

Implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme: A Study from Rajasthan

Bijayalaxmi Panda*

Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) is one of the flagship programme initiated to address the issues of poverty and livelihood at a larger level. The present study tries to analyze the impact of this scheme on the BPL families. Involvement of gram panchayat in implementation and monitoring of this scheme is also subjected for analysis. Samples for the present study constitute beneficiaries of MGNREGS from 121 Below Poverty Line families in the two villages of Ladhun Block of Rajasthan. Case studies, FGDs, in-depth interviews and observation methods were also employed. Purposive sampling method was used for selection of village and beneficiaries. Information from the secondary sources available at Planning Commission, Ministry of Rural Development, State Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department were also utilized for the study. It was found that the cases of women getting involved in NREGA activities were very much encouraging. Their involvement had contributed to improve the living conditions of the household. Women beneficiaries spent the money to create household assets, purchase of artificial designing jewelry, clothes and paid fees for education of their children. Half of the beneficiaries were mentioned they only got Rs 60/- per day and they were not aware of the reasons for low rate of payment. They were appreciated the timely payment of money. Their major suggestion was to create crèche facility for their children at nearby working sites. It is evident from the study that the interventions of Gram panchayat on monitoring part are lacking at the different levels.

Keywords: MGNREGS, BPL, Household

Introduction

Being the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment on an unprecedented scale, MNREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one

hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Unique features of the Act inter alia include, time bound employment guarantee and wage payment within 15 days, incentive-disincentive structure to the state governments for providing or not providing employment as per demand, emphasis on labour intensive works prohibiting the use of contractors, and machinery, ensure the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure and assets in the rural areas. NREGS was the most important “rights based social protection programme in India. It was working much better in Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh (Mahindra, 2011). The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is in consonance with the idea of sustainable development whose important cardinal component is economic, social and environmental sustainability. It was estimated that on an average each year around five crore people from rural areas are employed by MGNREGA. As on 12th January 2016 around 15.54 lakhs of households have completed 100 days of employment and in addition to these 26.19 lakhs more households have completed 81-91 days of employment (Singh, 2016).

The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening decentralization and deepening processes of democracy by giving a pivotal role to local governance bodies, i.e the panchayati raj institutions. Bhatt and Dreze (2006) conducted a study on “Employment Guarantee in Jharkhand: Ground Realities”. It was found that there was very little awareness of basic features of the Act and also job card. Even among concerned Govt. officials there was little awareness about the basic features of the Act. Although registering applications and issuing job cards were the responsibility of Gram Panchayat yet there was no Gram panchayats. Panchayat election had not been held

* Independent Consultant, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India. Email: bijaya246@gmail.com

since 1978. This institutional gap was a major stumbling block in the implementation of NREGA. A number of studies undertaken by Bhatta and Dreze (2006a), Ranware et al (2015), Jean and Khera (2009), Babu and Rao (2010), Ahmed and Sarkar (2014), Himanshu et al (2015), Siwan Anderson et al (2015), Panda (2015), Singh and Singh (2013) are reviewed in different aspects such as role of panchayat, status and impact of MGNREGS for the rural people, funds allocation, social audits etc.

From the review it was found that Rajasthan was the first major state to completely embrace the NREGS. Branding it the “best-performer among all States” for the year 2006-07, Dreze and Oldiges (2008) points out that this was unsurprising because “..... employment guarantee has been a lively political issue in Rajasthan for quite a few years, and the State also had a high level of preparedness for the Act, having organized massive public works programmes almost every year in living memory” (Himanshu et al; 2015). The researcher found gaps among many studies which were not focused on case studies, FGDs for in-depth analysis. It was lacking of conducting hardly any study on the implementation of MGNREGS in Ladnun Block, Rajasthan. Therefore this topic was given importance and conducted this research study in villages of Ladnun Block, Rajasthan.

Objectives

- To review the current status of implementation of MGNREGS.
- To examine the status of the beneficiaries in terms of changes in socio-economic condition.
- To study the involvement of gram panchayat in the implementation of programmes.

