



## Research Article

# CONSTRAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS PERCEIVED BY MGNREGA BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS IN SRIKAKULAM DISTRICT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

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**Abstract:** The present study was formulated during the year 2016 in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh, with a sample size of 120 respondents. Respondents were selected based on random sampling method. Results revealed that the major problems perceived by the beneficiaries were late payment of wages, no opportunity to get employment more than 100 days and non-provision of 100 days of work. Whereas, suggestions given by them to overcome the problems were timely payment of wages, payment of wages in cash and also in the form of grains and fulfilment of 100 days of employment guarantee. A sample of 30 people's representatives and 40 officials involved in implementation of MGNREGS at various levels were selected randomly. Results revealed that the major problems perceived by the stakeholders were illiteracy of the people, non-availability of staff, lack of cooperation and conflicts between people, non-availability of funds in time, limited work activities under MGNREGS which may not be available at village level so on.

**Keywords:** Constraints, Suggestions, MGNREGA, People Representatives, RPI

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## Introduction

Government of India implemented several employment programmes; no one was adequate enough to fulfil the needs of rural people. By considering all the shortcomings in earlier programmes, Government of India designed another scheme to provide employment to the rural people *i.e.*, National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act was notified on 7th September, 2005 but came into picture on February, 2006. The act was executed in a phased manner. This programme marked a paradigm shift from the previous wage employment programmes with its right based approach that makes the Government legally accountable for providing employment to those who demand it. However, there were certain constraints which hamper the complete utilization of this scheme by the rural people. Hence present study was undertaken to identify the major problems perceived by the beneficiaries of MGNREGA.

## Material and Methods

The present study was conducted with an *ex-post facto* research design in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh. Based on the criteria of maximum employment generation for the year 2015, 3 mandals *viz.*, Seethampeta, Ranasthalam and Polaki were selected out of 40 mandals of Srikakulam district. In the next stage, 4 villages from each mandal *i.e.*, 12 villages were selected. From each village 10 beneficiaries were randomly selected thus making total 120 respondents. A Sample of 30 People's Representatives such as MPTCs, sarpanchs, members of each village was selected for the study. A total 40 officials involved in implementation of MGNREGS at various levels such as Project Director at district level, Programme Officer, Assistant Programme Officer, Engineer and Computer Operator at mandal level and Field Assistant & Technical Assistant at village level were selected for the study.

The data was collected from the sample of MGNREGS beneficiaries, People's Representatives and Officials by personal interview method using structured pre-tested schedule.

## Responses Priority Index (RPI)

In the quantification of constraints expressed by the respondents, there was a problem whether to give more emphasis for number of responses to a particular priority or to the highest number of responses to a constraint in first priority. But, both lead to different conclusion. To resolve this Responses-Priority Index (RPI) as a product of Proportion of Responses (PR) and Priority Estimate (PE) was adopted. The PR for the *i*th constraint will give the ratio of number responses for a particular constraint to the total responses as given below [1]:

$$(RPI)_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^k f_{ij} \cdot X_{[(k+1)-j]}}{\sum_{i=1}^I \sum_{j=1}^k f_{ij}}$$

Where,

$(RPI)_i$  = Response Priority Index for *i*th constraint.

$\sum_{j=1}^k f_{ij}$  = Total number of responses for the *i*th constraint.

$f_{ij}$  = Number of responses for the *j*th priority of *i*th constraint (*i*=1,2,3.....*I*; *j*=1,2,3.....*k*).

*k* = Number of priorities.

$X_{[(k+1)-j]}$  = Scores for *j*th priority.

$\sum_{i=1}^I \sum_{j=1}^k f_{ij}$  = Total number of responses to all constraints.

Here, larger the RPI, higher the importance for the particular constraint.

## Results and Discussion

### Constraints

#### Constraints faced by selected MGNREGS beneficiaries

An attempt was made to find out the constraints encountered and perceived by MGNREGS beneficiaries and ranks were given based on Response Priority Index. [Table-1] clearly showed the operational problems perceived by selected MGNREGS beneficiaries during the implementation of MGNREGS. Out of them main problem was "Late payment of wages" (1.00) as this might be due to non-release of funds available with district administration in time and the MGNREGS consists of various procedures which makes delay in payment of wages. "No opportunity to get employment more than 100 days" (0.90) and "Non-provision of 100 days of work" (0.84) were the other important problems expressed by the beneficiaries. These might be due to the Act provides only 100 days employment guarantee and the district administration can't extend this limit without orders received from Central Government. "Long distances of work sites" (0.78) might be due to the non-provision of works with in the village. "Low payment of wages" (0.74), "Delay in allotment of work" (0.69) and "Non-payment of 10% extra wages for works outside the 5 km radius" (0.64) were might be due to lack of transparency in stakeholders and non-availability of sufficient funds with Government. At last "Non-provision of crèche facility" (0.58) and "Poor work site facilities" (0.52) were might be due to unavailability of primary aids because of lack of sufficient funds. "Delay in disposal of beneficiaries' complaints" (0.44), "Registration is not open in the Gram Panchayat on an ongoing basis" (0.36), "Migration of labourers due to non-provision of works under MGNREGS" (0.31), "Non-payment of wages" (0.25), "Payment of same wages for all kinds of works" (0.24), "Non-payment of wages in the form of grains" (0.14) and "Non-payment of unemployment allowance" (0.07) were the minor problems observed of least significance. These findings were in accordance with the findings of Mehrotra (2008), Dutta (2009), Kantharaju (2011), Roy et al. (2013) and Lakshmi & Sundaramari (2014) [2-6].

