



E-ISSN: 2664-603X

P-ISSN: 2664-6021

IJPSG 2023; 5(1): 260-266

www.journalofpoliticalscience.com

Received: 08-02-2023

Accepted: 10-03-2023

Dr. Mamata Patra

Assistant Professor,
Department of Political
Science Bhuban Women's
Degree College, Bhuban
Dhenkanal, Odisha, India

Dr. Debendra Nath Dash

Assistant Director, Research &
Networking, MGNCRE, MOE,
GOI, Hyderabad, Telangana,
India

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Mamata Patra

Assistant Professor,
Department of Political
Science Bhuban Women's
Degree College, Bhuban
Dhenkanal, Odisha, India

Mgnrega and livelihood promotion of rural poor: An empirical study of Odisha

Dr. Mamata Patra and Dr. Debendra Nath Dash

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33545/26646021.2023.v5.i1d.227>

Abstract

Rural development is a process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, technologies, infrastructure facilities, institutions and organizations, government policies and programs to encourage and speed up economic growth in rural areas to provide jobs and to improve the quality of rural life towards self-sustenance. Its objective is accelerated economic growth with wider participation and most equitable distribution of its gains. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a revolutionary step for the rural poor taken by the Central Government. The MGNREGA scheme was launched in 19 districts of Odisha, in 2006 and extended to other Districts in phased manner and presently covers all 30 districts. Dhenkanal District has been covered in the Scheme in the first phase since 2006, since has a great impact on the social transformation as well as on the livelihoods of poor and marginalized. The Act further aims at creating durable assets strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. Against this backdrop, this paper seeks to analyze the impact of MGNREGA in livelihood promotion of rural poor in Dhenkanal District of Odisha.

Keywords: Rural development, livelihood promotion, rural poor, unemployment, economic development

Introduction

It is well known that rural hazard and poverty is alarming in India. Poverty in India is a chronic and multi-dimensional phenomenon. The situation is dangerous in rural belt like continuingly subject to malnutrition, unemployment, starvation, indebtedness, and distress migration etc. Since long the rural poor have been suffering from divergent social and economic problems like poverty, unemployment, low level of income, poor and unhealthy food etc. which create frustration in the minds of poor exposing them to the danger of being attracted to unwanted anti-social activities. Hence a high rate of overall economic growth is the only way to dealing with the problem of unemployment and the poverty associated with it. Therefore, the Government of India made an effort to deal with these problems, and implemented various rural development schemes for particular groups, employment formation, income generation and poverty and destitution reduction.

The "National Rural Employment Guarantee Bill" (Satyanarayana and Madhusudana, 2012) ^[3] has been tabled in the parliament and thereby National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has been enacted which is now known as "The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005" (Ibid) ^[3]. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is considered as most effective approach with an intention to improve the quality of life of the rural poor through employment generation. However, over the last few years Dhenkanal district of Odisha topped in terms of generating man-days, having already recorded 5.13 lakh till May 28, 2020, which is an all-time record (Orissa Post, 2020) ^[5].

Objectives

- To evaluate the impact of MGNREGS on the livelihood of beneficiaries.
- To examine the satisfaction of the beneficiaries for work in MGNREGS.
- To map out the shortcomings of MGNREGS and suggest measures for improvement.

Review of Literature

Adhikari KD (2008) ^[1] in his book “*Co-operation on Eastern Himalayan Rivers – Opportunities and Challenges*” explained that MGNREGS providing a basic employment guarantee in rural belt and expects fixing priorities of activities. He recommended, it is mandatory under MGNREGS to formulate action plans and perspective plans prior to implementation, the focus of the act should be on activities related to water conservation, water harvesting, flood and drought proofing, irrigation, land development and rural road connectivity.

Khera R (2008) ^[4] in his research paper made a block study of Odisha State, “The Black Hole of NREGA Records”, he described the implementation of MGNREGA and found successful scenario that it went beyond the capability of the locals to claim their rights. Further he also pointed that, MGNREGA not only made itself success to fulfilling its primary objective of enlarging social security of the rural poor by providing employment opportunities, but also concentrated to improvement of the rural belts, focused women empowerment, and supposed to gram panchayat and gram sabha.

