

A STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MAHATMA GANDHI NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME IN VIZIANAGARAM DISTRICT

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Abstract:

India is an agricultural country where, 72% of the population lives in rural areas. Though India has completed more than 77 years of Independence poverty in rural India continues to increase day by day and people are increasingly migrating to the urban areas to earn their living. In other words, even after completing 77 years of Independence we have more than 40 per cent people living below poverty line. Every Five Year Plan and many other poverty alleviation programmes for the rural poor have come up with different income generation and Employment Guarantee Schemes but their result seems to be unsatisfactory.

Between 1970 and 2005, India implemented 17 major programmes with focus on employment or self-employment. By 2000, employment programmes like the National Rural Employment Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana and the Employment Assurance Scheme. Self-employment generation programmes, like the Integrated Rural Development Programme and the Training for Rural Youth in Self-employment attracted more unemployed participants. This study examines rural employment dynamics, and evaluates program implementation effectiveness. This study examines 2005 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. It is being implemented in Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh State, which was only created.

Introduction:

Development is the key word for the modern world. The movement of societies from the least desirable towards the most desirable is called development. This means a higher standard of living, more equitable wealth distribution and greater financial and political empowerment. It promotes social justice. It promotes social justice and transforms society into something better (prakash Jai, 1995). There must be enough jobs in both developing and developed countries for development to occur. In densely populated areas like India, employment is even more crucial. India's welfare orientation has been a key driver of its economic growth since independence. India's rural population is more than 70%. India is committed to growth and Indian policymakers are focused on rural development. India increases its budgetary provision every year. The 12 five-year planning periods were primarily geared towards creating employment.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is a demand driven wage employment programme. The core objective of the Scheme is to provide not less than 100 days of unskilled manual work as a guaranteed employment in a financial year to

every household in rural areas as per demand, resulting in creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and durability. In the financial year 2021-22, a total of 83.82 lakh works have been completed and 133.09 lakh works are ongoing under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS in India.

MGNREGS also initiated the world's largest financial inclusion measure by providing poor people access to the formal banking system. The impact of this is yet to be assessed by experts in the field of financial management. Close to 5 crore savings bank accounts have been opened with post offices and banks across the country. The payment of wages under MGNREGS in states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttaranchal, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh is done only through deposits in saving bank accounts for all the MGNREGS workers while others like Orissa, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have made substantial progress in providing banking services to poor rural folks.

While the world debates the adverse impact of climate change, many rural development experts have been describing MGNREGS as a tool that can help mitigate this problem. According to the latest data, an amazing 20.44 lakh works mostly related to water conservation have been taken up under MGNREGS, out of which 7.16 lakh works have been completed. "With such huge number of works focusing on conserving and preserving water, MGNREGS would definitely impact agricultural productivity in the long run," (Richard Mahapatra, 2009, <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/getting-our-moneys-worth/405302/2>) a Delhi based development writer said.

In Vizianagaram district has provided employment to 3,14,294 households from the inception of the programme. 31.47 lakh man-days of employment have gone to members of the Scheduled Castes, 32.84 lakh man-days of provide employment to members of Scheduled Tribes and 140.36 lakh man-days of employment to women workers between April 2010 and March 2011. 89,402 works have been initiated between 2006 and March 2011.

Review of Literature:

Vijay Korra (2011) in the article "Labour migration within Mahabubnagar: The Nature and Characteristics", Vijay Korra examines the characteristics and nature of seasonal labour migration in Mahabubnagar District, Andhra Pradesh. This article discusses different types of migration as well as the wages, working conditions, and spending habits of migrants. It is clear that urban and rural emigrants have distinct migration patterns. It also shows that most migrants migrate to cities to live and pay off their debts. The majority of migrants' earnings go to paying for their daily living expenses.

Rishaba Kosla (2011). The article "Caste Politics, India, Public Good Distributions, and India – Evidence From NREGA In Andhra Pradesh strong" attempts to quantify the impact of Andhra Pradesh's caste reservation policies on Gram Panchayats' provision and use of public goods and services. NREGA data was used. This investigation revealed that reservations can have wide-ranging impacts on institutions, politics, and social contexts. Contradictory results were also found in other studies. This study provides valuable lessons for policy-making, research and policy-making regarding caste-political contexts in which reservation can have positive or negative outcomes.