#### Constraints faced by the selected People's Representatives

The results were presented in [Table-2] clearly indicated the operational problems perceived by selected People's Representatives during the implementation of MGNREGS. The major problem expressed by all respondents were "Illiteracy of the people" (100.00%) as this might be due to the poor resources of many Panchayats as well as no initiatives to educate the people. "Allocation of less number of works through Gram Panchayat" (0.65) as this might be due to such decisions are being taken at district level. "Limited work activities to be under taken in MGNREGS which may not be available at the village level" (0.56) was another problem experienced by the respondents due to the policy guidelines of MGNREGS. "Inability to ensure 100 days employment guarantee" (0.40) due to the paucity of funds since it is a programme conceived on large scale. "Diversion of MGNREGS fund for other works by mandal authorities" (0.31) might be due to the paucity of funds for development at mandal level followed by "Lack of trained technical staff at village level" (0.24) might be due to no attention being paid in MGNREGS on this issue and "Corruption at mandal and district levels" (0.17) might be due to the lack of vigilance and transparency. All these were the problems of least significant expressed by the respondents. These findings were in line with findings of Chathukulam & Gireesan(2007), Gladson (2008) and Argade (2010) [7-9].

#### Constraints faced by the selected officials from village to district levels

The [Table-3] clearly indicated the operational problems perceived by selected officials during the implementation of MGNREGS were "Illiteracy of the people" (1) might be due to insistence on transparency in MGNREGS and non-willingness of these people to improve their living standards followed by "Non-availability of staff on contract basis" (0.88) might be due to low salaries, need to stay in villages and no certainty of its continuation, "Non-availability of funds in time" (0.76) might be due to procedural delays, "More and weak documentation" (0.67) might be due to the lot of time it is consuming in subjecting them to mental agony, "Delay in payment of wages to the workers" (0.58) might be due to complicated procedural norms, "Lack of timely training" (0.49) might be due to paucity of experienced staff

to train them and "Under payment of salaries to MGNREGS staff" (0.40) might be due to less amount of funds available towards administrative cost. Other problems with less significance were "Lack of co-operation from people's groups and social organizations" (0.34) might be due to public outlook as this is being a government scheme followed by "Lack of technical facilities" (0.26) might be due to revelry of MGNREGS conceived, "Bogus registration of families" (0.13) might be due to lack of proper supervision, These findings were in line with findings of Chathukulam & Gireesan (2007), Gladson (2008) and Argade (2010) [7-9].

Table-1 Constraints faced by selected MGNREGA beneficiaries, (n=120)

SN	Constraints	RPI	Rank
1	Late payment of wages	1.00	I
2	No opportunity to get employment more than 100 days	0.90	II
3	Non-provision of 100 work	0.84	III
4	Long distance of work sites	0.78	IV
5	Low payment of wages	0.74	V
6	Delay in allotment of work	0.69	VI
7	Non-payment of 10 % extra wages for works outside the 5km radius	0.64	VII
8	Non provision of crèche facility	0.58	VIII
9	Poor work site facilities	0.52	IX
10	Delay in disposal of beneficiaries complaints	0.44	X
11	Registration is not open in the Gram Panchayat on an on-going basis	0.36	XI
12	Migration of labour due to non-provision of works under MGNREGS	0.31	XII
13	Non-payment of wages	0.25	XIII
14	Payment of same wages for all kinds of works	0.24	XIV
15	On payment of wages in the form of grains	0.14	XV
16	Non-payment of unemployment allowance	0.07	XVI

Table-2 Constraints faced by the selected People's Representatives, (n=30)

SN	Constraints	RPI	Rank
1	Illiteracy of the people	1.00	I
2	Absence of Local Village Monitoring Committee	0.88	II
3	Lack of co-operation and conflicts between groups of people.	0.78	III
4	Allocation of less number of works through Gram Panchayat.	0.65	IV
5	Limited work activities to be under taken in MGNREGS which may not be available at the village level.	0.56	V
6	Inability to ensure 100 days employment guarantee	0.40	VI
7	Diversion of MGNREGS fund for other works by mandal authorities	0.31	VII
8	Lack of trained technical staff at village level	0.24	VIII
9	Corruption at mandal and district levels.	0.17	IX