Reddy and Roy *et al.* (2009) ^[7] in their research paper, “Soil and Water Conservation Works through National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in Andhra Pradesh- An Analysis of Livelihood Impact”, made a research in Anantpur District of Andhra Pradesh and pointed that MGNREGA has reduced migration by giving work near to the locality with work site facilities. Further they pointed, the MGNREGS brought down the migration levels from about 27 per cent to 7 per cent, which is very helpful for reduce the distress migration.

Ashok Purohit (2012) ^[6] in his book “*MGNREGA and Rural Development*” has focused on different aspects of the Act including Planning, Execution, Labour Budget, Monitoring & Evaluation, Social Audit, Payment of Wages & UA, Transparency & accountability. So also, he explained on ruralurban migration, empowerment of women and socially disadvantaged, challenges and opportunities of MGNREGA. Xavier and Mari (2014) ^[8] in their study “Impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment with special reference to Kalakkanmoi Panchayat in Sivgangai district, Tamil Nadu”, try to explore the influence of MGNREGA on socio-economic empowerment of women in Kalakkanmoi Panchayat. The study finds that the MGNREGS increases income and expenditure of the households compared over the pre MGNREGA period.

Research Gap: The present study seeks to fulfill the research gap to make an in-depth assessment on the impact of this Act and to give independent assessment, how MGNREGA provide livelihood Promotion to rural poor in Dhenkanal district.

Methods of Study

The present study has adopted two methods of data collection; documentary and field research methods

1. The documentary research method applied to get the secondary data from the data that have been collected in the past.
2. Fieldwork for this study carried out in selected villages of Dhenkanal District, Odisha. The methods of data collection based on primary in nature. Direct interview with the beneficiaries conducted who are engaged in MGNREGS at least three years or more. A simple statistical tool used to analyze the data through descriptive calculation of percentage. A Pre and Post

method applied to evaluate the impact of MGNREGS on the livelihoods of the beneficiaries with analysis based on tables and graphs.

Scope of the Study: For fieldworks it was decided to take three blocks from Dhenkanal district of Odisha, The logic behind the selection of these three blocks for the study is that, they are found as leading performers in MGNREGS in comparison with other blocks of the district. Among the three blocks, “*Kankadahad*” is the best performer, “*Gandia*” another average block with normal performance and “*Bhuban*” is the poor performer in MGNREGS. From three blocks twelve Gram Panchayats were selected. From twelve Gram Panchayats, Twenty-two Villages were selected and were taken for empirical study:

Block-Kankadahad

- Selected Gram Panchayats - Kankadahad, Birasal, Maruabili & Balikuma.
- Selected Villages - Kalabudhia, Kandhara, Bhalutangar, Dengabahali, Kochilabanka, Kampulei, Balikuma, Koi, & Kalaspur.

Block-Gondia

- Selected Gram Panchayats - Mandar, Kabera, Joranda, Nihalprasad, & Deogan.
- Selected Villages - Mandar, Dalar, Chirulei, Joranda, Kankalanda, Nihalprasad, & Kapilash.

Block- Bhuban

- Selected Gram Panchayats - Dhalapada, GN Prasad & Ekatali.
- Selected Villages - Anal, Kainsiri, Muruga, Rama krushnapur, Purusattampur & Ekatali.

Apart from this, Collector, Ombudsman, Executive Officers, Sarpanches, Ward Members and some workers were selectively interviewed.

Results and Discussion

During our visit from 1st November 2021- 31st January 2022 we visited to Blocks, Gram Panchayats and Villages, directly interacted with the officials starting from Collector, PD, DRDAs. We took personal interview of the beneficiaries to know the impact of MGNREGS on the health, education, livelihoods of the family, quality of life as a whole. The questionnaires have a combination of both multiple choice questions and likewise open ended questions. Mostly we have collected data from the selected villages from three blocks. Primarily, door-to-door surveys were conducted in most of the beneficiary households; head of the households were interviewed to gather detail information regarding the family members. Moreover, we collected data those who are working since 5 years in MGNREGS, some elders were also selectively interviewed in order to draw information concerning their opinion and condition with the advent of MGNREGA. A total number of 1000 questionnaires were administered to the Beneficiaries. Out of which 180 were used as Sample.