Methodology

This study was based on both primary and secondary sources of data. It followed the mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative. The secondary sources of data were collected from the Planning Commission reports, Ministry of Rural Development reports, State Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department reports etc. Interview schedule, interview guide, guideline for case studies and FGDs were used for collecting data from primary sources. Two case studies were selected as per the different criteria which focused on status of

implementation of scheme, involvement gram panchayat, participation for wages etc. Four FGDs were conducted with beneficiaries of MGNREGA in both the villages. Interviews have been conducted with beneficiaries of MGNREGA, Government officials, Panchayat members. Purposive sampling method was used for selection of Bakliya and Dujar Village from two different Panchayats due to the highly concentration of Below Poverty Line (BPL) families and implementation of MGNREGA. Dujar village is the distance of 5km and Bakliya is 10 km from the block and MNREGA office of Ladnun. Out of 132 BPL families in both villages, 121 families were selected those have MGNREGA job card from their respective gram panchayat.

Result and Discussion

Socio-economic Profile of the Beneficiaries

In the below (Table 1) data shows that highest number of persons 12 (38.8%) out of 121 were working under MGNREGA in the age-group of 30-40 years followed by 26.4 percentage in the age group of 40-50 years and 14 percentage in the age group of 50-60 years. It was found that 11 persons were demanding to work under MGNREGA in the age of 60-70 years although they were not able to work due to their poor health condition but for livelihood they forced to do work in their own villages. Only 11 percent were working in the age group of 20-30 years under MGNREGA because they were going to nearby cities for getting more wages.

Table 1: Profile of the Respondents

	Background characteristics	Bakliya (N= 42)	Dujar (N =79)	Total (N = 121)
Age	20-30 years	5 (11.9)	9 (11.4)	14 (11.5)
	30-40 years	16 (38.1)	31 (39.2)	47(38.8)
	40-50 years	10 (23.8)	22 (27.8)	32(26.4)
	50-60 years	6 (14.3)	11 (13.9)	17 (14.0)
	60-70 years	5 (11.9)	6 (7.5)	11(9.0)
Caste	Schedule Caste	24 (57.1)	40(50.6)	64(52.9)
	Other Backward castes	17(40.5)	37(46.8)	54(44.6)
	Others	1(2.4)	2 (2.5)	3 (2.4)

Gender-wise	Male	36 (85.7)	65 (82.3)	101(83.5)
	Female	6 (14.3)	14 (17.7)	20(16.5)
Religion	Hindu	40 (95.2)	69 (87.3)	109 (90.1)
	Muslim	2 (4.7)	10 (12.6)	12(9.9)
Family type	Nuclear	21(50)	49(62.0)	69(57.0)
	Joint	21(50)	30(38.0)	50 (41.3)
Educa-tion	Illiterate	34(80.9)	74(93.7)	108(89.2)
	Literate	1(2.3)	2(2.5)	3 (2.5)
	Up to El-ementary	5(11.9)	2(2.5)	7 (5.8)
	Up to senior secondary	2(4.7)	1(1.3)	3(2.5)
Em- ploy- ment	Labourer	33 (78.5)	68 (86.0)	101(83.5)
	Self em- ployed	5 (11.9)	5 (6.3)	10 (8.2)
	Government Pension	4 (9.5)	6 (7.5)	10 (8.2)
Income of fami- lies	Less than 4000/-	17 (40.5)	22(27.8)	39 (32.2)
	4000-6000/-	12 (28.6)	32(26.4)	44 (36.4)
	6000-8000/-	10(8.3)	20 (16.5)	30(24.8)
	Above 8000/-	3(2.5)	5(4.1)	8(6.6)

Among 121 beneficiaries, 64 (52.9%) beneficiaries were coming under Scheduled Castes followed by other Back Castes i.e 54 (44.6%) and only three family belongs to General caste. Not a single tribal family was available in these villages. All the BPL families were getting BPL ration cards from their respective Panchayat. It was found that 16.5 percent families were single/female headed households. Either they were widows or separated. Ninety percent of families out of 121 were from Hindu religion and rest others were Muslims. Data shows that 62 percent households were single family in Dujar village where as in Bakliya, it was equal number in case of nuclear and joint families. The educational status is very poor in this village. Even most of the females were not aware about their signature. Data reveals that 89.2 percent were illiterate out of 121 families in both the villages. In Dujar village 86 percent are daily wage labourer which is eight percent higher than Bakliya village. They opined that all times in a year work is not available in villages and even in nearby villages. Due to lack of education they were not able to work in other sectors. MGNREGA was not regular also, they have to search for work otherwise migrate to other place for earning money. It reveals that most of the family income of the beneficiaries is between Rs 4000-6000/- per month i.e 44 (36.4%) followed by 32.4 percent

earned less than Rs 4000/-. Ten families (8.2%) were only dependent on Government schemes such as old age and widow pension schemes. Around 70 percent of households were living in Pucca houses in Bakliya whereas Dujar had this facility for 62.5 percent families/households. Bakliya village had more than half of the houses (56.8%) with separate kitchen which was thrice more than Dujar (20.5%). Data shows that 60.2 percent had facility of electricity in Dujar and in Bakliya, it was 71.5 percent. Most of the households (81.8%) had drinking water facility in their own premises. These sources were piped water, tube well and rain water harvesting.