Kareemulla, S.K.Reddy, C.A. Rao S. Kumar and B. Venkateswarlu, (2009). Their research showed that soil and water conservation contribute more than 80 percent of the total in Andhra Pradesh. This scheme decreased migration by 27% to 7. Their research showed

that soil conservation was essential for agricultural lands, particularly in rain-fed regions.

Lakshmi Narayana M. and K. Narayana (2001), In their book “Drought & Development”, they analyzed the impact of IRDP income on beneficiaries. The study was conducted in four villages in Anantapur (Andhra Pradesh). The study looked at the household assets, incomes, and employment levels of the beneficiaries during the loan period. It was revealed that IRDP has greatly benefited beneficiaries. It was very difficult to create the infrastructure required for various schemes of IRDP.

Mihar Shah (2007) explained several aspects of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act saying that the enactment of MGNREGA is the fruition of a long and hard struggle over many years. As Andhra Pradesh has shown best performance at all stages of MGNREGA work, from registration for work to issue of job cards, preparation of work estimates and of muster rolls can be very effectively computerized. Each job card issued, each work undertaken and every payment made anywhere in the state has a unique identification code, and recorded in the web. As such all the information is just a click away on the web and anyone interested can access this information and field-check to see whether or not what is reported is true. The 100 days restriction is causing all manner of problems in MGNREGA implementation.

Gopal K.S (2009) revealed about the social audits conducted in Andhra Pradesh under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. But on the ground these audits have achieved much less than advertised and they have ignored many important aspects of implementation of MGNREGA. The social audit process has a long way to go before it can claim to have contributed to transparency, empowerment and good governance. The basic change MGNREGA confers on people is guaranteeing a right to employment and making the government accountable. But the functioning of this cardinal feature of the legislation is not part of social audit scrutiny in Andhra Pradesh. Officials do not acknowledge the applications for work, while the government does not bother to monitor its delivery. On the other hand, the government has repeatedly placed obstacles on implementation by issuing unofficial instructions on when and where to provide employment.

Objectives of the Study:

This work aims to examine the impact of MGNREGA on India. It will focus on Andhra Pradesh. It is also intended to analyze the impact of MGNREGA on rural livelihoods and how it has transformed rural areas.

1. To examine the Implementation process and Impact of MGNREGS in Rural areas of Vizianagaram district
2. To analyze the overall contribution of this scheme on creating and strengthening livelihoods of the poor people in the Study district during
3. To understand the impact of the MGNREGS on migration, lives and livelihoods of the poor households in the study households
4. To examine the impact of MGNREGS on the social and economic empowerment of Women in Rural Vizianagaram.

Research Design:

Keeping in view the nature and objectives of the study, reliance was placed mainly on primary data collected from the sampled respondents. This section provides details of methods and techniques employed for the collection and analysis of data. The approach of

study is Descriptive and Evaluative in nature and it is based on survey methods. The study was carried out in the Vizianagaram District in Andhra Pradesh State. The data collection was carried out during the period starting from March 2023 to May 2023. By using a stratified random sampling method, 350 respondents were selected from the Vizianagaram district. We utilized both primary and secondary data for the analysis of the objectives mentioned in our theses. The sources of data and data collection techniques are explained below. The study is empirical in nature. This study is based primarily on primary data from MGNREGS beneficiaries and government officials and secondary data taken from books, journals reports and websites.

Data Analysis and Discussion:

Personal Profile of Respondents

1. Gender wise Distribution of Respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Female	213	60.8
2	Male	137	39.2
	Total	350	100

The data presented in this table reveals that the majority of the respondents 213 (60.8%) are female whereas 137 (39.2%) of the respondents are male category taken as sample for this study from the Vizianagaram district of the Andhra Pradesh State.

2. Age wise Distribution of Respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	18-25	42	12
2	26-40	145	41.4
3	40-60	127	36.3
4	Above 60	36	10.3
	Total	350	100

This table shows the age distribution of respondents from the same district as in the previous table. The data presented in this table shows that the majority of the respondents 145 (41.4%), the 26-40 age group accounted for the highest proportion. The sample villages have a high percentage of middle-aged population. 127 (36.3%) of them belong to 40-60 age groups. The

youngest age groups are 42 (12%) between 18 and 25, while the oldest age 36 (10.3%) groups (above 60) make up for this study.