During our visit to Collector and DRDA Office, Dhenkanal, we got the information that, the district has given more importance under MGNREGA to Development works like, pond digging, pond resurrection, well digging, construction of agriculture canal, construction of drain, improving land quality, road construction in rural area, water harvesting project, and water conservation etc. “In 2019-20 financial year

the district had successfully generated 35, 30,497 man-days by spending 9460.23 lakh. However, in current year till May 28 the district administration has generated 5.13 lakh man-days by spending 14.87 crore. Total 62,362 people have been working in these development projects throughout the districts. The district administration has provided job-cards to 1, 94,757 families (DRDA Office, Dhenkanal, 2021) ^[2]. 8258 Household completed 100 days' work in MGNREGS in financial year 2019-20, 18690 in 2020-21 and 11137 in 2021-22" (Ibid) ^[2] (Table-1).

Table 1: Household completed 100 days' work

	Block	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
1	Bhuban	545	1478	1072
2	DhenkanalSadar	1563	4201	3130
3	Gandia	1393	928	725
4	Hindola	1374	3476	1819
5	Kamakshaya	813	2746	1524
6	Kankadahad	1091	2799	1478
7	Odapada	1049	1815	729
8	Parjanga	430	1247	660
	Total	8258	18690	11137

Sources: DRDA Office, Dhenkanal

Table 2: Income Sources Pre- MGNREGS Period

Sl. No.	Sources of Income Pre- MGNREGS Period	No of people Engaged. N=180	Percentage
1	Unemployed	60	33.33
2	Agriculture	14	7.7
3	Business of the local production	06	3.33
4	Daily labourers	25	13.88
5	Labourers outside of the locality	47	26.11
6	Construction Labourers	11	6.11
7	Collection of green leaves, lotus, medicine plants, benna grass (used for mats), flowers, fire woods, bamboo bushes etc.	05	2.77
8	Livestock rearing	12	6.66

Sources: Field Survey

Table 3: Income Sources during- MGNREGS Period

Sl. No.	Sources of Income During MGNREGS Period	No of People Engaged. N=180	Percentage
1	Unemployed	25	13.88
2	Agriculture	21	11.66
3	Labourers outside of the locality	10	5.55
4	Water conservation & Renovation of water bodies	20	11.11
5	Land development	22	12.22
6	Rural connectivity	41	22.77
7	Construction labourers	23	12.77
8	Livestock rearing	28	15.0

Sources: Field Survey

Working Days

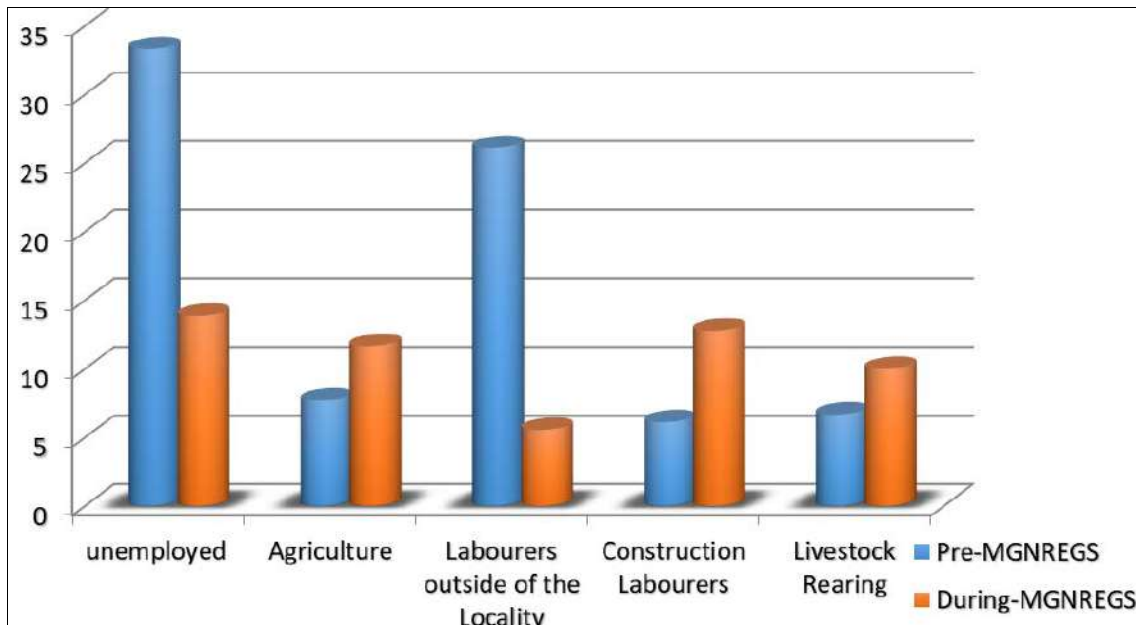
If we discuss about the working days in a year we can find 31-50 days in a year was the highest period of working in pre- MGNREGS and less than 30 days was the second highest of that period. Whereas, the workers are getting 71-