Table 2: Number of Households engaged in MGNREGA Works

Response Category	Bakliya (Village-I)	Dujar (Village-II)	Total
Worked under MGN-REGA			
Participation	29 (69.0)	68 (68.1)	97 (80.2)
No participation	13 (31.0)	11 (31.9)	24 (19.8)
N	42 (100)	79(100)	121(100)
Duration of work			
Below 30 days	1 (3.4)	2 (2.9)	3 (3.1)
30 days to 90 days	21 (72.4)	62 (91.2)	83 (85.6)
Completed 100 days	7 (24.1)	4 (5.9)	11 (11.3)
N	29 (100)	68(100)	97(100)
Timely payment			
Yes	26 (89.7)	67 (98.5)	93 (95.9)
No	3 (10.3)	1 (1.5)	4 (4.1)
N	29 (100)	68 (100)	97(100)

Data reveals that 42 families of Bakliya and 79 of Dujar had received job cards to work in MGNREGA. Sixty nine percent of households were participated in the MGNREGA works in Bakliya village and their percentage was 68 percent in Dujar. Respondents mentioned that they had got better wages than NREGA works. Therefore, they did not take interest to this work. Women with small children were unable to gets job due to absence of day care/child care facilities. Other causes were health problems, no adult member to work, old age, lack of prior information about starting of work etc. Data reflected that only 24 and six percent of households completed 100 days of labour works in both the villages. It was reported that 90

percent of beneficiaries were women. Beneficiaries were participated in different works for village development under MGNREGA such as village road construction, water pipe connection to village, water tank and irrigation of canals.

More than 70 percent and 90 percent of beneficiaries had got engaged for duration of 30 to 90 days. In this context earlier study also proved the same. In the study on “Will NREGA ensure security against hunger?”, ten districts had been chosen from the first stage of implementation of NREGA. Of these, five were from Gujrat, two each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan as also one in Maharashtra. It was also reported that average period of employment was around 39 days against legal provision of 100 days. In Dangs, Panchmahal and Banaskantha, the implementation of the schemes had been weak in a range of 5 to 20 days of employment had been provided whereas situation was comparatively a better in Dungapur (63 days) and Udaipur (67 days) conducted by Jaswal Anshuman and Mistry Paulomee in the year 2007. Almost all (90 and 99 % respectively) said that they had got the timely payment of wages after 15 days.

Field observation and discussion revealed that communication was not received from Gram Panchayat about starting of work under MGNREGA. Therefore card holders were not aware about the works and joined late in this process. Beneficiaries had mentioned that Sarpanch and Panchayat members only informed to their known persons and relatives. In this context similar findings emerged from the study on impact assessment of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme conducted in Uttar Pradesh. More than 71 percent Pradhans admitted that they did not inform every one regarding the selected works, payment and expenditure of the projects in last six months, which had been mandatory under the scheme (Giri Institute of Development Studies, 2009). They had quoted that they got wages below the minimum wages. Half of the beneficiaries were mentioned that they got 60 rupees per day. They were not aware about the reasons for low rate of payment and panchayat members were also not informed to them. Respondents reported that they did not continue their work for 100 days due to pressure of hard labour, and low amount. In the study conducted by Jaswal and Mistry (2007) also discussed the wages paid had been below the minimum wages decided by the Government. These were Rs 50 per day for Gujrat, Rs 73 for Rajasthan and Rs 63 for Madhya Pradesh. Corruption

was prevalent in wage payment in the States of Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

A question was asked regarding the utilization pattern of money received from MGNREGA work. Women beneficiaries spent the money to create household assets, purchase of artificial designing jewelry/ornaments for the girls and also, purchased clothes, bought goat/sheep, paid fees for education of their children. They also visited Ladnun city for entertainments and to taste the foods from markets as a group members. Dev Mahindra (2011) discussed that the income from NREGS made very significant contribution towards children's well being such as reducing hunger, improving health and education.

