



Research Article

LOW PARTICIPATION OF SMALL AND MARGINAL FARMERS IN MGNREGA IN HARYANA: UNAVAILABILITY OF WORK IN LEAN PERIOD

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Abstract: MGNREGA is the most popular scheme to provide employment to rural workers of India. In Haryana state present study was conducted in Mahendragarh district. From the selected district, two villages were selected randomly from all the blocks, totaling 10 villages. The sum of samples comprised of 100 respondents because of random selection of ten MGNREGS job card holders were selected from each village. The proportion of persons doing actual work to the total job cards issued was very low in almost all the selected blocks. Majority of job card holders did not get employment in almost all the years. In the year 2011-12, 63 percent of workers did not get work for even a single day. In the year 2006-07, the average employment per respondent was about 23 days which decreased to about 14 days in 2011-12. This is the indication of very low participation of workers in MGNREGA in the study area. The root cause of low participation is lack of information/awareness about MGNREGS and non availability of work in lean period. There is a need of further strengthening of the MGNREGS to generate sufficient employment for rural workers along with small and marginal farmers which helps to improve economic condition of rural households.

Keywords: MGNREGS, employment, man days, job cards, marginal farmer

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Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) was notified on September 7, 2005 [1] and came into force from February 2, 2006. It is the world's biggest employment guarantee programme and aims at enhancing livelihood security by providing 100 days of assured wage employment to every household whose adult members above the age of eighteen years volunteer to do unskilled manual work in rural areas of the country in a financial year [2-4]. The other striking feature of the MGNREGA Scheme is to provide basic facilities like drinking water, shade, first-aid box and crèche at the worksite [5]. The main focus of the MGNREGS is to facilitate the social protection to the rural people of India by providing employment opportunities. Its primary objective is to augment wage employment and strengthen natural resource management so that contribute towards the overall development of the rural people of the country [6]. In the first phase with effect from February 2, 2006, the act was notified in 200 districts of India. Further, this was extended to 130 more districts in the next financial year 2007-08 (113 districts were notified with effect from 1 April 2007 and 17 districts were notified with effect from 15 May 2007) in Uttar Pradesh. Moreover, with effect from 1 April 2008 the rest of the districts have been notified under the MGNREGA [7]. Thus, intact country is covered with MGNREGA apart from some districts which have a hundred percent urban population. In the study area, out of those households who could get employment during 2006-07, 20.43 percent households completed 100 days of employment which came down to only 2.43 percent in the year 2011-12. The states like Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and West Bengal etc. had high participation rate (share of rural households working on MGNREGA) while in Haryana participation rate was second lowest among all the states. Keeping in view of the above facts, the present study was undertaken to find out the situation

of participation of workers since inception of MGNREGA (2 Feb, 2006) and to find out root causes of low participation rate in Haryana state.

Methodology

In the first phase, the scheme was implemented in two districts of Haryana, namely Mahendragarh and Sirsa. First phase was selected because of maximum time of implementation which could give better results regarding MGNREGS in Haryana. Mahendragarh district was selected on the basis of poor economic conditions of rural people and more numbers of small and marginal farmers than Sirsa district. All the five blocks were selected for the present study. From all the five blocks two villages were selected randomly from each block totalling 10 villages in the selected district as shown in [Table-1].

Table-1 Blockwise selection of villages and respondents

Blocks	Villages	Respondents
1. Narnaul	1. Balaha Kalan	10
	2. Bhankhari	10
2. Nangal Chaudhary	3. Mandhana	10
	4. Kojinda	10
3. Kanina	5. Dongra Ahir	10
	6. Mundia khera	10
4. Mahendragarh	7. Kherki	10
	8. Malra Bass	10
5. Ateli Nangal	9. Pirthipura	10
	10. Saluni	10
Total	10	100

The lists of all the job card holders were taken from the gram panchayats of the selected villages. Then 10 MGNREGS job card holders were randomly selected from each of the selected villages.

Table-2 Pattern of land ownership among respondents, 2011-12

Particulars	Blocks					Total
	Narnaul	Nangal Chaudhary	Kanina	Mahendra-garh	Ateli Nangal	
Landless	16(80.00)	19(95.00)	14(70.00)	15(75.00)	18(90.00)	82 (82.00)
Less than 1 acre	2(10.00)	1(5.00)	3(15.00)	2 (10.00)	-	8(8.00)
1-2 acre	1(5.00)	-	1(5.00)	1(5.00)	1(5.00)	4(4.00)
2 acres & above	1(5.00)	-	2(10.00)	2(10.00)	1(5.00)	6(6.00)
Total	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to the total

Table-3 Employment pattern of the respondents under MGNREGS in the selected district, 2011-12

Employment (days)	Blocks					Total
	Narnaul	Nangal Chaudhary	Kanina	Mahendra-garh	Ateli Nangal	
	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=20	N=100
No employment	17(85.00)	7(35.00)	13 (65.00)	12(60.00)	14(70.00)	63(63.00)
Up to 20	1(5.00)	4(20.00)	2(10.00)	3(15.00)	-	10(10.00)
20-40	-	4(20.00)	1(5.00)	4(20.00)	4(20.00)	13 (15.00)
40-60	-	1(5.00)	3(15.00)	-	2(10.00)	6(6.00)
60-80	2(10.00)	1(5.00)	-	-	-	3(3.00)
80-100	-	2(10.00)	1(5.00)	1(5.00)	-	4(4.00)
completing 100 days	-	1(5.00)	-	-	-	1(1.00)
Average employment per worker (days)	6.5	28.35	14.65	12.85	9	14.27