A Comparison of the Status of Rural Poor in Pre-MGNREGS & Inroad-of- MGNREGS Period

This part will help us to know better how the rural poor people manage themselves in the Pre-MGNREGA period and to sustain their life with the MGNREGA period. We have attempted to give here basically a picture of what rural poor typically earn in Pre and During MGNREGA period. Moreover, the key concentration of this part is to focus the impact of MGNREGA on Livelihood promotion of rural poor.

In this part we tried to compare the status of rural poor in Pre-MGNREGS and during MGNREGS period. The Pre-MGNREGS scenario has represented (Table-2) a scenario that 33.33% of rural poor were unemployed and most of the labourers 26.11% were worked outside the locality. Under MGNREGS period the unemployed reduced 33.33% to 13.88% and the labourers those who were worked outside of the locality their percent reduced 26.11% to 5.55%. Agriculture also increased 7.7% to 11.66%, Livestock rearing increasing as well 6.66% to 15% (Table-3& Column- Chart-1).

90 days work in a year during-MGNREGS period the highest one. Further it shows that, 23.33% getting 91-100 days work in comparison to 2.77% of Pre-MGNREGS period (Table-4 & Column-Chat-2).



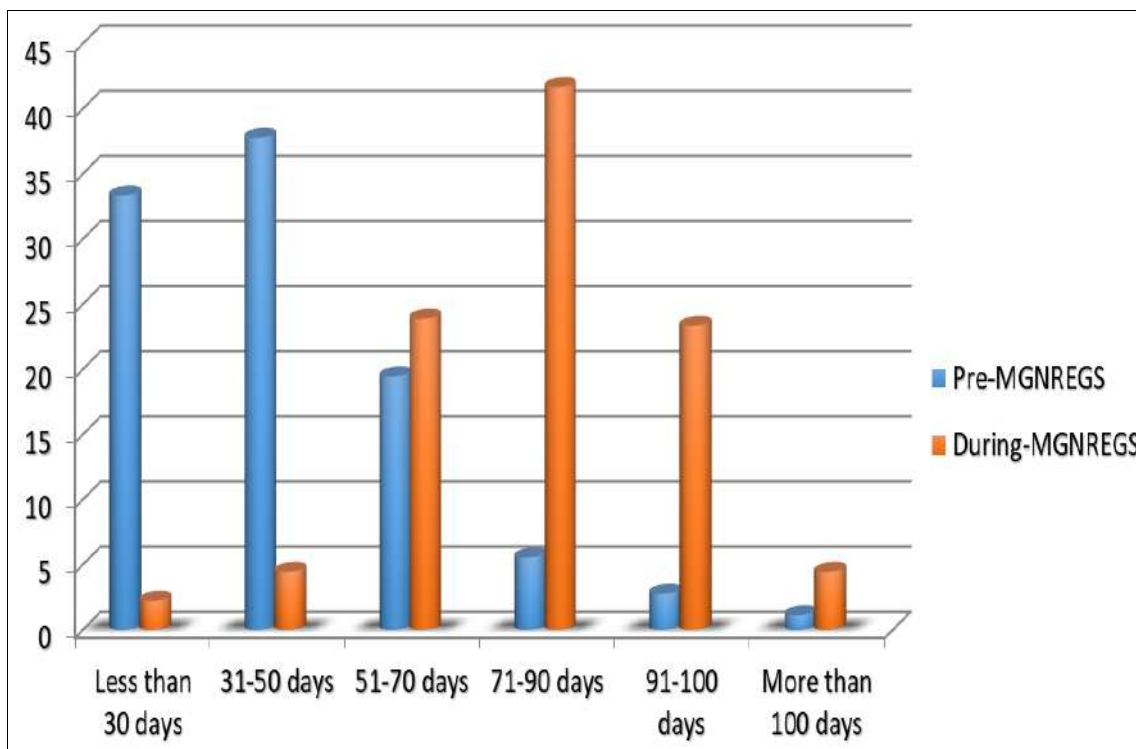
Sources: Field Survey

Chart 1: Comparative Income Sources between Pre-MGNREGS & During- MGNREGS Period

Table 4: No. of Working Days in a Year

Sl. No	Working Days	Pre-MGNREGS Period. N=180	%	During-MGNREGS Period. N=180	%
1	Less than 30 days	60	33.33	04	2.22
2	31-50 days	68	37.77	08	4.44
3	51-70 days	35	19.44	43	23.88
4	71- 90 days	10	5.55	75	41.66
5	91- 100 days	05	2.77	42	23.33
6	More than 100 days	2	1.11	08	4.44

Sources: Field Survey



Sources: Field Survey

Chart 2: Comparative Working Days between Pre-MGNREGS & During- MGNREGS Period

Family Income

During our interaction with the respondents, we faced difficulties to know the financial position of the

beneficiaries and furnish the comparative figure of family income. However, the preliminary finding indicates that, in the Pre-MGNREGS period, 51.11% rural poor’s family

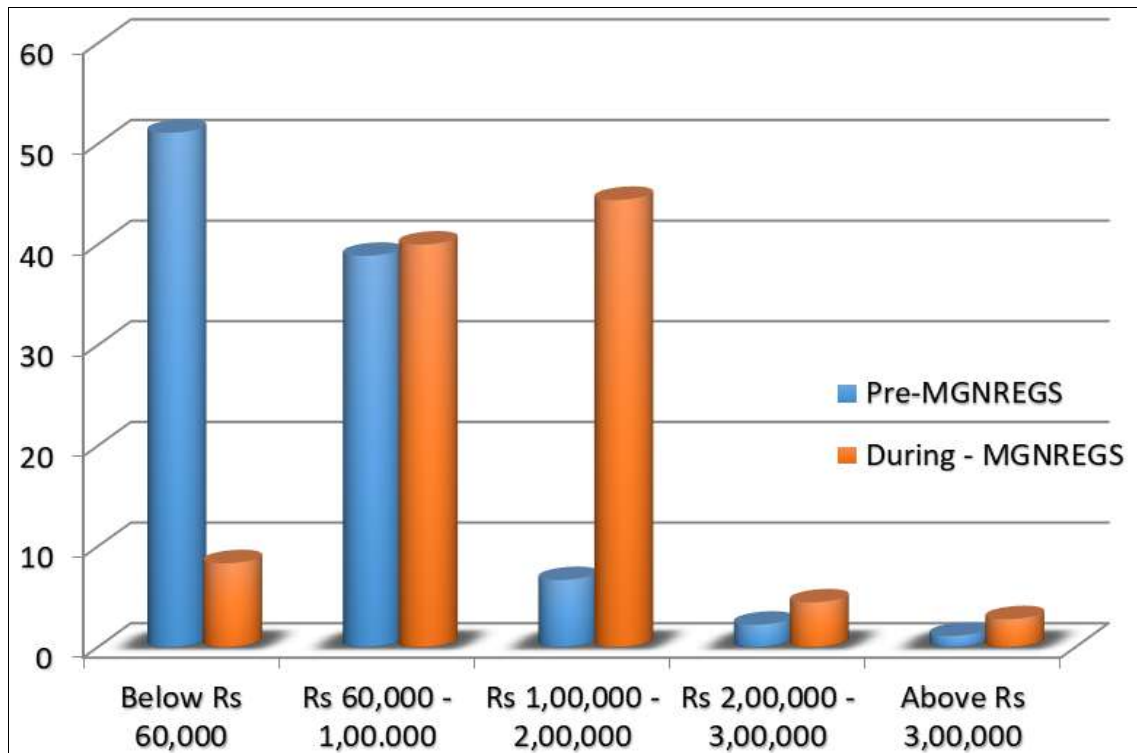
income per year was below Rs 60,000/-, which was decreased to 8.33% During- MGNREGS period. The labourers those who were working outside of the locality, they were eligible to earn more than Rs 2,00,000/ per year in Pre- MGNREGS period. Otherwise During- MGNREGS