The cases of women getting involved in NREGA activities were very much encouraging. It was also found in the review of impact assessment of NREGS in Uttar Pradesh that women's participation had been quite satisfactory 29.59 and 32.35 percent respectively during the years 2006-07 and 2007-08 (Giri Institute of Development Studies, 2009). Their involvement in NREGS had contributed to improve the living standards/conditions of the household. Across all age spectrums, people enroll and work for MGNREGA activity.

From the focus group discussions in Bakliya village with beneficiaries of MGNREGA it was reported that beneficiaries of MGNREGA felt that this scheme was not helpful in reducing the migration due to low wages, irregular allotment of work. But women migration was decreased during MGNREGA works. Women had stopped going to nearby urban areas for searching job. In MGNREGS they had to work within 5 kms distance from the village wherein they were living. In case distance is more than five kms they were earning extra money @ 10 percent of the wage per day.

Women beneficiaries mentioned about the utility of this programme that “*pehel jesa hamesa mangna nahi padta hai ghar wala ko*” means it is not necessary to beg money always from husband now as it was earlier. They felt that work was tedious for women and elderly persons. MGNREGA had contributed to develop their saving attitudes. They used the saved amount of money for development of their children and creating household assets like utensils, stove etc. Sometimes they had gone market in a group for a change. Four ladies opined that they had also bought ornaments for their use. They had earned Rs 5000 – Rs 7000/- while working in MGNREGA during

the year 2012. MGNREGA scheme was also appreciated as it had sought participation of good for women. These responses received from FGDs are also similar to the recent study which was conducted in Assam with 400 MGNREGS workers (target groups) and 400 non-workers (control group) spread over five district, 10 blocks and 40 GPs in Assam. It was found that significant 81 percent of the MGNREGS workers admitted that MGNREGS had improved their standard of living. With regard to food security, 88 percent opined that MGNREGS had ensured them some degree of food security. A comparison between the target group and control group showed that the average annual income of the farmer during 2011 was Rs 14,798 and the latter Rs 9,800. This is indicative of some amount of higher income generation for the ones who had worked in MGNREGS. Ninety-nine percent of the MGNREGS beneficiaries had bank/post office accounts in their names compared to only two percent of non-beneficiaries. It was found that 90 percent of the members of the target group could establish better networks, including forming of SHGs and associations, as against 42 percent from the control group. Seventy-three percent of the members had confirmed that their children attended schools, whereas only 60 percent from the control group had their children attending schools (Panda Bhagirathi: 2015).

In Dujar village women beneficiaries were mentioned in the focus group discussions that mobility of women increased to market twice in a week for purchasing vegetables, stationary items, clothes etc to Ladnun city. It was easy for them to visit city on payment of @ Rs 10/- as conveyance charge due to continuous availability of transport services. It was mentioned that women were getting Rs 60/ to Rs 90/- per day due to non completion of required quantity of work at work site. They had developed their own saving habit. Further money was used by them for purchasing of assets, clothes etc.

During the interview Block level officials mentioned that this programmes has led contributed to reduction migration during only the period of MGNREGA works. The significant positive change was decrease in the feeling of casteism and untouchability. *“Ek hi jagah kaam karte hai or pani peete hai”* (All persons were working in the same place and drink water from the same pot or source). They opined that Dujar village had lesser benefits than other villages because they had no land and avenues to get work. Most of the BPL families were not having agricultural land for cultivation. They were

mainly daily wage labourers or working in other's land for growing vegetables, Bajra etc. This programme had also brought a feeling of co-operation and co-ordination among villagers. They opined due to lack of education and staff in the panchayat, gram sevaks had overburden of work and not able to maintain the documentation properly. A study on Impact Assessment of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme conducted by Giri Institute of Development Studies (2009) in Uttar Pradesh pointed out that majority of the block officials reported that they had been over burdened due to shortage of manpower in general and trained manpower in particular. Singh and Singh (2013) mentioned from field report from Manipur that there has been some improvement in consumption of the poor, reduction of distress migration and participation of women. It is increasing recognized that the MGNREGA has the potential not only to generate more employment directly and indirectly, but also to transform rural economic and social relations at many levels.