3. Marital Status of Respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Married	206	58.9
2	Unmarried	96	27.4
3	Single/Widowed/Divorced	48	13.7
	Total	350	100

The numbers given in the above table indicating that the majority of the respondents 206 (58.9%) are taken from married category followed by 96 (27.4%) of them belong to unmarried category and last 48 (13.7%) of the respondents taken from Single/Widowed/Divorced category.

4. Social category wise distribution of the respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	OC	27	7.7
2	BC	174	49.7
3	SC	112	32
4	ST	37	10.6
	Total	350	100

The details presented in the above table shows the distribution of respondents according to social category. The main social categories are BC, SC, ST and OC. Nearly half of the respondents 174 (49.7%) are from the BC category, followed by SC 112 (32%) category, 37 (10.6%) of them taken from ST category and last 27 (7.7%) of them belong to OC category. As you can see in the table, there are not many respondents from the OC category in some villages.

5. Educational Status of Respondents

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Illiterate	191	54.6

2	Upto SSC level	87	24.8
3	Intermediate	43	12.3
4	Graduation/Professional	29	8.3
	Total	350	100

The details represented in this table reveals that the majority of the respondents 191 (54.6%) are illiterate, 87 (24.8%) of them upto SSC level, 43 (12.3%) of them intermediate and last 29 (8.3%) of the respondents are Graduation/Professional educational category.

6. Family occupation and livelihoods

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	No Agriculture land	131	37.4
2	Upto 1 Acre	85	24.3
3	1 to 2 Acres	71	20.3
4	More than 2 Acres	63	18
	Total	350	100

The data mentioned in the above table shows that 131 (37.4%) of respondents have no agricultural land holdings, 85 (24.3%) of them have upto 1 Acre, while 71 (20.3%) have land holdings between 1 and 2 acres and remaining 63 (18%) of them having more than 2 Acres. It is observed that 219 (62.6%) of respondents own agricultural land around 131 (37.4%) of respondents don't own any land.

7. Working members in the family

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	1-2 members	215	61.4
2	2-3 members	77	22
3	Above 3 Members	58	16.6
	Total	350	100

The data are analyzed under three categories. In the sample villages, 215 (61.4%) of respondents have at least 1-2 adult workers in their families. This is followed by 2-3 in 77 (22%). In the case of 58 (16.6%) respondents, more than three adult working members are present in a family.

8. Respondents Main source of livelihood

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Agriculture	204	58.3
2	Daily wage Labour	109	31.1
3	Other source	37	10.6
	Total	350	100

The data presented in the above table reveals that the majority 204 (58.3%) of the respondents rely primarily on agriculture. Followed 109 (31.1%) of respondents are working as day wage labourers, their main source income and only 37 (10.6%) of them depend on other sources. Farmers can also be employed as agricultural labourers if they don't have enough land or rely on rainfed irrigation.

Awareness on MGNREGS and its Implementation

1. Source of awareness on MGNREGA scheme'?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	SHGs/NGOs/ Grama Sabha	189	54
2	Political leaders/ Govt officials	65	18.6
3	Family members	72	20.6
4	Others	24	6.8
	Total	350	100

The details mentioned in the above table shows that 189 (54%) of respondents learned about the scheme from Grama Sabha/ NGOs/ SHGs. 72 (20.6%) of them learned about this scheme from political leaders/govt. officials, 65 (18.6%) of them knowing this scheme from family members and remaining 24 (6.8%) of the respondents knowing this scheme from other sources. This shows that SHGs are active in the villages.

2. Do you know the provision for 100 days work per household according to MGNREG Act?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	291	83.1
2	No	39	11.2
3	No Opinion	20	5.7
	Total	350	100

The data represented in this table reveals that the maximum majority of the respondents 291 (83.1%) said that they know the provision for 100 days work per household according to MGNREG Act while 39 (11.2%) of them said that they don't know the provision for 100 days work per household according to MGNREG Act and rest of the 20 (5.7%) respondents are silent about the provision of 100 days work.

3. Have machines ever been used on this worksite?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	37	10.6
2	No	285	81.4
3	No Opinion	28	8
	Total	350	100

The above table shows that 285 (81.4%) of respondents stated that there are no machines in their workplaces but 37 (10.6%) of them said that some of the critical works done by machines and last 28 (8%) of the respondents not given any answer. According to the data, the respondents work mainly manual labor.