period, 44.44% labourer earning Rs 1, 00,000 - 2,00,000 per year the highest ever. 4.44% family income are Rs 2, 00,000 – 3, 00,000 whereas 2.77% earning more than Rs 3, 00,000/ (Table-5 & Column- Chart- 3).

Table 5: Family Income per year

Sl No	Income per year	Pre- MGNREGS Period. N=180	%	During-MGNREGS Period. N=180	%
1	Below Rs 60,000	92	51.11	15	8.33
2	Rs 60,000 -1,00,000	70	38.88	72	40
3	Rs 1,00,000- 2,00,000	12	6.66	80	44.44
4	Rs 2,00,000- 3,00,000	4	2.22	8	4.44
5	Above Rs 3,00,000-	2	1.11	5	2.77

Sources: Field Survey



Sources: Field Survey

Chart 3: Comparative Family Income per year

Main Expenditure

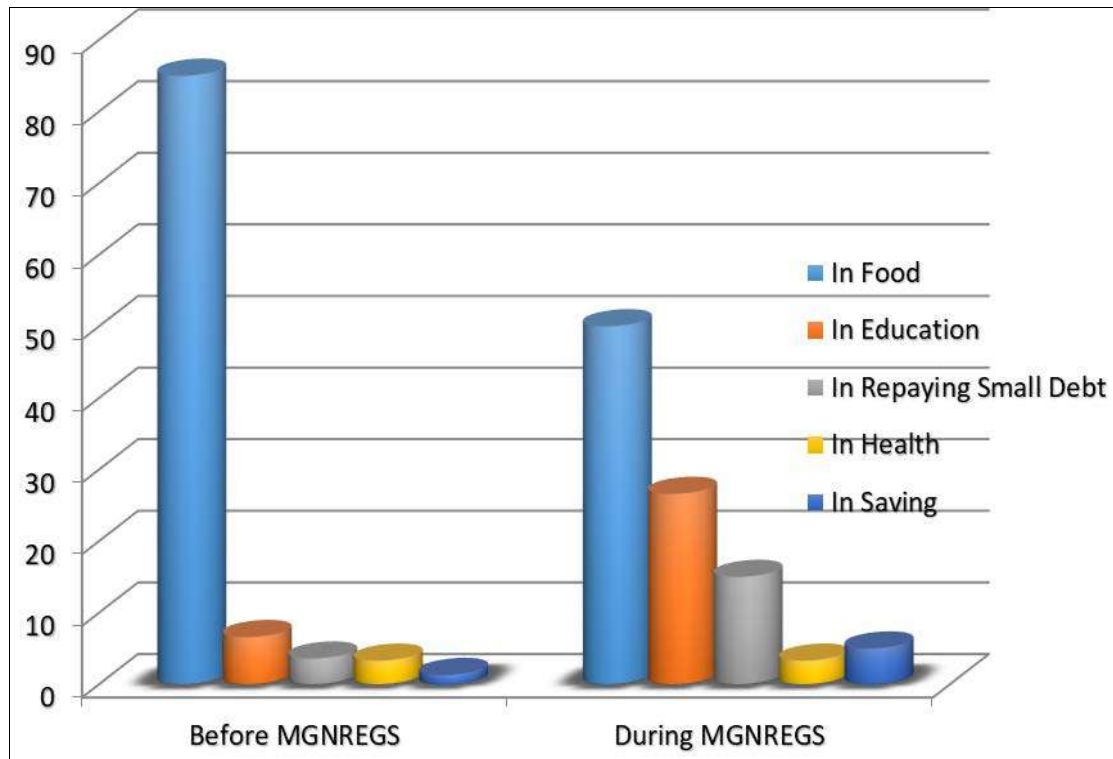
When we collected data about the expenditure of beneficiaries, even though, 85% beneficiaries replied that, they spent their wages only for food in Pre- MGNREGS period and rest of the amount they spent in children’s education, in health, in repaying small debts etc. But during

MGNREGS period 50% beneficiaries spent their wages on food, 26.6% for education (Around ¼ their income paid for children’s education). 15% replied that, they spent part of their wages to repaying small debt and 5% said, they have some savings of their surplus amount (Table-6 & Column-Chart-4).