Its negative aspect was payment of low wages to the beneficiaries. Therefore, villagers were not taking interest in this programme. They felt *“Paisa kam avom kaam jada”* means money is less as per the work. Minimum 70-80 members were benefitted from each panchayat. They were getting money through post office or mini- bank. Rural connectivity had increased due to construction of approach roads and paths. Due to lack of pucca roads maintenance of roads had not been carried out. Villagers were not participating in this work due to payment of better wages in other types of works like construction of buildings in adjoining towns and cities. Mostly female are participated in MGNREGA but they could not complete the size of work as expected of them due to weak physique. During discussion with panchayat members it was felt that old persons were demanding for work but they were not allowed to work on their health ground.

The researcher discussed the effects of this with the Executive Engineer, and Consultant, MGNREGA, Government of Rajasthan. They mentioned that MGNREGA had decreased the extent of migration from the villages. Similar finding from a study on National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA); some reports from the fields was conducted in the year 2007. In the Batlahundu Panchayat union area of Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu, residents had migrated to Tiruchur and Allepey in Kerala for seeking work in the brick kilns and

tile manufacturing units. This had hampered children's education. NREGA had provided to them an opportunity to stay in their villages. Their children were going to schools regularly. In Lodwa, village of Dungapur District, a group of villagers reported that seasonal migration had gone down due to proper implementation of the NREGA. They were also able to afford two times decent meals every day (Ministry of Rural Development). Consultant mentioned that in the year 2013-14, the number of days of work was increased from 100 to 150 days. The amount of wages of 50 days was paid by the State Government. GOI and State Government funding pattern was 100:50 days. The amount of wages per day was also increased to Rs 149/-. If somebody wanted to work as a group, minimum five members were needed for forming a group to complete the assigned work. Earlier beneficiaries were getting wages Rs 10,000/- maximum for 100 days within a year but now it is enhanced to 14,900/-. Both of them appreciated the work carried out under MGNREGA to increase family income of poor families.

The discussion was also held with LDC-MGNREGA at Panchayat Office in Dujar. She informed that MGNREGA remained suspended since 'July to October' every year because women were busy for working in agricultural land. They were not interested to work during the month of November due to fear of rain fall. During this period villagers were depending exclusively in their own cultivation. Persons who had completed 100 days of work were entitled to get extra amount of Rs 2100/- as incentives from the Government for their continuous involvement without break. The job cards were issued to beneficiaries for the duration of five years. She mentioned that Dujar was famous for growing vegetables. Vegetables were supplied to Ladnun city. Some women are working in the agricultural fields of others as well as growing vegetables for their consumption. Therefore, villagers had preference to work in their fields to derive double benefits rather than working in MGNREGA. She also highlighted some of the problems encountered in smooth implementation of this programme. Elderly women and married women with small children in their arms demanded work but they were not performing as per the expectation. Women could do work up to lesser extent; however they lodged complaints to get full wages. Creche facilities were not available at worksite.

Data also indicates that 25 percent of respondents were fully aware about the date and timing of gram panchayat

meeting(s) in Village-I (Bakliya) where as it was seven percent higher in Village-II (Dujar). Few of them mentioned due to their own busy work schedule they could not visit the office of panchayat. It was surprising that 40 percent of Bakliya and 36 percent of Dujar villages had been made aware about the date (s) and timings of organizing the meetings. One-third of respondents were partially aware that meetings were organized but could not know about the exact timing(s) and dates of these meetings. Notice Board was placed in the premises of panchayat Bhawan but there was no information about meetings, government schemes and programmes. Even panchayat representatives especially Sarpanchas did not have correct and required knowledge about government schemes and guidelines. Sarpanchas were illiterate and also dependent on Gram Sevaks. They did not have any idea regarding the objectives, budgetary provisions, social audit etc. The review also provided the same result that many Sarpanchas did not have information about purpose, objectives, selection procedure, payment rules etc of NREGA (Jaswal and Mistry; 2007). Regarding panchayat meetings, three lady panchas of Bakliya and Dujar mentioned that they had visited once or twice in a month to the panchayat office and sign in the register to show her participation in the meetings. They were not aware about any scheme and the functioning of panchayat. They also agreed monitoring of scheme was not conducted by panchayat members and Sarpanch.

