREGA programme. Therefore, keeping this approach in mind, the present study bears the following objectives:

- To observe the issues and impacts of MGNREGA Programmes on the daily life of the villagers under study.
- To identify the obstacles in the implementation of the scheme in the area.
- To suggest suitable measures for its effective implementation in future.

Area and the people under study:

The present study was conducted at Kashipur village. The village is located under the jurisdiction of Kumra Panchayat in the Habra-I Block. The village consists of ten hamlets as investigated, namely, *Uttar Para, Amtalapara, Kapashepara, Panchim Para, Dakhin Para, Mauvali Para, Purba Para, Jol Para.*

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the ten hamlets were selected purposively to see the structures and different impacts of NREGA in agricultural areas under study.. For collecting empirical data, the present researchers used the methods and techniques like, Participant Observation, Intensive Interview, Case Study, and Questionnaire. The secondary data have been collected from books, journals, administrative materials, and internet resources. The study is basically a qualitative one, but it is worth mentioning that some quantitative interpretations have been followed. The analysis of data in the present study was also consisted of some significant as well as pertinent descriptive statistics.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Kashipur village the NREGS was started during April, 2010. The villagers know the NREGS programme as 100days jobs. In Kashipur village there are four *Panchyat Gram Sava*. In part 97(*Gram Sava*) two works under NREGS were completed. The sanctioned money of two works was three lacks and nine lacks respectively. Four types of works were incomplete due to the political reason. Most of the laborers do not received their total payment from the panchyat office. The laborers do not get payment daily of the NREGS work. At least they have to wait one week

for their payment. Most of the owners complain that they get half amount of works of their sanctioned work. The panchayat office informed that they have completed their works as sanctioned. I observed that where a pond was to dig out five cft(cubic ft.) in depth according to sanctioned order but actually 2.5-3 cft was dug out. In master role 5cft was shown. According to the NREGS programme in Kashipur village in the district of North 24 Parganas various kinds of works have happened. The average wages of the labor are not increased for this programme. So, the economic condition of the labor is very weak. On the other hand, the majority portion of unskilled labor and semiskilled labor get 50-60 days work under this NREGS Programme. I take 100 labors as a sample around Kashipur village including four *Gram Sava*. Only 60 labors get 61-100 days work under NREGS programme. 40 labors get 30-60 days work in a year. On the other hand the labors do not get daily wage in this work. The wage was coming very irregularly in their post office account. As a result of it most of the laborers of this village were not interested in NREGS programme. Because they face lots of problem regarding earn money under this programme. The women worked under NREGS programme get Rs. 100 as wage cut by 72 cft soil per day. On the other hand a male labor gets Rs. 100 as wage cut by 88 cft. soil in a day. I take twenty female laborers as a sample.

The owner digs out their pond under NREGS programme. If they dig out their pond by the help of their personal money they face a great problem. The owners told me that in this process the government digs out their pond by using of government money. The majority of the pond was dugout remain incomplete due to unlawful adjustment. The government employee show extra labor in the master role.

The NREGS works under Kashipur village was not going on in full swing. Sanctioned money for these works did not use properly. The male and female laborer do not get payments daily of the NREGS programme. The female laborer got proper advantage from the NREGS works but the male laborers do not get proper advantage for this programme. The data has been collected from 30 female laborers as a sample around Kashipur gram panchyat.

Table 1 : Wage earned by types of work and sex under NREGS programme		
Types of work	Wages received in Rupees	
	Male	Female
Excavation of village pond	100/88cft	100/72cft
Repairing road	100/88cft	100/72cft

Table 2 : Income generation through NREGS				
Number of days in jobs under NREGS (N=100)				
0-10 days	11-30days	31-60 days	61-100 days	>100days
10/100×100=10 %	20/100×100=20%	30/100× 100 =30%	50/100× 100 = 50%	nun

It appears that the majority of the people engaged MGNREGS programme in 61-100 days. (Male and Female both)

There were many fruitful sides in the programme of MGNREGS. The level of income in the villagers was increasing in this programme.

General observations and concluding remarks:

It has been concluded that the farmers owing large size of land holdings and more number of live stocks are not much interested in participation in MGNREGS works as they are busy with their

own activities. The farmers who have small land and live stock resources are more inclined to work in MGNREGA and their participation is also more. Thus MGNREGA is providing livelihood security to the resource – poor rural people. The study has also revealed that the female workers participated in this programme gladly because they get 100 % as a wage to dig out 72 cft soil which was very poorer than male worker. The female laborers got a chance to increase their income level. So in my data collection it published that the female laborers were more benefited due to the male laborers. If the laborers get their wage in a week, they participated on this programme heavily.

The pond owners told that the panchyat permitted the work order due to 3-4 months. On this time the owners did not get money from this pond. If the government did the programme in short time, a broad land owner dug up their pond under NREGS scheme. If the master role were prepared properly the poor people get benefitted properly.

Auditing may be done through an extra government agency in addition to gram panchyat to check mishandling of fund. The employees related with the schemes should be devoted, dutiful and they must have positive of their own.

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