Table-3 Constraints faced by the selected officials, (n=40)

SN	Constraints	RPI	Rank
1	Illiteracy of the people	1.00	I
2	Non-availability of staff on contract basis	0.88	II
3	Non- availability of funds in time	0.76	III
4	More and weak documentation	0.67	IV
5	Delay in payment of wages to the workers	0.58	V
6	Lack of timely training	0.49	VI
7	Under payment of salaries to MGNREGS staff	0.40	VII
8	Lack of co-operation from people's groups and social organisations	0.34	VIII
9	Lack of technical facilities	0.26	IX
10	Bogus registration of families	0.13	X

### Suggestions

#### Suggestions given by selected MGNREGS beneficiaries

Based on the problems encountered, the suggestions were drawn from the beneficiaries to overcome them and presented in [Table-4]. Suggestions were identified and ranked based on Response Priority Index. [Table-4] clearly showed the suggestions given by selected MGNREGS beneficiaries to overcome the operational problems as perceived by them during the implementation of MGNREGS.

Second suggestion was "Payment of wages in cash and also in the form of grains" (0.92) which was specially mentioned by female workers because the payment in grain form favours to increase the food security to their families. "Fulfilment of 100 days employment guarantee" (0.78) requires identification of more works at Gram Panchayat level without any limitation with regard to the types of work to be taken up under MGNREGS. The development of school buildings, primary health centres in villages will help to improve the quality of life of the people. The greater number of water conservation works helps to increase the water availability for agricultural purpose. "Provision of works through Gram Panchayat nearer to the residence" (0.75) was another suggestion to overcome the problem of long distance of worksites. "Timely allotment of works" (0.65) in order to avoid delay in provision of works was another suggestion given by beneficiaries. "Payment of extra wages for long distance work sites" (0.59), "Provision of crèche facility" (0.56), "Provision of necessary work site facilities" (0.49), "Provision of sufficient employment in own village" (0.45), "Extension of limit of 100 days employment guarantee" (0.40), "Grievance redressal mechanism should be nearer" (0.33), "Registration should be open in the Gram Panchayat on an ongoing basis" (0.24), "Payment of wages should be according to kind of works" (0.20) and "Timely payment of unemployment allowance" (0.16) were the suggestions of least significance. These findings were in agreement with the findings of Chathukulam & Gireesan (2007), Gladson (2008), Ramesh & Krishnakumar (2009) and Argade (2010) [7-10].

Table-4 Suggestions given by selected MGNREGA beneficiaries

SN	Suggestions	RPI	Rank
1	Timely payment of wages	0.99	I
2	Payment of wages in cash and also in the form of grains	0.92	II
3	Fulfilment of 100 days employment guarantee	0.78	III
4	Provision of works through Gram Panchayat nearer the residence	0.75	IV
5	Timely allotment of works	0.65	V
6	Payment of extra wages for long distance work sites	0.59	VI
7	Provision of crèche facility	0.56	VII
8	Provision of necessary work site facilities	0.49	VIII
9	Provision of sufficient employment in home village	0.45	IX
10	Extend the limit of 100 days employment guarantee	0.40	X
11	Grievance redressal mechanism should be nearer	0.33	XI
12	Registration should be open in the Gram Panchayat on an on-going basis	0.24	XII
13	Payment of wages should be according to kind of works	0.20	XIII
14	Timely payment of unemployment allowance	0.16	XIV

Table-5 Suggestions given by the selected People's Representatives, (n=30)

SN	Suggestions	RPI	Rank
1	Organisation of literacy programmes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" at village level.	1.00	I
2	Obtaining people's co-operation in solving the conflicts among them through Gram Sabha.	0.86	II
3	Setting up of Village Monitoring Committee for better supervision.	0.73	III
4	Allocation of more than 50 per cent of work through Gram Panchayat	0.61	IV
5	Introduction of 'Wage Subsidy' to the farming community by applying MGNREGS workforce.	0.45	V
6	Enhancing minimum limit of 14 days and maximum limit of 100 days employment guarantee to higher side.	0.34	VI
7	Appointment of trained technical staff at village level on permanent basis.	0.30	VII
8	Timely supervision at mandal and district levels.	0.20	VIII