The income of BPL households had increased due to benefits reaped from MGNREGS. Water facility is available in the village due to pipe connection in the village. Sometimes they used outside food from market. In contrast, the study conducted by Bhatta and Dreze (2006) on "Employment Guarantee in Jharkhand: Ground Realities" reported by Jaga Devi of Kusumatand village (Palamu district) "*Koi parivartan nahi hua, pehale bhi saag-gethi khate the, Aab bhi vahi khate hai* (Nothing has changed, earlier we used to survive on 'saag' and roots, and we are eating the same today also).

Mobility of women and girls had gone up in Dujar village. Style of wearing dresses had been modernized due to their regular visit to Ladnun City. Mobility of women and girls had gone up in Dujar (64.7%) village but in case of Bakliya it was only 25 percent. Women were not hesitating to talk with others. Even they were going to Government hospital, Ladnun independently for their health related problems and also to private clinics for treatment. Women

have developed positive attitude towards saving money. Sharing of experiences was the major change observed among women.

Two case studies were selected in context of MGNREGA and their benefits, uses of money, problems faced and their suggestions for strengthening of this scheme.

Case Study – 1

Identification: Sarita Kumari, a widow belongs to General Caste of Hindu religion. She was 75 years old. She received ration card from the panchayat on 12th May 2010. She was the poorest person of the Dujar village living in ward no. 3 as per the information provided by PDS Dealer and panchayat members. MGNREGA job card was issued to her. She was illiterate. She was not able to work due to weak health condition and old age.

Poorest family: This family was the neediest one but her name had not been included in the category of BPL Census of 1997 because her son was staying with her and he was earning to take care of the family. She was excluded the benefits of government schemes and programmes since many years though her condition was very pathetic.

Death of single son: Her son died in the last ten years when he was 28 years old. After death his wife deserted this old lady to left the house. After that she was alone. Her name was included as per criteria evolved in 2002 BPL Census. The village panchayat agreed for her inclusion in BPL category. Her name was included in the list through the help of panchayat unanimously.

Children: She had a married daughter. Her grandson and granddaughter were staying with her. Both were in the age group of 21 and 17 years respectively. Son was a drop out of the Class VIII and granddaughter was still continuing her study in the Class X in the Government school. Due to poor economic condition of her daughter and large size family she had sent her children to stay with her.

Observation: It was observed that she was quite weak sitting outside of her room. She used stick to walk from one place to another. Her granddaughter was cleaning the house and grandson had gone for searching a job.

Occupation and income: Her family income was between Rs 2000/- to 2500/- per month depending upon the availability of work including pension of Rs 750/- per

month. Earlier she was getting Rs 500/- per month but after entering the age of 75 she was getting the increases amount of Rs 750/-.

Benefits: Family received the benefits of Old age pension, PDS, MGNREGA. She appreciated the PDS Dealer for his help in this process of getting pension. She also mentioned that Dealer provided her rations in the door step.

Housing condition: The housing condition was not good. It was kutcha house with kutcha floor. There was no electricity facility because the electric pole was at a long distance from her house. Water facility was available within her premises. She had no asset like chair, bed, stitching machine, gas, pressure cooker etc. Mobile phone was available due to the financial support under the government scheme. Chullah was the only source of cooking. Separate kitchen was unthinkable for her. In the raining season they were confronting problem of cooking at a suitable place for cooking due to leakage of raining water. Firewood was collected from her land. She owned ten bigah of agricultural and cultivable land. Due to her daily struggle for searching of work by her grandson she had given this land for cultivation under share cropping system. Output of the crops was a source of her feeding also overcoming problem of starvation. She had a goat also to get milk for making tea. She did not buy milk from open market.

Cooking: Her granddaughter was helping her in her daily chores. She goes to school and cooked for all three members.

MGNREGA: Due to MGNREGA card received during the year 2012 her grandson was working. He had completed 80 days of work. After this he had got found some work at construction on higher sites. Payment of wages was of Rs 250/- per day in outside work which is higher than MGNREGA wages. He left MGNREGA work and started working at construction site for earning more money. They used the money for livelihood and purchasing of stationeries for her education of granddaughter.

Problems/Difficulties: She did not take benefit of Indira Awaas Yojna after many requests to panchayat. She also mentioned that school had given only books to her granddaughter. She had to spend money to purchase school uniform, note books, stationary which were costly items. Since she was from General caste, teacher

told her that she would not get scholarship or any other benefits from the school. She was dissatisfied with this response. However SCs and OBCs castes were getting the scholarship though their family conditions were far better. She was from upper caste but her condition was pathetic.