Table 6: Main Expenditure

Sl. No	Expenditure	Pre-MGNREGS Period. N=180	%	During -MGNREGS Period. N=180	%
1	In food	153	85	90	50
2	In Education of Children	12	6.6	48	26.6
3	In Repaying small debt.	7	3.6	27	15
4	In health	6	3.3	6	3.3
5	In Savings	2	1.3	9	5

Sources: Field Survey



Sources: Field Survey

Chart 4: Comparative Expenditure

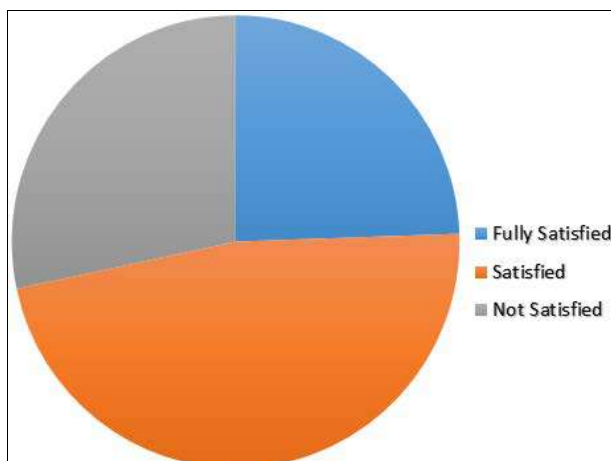
Satisfaction of Beneficiaries

In the last part of our survey we made an attempt to know the satisfaction of MGNREGS beneficiaries with MGNREGS work. While interacting with the workers, we kept confidentiality to elicit the truth. The reactions of the rural poor reveal the blankness of our claim that everything running smoothly, but with sharp shortcomings. Thus, the data revealed that, only 24.44% beneficiaries fully satisfied and 47.22% are satisfied, whereas 28.33% beneficiaries are not satisfied due to some shortcomings of MGNREGS work (Table-7 & Pie-Chart-4).

Table 7: Satisfaction with MGNREGS

SL No.	Category	No of Beneficiaries N=180	%
1	Fully Satisfied	44	24.44
2	Satisfied	85	47.22
3	Not Satisfied	51	28.33

Sources: Field Survey



Sources: Field Survey

Pie-Chart 4: Satisfaction with MGNREGS

Findings

On the basis of the empirical study we find that, MGNREGS is one of the most important schemes for providing employment to the rural poor and marginalized who are in want of finding a job. It is by far the best employment generation programme because it is, rights-based, legally enforceable and have some innovative features. This Act is really a powerful tool for the economic, food and social security of the rural poor. It has immense potential not just to stem distress migration, which has been showing an increasing trend over the last decade or so, but, also to regenerate degraded coons and waste land in the rural areas for productive purposes. Used in the right spirit and manner and along with the existing provisions for land to the landless, especially in the case of tribal communities, it can become almost redundant in the long run for a significant portion of the rural poor, as degraded wastelands can be converted to productive assets for them. Used imaginatively, it can help to build assets in the villages, and country side and gradually change the face of the rural areas. It can, in fact, help the economy to grow in real terms, with the real income of the poorest people going up, not just through the employment but through productive self-engagement in the long term. MGNREGA wages are not higher than the wages otherwise but it is locally available. The man and woman both are getting equal wages, for women employment generation in the locality boosts their confidence and creating economic independent, enhancing their position in family and in society. As to impact of the Scheme earnings, all beneficiaries agreed that economic condition has improved to some extent, they are getting work at village without going outside. Food, clothing, education, health have been impacted by the earnings. Local infrastructures have improved a lot. Individuals' beneficiary schemes have raised hopes on livelihood options and earnings. Despite

success of the program from many fronts, there are, however, many critical challenges that need to be overcome so that the scheme provides desired outcomes. The MGNREGA in its present form suffers major flaws. Still there are many areas which need to be touched.