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to the total

Table-4 Problems for low participation of the respondents under MGNREGS, 2011-12

Particulars	BLOCKS					Total
	Narnaul	Nangal Chaudhary	Kanina	Mahendragarh	Ateli Nangal	
Lack of awareness	20(100.00)	10(50.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	90(90.00)
Wage rate lower than open market rate	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)
Limited and irregular employment	12(60.00)	17(85.00)	11(55.00)	8(40.00)	11(55.00)	59(59.00)
Employment not provided in lean period	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to the total

Table-5 Suggestions given by the respondents under MGNREGS, 2011-12

Particulars	Blocks					Total
	Narnaul	Nangal Chaudhary	Kanina	Mahendragarh	Ateli Nangal	
Wage rate may be high	20 (100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)
Proper tea & food management	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)
Meetings conducting regularly & full knowledge should be given.	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)
One day of wage should be given on day of meeting	20 (100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)
Medical facility at working place should be provided	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)
Work should be started in lean period	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	20(100.00)	100(100.00)

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentage to the total

In this way the ultimate sample consisted of 100 respondents. Primary data were collected from the selected respondents using specially structured interview schedule designed for the study purposes. The data included receipt of job card, employment under MGNREGS, wages rate under MGNREGS, income from MGNREGS, problems faced and suggestions of the respondents for successful implementation of MGNREGS etc. Secondary data on different aspects of MGNREGS were obtained from the Govt. offices and websites.

Results and Discussion

Land ownership

The information provided in [Table-2] showed that in the study area at aggregate level as high as 82 percent of the total respondents were landless. Eight percent of the total respondents were having land less than 1 acre, 4 percent respondents 1 to 2 acre and 6 percent respondents were having land 2 acres and above.

Employment pattern under MGNREGA

The employment pattern under MGNREGS in the study area during the year 2011-12 is presented in [Table-3]. It was found that sixty-three percent of the respondents did not get any employment. Fifteen percent of the respondents could get employment for 20 to 40 days followed by 10 percent who got employment up to 20 days and 6 percent got employment for 40 to 60 days. Four

percent got employment for 80 to 100 days and 3 percent got employment for 60 to 80 days. There was only one respondent who completed 100 days of employment. The average employment per worker for the entire study area came out at 14.27 days during the same year. As discussed, most of the workers were unable getting employment under MGNREGA which indicates low participation under the scheme in the study area. The low participation may be due to the problems faced by the respondents which are discussed in [Table-3]. The data collected from NSSO (2009) estimated that participation rate in Haryana is lowest after Maharashtra [8]. The findings of this paper are satisfactory with the present study.

Problems faced by the respondents

The problems faced by the job card holders working under MGNREGS are presented in [Table-4]. Majority of the respondents i.e., 90 percent reported the lack of awareness/ information about the MGNREGA scheme. About 59 percent of the respondents highlighted the problem of limited and irregular employment provided to them under MGNREGS and all reported the problem of low wage rate in MGNREGS than open market rate. The pattern of problem was found almost same in all the blocks under study as observed at the aggregate level. However, there was variation in the extent of problems in different blocks. All the respondents reported that in lean period they remain unemployed but at that time

they do not get the work under MGNREGS. The above-mentioned problems seem to be the reasons for low participation under MGNREGS in the study area.

Suggestions given by the respondents

There are many suggestions which were given by almost all the respondents and the same are shown in [Table-5]. All the respondents suggested that meetings should be conducted regularly and full knowledge about the scheme be given. As by attending the meeting there is loss of one day wage so workers are less interested in attending the meeting that is why all the respondents suggested that on the day of meeting one day wage should be given. All the respondents further suggested that medical facility should be provided at work site so that in case of emergency first aid treatment can be given. Most of the respondents were more interested in doing work other than MGNREGA due to high wage rates in the market. But all the time employment is not available to them, especially during lean periods i.e., from November to February and from May to August. So, all the respondents suggested that MGNREGS work should be started in lean period. There was no inter block variation in the suggestions given by the respondents.

Conclusion

The proportion of persons doing actual work to the total job cards issued was very low in the study area. A lot of problems have been faced by the workers in the MGNREGA due to which participation of workers is very low in Haryana. A lack of awareness / information has been reported by some popular respondents about the MGNREGA scheme which highlighted the problem of restricted employment provided to them under the scheme. In the peak period i.e., harvesting time of Rabi and Kharif crop, there was no need of wage employment in the study area and workers were not interested in MGNREGA during that period. So that the MGNREGA work should be started in lean period so that they can work even at low wage rates.

Research Application

On the bases of research findings, there is a need of further strengthening of the MGNREGA in Haryana State to generate sufficient employment for rural households including small and marginal farmers.

Research Category: Social Science in Rural Farming Area.

Abbreviations:

MGNREGA: Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

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