Benefit derived from the schemes: She got the benefits of wheat, sugar and kerosene oil from PDS on very low price. It had helped her to ensure her survive. Otherwise she would have been in wretched condition. She opined “*Gujara chalta hai nahi to kahan se lati itna paisa or unko khilati*”. Due to her pitiable health condition most of the times PDS Dealer helped her to supply her rations at her doorstep. Sometimes her grandson collected it from the shop. Due to timely benefits of wheat every month they were eating food daily. It was sufficient for her family. The quality of rations was good. She said “*upar wala utna dia to bahut hai*” (God is giving this quantity I am happy). She was worried about maintenance on her house. She hoped that her grand daughter and son will manage in the kutch house. She expected electricity connection for survival of her grand children also. She had never attended panchayat meeting. She was aware about IAY and electricity connection schemes for BPL. Family did not receive seeds from Panchayat to grow crops. She used the pension amount for household chores, purchase clothes and education of daughter. She was happy for running of government schemes as also financial help so that poor could lead life with respect.

Conclusion: She was worried about her education and care of granddaughter after her death. She also wanted to communicate caste does not matter for getting benefits of government but it depend upon the socio-economic condition of family. So strict identification of beneficiaries needs to be focused by the panchayat, school teachers etc.

Case Study – 2

Identification: Manoj, was from OBC, Muslim religion. He received the ration card on 20th April 2012 from Panchayat Office. He resided in Ward No.2. He had MGNREGA job card. His wife was worked in MGNREGA.

Children: She had three sons and one daughter. The eldest daughter was 15 years old followed by second, third and fourth were in the age of twelve, nine and six years. He was not aware about the education of his children. Only

he mentioned that they were going to the Government School. He quoted “*Bacho ki padhai mujhe nahi maloom hai*”.

Disabled by accident: He was disabled since last five years due to road accident. His one leg has fractured and he was not able to walk properly. He had fallen from Auto when he was riding. After that he was taking rest at home. His family condition had gone down due to unexpected accident. He had spent lot of money for his treatment. But it was found that lack of positive result in context of his condition.

Housing conditions: They had only one semi-pucca room. Kitchen was also not available. Toilet and bathroom were not there. Everybody had gone for open defecation. But it was difficult for him to go outside because of feeling of pain in the legs. Electricity connection was available in the name of elder brother. It was not benefitted from any government scheme. Water tank was there for storage of water. Drinking water facility was available. In the discussion he said never boil or purified the water. They had only three bigah of agricultural land and a goat. Chullah was the main source of cooking. Family had no asset like television, radio, chair, bed, machine, gas cylinder. As per the discussion with his wife it was mentioned that two small children were going to Madrasa.

Government school: Only text books were provided in the Government School. The quality of mid day meal was not good. Children carried their lunch box from home. Scholarships, uniform were not provided in the government school for the poor.

Source of income and use of money: His wife was the main source of income. She worked as a maid servant and earned Rs 1000/- per month to make roti for one family in their village.

MGNREGA: She had completed 100 days of work under MGNREGA but she got only Rs 7000/- and it was calculated @ Rs 60 to Rs 80/- per day. She did not aware the reason for low amount has taken per day. She used that money to purchase some household assets and in the household management. She purchased a mobile for emergency purpose. He opined that minimum Rs 4000/- was essential for food, tea etc per month. Through the income from MGNREGA her individual and family status improved. She used the money in purchasing the artificial designing ornaments, created assets also. She developed

her confidence, and improved sharing attitude in groups also and mobility to Ladnun city improved.

Education of children: His wife also worked as a labourer in the agricultural land of rich families in the village. She was doing hard work for household chores and education of children. As per the discussion with his wife, she told the eldest daughter was studying in Class VIII and second child was in Class VI. They were interested to complete the Class X. But their continuation of higher studies will depend upon their family situation.

Panchayat Meetings and awareness: He never attended the meeting at panchayat. Family members were not aware about any scheme except PDS provided the rations and Indira Awaas Yojna (IAY), MGNREGA.

Benefits from PDS: He received 25 kg wheat and three kg of sugar @half kg per head, three Litre Kerosene oil from PDS shop every month. But sugar was not provided timely. The quality was good but the quantity was not sufficient for them. Each person ate roti of @12 kg of wheat flour every month. Three times they consumed roti per day. Tea was the main habit of all. Therefore sugar, tea and milk were very much essential to buy and Rs 1000/- had spent in this way. They also bought 70 kg of Bajra from open market and per quintal its cost was Rs 1500/-.