Recommendations

- The Scheme should be provided 100 days work per family member in a year and at least 180 days per major family member. Then there could be a better scope for the MGNREGS workers.
- State government has the responsibility of framing the rules as well as overseeing the actual implementation of the scheme on the ground. There is a lot of scope for the state government to innovate and adapt the scheme according to the local requirements. State specific experiences are important sources for innovations which in turn provide valuable lessons or replication.
- Creation of awareness will carry many advantages. It will not only make the people motivated about the program but also bring greater transparency and accountability in the selection of beneficiaries and projects.
- There should be a need to change the stereo type of mindset of officials and do not take this Act like a formal employment generation Scheme. Overall, even within the existing framework and limitations, any of the problems can be substantially overcome if the political and administrative leadership at the district and local levels plays a more proactive role in implementing the objectives of the MGNREGA.
- There are several ways the administrative problems can be addressed. Village committees, Self Help Groups, (SHGs) Youth Groups can be involved to implement the MGNREGA works. Educated youth in the village need to be trained for supervise and keeping records of the Scheme work. Grassroots voluntary organizations which have a proven track record also need to be involved in communicating the provisions of the act to the people,
- The Contractor lobby has already stepped in MGNREGS work and would be subtly aided and encouraged by local administrations in the time honored traditions of local corruption. In many places an innovative way of machinery, contractor and jobseekers nexus has developed, as a result no job seeker works and work is done by the machine through the contractors. Workers job cards are filled up, wage list is made and amount credited to job seekers account from where it is drawn by advance withdrawals forms. In this case the interests of workers are hampered whereas the contractors are fulfilled their vested interest, hence contractor lobby should be stopped.

Conclusion

The largest public work programme like MGNREGS is undoubtedly a great opportunity for the poor to meet their livelihood and other needs with dignity. On the whole, the scheme has been able to provide livelihood security, arrest distress migration, create durable community assets, prevent the expansion of left-wing extremism, protect natural environment, empower women, strengthened village panchayats, and accelerated the process of inclusive growth. But the impressive performance of the scheme in the district

is not without constraints. Lack of awareness on some core aspects of the scheme was proved to a major impediment. Besides, creation of fragile assets, inadequate wages, delayed payment of wages and bureaucratic hurdles pose major constraints to the working of the scheme. Strengthening the Panchayati Raj system, fixing responsibility, transparency, and a robust civil society is the need of the hour to make the best out of the scheme.

Acknowledgement

This Paper is a part of my Research Work, supported by Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education (MGNCRE) Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India. Basically it is the result of assiduous research for long six months. Here I would take this opportunity to extend my profound sense of gratitude and thanks to MGNCRE)

References

1. Adhikari KD. Co-operation on Eastern Himalayan Rivers – Opportunities and Challenges Konark Publishers: New Delhi; c2008.
2. DRDA Office, Dhenkanal, Consulted on 3rd Jan 2022; c2021.
3. Satyanarayana G, Madhusudana HS. Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation in India: Policies and Programmes. New Century Publication, New Delhi; c2012.
4. Khera R. The Black Hole of NREGA Records, Yojana; c2008 Aug 20.
5. Orissa Post Dhenkanal dist tops in MGNREGA man-days generation 2008, Retrieve on - 25 Dec. 2021. from <https://www.orissapost.com/dhenkanal-dist-tops-in-mgnrega-man-days-generation>
6. Purohit Ashok. MGNREGA and Rural Development Dominant Publishers: New Delhi; c2012.
7. Reddy SK, Rama Rao CA, Kumar S, Vekateshwarlu B. Soil and water conservation work through National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA) in Andhra Pradesh: An analysis on livelihood impact. Agriculture Economics Research Review. 2009;22(4):443-450.
8. Xavier G, Mari G. Impact of MGNREGA on women empowerment with special reference to Kalakkanmoi Panchayat in Sivgangai district, Tamil Nadu. SSRG International Journal of Economics and Management Studies. 2014;1(1):1-5.