4. Do you Have Job Cards / worked under MGNREGA?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	326	93.1
2	No	13	3.8
3	No Opinion	11	3.1

	Total	350	100
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The details according to this table mentioned that 326 (93.1%) of respondents have job cards and worked under the MGNREGA in the sample villages. While 13 (3.8%) have no Job Cards/worked under MGNREGA but engaging in the work and remaining last 11 (3.1%) of them given no response.

5. After 15 days you got the employment?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	306	87.4
2	No	31	8.9
3	No Opinion	13	3.7
	Total	350	100

The data represented in this table clearly indicates that majority of the respondents 306 (87.4%) were provided with the employment within the 15 days from the date of placing the application with the gram panchayat in sample villages however 31 (8.9%) of them did not have the employment and last 13 (3.7%) of the respondents are silent.

6. Is there any Political affiliation influence in getting work in MGNREGS?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	110	31.4
2	No	216	61.8
3	No Opinion	24	6.8
	Total	350	100

The details represented in the above table shows that majority of the respondents 216 (61.8%) said that political affiliation does not influence access to work in MGNREGS however 110 (31.4%) of them agreed that there is a political affiliation influence access to work in MGNREGS and last 24 (6.8%) of them silent about the Political affiliation influence in getting work in MGNREGS. This is true in all the villages. This brings out a positive perspective that nobody can get a job by way of any kind of influence.

7. Do you know the lean period (no. of months)?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	243	69.4
2	No	77	22
3	No Opinion	30	8.6
	Total	350	100

According numbers mentioned in the above table reveals that an overwhelming majority of the respondents 243 (69.4%) said that they having lean period for 4 to 6 months in a year while 77 (22%) of them perceived negative opinion about the lean period and rest of the 30 (8.6%) respondents are silent about the aspect of lean period. This is the period in which the village panchayats are implementing the MGNREGS in the villages.

8. Whether Continuous work will check migration?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	263	75.1
2	No	55	15.8
3	No Opinion	32	9.1
	Total	350	100

The data represented in this table mentioned that above three fourth of the respondents 263 (75.1%) from all villages are of the view that continuous work will definitely check migration but 55 (15.8%) of them perceived that continuous work will not definitely check migration and remaining 32 (9.1%) of them did not responded for this aspect. However, the analysis of the implementation of the scheme in sample villages indicate that majority of the workforce is not getting the desired 100 days of the employment.

9. How long time will take for Payment of Wages in MGNREGS?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Below one week	88	25.1
2	Above one month	235	67.2
3	No Opinion	27	7.7

	Total	350	100

The details presented in the above table shows that majority of the respondents 235 (67.2%) from all villages said that they have received their wages above a month however 88 (25.1%) of them said that they have received their wages below one week and rest of them 27 (7.7%) usually not responded about payment of the wages. It clearly shows that there is a delay in the payment of wages in the sample district.

10. Whether Gram Sabha held on NREGA activities?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	265	75.7
2	No	51	14.6
3	No Opinion	34	9.7
	Total	350	100

According details shows in this table indicates that above three fourth of the respondents 265 (75.7%) are of the opinion that gram sabha held on NREGA activities while 51 (14.6%) of them given negative opinion that gram sabha held on NREGA activities and last 34 (9.7%) of them not responded for this question. Grama Sabha is the platform the works need to be undertaken are discussed and finalised in the presence all the people in the village.

11. What is the Overall Impact of the NREGS on the Lives and Livelihoods?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	260	74.3
2	No	73	20.8
3	No Opinion	17	4.9
	Total	350	100

The data presented in this table shows that nearly three fourth of the respondents 260 (74.3%) agreed that there is the Overall Impact of the NREGS on the Lives and Livelihoods while 73 (20.8%) of them did not agreed that there is the Overall Impact of the NREGS on the Lives and Livelihoods and last only 17 (4.9%) of them did not willing to give answer. It is observed

that there is the additional income after getting employment in NREGS.

12. Do you observed any kind of corruption in Implementation Process?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	129	36.8
2	No	177	50.6
3	No Opinion	44	12.6
	Total	350	100

The data mentioned in this table reveals that above half of the above respondents 177 (50.6%) agreed that there is a practice of corruption in Implementation Process however 129 (36.8%) of them did not agreed that there is a practice of corruption in Implementation Process and rest of the 44 (12.6%) of them are silent about the corruption in implementation process.