He opined that “*Faida to bahut hai, sasta mile rations aur bahut paisa bachta hai uske baje se*” means due to BPL category he got help from Government. The cost of rations was in very low prices, so it saved money also. This money utilized in other way to manage the household. If they will buy wheat from market they per quintal they had to pay Rs 2000/- and for 25kg it was Rs 500/-. But they were getting 25 kg of wheat only in Rs 25/- @ one rupee per kg. It saved money, time. He also got the opportunity to take the wheat flour roti. Otherwise they could have to take only Bajra roti. His food habits changed in this way.

Suggestion: He wanted MGNREGA needs to be continued because it helped the ladies for earning money. But wages needs to be increased. His wife said “if days of employment will increase, then ladies need not go to outside for searching of work and they will secure in their own village also”.

Suggestions to improve the efficacy of MGNREGA

1. Capacity building of staff by identifying the relevant inputs and then providing them intense training on

issues of implementation would help in increasing the efficiency of the programme. Training to the Gram Panchayat officials is crucial to understand as to how to plan, execute and monitor viable projects under MGNREGA.

2. Social mobilization, creation of awareness among workers and sensitization of the officials and elected representatives of rural local self government are vital for making the scheme demand driven.
3. Social audit need to be done effectively for the proper functioning of MGNREGA.
4. Panchayat meetings should be organized time to time for the poor people to provide proper information about schemes and programmes and strict monitoring is necessary for the smooth functioning of the programme.

Conclusion

To conclude, this paper discussed about the status of implementation of MGNREGA for the socio-economic changes of below poverty line families in two villages of Ladnun Block, Rajasthan. It also focused on women beneficiaries used their money in different activities. As per their views MGNREGA need to be continued regularly. As rights based programme MGNREGA envisages certain prerequisites in terms of enhanced awareness and understanding of the nuances of rights and entitlements. Participation, transparency and accountability are three important elements which need to be adhered to in order to enhance effective implementation of this social protection programme.

References

- Rehana, A., & Sarkar, S. (December). MGNREGA and social protection: An analysis of efficiency, equity and accountability in Northern Eastern states. *Journal of Economic and Social Development*, 10(2) 81-94.
- Babu, V. A. (2010). *Impact of MGNREGS on Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes: Studies conducted in Eight States*. Hyderabad: NIRD.
- Bella, B., & Jean, D. (2006). Employment guarantee in Jharkhand: Ground realities. *Economic and political weekly*, 41(29), 3198-3202.
- Dev, M. (2011). *NREGS and Child Well Being*. Mumbai: Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research.

- Dreze, J. A. (2008). Commendable Act. 24 (14). *Frontline*.
Giri Institute of Development Studies. (2009). *Impact Assessment of National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme in Uttar Pradesh (Sonbhadra District)*. Department of Rural Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- Ghosh, J. (2009). *Equity and inclusion through public expenditure: The potential of the NREGS*. Paper for international conference. New Delhi, India.
- Hiamnshu, A. M. (2015). *NREGS in Rajasthan, Rationed Funds and their allocation across villages*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(6) 52-60.
- Jaswal, A., & Mistry, P. (2007). *Will NREGA Ensure Security Against Hunger? A Study - Summary Report*. Ahmedabad: DISHA.
- Krushna, R. U. D. (2015). *MGNREGA Works and their impacts. A study of Maharashtra*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(13), 53-61.
- Mehta, Y. A. (2015). Spectators or Participants? Effects of Social Audits in Amdhra Pradesh. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(7), 66-71.
- Panda, B. (2015). *National rural employment guarantee scheme, development practice at the crossroads*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(23), 126-131.
- Shah, M. (2007). Employment guarantee, civil society and Indian democracy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 42(45), 43-51.
- Siwan, A. P. F. (2015). *One kind of Democracy, implementing MGNREGS*. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(26&27) 44-48.
- Singh, U. (2016). Roadway to accomplish sustainable development of rural youth. Kurukshetra. *A Journal of Rural Development*, 64(10), pages 56.
- Tomba, S. S. (2013). Rural Poverty Alleviation Programmes: A Study of MGNREGA in Manipur. *Journal of People and Society in Local Culture*, 4(1). 129-144.