### Suggestions given by the selected People's Representatives

Among them the important suggestions were "Organisation of literacy programmes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" at village level" (1) as this might be due to the impending problem of illiteracy to the implementation of MGNREGS and "Obtaining people's cooperation in solving the conflicts among them through Gram Sabha" (0.86) might be due to the lack of persuasion on behalf of MGNREGS

implementing agency while implementing the programme. Third suggestion given by the respondents was "Setting up of Village Monitoring Committee for better supervision" (0.73). This might be due to the lack of transparency in the involvement of the people. "Allocation of more than 50 per cent of works through Gram Panchayat" (0.61) is the another suggestion expressed by them. This might be due to the allotments of more works through only Panchayat Samitee. "Introduction of 'Wage Subsidy' to the farming community by applying MGNREGS workforce" (0.45) might be keeping in view the prevailing dissatisfaction among the big farmers as the farm wage rates increased followed by "Enhancing minimum limit of 14 days and maximum limit of 100 days employment guarantee to higher side" (0.34) due to the life sustenance and as well as taking up income generation activities becomes difficult as the cost of living escalating day by day, "Appointment of trained technical staff at village level on permanent basis" (0.30) might be due to the identification of works and their documentation is becoming difficult and timely "Supervision at mandal and district levels" (0.20) might be due to check the corruption and diversion of funds. These findings were in agreement with the findings of Borah and Bordoloi, (2014); Garg and Yadav (2010); Kadrolkar (2012) [11-13].

Table-6 Suggestions given by the selected officials, (n=40)

SN	Suggestions	RPI	Rank
1	Organisation of literacy programmes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" at village level.	100.00	I
2	Appointment of adequate trained staff on permanent basis.	100.00	II
3	Timely allocation of sufficient funds.	90.32	III
4	Synchronization of related documents.	80.65	IV
5	Timely training to the staff in accordance with their needs.	77.42	V
6	Extending the 4 per cent limit of administrative cost.	64.52	VI
7	Organisation of weekly Gram Sabha.	64.52	VII
8	Appointment of separate MGNREGS staff at village level for 20-25 villages.	58.06	VIII
9	Opening of postal accounts of those who are on work instead of all registered families.	58.06	IX
10	Provision of technical facilities.	51.61	X
11	Collection of fine for bogus registration on par with unemployment allowance	48.39	XI
12	Division of works among line and staff departments	41.94	XII

### Suggestions given by the selected officials from village to district levels

The [Table-6] clearly showed the suggestions given by selected officials to overcome the operational problems perceived by them during the implementation of MGNREGS were "Organisation of literacy programmes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan" at village level" (1) might be due to problem posed by illiteracy in the effective implementation of MGNREGS and "Appointment of adequate trained staff on permanent basis" (0.91) might be due to technicalities involved in the implementation of MGNREGS programme followed by "Timely allocation of sufficient funds" (0.82) might be due to it is key for timely payment of wages, "Synchronization of related documents" (0.74) in order to reduce delay in payment of wages, "Timely training to the staff in accordance with their needs" (0.66) might be due to ensuring the proper implementation of MGNREGS, "Extending the 4 per cent limit of administrative cost" (0.58) in order to increase the salaries of MGNREGS staff, "Organisation of weekly Gram Sabha" (0.48) might be for achieving better cooperation from the people and solving their problems, "Appointment of separate MGNREGS staff at village level for 20-25 villages" (0.40) for proper documentation and timely payment of wages, "Opening of postal accounts of those who are on work instead of all registered families" (0.35) might be due to overcome the problem of tedious documentation and bogus registration of families, "Provision of technical facilities" (0.26) in order to maintain large amount of data of beneficiaries, "Collection of fine for bogus registration on par with unemployment allowance" (0.18) in order to check offensive happenings and effective implementation of MGNREGS and "Division of works among line and staff departments" (0.12) for early execution of works and better cooperation. These findings were in accordance with the results of Chathukulam & Gireesan (2007), Gladson (2008) and Argade (2010).



### Strategy to overcome operational problems in implementation of MGNREGS

- Efforts must be made to improve the literacy among the people through programmes like "Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan".
- Build large scale citizen's awareness campaigns for generating demand side of MGNREGS.
- Improve institutional capacities of Gram Panchayat.
- Introduction of 'Wage Subsidy' to the farming community by applying MGNREGS workforce.
- Timely allocation of fund at various levels of implementation of MGNREGS.
- Efforts must be made to organize capacity building sessions to Panchayat Raj functionaries about the programme and its monitoring through training sessions
- Exposure visits and sharing of good practices.
- Appointments of adequately trained staff at various levels of implementation of MGNREGS especially at the village level on permanent basis.
- The pro-active planning for effective engagement of mandal and district Panchayats in order to achieve better cooperation between them and line departments in the implementation of MGNREGS
- Adequate attention to strengthen Village Monitoring and Vigilance Committee.
- Flexibility for technical sanction of civil works and audit of accounts through competent private professionals
- Improved technological options for performance and monitoring
- Establishment of information resource centres and helpline in collaboration with civil society organizations.
- It has been observed during the survey that unemployed youths in the villages are showing more interest to work under MGNREGS. Hence, MGNREGS should be continued in order to facilitate them towards gainful employment.

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