13. Any suggestions for Strengthening the Implementation of MGNREGS?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	238	68
2	No	100	28.6
3	No Opinion	12	3.4
	Total	350	100

The data contains in the above table shows that the maximum majority of the respondents 238 (68%) agreed to give suggestions for Strengthening the Implementation of MGNREGS while 100 (28.6%) of them did not give any suggestions for Strengthening the Implementation of MGNREGS and last only 12 (3.4%) of them did not responded for give the suggestions. It shows that the suggestions to strengthen the scheme are: regular work and more than 100 days work; increase in wages on a daily and weekly basis; provision of basic worksite facilities; strengthening of social audit system; organization of camps at village - level.

14. Is there proper monitoring on this scheme in your locality?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	212	60.6

2	No	100	28.6
3	No Opinion	38	10.8
	Total	350	100

The details presented in this table shows that the majority of the respondents 212 (60.6%) agreed that the proper monitoring on this scheme in their locality however 100 (28.6%) of the respondents perceived negative opinion on this question and remaining 38 (10.8%) of them are silent about the proper monitoring on this scheme in their locality.

15. Do you feel that flexible implementation of this scheme in Vizianagaram district?

S. No	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	Yes	297	84.9
2	No	43	12.3
3	No Opinion	10	2.8
	Total	350	100

The data mentioned in this table shows that an overwhelming majority of the respondents 297 (84.9%) agreed that the Vizianagaram district is flexible implementation of this scheme while 43 (12.3%) of them are said that Vizianagaram district is not flexible implementation of this scheme and only 10 (2.8%) of the respondents are silent about this aspect.

Findings of the Study:

The majority of the respondents 213 (60.8%) are female and the data presented in this table shows that the majority of the respondents 145 (41.4%).

The majority of the respondents 206 (58.9%) are taken from married category and nearly half of the respondents 174 (49.7%) are from the BC category.

The majority of the respondents 191 (54.6%) are illiterate and 131 (37.4%) of respondents have no agricultural land holdings.

In the sample villages, 215 (61.4%) of respondents have at least 1-2 adult workers in their families and the majority 204 (58.3%) of the respondents rely primarily on agriculture.

189 (54%) of respondents learned about the scheme from Grama Sabha/ NGOs/ SHGs and the maximum majority of the respondents 291 (83.1%) said that they know the provision for 100 days work per household according to MGNREG Act.

285 (81.4%) of respondents stated that there are no machines in their workplaces and 326 (93.1%) of respondents have job cards and worked under the MGNREGA in the sample villages.

Majority of the respondents 306 (87.4%) were provided with the employment within the 15 days from the date of placing the application with the gram panchayat in sample villages and

majority of the respondents 216 (61.8%) said that political affiliation does not influence access to work in MGNREGS.

An overwhelming majority of the respondents 243 (69.4%) said that they having lean period for 4 to 6 months in a year and above three fourth of the respondents 263 (75.1%) from all villages are of the view that continuous work will definitely check migration.

Majority of the respondents 235 (67.2%) from all villages said that they have received their wages above a month and above three fourth of the respondents 265 (75.7%) are of the opinion that gram sabha held on NREGA activities.

Nearly three fourth of the respondents 260 (74.3%) agreed that there is the Overall Impact of the NREGS on the Lives and Livelihoods and that above half of the above respondents 177 (50.6%) agreed that there is a practice of corruption in Implementation Process.

The maximum majority of the respondents 238 (68%) agreed to give suggestions for Strengthening the Implementation of MGNREGS and the majority of the respondents 212 (60.6%) agreed that the proper monitoring on this scheme in their locality.

Lastly an overwhelming majority of the respondents 297 (84.9%) agreed that the Vizianagaram district is flexible implementation of this scheme.

Conclusion

The Government of India and several State Governments had been implementing Employment generation Programmes to provide productive employment by creating durable assets in the rural areas. However, studies revealed that the earlier schemes implemented suffered from shortage of coordination and integration and the works were mostly stereotypes. NREGA was enacted by the Indian Parliament in 2005 and the Act came into force from 2nd February 2006. It has been covering the entire country since 2008. The basic objective of MGNREG is to meet the challenges of rural rates, low wages, wage discrimination between men and women, dependence of the workers on agriculture, insecurity to the workers and low level of participation of the poor in rural development. The Act has been implemented effectively in the Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh State.

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